

# barnabasaid

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BARNABAS FUND - AID AGENCY FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2015



Suffering Church  
Action Week

1 NOVEMBER – 8 NOVEMBER 2015

15 PAGES OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES INSIDE

**STRUCK DOWN  
BUT UNCONQUERED**

  
barnabasfund  
hope and aid for the persecuted church



## The Barnabas Fund Distinctive

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

### We work by:

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

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

### We seek to:

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

- facilitate global intercession for the persecuted Church by providing comprehensive prayer materials

### We believe:

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

**"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."**

(Matthew 25:40)

## How to find us

## You may contact Barnabas Fund at the following addresses

### UK

9 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX

**Telephone** 024 7623 1923

**Fax** 024 7683 4718

From outside the UK

**Telephone** +44 24 7623 1923

**Fax** +44 24 7683 4718

**Email** [info@barnabasfund.org](mailto:info@barnabasfund.org)

Registered charity number 1092935

Company registered in England number 4029536

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

### Australia

PO BOX 3527,

LOGANHOLME, QLD 4129

**Telephone** (07) 3806 1076

or 1300 365 799

**Fax** (07) 3806 4076

**Email** [bfaustralia@barnabasfund.org](mailto:bfaustralia@barnabasfund.org)

### Germany

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

**Account holder:** Hilfe für Brüder International e.V.

**Account number:** 415 600

**Bank:** Evang Kreditgenossenschaft Stuttgart

**IBAN:** DE89520604100000415600

**BIC:** GENODEF1EK1

### USA

6731 Curran St, McLean, VA 22101

**Telephone** (703) 288-1681

or toll-free 1-866-936-2525

**Fax** (703) 288-1682

**Email** [usa@barnabasaid.org](mailto:usa@barnabasaid.org)

### New Zealand

PO Box 27 6018, Manukau City, Auckland, 2241

**Telephone** (09) 280 4385

or 0800 008 805

**Email** [office@barnabasfund.org.nz](mailto:office@barnabasfund.org.nz)

### Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland

PO Box 354, Bangor, BT20 9EQ

**Telephone** 028 91 455 246

or 07875 539003

**Email** [ireland@barnabasfund.org](mailto:ireland@barnabasfund.org)

### Singapore

Cheques in Singapore dollars payable to "Barnabas Fund" may be sent to: The Old Rectory, River Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire SN9 5DB, UK

### International Headquarters

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

**Telephone** 01672 564938

**Fax** 01672 565030

From outside UK:

**Telephone** +44 1672 564938

**Fax** +44 1672 565030

**Email** [info@barnabasfund.org](mailto:info@barnabasfund.org)

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

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

**Telephone** 01672 564938

**Fax** 01672 565030

From outside UK:

**Telephone** +44 1672 564938

**Fax** +44 1672 565030

**Email** [info@barnabasfund.org](mailto:info@barnabasfund.org)

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

# SAVE ONE LIFE

Dr Patrick Sookhdeo International Director



ancient Jewish Talmudic saying states: "Man was first created as one person [Adam], to teach you that anyone who destroys a life is considered by Scripture to have destroyed an entire world; any who saves a life is as if he saved an entire world." (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:9) We can choose to save or destroy a single life, by our action or by our neglect.

Today there are many thousands of Christians and others fleeing from war and persecution. The Christian communities of Syria and Iraq have seen their situations deteriorate to the point where they question their very existence in the land of their birth. They want out.

Some people respond by saying that the need is so overwhelming that it is impossible to do anything. Yet if we do not focus on helping even one, are we not complicit in their potential destruction?

Others argue that we should assist everyone, not just Christians. This is the position of the UN, EU and many international bodies. It has been adopted by some Western Christian leaders who refuse to help Christians in need, as if Christianity were nothing more than a civil religion. But it is contrary to Middle Eastern culture, which expects each religion to help its own followers, and thus all will be cared for. When Christians fail to show practical love for each other, the astonished onlookers ask: "What kind of religion is this that does not even look after its own?"

When Muslims are persecuted there are dozens of countries with an Islamic identity to which they could flee. Hindus persecuted in Pakistan can flee to India. But where are the consciously Christian countries to provide sanctuary for persecuted Christians? Armenia is one, but too poor to help many. For all their Christian heritage, Western nations now see themselves as secular, and with no responsibility to help Christians.

As Christians we believe that we have a relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ and have become His sons and daughters. We must show our love for our brothers and sisters in practical ways (1 John 3:17-18; James 2:14-17).

Barnabas Fund has started Operation Save Havens to rescue Christians in danger (see page 22). We are thankful to God for the Polish government which has thus far allowed us to bring into their country 157 Syrian Christians. We are desperately hoping that other countries will follow suit and give a safe haven to a few. To save one is to save many.

## PATRICK SOOKHDEO

*is the International Director of Barnabas Fund. Dr Sookhdeo is a spokesman for persecuted Christian minorities around the world. He is an advocate for human rights and freedom of religion.*

**THE ASTONISHED ONLOOKERS ASK: "WHAT KIND OF RELIGION IS THIS THAT DOES NOT EVEN LOOK AFTER ITS OWN?"**

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# how barnabas is helping

## Hope rises from the desert

Your generosity enabled Barnabas Fund to move part of Camp Bastion (the UK forces' HQ in Afghanistan) over to Northern Iraq. The temporary but substantial structures have been rebuilt as Sawra (Hope) Village, to house displaced Christians who have fled from the violence of Islamic militant groups like Islamic State. Each tent is air-conditioned and insulated against both the summer heat and the cold of winter. There are also three large diesel generators, washing machines, showers, toilets and cooking facilities. The encampment is nearing completion, various challenges having been overcome. By the Autumn, Sawra Village will have received its first intake of displaced Christians.



These tents are now used to provide temporary homes for refugees from persecution in Iraq – Sawra Village is seen here as it nears completion.

**£1,105,000 for Sawra Village in Iraq**  
(*\$1,725,000, €1,570,000*)

*Project reference 20-1200*

## Finding a place of safety from cultural abuses

All of the girls who arrive at Cana Girls' Rescue Home – currently, there are 65 – seek refuge from the harm they face because of tribal customs such as female genital mutilation (FGM), child labour and the prospect of early child forced marriage. New arrivals receive guidance and counselling to help them overcome the trauma they have suffered.

“Susan” is one of the many blessed by their time at the Rescue Home. She wants to tell Barnabas Fund supporters, “Thank you for the support you provided to me through Cana Girls' Rescue Home that assisted me greatly.” She goes on to say, “I am now married and aged 22 years old. Cana became my refuge [from] the hostile cultural and traditional values of my Pokot community.”



Cana Girls' Rescue Home

**£20,500 for Cana Girls' Rescue Home in Kenya**  
(*\$32,150, €29,125*)

*Project reference 25-663*

## Looking after a widow in distress

Pastor Jean Marcel Kesvere was murdered by Boko Haram leaving a widow, Jaqueline, and eight children. Barnabas Fund has supported the family, providing a sewing machine and money for the children's education. When she had a surprise visit from project workers who delivered the aid she burst into tears at the unexpected display of Christian love from around the world. “I do not cry for my husband,” she reassured people, “I cry for people who take the trouble for me and my children.”



Jaqueline with two of her children, and the sewing machine gifted to her by Barnabas Fund

**£1,000 for support for pastor's widow in Cameroon**  
(*\$1,600, €1,500*)

*Project reference 00-345  
(Victims of Violence Fund)*



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

## Secure church buildings in Bangladesh

Often being a pastor in a Christian minority context calls for extraordinary tenacity and courage. Shahbaz Ali converted from Islam in 2004 and trained as a pastor. In 2008 a radical Muslim group destroyed his church building, terrorising the 120 believers there. The churchgoers scattered. For safety's sake, Shahbaz Ali moved his family to accommodation 12km (7 miles) away.

In the face of opposition and disruption from local Muslims, Barnabas supported the construction of new church buildings, which were finished in May 2015 – complete with a secure boundary wall inside which he and his family can live in safety. “We give thanks to God because he is our best Shepherd,” says Shahbaz.



Pastor Shahbaz Ali and his family outside their safe new home

**£4,500 for new church buildings in Bangladesh**  
(\$7,000, €6,500)

Project reference 00-345  
(Victims of Violence Fund)

## Church and school packs for flood-affected Christians

Some deprived rural areas of Sri Lanka are prone to flooding. So the project which Barnabas supports made such areas a priority following the last rainy season.

Aid packages were distributed to 195 flood damaged churches. In all, 2,200 prayer mats and 5,000 each of Bibles and song books in the local languages were sent to replace those lost in the flood waters. The project also purchased 5,200 school bags, filling each with stationery and writing materials.

Nilusha prayed for God's help when her house was caught in the flood. “I got a new school bag ... and I have a Bible ... I thank all the Christian brothers and sisters who have helped me get this blessing.”



Nilusha proudly displays the first personal Bible she has ever had, her new school bag over her shoulder.

**£66,000 for flood relief in Sri Lanka**  
((\$105,000, €95,000))

Project reference 00-634  
(Disaster Relief Fund)

## Pastoring in the extremes in Tajikistan

Your generosity enables pastors in difficult countries such as Tajikistan to persevere in their ministry despite hostility and persecution. Pastor “Kirill” and his wife work among the 98% Muslim majority population in the country's capital city, Dushanbe. His church pays him a small stipend and Barnabas Fund is covering his accommodation costs.

Christian worship and witness are tightly controlled by the government of Tajikistan. In effect it requires that any religious activity be officially approved in order to be legal, and it suppresses and punishes churches and other organisations that do anything independently of state control.

One young man disciplined by Pastor Kirill has recently joined the ministry team in Khudjand, an ancient but remote city in northern Tajikistan. The Church there is growing, especially among young, educated people in this city of 170,000.



Pastor Kirill, his wife and their two children

**£130 a month for accommodation for pastor in Tajikistan**  
((\$200, €185))

Project reference 00-477  
(Pastor Support Fund)

1



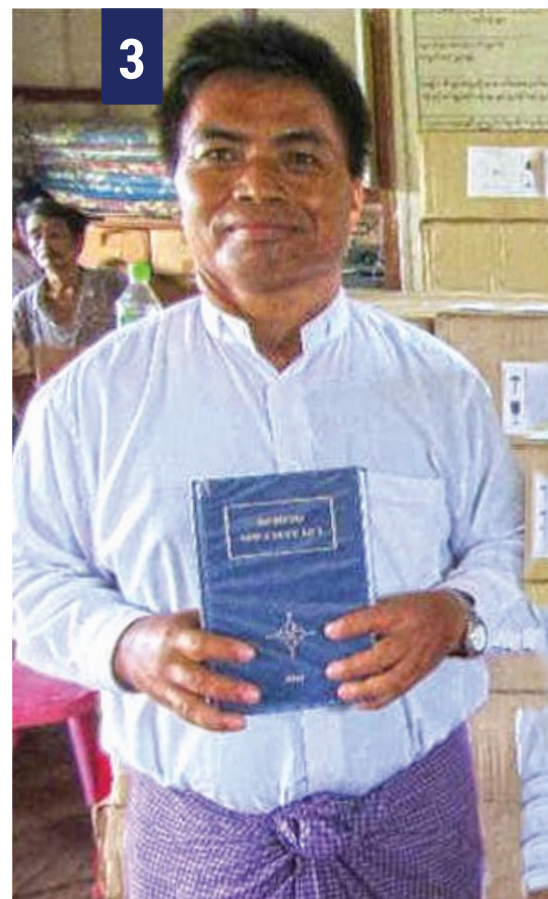
At last Pastor Mukesh and his family have a new home

2



Linda Wou, widowed by Ebola, grateful for aid she received through her local church, funded by Barnabas

3



Pastor Phuza displays his Lisu study Bible



# bringing hope, transforming lives



## A house for a persecuted pastor

**1** Pastor Mukesh prayed whether he should persevere with ministry in his village, or move on and keep his family safe. The church he pastored was disrupted; meetings were interrupted and the believers threatened, a relative suffered a suspicious death and a mob ransacked then destroyed his home. His family was left frightened and destitute.

Pastor Mukesh persevered. Barnabas Fund offered help. Three months later financial help to rebuild his house and buy clothes, groceries and utensils was made available; this brought renewed hope and determination to Mukesh and his family.

But angry mobs gathered and disrupted building work whenever it was attempted. The dedication of the new house was put off as construction was halted time and again – even the entrance of the house had to be relocated because a neighbour opposite objected. In the end, a local police officer intervened and the house was finally completed in May, although there is still unrest in the community.

Pastor Mukesh sends this message to Barnabas supporters: “Apart from meeting my physical needs, your help has lifted my faith in God that He will never let me down, however big the opposition is. He will send help to His servants from any distance. I have grown through this experience and help. I also want to be like Barnabas Fund in extending help to fellow Christians.”

**£1,600 to rebuild pastor's house in India**  
(\$2,500, €2,250)

Project reference 00-345  
(Victims of Violence Fund)



## Aid for Christian families struck by Ebola crisis

**2** On 15 May of this year Liberia was declared free from new cases of Ebola. The impact of the disaster for those directly affected is immense. Hygiene is still a major priority to ensure that the virus does not spread again.

Linda Wou lost her husband to Ebola: “I heard nothing from him”, she said, “No one told me anything. The death of my husband caused me lots of suffering.”

When her husband was alive, the family bought rice in large bags, “Today,” she said, “I can't afford to buy a cup of rice, my children and I have been living one day at a time.” She was delighted when she received food and hygiene supplies. Her pastor told her that the aid had come from Barnabas Fund, through the local church. “May God remember the hands that remember me in my days of distress and may their basket never go empty!” she prayed in gratitude.

Many families lost their breadwinners, communities were decimated, and in society at large people lived for months in dread of this often fatal illness. The price of food shot up.

Barnabas Fund worked with a partner in Monrovia, Liberia, to bring essential hygiene supplies and basic foodstuffs to destitute Christian families; it wasn't safe even to go food shopping because of the risk of contracting Ebola. The project helped 500 of Monrovia's poorest families (approximately 2,500 people).

**£61,500 for food and hygiene supplies in Liberia**  
(\$96,000, €87,000)

Project reference 00-634  
(Disaster Relief Fund)



## A Bible - the most precious gift I have ever received

**3** There is a great thirst for Bibles among Christians of the Lisu people group, found across Burma (Myanmar), northern Thailand and China.

Recently, 20,000 Lisu Study Bibles were produced in a country in the former Soviet Union and transported by container to a central distribution point. From there the precious cargo was covertly consigned to a number of destinations in the region.

*I love to meditate  
on the word of God.  
It gives me light when  
I am in the dark*

Lisu Christian churches in Burma welcomed the Bibles as a treasured gift. One pastor gave this inspiring testimony:

“For many years I have not had the Bible, because there are no Bibles in our place. I am so happy to get this Bible in our language. Thank you! Praise the Lord. May God bless you. This is the most precious gift I have ever received during my lifetime. I really love to read the Bible and I love to meditate on the word of God. It gives me light when I am in the dark.”

**£9,600 to transport Lisu Study Bibles for Burma**  
(\$15,000, €13,700)

Project reference 75-1042



# STRUCK DOWN BUT UNCONQUERED

**E**very day, Christians around the world “are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed”. (2 Corinthians 4:8,9 NIV)

Ideologies including Islam, secularism, Buddhism and Hindu nationalism put churches under pressure and crush life from the daily existence of Christians in parts of the world where they live as a despised minority.

In many places, the pressure from these ideologies has increased in recent years. Communities where different faiths lived together in harmony are now torn apart by majorities who no longer tolerate minorities who do not subscribe to their beliefs. Christians are often on the receiving end of aggression fuelled by hard line interpretations of religious and other belief systems.

But God’s Church remains unconquered. Even in the

midst of these difficult circumstances, people refuse to deny their faith. Many others are becoming Christians. Our Christian family in places of persecution relies on the support of its brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the following pages you will find information about some of the ideologies whose followers persecute Christians and case studies to help focus on some of the problems they endure.

There are suggestions about how you could get involved in Suffering Church Action Week and a free **Struck Down but Unconquered** Inspiration pack is available to order, which includes examples of all the materials you will need to take part. For more information please turn to pages 19-21. There is also news about Barnabas Fund’s major project, Operation Safe Havens, which is rescuing Christians in the Middle East from the danger of Islamic State (IS) and relocating them to safe countries – see page 22.

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# WHAT IN THE WORLD?

## SOME IDEOLOGIES THAT LEAD TO CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION

When the American Declaration of Independence was penned in 1776, progressive thought across Europe and North America might have agreed that:

*"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."*

Yet the long span of history and the variety of human cultures suggest that equality, life, liberty and human rights have been anything but self-evident to most people.

For many belief systems, what stands out is the hostility to others, whether those of different ethnicity, nationality or religion, and the un-Christian, often virulently anti-Christian, attitudes and behaviour displayed.

In many contexts, land and religion are being increasingly linked together, and a nationalism is developing as people rediscover their history and roots, looking to their religion to define their identity. In these situations Christian minorities suffer.



North Korea is probably the most dangerous country for Christians



Militant Hindu nationalists



Algeria: Christian converts must meet secretly in many Muslim contexts.



 **SECULAR HUMANISM**

Countries such as those in Europe, North America, the Caribbean and Australia have their foundation in Christianity and have developed in what is described as the “Judeo-Christian” tradition. Judeo-Christian ethics, Enlightenment thinking and Western political philosophy combined in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to produce much of what we see today in liberal democracy and the emphasis on human rights. These countries have moved away from giving authority to Christian principles; the place of the Church in public and government arenas has diminished.

Secular thinking often seeks to deny its Judeo-Christian roots and concentrate on pure political philosophy, attempting to deduce rights and freedoms by human reason. Secular humanism attempts to restrict the influence of Christianity and drive it out of the public sphere. In the past secularism argued for freedom of expression and public debate, but now it often argues against freedom for Christian ideas and expression. This pressure combines with modern materialism, and Christians experience media hostility or mockery, an unfriendly education system, limits on freedom of speech for Christians (but not for other religions), limits on freedom of conscience and restrictions on Christian practice in business, the workplace and elsewhere, as the Biblical foundations of society are gradually eroded.

 **ISLAM**

Islam was founded by Muhammad in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. When he could not convert the surrounding Jews and Christians to Islam peacefully, his approach became violent, with the use of jihad (holy war) to force people to accept Islam or to submit as second-class citizens. When Muhammad died, his successors continued the same policy and Muslims began to engage in armed conflict to spread Islam outside the Arabian Peninsula.

Muslims follow sharia law, which has a number of different schools, all of which discriminate against non-Muslims and women. Christians and Jews are categorised as “People of the Book” and are permitted to live under Islamic rule, but only with the inferior status of *dhimmis*. This means they must acknowledge that they submit to Muslim rule and follow various humiliating rules.

Problems for modern-day Christians in Muslim-majority countries have increased because of Islamisation and the radicalisation of ordinary Muslims. Muslim-majority countries have turned increasingly to Islam as their main source of identity. Their governments have become more Islamic, some because of their own beliefs and others because of the need to compete with Islamic political opposition groups. Countries previously modelled on secularism, such as Pakistan, Turkey, Algeria and Indonesia, are now following a more Islamist model. Some Muslim-majority states have sharia as a source of law, thus opening the door for discrimination against Christians and other non-Muslims. Sharia lays down a death penalty for converts from Islam, which is seen as treason against the Islamic state. This means that the authorities and society in general react very strongly against Christians from a Muslim background and punish them in many ways.

The difficulties that Christians face include imprisonment, especially of church leaders and those who are involved in evangelism, restriction on publishing and distributing Christian materials, including Bibles, and discrimination in many forms. Terrorist groups such as Islamic State have emerged in recent years, increasing the problems and risk for Christians within their reach. They aim to re-create an Islamic state as in the early days of Islam.





## BUDDHISM

Founded some time between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC in India, Buddhism now has around 488 million adherents worldwide. Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha, aimed to help people escape from suffering, which he believed was caused by attachment (to things and people) and ignorance. Buddhism takes a number of forms, the most common being Theravada and Mahayana. The teachings of the Buddha are entrusted to orders of monks (bhikkhu) and nuns (bhikkhuni) known as the sangha. They are responsible for guiding lay Buddhists. Theravada emphasises liberating oneself from suffering, while Mahayana also encourages its followers to help other conscious beings. Buddhists in China, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam are mainly Mahayana, while Theravada Buddhists predominate in Thailand, Burma (Myanmar), Sri Lanka, Laos and Cambodia. A smaller branch, Vajrayana Buddhism, is concentrated in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Mongolia.

Buddhism has been taken up by some in the West and has a reputation there for gentleness. But it has a long history of violence on the Indian sub-continent, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia and Burma (Myanmar). It has become associated with nationalism, particularly in Sri Lanka and Burma. In Sri Lanka militant Buddhism has its roots in an ancient text called the Mahavamsa (Great Chronicle) which describes how the Buddha foresaw the end of Buddhism in India, but believed that it would flourish in Sri Lanka. The Sinhalese (the majority ethnic group in Sri Lanka) understand this to suggest that they are the Buddha's chosen people and that they must protect Buddhism in its original form. There is a story of a 2<sup>nd</sup> century Sinhalese prince who, carrying a spear tipped with a relic of the Buddha, led 500 monks to victory against Tamil invaders; this is seen as legitimising religious violence in the cause of the nation's survival. Anti-Christian feeling in post-colonial countries is further increased by Christianity's association with colonial rule.

Minority religions in Buddhist-majority countries suffer violence and persecution as militant nationalists try to cleanse the country of non-Buddhist religions. The leadership role of the sangha explains the prominence of Buddhist monks in attacks against minorities, sometimes even leading the mob. Christians suffer from attacks on churches and live in fear of violence in countries such as Burma and Sri Lanka. Some countries do not allow conversions to non-Buddhist religions, so Christian converts from Buddhism are in great danger.



## HINDUISM AND HINDUTVA

Like Buddhism, Hinduism has had a reputation in the West as a gentle religion, accepting of all, although the caste system is known for its inequalities. But Hinduism contains a strain of nationalism which is growing in prominence in India and leading to persecution of Christians. Known as Hindutva, this Hindu nationalist ideology rejects religions that did not originate in India and aims to turn the country into a Hindu-only nation. The term Hindutva was coined by Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in the 1920s and a number of organisations have arisen with Hindutva as their central philosophy. These include the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and political party the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The BJP is the largest party in India's ruling coalition and its leader, Narendra Modi, is currently Prime Minister.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and Prime Minister Modi has indicated he will uphold this freedom, but six of the 36 states and union territories that make up India have implemented so-called "freedom of religion" laws, which are, in effect, anti-conversion laws. They make it illegal to try to convert someone from one religion to another by means of force, fraud or allurements. A sixth state has passed the law, but not yet implemented it. There are calls for a similar law nationwide. Christians are often falsely accused under these laws and they can be used to prevent legitimate evangelism. Meanwhile, Hindu nationalists are engaged in a campaign to convert (or as they say "re-convert") all India's non-Hindu inhabitants to Hinduism.

Muslims and Christians, as followers of religions that did not originate in India, face particular hostility from Hindu extremists. But Christians are the more vulnerable because they are fewer in number than Muslims, often from very low status groups, and do not retaliate when attacked. Incidents of anti-Christian violence have increased significantly in recent years, and especially since Prime Minister Modi came to power in May 2014. Between 1964 and 1996 there were 36 recorded incidents, but the Evangelical Fellowship of India cites 147 attacks in 2014. They are mainly on church leaders, Christian workers or Indian missionaries, but include disruption of Sunday worship and midweek prayer meetings.

# WHERE IN THE WORLD?

## PERSECUTION IN PRACTICE

Persecution, discrimination or disadvantage for Christians can come in many forms and from many sources. A conservative estimate is that over 200 million Christians live in contexts of pressure and persecution.

There are two sources of persecution: "top-down" from the state and "bottom-up" from society generally. Top-down persecution can come from the national government, political system and constitution, local or state government, local officials, police, the legal system and judiciary. Bottom-up persecution can come from groups in society, relatives, religious leaders, neighbours, work colleagues, employers, the media, political parties or terrorist groups.

THIS TABLE RANKS A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES ON LEGAL AND SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS AND DANGER OF VIOLENCE TO PRODUCE AN OVERALL SCORE

CRITICAL LEVELS OF PERSECUTION	NORTH KOREA, SOMALIA
SEVERE LEVELS OF PERSECUTION	AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, NORTHERN NIGERIA, SYRIA
SPORADIC LEVELS OF PERSECUTION	BURMA, CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, ERITREA, IRAN, LIBYA, PAKISTAN, SUDAN, SAUDI ARABIA, VIETNAM, QATAR, MALDIVES
	EGYPT, KENYA, NIGER, LAOS, TANZANIA, UZBEKISTAN, YEMEN
	ALGERIA, CHINA, INDIA, INDONESIA, SRI LANKA, TAJIKISTAN, TURKMENISTAN, JORDAN, UAE
	AZERBAIJAN, BANGLADESH, KAZAKHSTAN, TURKEY, TUNISIA



### NORTH KOREA

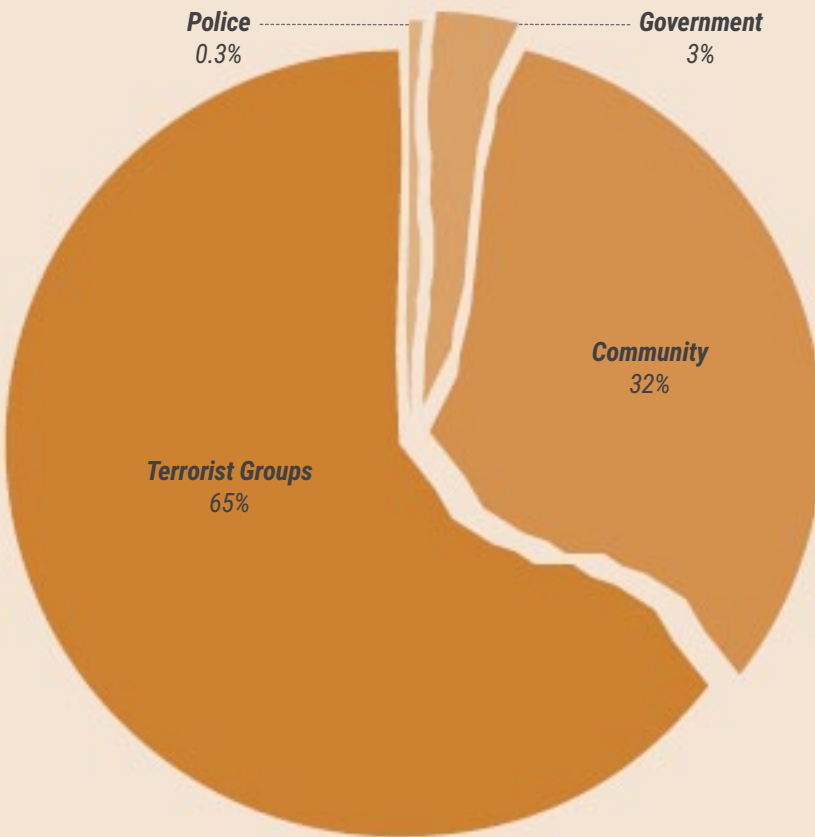
Christianity is seen as the foremost threat to the ideology of *Juche* - total dependence on the ruling member of the Kim family and the State. Faith in a God who is the source of every good thing, is not allowed. The regime therefore ruthlessly represses any trace of Christianity. Possession of a Bible brings a life sentence in a political labour camp for the individual, and time in a re-education camp for non-Christian relatives. State spies, vigilant for any sign of Christian activity, foster a climate of suspicion and fear.

An estimated 100,000 Christians are incarcerated in labour camps, some for a few years, some for decades; some never know freedom again. They work long hours, clothed in rags and malnourished, frequently subjected to torture.

Hea-Woo describes her three years in a labour camp: " We didn't mean anything to the guards. They beat me so hard I thought I was going to die. When we worked, we were not allowed to rest. Every day was as if God was pouring out all ten plagues on us simultaneously. . . But God also comforted me and brought a secret fellowship into existence. Every Sunday we would gather in the toilets and pray."



**SOURCES OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS AGAINST CHRISTIANS IN MUSLIM-MAJORITY CONTEXTS 2013-2015**



**SRI LANKA**

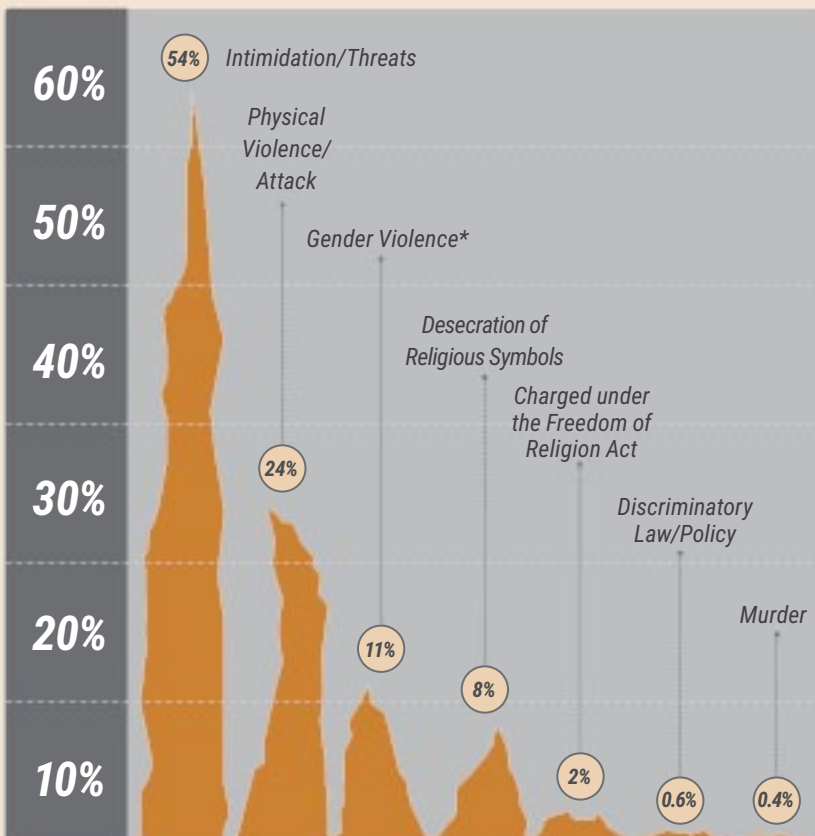
The majority of the Sri Lankan population are Buddhists who are ethnically Sinhalese (70%) with minority Hindu Tamils (12%), Christians (7%) from both Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups and Muslims (10%) of Malay and Moor ethnicity. The long-running civil war against the “Tamil Tigers” was finally won by the government in a massive final battle in 2009. Officially a secular state, the constitution of Sri Lanka nevertheless gives “Buddhism the foremost place”. It is the state’s duty to protect and foster Buddhism while at the same time upholding the constitutional right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Christianity is seen as a colonial imposition and Buddhism has become associated with Sri Lankan nationalism. In fact, Christians in Sri Lanka trace their roots to the apostle Thomas in the first century and there is archaeological evidence of a Christian presence from the fifth century.

The government seems happy to allow free reign to Buddhist extremist groups, BBS (Bodu Bala Sena) and Sinhala Ravaya. Persecution often takes the form of violent attacks on churches by mobs, which are frequently led by Buddhist monks. Church leaders have been abducted and instructed to stop leading Christian worship. Christians are accused of unethical conversions. Some churches are threatened with closure if they do not register with the government, even though there is no legal requirement to do so. In schools, although there is an option to study Christianity rather than Buddhism, in some cases Christians are told there are no teachers available.

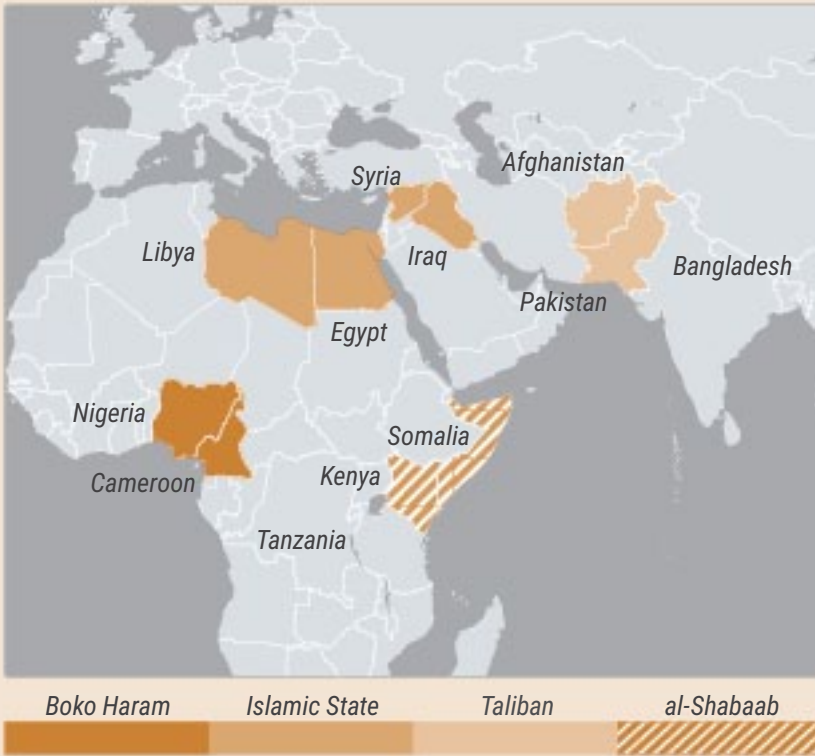
Christians suffer discrimination in employment and education. Many Christians work in appalling conditions on tea plantations, living on the mud slopes. Poor and marginalised, they suffered particularly badly at the beginning of 2015 when torrential rain caused mudslides.

**ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION IN INDIA 2014 (147 INCIDENTS)**



\*eg sexual assault on female Christian workers

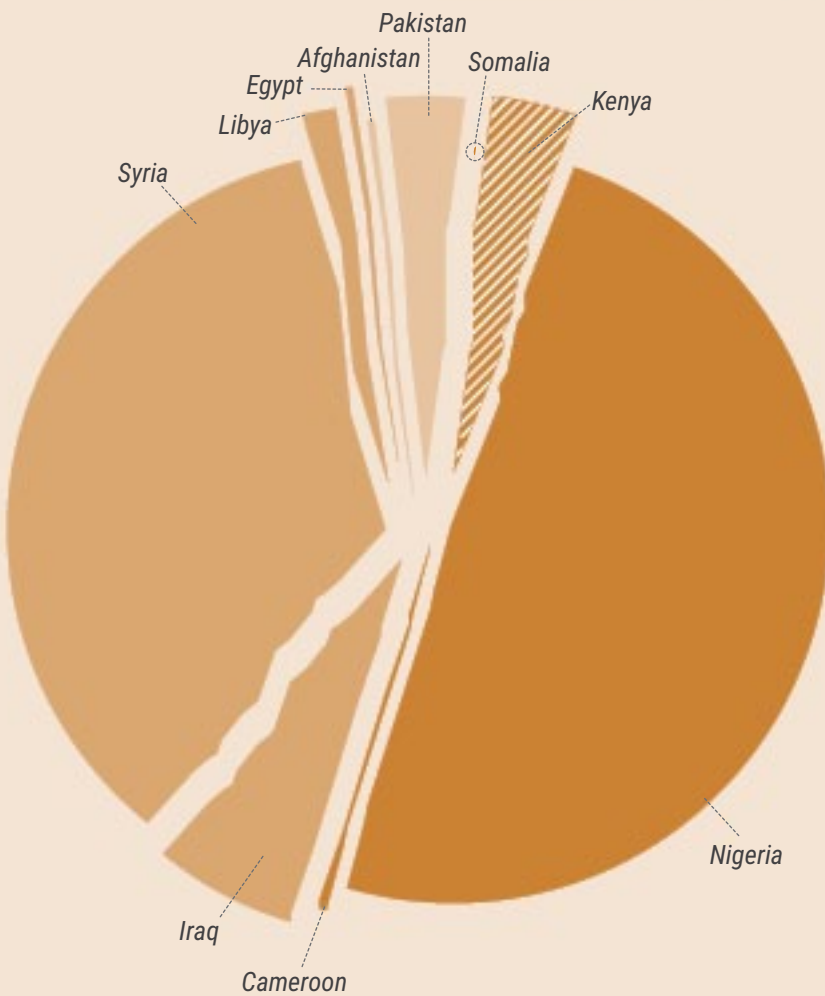
**COUNTRIES WHERE THE FOUR MOST DANGEROUS GROUPS ISLAMIC STATE, BOKO HARAM, AL-SHABAAB AND THE TALIBAN (AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN) HAVE KILLED CHRISTIANS**



**ISLAMIC STATE'S TERRITORY**

The Islamic State group (IS) came to international attention last year when its militants began seizing territory in Iraq and Syria. In June 2014 IS declared a caliphate with their leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as caliph. The title "caliph" is used by Sunni Muslims for the supreme political and religious leader of the global Muslim community and dates back to the immediate successors

*The aim of IS is to expand the rule of their caliphate to cover all the territory that has ever been under Islamic rule*



of Muhammad in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. There has been no caliph since the abolition of the Ottoman caliphate in 1922.

The aim of IS is to expand the rule of their caliphate to cover all the territory that has ever been under Islamic rule. IS enforces strict Islamic law (sharia), with women required to be completely covered and the Quranic punishments implemented, such as amputation, flogging and crucifixion. Although sharia allows Christians to live under its rule as a subjugated minority, IS appears not to tolerate a Christian presence of any kind within its territory. Describing Christians as "crusaders" it has killed or kidnapped many, for example along the Khabur river in north-east Syria in February. It has sold Christian women as slaves. In Ramadan in June/July this year it offered a slave as a prize for memorising parts of the Quran.



**600 CHURCHES ATTACKED OR DESTROYED**  
2013-2015



Country	Attacks	Key
Nigeria	210	1
China	50	2
India	34	3
Sri Lanka	22	4
Vietnam	4	5
Burma	8	6
Philippines	2	7
Indonesia	5	8
Pakistan	8	9
Syria	50	10
Iraq	42	11
Egypt	60	12
Turkey	1	13
Algeria	4	14
Cameroon	16	15
Central African Republic	20	16
Tanzania	4	17
Mali	18	18
Sudan	2	19
Niger	40	20

*Barnabas analysed a sample of 600 attacks on churches, by country. The largest number (482) occurred in Muslim-majority contexts, but significant numbers are to be found in Buddhist (30), Hindu (34) or Communist (54) countries.*



**NIGERIA**

Nigeria is officially a secular state whose constitution guarantees freedom of religion and outlaws discrimination. Its growing population, currently around 174 million, is divided nearly equally between Muslims and Christians, with 10% following traditional African religions. Muslims are concentrated in the north of the country and Christians in the south. In the Middle Belt, Christians and Muslims are roughly equal in numbers. Islamist group Boko Haram, which has pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS), operates in the north-east. It specifically targets Christians and churches, “Western-style” educational institutions, government or security bodies, and Muslims who do not share its severe interpretation of sharia law. Kidnappings, such as the more than 200 Christian school girls in Chibok last year, suicide bombings and shootings are an everyday occurrence.

Muslim President Muhammadu Buhari, elected in March, has promised to defeat Boko Haram. But the group unleashed even greater violence in response to his swearing-in on 29 May.

At the same time, Muslim ethnic Fulani tribes in central northern areas also launch violent attacks on Christians, storming villages and killing inhabitants. The authorities often attribute these incidents to ethnic divides and land disputes and take no action.

According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 15,000 people, many of them Christians, have been killed since 2009. But Christians are determined to remain strong. After a Fulani attack this year one villager said, “We ... have been under siege and invasion. Lives have been lost almost every day... But we are still faithful to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

# "I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH"

2 Corinthians 4



**In**

April last year, over 200 teenage schoolgirls, mainly Christians, were kidnapped from Chibok in Nigeria by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram.

Most of them were forcibly converted to Islam and married to Boko Haram fighters. But one of the girls, Monica, refused to deny Christ. To punish her, she was buried up to her neck and stoned to death. She kept the faith.

In the middle of the 2nd century, an elderly Christian from Asia Minor was burned at the stake. "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong", declared Polycarp, as he refused to worship the Roman emperor, "How then can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" He kept the faith.

For almost two millennia, there have been Christians who kept the faith, facing torture and even death for Christ's sake. Martyrdom has traditionally been

considered the highest privilege bestowed on a believer, with its heavenly crown that few are privileged to wear. But in the modern materialistic and secular culture of the West, with its advanced technology, where personal pleasure is the highest goal, how many Christians would be willing to die for their faith? How many would say in the face of suffering and death, "I have kept the faith"? To many the whole idea seems anachronistic. The concept of giving your life for a cause seems outdated, bizarre and unintelligible in a self-seeking, hedonistic and narcissistic society. Whilst none of us knows how we would respond in such a situation and all of us would acknowledge that it is God who would give us grace to stand, yet there should be a conscious willingness within us – before the time of testing comes - to embrace suffering if necessary.

The Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 4:13-14 applies to himself the affirmation of the psalmist:

*I kept my faith, even when I said, "I am greatly afflicted" (Psalm 116:10).*

Paul outlines how we should respond to suffering.

## 1 CONTINUE (v. 1-2,16)

- a. God has called us to ministry and acts of service. It is a special gift from God that we have the opportunity to serve Him, and yet inevitably there seem to come difficulties.
- b. The temptation to be discouraged and give up is real. But we are called to persevere, never to lose heart or hope or to abandon our calling.

*We do not get discouraged (spiritless and despondent with fear) or become faint with weariness and exhaustion (v. 1, 16 Amplified Bible).*

- c. We continue by living transparent and sincere lives in the face of adversity. Paul

rejects disgraceful underhand ways and dishonesty; he refuses to practise deceit or to distort God's Word.

- d. In the face of adversity, the temptation to find a way out can sometimes lead us to behave in an unChrist-like way and contrary to the Word of God, for example, to lie, or to bend the Scriptures to suit our own purposes. God calls us to put on the breastplate of righteousness and the belt of truth (Ephesians 6:14) so that with a transparent life and a clear conscience we will reflect His character. Sufferings are meant to remove the dross and refine us like pure gold.



## 2 CONFLICT (v. 3-5)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>a.</b> Paul recognises that he is involved in a battle between the god of this world and the God of eternity, between the god who blinds the minds of unbelievers and the God who gives sight and understanding, between the god of darkness and the God of light. Paul as a faithful messenger of Christ, bringing the Gospel of peace, is caught between the two. Yet, it is not a contest between two equals, for Paul's understanding of God of eternity is</p> | <p>that He will ultimately triumph over the god of this world, Satan.</p> <p><b>b.</b> To be in the middle of a raging spiritual battle is never easy, and can bring with it hurt and pain. We are not on a luxury cruise liner sailing, but on a battleship engaging the enemy, facing hardships, so that we arrive at our destination, maybe battle scarred, but knowing that we have been good and faithful servants.</p> |
|---|--|

## 3 CONFIDENCE AND COURAGE (v. 4-12)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>a.</b> We have the precious treasure of the light of the Gospel, even though our bodies and minds may be as fragile as clay jars (v. 4-7).</p> <p><b>b.</b> We are not hemmed in or crushed by the weight of pressures from all directions (v. 8).</p> <p><b>c.</b> We keep our hope and faith, despite the mental anguish that may perplex us (v. 8).</p> | <p><b>d.</b> We remember that God never abandons us, even in the worst time of persecution (v. 9).</p> <p><b>e.</b> We are not destroyed, even though we may be knocked down by various setbacks (v. 9).</p> <p><b>f.</b> The life of Jesus is shown in our lives, even as we suffer for Him (v. 10-12).</p> |
|--|--|

## 4 CONSUMMATION (v. 17-18)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>a.</b> Paul saw the End. Without this, suffering can have no meaning. Knowing, however, that the End is written, that God's purposes will be fulfilled, that an eternal weight of glory awaits us, enables us to bear life's difficulties.</p> <p><b>b.</b> We will ultimately triumph. We will be victorious. The gates of hell will not prevail.</p> | <p>Of this, we are certain and we live with the hope that not only has Christ risen, but that one day we shall rise with him. We shall rise and enter into His presence, there to share in His life for all eternity.</p> |
|--|---|

Monica's father, a pastor, said of his daughter's martyrdom, "To die for the sake of Christ – that's the happiest thing for me. I'm grateful she didn't change her religion. She trusted in God." Her mother added, "Monica is now in heaven because she refused to convert." Monica had kept the faith in life and in death. Young though she was, isolated and alone when her schoolmates had yielded, she continued to affirm what was central to her life and to her experience. She could say, with Paul and the psalmist, "I have kept my faith" in the midst of all her afflictions.

**DR PATRICK SOOKHDEO**

*For further material that could be included in your sermon, see Small Group Bible Study page 18 and also the 8-day devotional readings booklet. For more examples of modern-day Christian persecution see pages 12-15.*

# KEEPING THE FAITH



## 2 Corinthians 4

This study is on the same theme as the sermon outline (pages 16-17) and looks at some of the same verses mentioned in it. It can be used before or after hearing the sermon. If it is used without the sermon, it may be helpful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. You may also like to read the SCAW 2015 eight-day devotional booklet by Dr Patrick Sookhdeo.

*The section at the end entitled "Digging Deeper" is intended for those who would like to explore the theme in more depth.*

### INTRODUCTION

1. What do you think of when you hear the word "martyr"? Where, when and who comes into your mind? Is it a positive or a negative word to you?
2. Is there any cause or person you would die for? Do you think you may ever be faced with the possibility of dying for the sake of Christ? How do you think you would react?
3. What should be our attitude to suffering for Christ? Should we seek it out or should we avoid it? Should we be thankful or should we feel sorry for ourselves?

### GOLD AND TREASURE

4. Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-7. How does Paul keep himself from getting discouraged (v. 1)? What particular ministry or area of service has God given you?
5. Read Job 23:10 and James 1:2-4. How can we make sure that our problems and sufferings help us to become more Christ-like instead of less Christ-like?
6. In verse 7, Paul says we are like simple clay jars but inside we have a precious treasure. What is the treasure inside us? How can this truth help us not to be over-confident or under-confident?

### "BUT NOT"

7. Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-12. In two short verses (8 and 9), Paul writes "but not" four times. Some people think that Paul had in mind a wrestling match as he wrote these verses; what is he trying to communicate to us? Have you ever felt like that?

8. Which words of the Lord Jesus may Paul have been thinking of when he wrote verses 10-11?

### A PURPOSE AND AN END

9. Read 2 Corinthians 4:13-18. What are the three purposes of suffering that Paul gives in verse 15?
10. In verses 17-18 Paul compares our earthly sufferings with heavenly glory. What perspective does this give on any difficulties you are currently facing?

### DIGGING DEEPER








11. The Greek word *martus* is sometimes translated as "martyr" and sometimes as "witness". What is the link between these two different meanings?
12. Read Psalm 116:10 and compare it with 2 Corinthians 4:13. Why do you think Paul selected this text from the Old Testament to share with the Corinthian Christians in his letter? What did he want them to understand from it?
13. In verse 10, Paul used the Greek word *nekrosis* meaning "putting to death" instead of *thanatos* meaning "death". Why do you think Paul chose to write *nekrosis*?
14. What other challenges to our faith are there apart from suffering and persecution? If you live in a wealthy, secular and materialistic society, do you think this can affect your faith? What can you do to make sure you keep your faith to the end?



# RESOURCES

Getting equipped for Suffering Church Action Week couldn't be easier. Just order our free **Struck Down but Unconquered** Inspiration Pack, and we'll provide you with everything you will need to get started.

## The Inspiration Pack includes (one of each):

	<p>A DVD about Barnabas Fund's work, including a video, a sermon PowerPoint presentation with photos, and digital copies of the SCAW resources.</p>		<p>An eight-day devotional booklet to help you pray through the week (can also be printed out from the DVD and a longer version is available at <a href="http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw">www.barnabasfund.org/scaw</a>)</p>		<p>A sample Gift Aid envelope for a donation</p>
	<p>An A3 <b>Struck Down but Unconquered</b> poster to advertise your Suffering Church Action Week events (can also be downloaded at <a href="http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw">www.barnabasfund.org/scaw</a> or printed out from the DVD)</p>		<p>A money box that could be used when taking up a collection or for individuals at home</p>		<p>An additional copy of this issue of <i>Barnabas Aid</i> magazine</p>
	<p>Prayer bookmark</p> <p>Prayer resources can be used during the Barnabas Fund International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church on Saturday 7 November or the International Day of Prayer on Sunday 16 November (please see page 20 for further information).</p>				

## SPONSORSHIP FORM

If you're planning a sponsored event for Barnabas, let us take the hassle out of your preparations. Download a pre-prepared sponsorship form from [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw) or order hard copies using the form on the next page.

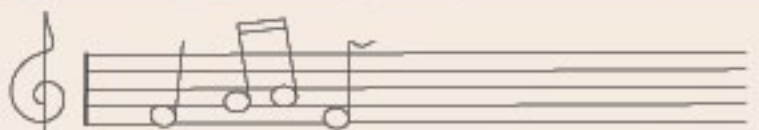


## Thinking big?

Extra quantities of any of the resources in the pack can be ordered for free. You may find it especially useful to order extras of the following items:

- A3 poster
- eight-day devotional booklet
- prayer bookmarks
- money boxes
- Gift Aid envelopes.

For example, you may want to order an eight-day devotional booklet for each member of your home group. You could also place a Gift Aid envelope on each seat at your Suffering Church Sunday service, so that Barnabas Fund can claim an extra 25p from the government for every £1 given by a UK taxpayer.



## SUGGESTED SONGS FOR YOUR SUFFERING CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

- "Trading My Sorrows" (Darell Evans)
- "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" (Martin Luther)
- "Amazing Grace" (John Newton, *Mission Praise* 31)
- "Blessed be Your Name" (Matt Redman, *Mission Praise* 1036)
- "O Church, Arise" (Stuart Townend & Keith Getty, *Mission Praise* 1213)
- "How Long", by Stuart Townend
- "The Church's One Foundation"
- "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"



**PRAYER FOR THE SUFFERING CHURCH**

**God of all compassion,**  
Visit Your suffering people.  
In the time of their troubles,  
Let them not be dismayed.

In their oppression,  
Let them not be destroyed.  
In their anxiety,  
Let them not lose hope.

In their alienation and wandering,  
Be their identity and home.

**O God, the Father of all mercies,**  
Look upon them with Your favour.  
Set Your seal upon their foreheads.  
Let Your right hand uphold them,  
Your love encourage them,  
Your presence engulf them,  
Your protection cover them.

In their fragility and brokenness,  
Be their strength and treasure.  
Let Your light shine upon them  
And reveal the glory  
Of Your eternal Son,  
In Whose Name we pray.

**Amen**

© Patrick Sookhdeo 2015

**BARNABAS FUND INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH**

**- Saturday 7 November -**

Can you join with us in praying for our suffering brothers and sisters, asking the Lord to strengthen them and help them to be faithful to Him in the face of persecution?

**Getting involved**

You can use our resources for your own prayer on the day, or maybe your church could set up a special event. Let us know if your day of prayer

event is open to all. You can register the details on the special website devoted to Suffering Church Action Week [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw).

If your church or group is not running an event but you would like to join with others to pray, why not check the map on the website? It marks the location of all prayer events that have been registered with us.



**SUFFERING CHURCH ACTION WEEK OFFERING**

Persecuted Christians need spiritual support to stand firm in their hostile world, and they are also encouraged in their faith when we show them the love of Christ by meeting their material needs. Please turn to pages 4-7 to read about the many ways in which Barnabas Fund helps our persecuted brothers and sisters.

Turn to page 22 to read about Operation Safe Havens, a major new initiative to evacuate Syrian Christians and give them new homes in safe countries.

If you take up an offering for persecuted Christians on Suffering

Church Sunday, you may like to use it to support a particular project or need described in these pages. If not, we recommend that you donate it to our General Fund (Project number 000). Giving to the General Fund allows us flexibility in allocating funds, so that we can use your donation wherever the need is greatest. It enables us to react quickly to emergency situations and needs that are too sensitive for us to publicise.



A family rescued by Operation Safe Havens

**DAILY DEVOTIONAL RESOURCE**

**Suffering for Christ** is a devotional resource that has been specially designed for SCAW. It includes daily readings and prayers from 2 Corinthians based on the theme for the week. For each of the eight days you will find a suggested reading, a key verse and a comment including ideas for prayer.

The booklet is included in the SCAW pack and extra copies are available to order. You will find a longer version on the website: [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw)



**TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

We aim to make our resources as relevant, useful and inclusive as possible. But we can make this happen only if we know what our supporters need and want. Please let us know what you think about this year's

resources: what was useful, what could be improved and if there is anything you would like to see included in the future. You can provide your feedback by filling in the online form at [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw) or by contacting your nearest Barnabas office (addresses on back cover).

**Please send me a Struck Down but Unconquered Inspiration Pack**

Additionally, please also send me the following resource(s) (state quantity of each):

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

.....

Email address .....

Phone .....

Name of church/group .....

.....

.....

**Please add my Suffering Church Action Week event to the online map**

Location .....

.....

Type of event: (i.e. church service, prayer meeting, other)

.....

.....

Time: .....

Open to public:  Yes  No



# ACTION PLAN

There are many ways in which to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians who are “**struck down but unconquered**”, and to build ourselves up in our own faith, during Suffering Church Action Week. Below are some ideas for events and activities. We invite you to make the most of the opportunities the week offers, enjoy supporting and praying for your fellow believers and keep in touch by sharing your events at [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw)

All the resources highlighted on this page are included in a free Suffering Church Action Week Inspiration Pack, available to order now (see page 20).



POSTER



BEING BRAVE FOR JESUS



DVD



BARNABAS AID MAGAZINE



EIGHT-DAY DEVOTIONAL BOOKLET



GIFT AID ENVELOPE



MONEY BOX



LESSON PLAN

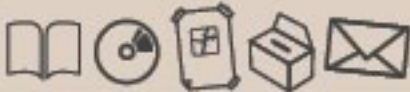


PRAYER BOOKMARK

## SUFFERING CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

Dedicate a special service on 1 November or 8 November (or any other Sunday that suits your church calendar) to remember those who are “**struck down but unconquered**”, suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ. Available resources for this service include a **sermon outline** (see pages 16-17), a **DVD**, a **poster**, a **money box** and **Gift Aid envelopes** for each seat. You could also make a display board for your church using photographs and information from *Barnabas Aid* magazine or our website, [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org).

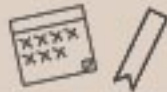
### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



## PRAYER

Organise a prayer meeting focused on lifting up our persecuted brothers and sisters to the Lord. Saturday 7 November is the Barnabas Fund International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church). You could also pray individually, using our Suffering Church Action Week **eight-day devotional booklet** on 2 Corinthians 4. A **prayer bookmark** is also available.

### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



## FUNDRAISING

Fundraising ideas are limited only by your imagination. You could hold a sale, concert or auction on behalf of Barnabas, or arrange a “dress down” day, quiz night or car wash. You could challenge yourself to take part in a sponsored event, or sell the products of your own unique skills such as crafts or painted portraits. Available resources include a **poster**, a **money box** and **Gift Aid envelopes** for collecting donations. A sponsorship form can be downloaded from our website, [www.barnabasfund.org/scaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaw).

### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



## CHILDREN'S EVENTS

Focus your weekly ministry for children and young people on the persecuted Church and being faithful in a hostile world. You could also plan a “light party”, or other event as an alternative to Halloween on 31 October, on the theme of being faithful. Children’s resources are available to order.

### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



## BIBLE STUDIES

Devote your Bible study or home group meeting to this year’s theme. The **Bible study** on page 18 of this magazine can be used to structure and focus your meeting. Take time to pray for persecuted Christians, to identify actions you could take on their behalf as individuals or as a group, and to encourage one another. You could also use this Bible study, or the **eight-day devotional booklet**, in your own quiet time.

### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



## COFFEE MORNINGS

Hold a coffee morning at your church or home, and place **magazines** and other resources on the tables along with **money boxes** or **Gift Aid envelopes**. Share the theme **Struck Down but Unconquered**, perhaps using the article on pages 9-15 of this magazine or the video on the **DVD**, and invite prayer for persecuted Christians.

### RESOURCES THAT CAN BE USED ARE:



# OPERATION SAFE HAVENS

*“Be a safe place for those on the run  
from the killing fields.”\* (Isaiah 16:4)*

**Christians in Syria and Iraq used to live in peaceful coexistence with their neighbours, but the rise of Islamist groups has changed all that. The most severe threat comes from Islamic State (IS), with its determination to annihilate Christians from its territory. The Christian presence and witness is being driven out, possibly forever.**



## CAN YOU HELP?



Help cover the cost of evacuating families and providing support for a year in their host country.



Prayerfully consider whether your church could participate in the programme.



Pray as we meet with government representatives, prospective sponsor churches and a network of organisations to create further opportunities for families to experience God's provision.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)*

\*The Message

## RESCUING CHRISTIANS IN DANGER

They have clung to their beloved homeland for as long as they could, but now their very lives are threatened, and it is time to leave and re-settle in a place where they can live as Christians in safety.

Building on our considerable experience in finding places of safety for Christians in danger, **Operation Safe Havens** is Barnabas Fund's initiative to bring a hope and a future to Christian refugees in the Middle East who are in dire straits.

### What Operation Safe Havens does

We are providing a safe route out of the Middle East for Christians whose lives are in danger, covering airfares to safe countries who will allow them to re-settle. We also help with their basic needs after arrival, while they re-establish their lives and get jobs to support themselves. This means the Middle Eastern Christians do not have to take the risk of paying people-traffickers and making dangerous voyages across the Mediterranean.

### Phase One: From Syria to Poland

Thanks to the generosity of Barnabas supporters and the willingness of the Polish government to grant visas, we flew 47 Syrian Christian families (157 people) to Warsaw in July to start a new life in Poland. The Polish government is willing to take more families and other governments are also stepping forward to offer resettlement.

## PLEASE JOIN WITH US TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN

With your continued help, we can transform lives as we relocate Christian refugees to countries where they can feel safe, integrate and become settled, find homes and get employment.

### CAN YOU HELP?

- Can your church get involved?
- Could you sign the Barnabas petition asking Western countries to accept Christian refugees? You can find it at: [www.barnabasfund.org/osh](http://www.barnabasfund.org/osh)
- Can you help fund a refugee family? £40 provides a week's food for a family in Poland  
£2,000 covers all the costs to rescue one person and support them for a year

Project reference 00-1199



The Lord is doing amazing things in the context of pressure, suffering and persecution

# Grace upon Grace

## Thousands turning to Christ in places of persecution



Iraqi refugees

People are turning to Christ in situations of persecution around the world. Where Islamic State (IS) and other jihadi groups operate, some Muslims now question their traditional beliefs and become open to the power of the Gospel message. Elsewhere the love of Christ in action through His followers, or reading a Bible for the first time, impacts people's lives.

In **Iraq**, moderate Muslims formerly hostile towards Christianity are turning to Christ as IS violence continues to kill and destroy homes and livelihoods.

**Algeria** has seen an enormous growth in the Church, from a few hundred national believers in 1980 to perhaps 60,000 today. Much of the growth occurred during the period of conflict (1991-2004) between the military-backed government and Islamist rebels, which left over 100,000 people dead. More recently, in 2006, concern in some quarters led the government to enact restrictive laws on Christians, but the Church has continued to grow.

In **India** Christian outreach continues to have a huge impact amongst the Dalits (the lowest members of Hindu society) and marginalised tribes. For 2,000 years Indian Christians have been spreading the Good News. Many have become Christians when they heard a message of salvation based on God's equal love for all humans – regardless of human status.

In **Iran** the authorities appear to be struggling to prevent the huge growth of Christianity in the country, with thousands of Iranian Muslims turning to Christ. Public statements by officials warning about the dangers of Christianity, and the police crackdowns on pastors and converts, do not appear to have slowed the explosive growth of

the faith. The brave witness of believers and the message of salvation are striking a chord in the hearts of people disenchanted with 35 years of the Islamic revolution. There are reports of police and jailors being brought to Christ by the faithful witness of their prisoners.

**Cuba** appears to be experiencing a revival after 55 years of harsh Communist rule. Recent relaxations of relations with the USA have paralleled an easier atmosphere in the country. Across the island there is a huge growth in numbers of small independent churches, which is causing some concern in government quarters. Bibles are not available to buy in

*the love of Christ in action through His followers, or reading a Bible for the first time, impacts people's lives*

bookshops and churches have been finding it difficult to keep up with the increasing demand. Theoretically no other country in the Americas is so restrictive; the Cuban government does not allow churches to run their own schools, broadcast on television or the radio, and public acts of worship or proselytising are illegal.

According to a *Financial Times* magazine (7 November 2014), **China** is soon likely to be the country with the world's largest Christian population. There are estimated to be nearly 100 million Chinese Christians, now outnumbering the (87 million) Chinese Communist Party membership. Official repression has increased again recently.

## Schools close in northern Kenya, as Christian teachers fear more attacks

KENYA



School in NE Kenya

Nearly 100 schools in areas bordering Somalia were reported closed by early June with teachers, many of them Christians, too afraid to work in the light of recent al-Shabaab attacks against education institutions. It was thought unlikely then that many would re-open before the August-September holidays, and some may close indefinitely.

In April 2015 al-Shabaab militants massacred 148 students at Garissa University, singling out the Christians from the Muslims. Previously in November 2014, 28 people were killed in a bus attack, in Mandera county, after the Christians were separated from the Muslim passengers. Many of those killed were teachers on their way home for the Christmas holidays. Less than two weeks later, 36 non-Muslims were shot dead at a stone quarry, again in Mandera County.

Al-Shabaab also claimed responsibility for an attack outside Mandera town in the early hours of 7 July. Gunmen blew open the gates to a compound housing Christian workers and shot people inside two buildings and those sleeping outside. At least eleven were killed and 14 injured, according to Kenyan police, mostly quarry workers from other parts of Kenya.

## Anti-Christian violence continues in Nigeria

NIGERIA

On 5 July 32 churches and around 300 houses were torched in north-eastern Nigeria, killing nine people. Five Christians were killed by a suicide bomber at a church in Yobe state. Mosques have also been targeted and many Muslims killed. A mosque in the city of Jos was also attacked while a Muslim cleric known for his preaching on the peaceful coexistence of people of all faiths was speaking.

In other attacks from 25 April to 11 May Fulani Muslim herdsmen killed at least 70 Christians in attacks on Christian villages in Plateau state, in the Middle Belt, and on 16 June they

killed nine Christians in the village of Katsak in Kaduna state.

Boko Haram killed dozens of Christians during ten violent days in May in Adamawa state. There was a suicide bombing in Garkida on 19 May, an attack with machetes on a church in Madagali on 22 May, and an attack on Wagga village killing ten church members as they slept. And a wave of violence accompanied the new President's inauguration on Friday 29. In the city of Maiduguri, Borno state, more than 50 rockets were fired into the town and three bombs were detonated killing scores of people.

## Syrian Christians flee their homes after fresh assaults on Hassake and Kobane

SYRIA



Nineteen-year-old Shigho (on the right) was executed by IS militants attacking Kobane on 25 June for his decision to leave Islam and follow Christ

Attacks on the northern Syrian cities of Hassake and Kobane on 25 June, and increasing rebel pressure on Damascus and Aleppo, left Christians wondering what they would do if Islamists come to power over larger swathes of the country. At least 146 people were killed in Kobane. Local Christians told Barnabas that "the attackers went from house to house killing civilians, men, women and children." Nineteen-year-old Shigho was executed for converting from Islam to Christianity, they said. Christians in hiding sent a message: "Don't worry about us, even if they

were to cut our heads off ten times we would still say that Jesus is Lord!"

Hassake, previously a place of relative security for Christians, appeared to be on the point of falling to IS at the time of writing. Nearly 4,000 Christian families fled the city at the beginning of July, many had fled the Khabur river area after raids in February 2015. Barnabas helped those who fled with food, blankets, medicines and other necessities. Many Khabur river homes and fields have been destroyed and others booby-trapped.



## Eritrean Christian migrants kidnapped by IS in Libya

ERITREA

Islamic State (IS) militants in Libya kidnapped 86 Eritrean Christian refugees from a people-smugglers' convoy in western Libya on 3 June. They stopped the group and separated Christians from their Muslim counterparts. Those who claimed to be Muslim were grilled on their knowledge of the Quran, and their prayer habits. At least nine men were able to escape their kidnappers to witness to what had occurred.

IS gained a foothold in Libya in 2014 and declared the establishment of three branches in the country, uniting disparate jihadi groups under its banner.

## Iranian authorities continue to suppress evangelism

IRAN

An Appeals Court in Iran has upheld the additional one-year prison sentence given to Pastor Farshid Fathi. He was already serving a six-year sentence, and had originally been arrested during a 2010 crackdown on house churches.

Meanwhile Saeed Abedeni, an American-Iranian pastor serving an eight-year sentence for evangelism and planting house churches, was assaulted on 3 June by a group of inmates.

In April and May alone, 18 Christian converts from Islam were imprisoned for evangelism and forming house churches. Most of the 18 had been arrested in February 2013. Ayatollah Jafar Sobhani, an Iranian Islamic religious expert, has warned Iranians "to be cautious and not let house churches be planted".

## Indian Christians face increasing pressure under BJP-led government

INDIA



Indian Christians are under pressure

Evaluating the first year of the Hindu-nationalist BJP majority coalition government, which came to power in May 2014, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in India, Roger Gaikwad, said, "We have nothing to celebrate. Rather, we have reasons to be concerned."

In 2014 there were 147 anti-Christian incidents recorded, including attacks on churches, arson, assaults on pastors, intimidation and harassment. This compares with only 38 recorded incidents in the whole period between 1964 and 1996.

## Churches raided in Belarus and Christians fined

BELARUS

A pastor in Gomel was fined for unauthorised organisation of a public event after a raid during Sunday service in a rented building on 11 June. The church has state registration, but the congregation has been prohibited from meeting together since the raid.

And in Svetlogorsk, in the Gomel region, armed police raided a house church on 7 May and charged the owner with "improper use" of her home. Two church members were fined and police registered a case against 17 others for refusing to testify.

## South Sudanese pastors face possible death penalty in (North) Sudan

SUDAN

South Sudanese pastors Peter Yein Reith and Yat Michael may soon face the death penalty if convicted on charges of violating the (North) Sudan constitution, and espionage.

Pastor Michael was arrested after preaching a sermon in Omdurman, Khartoum in December 2014, suggesting that the authorities' real issue was his Christian activities. Pastor Reith was arrested after writing a letter to the Khartoum Office of Religious Affairs asking about Pastor Michael's whereabouts. The pastors' lawyer was also arrested after voicing his concerns about the case and the persecution of Christians in Sudan.

## Mob threatens to burn Pakistani Christians alive

PAKISTAN

An illiterate Christian family living in the village of Maki Chak 460, in Pakistan's Punjab province, was accused of blasphemy, beaten and threatened with burning alive on 30 June. Awais Qamar and his wife Rukhsana unknowingly used a PVC banner with a Quranic verse as a sleeping mat. The mob publicly degraded them, blackening the faces of Awais, Rukhsana and her sister, Rehana, with soot. Awais Qamar also had his head shaved, then was paraded through the village with shoes slung around his neck.

Unusually the police refused to register a blasphemy case against them and the family have gone elsewhere for safety.



To view our most current news scan this with your device



# In Touch

Enjoy running? You could support Operation Safe Havens project by participating in a **RUN FOR ONE** your own event.

Barnabas Fund New Zealand is running a team in an Auckland half marathon, raising funds and awareness for Operation Safe Havens to help Syrian Christians who have been displaced from their homes by Islamic State (IS) violence. Could you "Run for One" — aim to raise the £1,400 that it will take to support **one** Christian refugee for **one** year in Poland? (See page 22)

For assistance contact Barnabas Fund at 9 Priory Row, Coventry, CV1 5EX, tel: 024 7623 1923 or download a sponsorship form at [www.barnabasfund.org/osh](http://www.barnabasfund.org/osh)

Operation Safe Havens (Project reference 00-1199)



## Cycling for Syria

On 27 March Hilary Barratt and Brian Quinn cycled 35 miles along the Waterway, the old railway line from Lincoln to Boston, UK, to raise funds for Christians in Syria. They received an incredible level of sponsored support from friends and family, and were able to send a cheque for £1,000 to the Middle East fund, to help Christians in Syria with basic needs.

They benefited from the support of their spouses who provided refreshment and nourishment along the route. They also had the advantage of a fine day with little wind and no rain — the only day that week when it was dry!

Syrian Christians will be hugely helped by this initiative; it can cost about £22 to provide a monthly food parcel for a displaced family so this sponsored ride will help 45 families.

Middle East Fund to help Christians in Syria  
(Project reference 00-1032)



## Fundraising

Barnabas works hard to be ethical in the way we raise funds and in the ways we contact supporters.

### We raise funds from:

- appeals through our own literature such as the magazine, which is sent to people on our mailing list
- appeals via emails sent to people on our email list
- appeal leaflets in other Christian publications
- appeals on our website and social media

### We never:

- cold call people
- have street collections
- use external fundraising organisations

If you ask us to stop mailing you we will take you off the mailing list as soon as we receive your request. Please note that you may still receive some printed material if the mailing list has been used by our printer to create a mailing shortly before we removed you from the list.

## Message of Love

Mossend High Fives children's group wanted to send a message of support for the Christian school in Bethlehem that is supported by Barnabas Fund. So they designed a large card for St Aphrem's with the messages "Jesus loves us all" and "God loves us all" then all signed it. The card was passed on to the head teacher of St Aphrem's who was very touched by the idea that young children in Britain are thinking about and praying for her students in the Holy Land.



## Harvest Offering

Harvest is a season when many churches celebrate God's goodness in giving us enough to eat. But in many places Christians are going hungry, because of natural disaster, conflict or persecution. Barnabas Fund has feeding programmes in a number of countries. Would you consider taking a harvest offering or running a harvest event to support needy Christians in Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq and Syria?

Feeding Fund (Project reference 00-636)



# YES, I WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Title ..... Full Name.....  
 Address.....  
 Postcode ..... Telephone.....  
 Email .....



barnabasfund.org | 0800 587 4006



If you would like to donate online please go to [www.barnabasfund.org/donate](http://www.barnabasfund.org/donate) or scan this code with your device

MAG 09/15

## PLEASE USE MY GIFT FOR

- Wherever the need is the greatest (General Fund)  
 Other.....\*(give reference number of project to be supported)

## HERE IS MY SINGLE GIFT OF £ .....

I enclose a cheque/voucher payable to "Barnabas Fund" OR  
 Please debit my  Visa  Mastercard **CAF**  
 American Express  Maestro  CAF card /other charity card  
 Card Number             
 Maestro issue number   or issue date  /   
 Expiry Date  /  Signature.....  
 I do not require an acknowledgement of this gift

I have made an internet transfer/bank deposit of £..... (amount) to the Barnabas Fund bank account  
**(Sort Code : 20-26-46, Account Number: 50133299).**  
 (With your transfer, please quote as the reference your postcode and house number. To receive an acknowledgment letter, please add the letters TY to the beginning of this reference number.)

## I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE REGULARLY THROUGH MY UK BANK

A direct debit can be set up either by completing the form below, by telephoning the number above or by going to our website.

£ ..... (amount in words) .....

Please start on **7th/11th/15th/21st** (delete as applicable) of .....(month) and then **every month/quarter/year** until further notice. This Direct Debit is a **new one/in addition to/replaces an earlier Standing Order/Direct Debit** in favour of Barnabas Fund.



## Instruction to your bank or building society to pay by Direct Debit



Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send it to:  
 Barnabas Fund, 9 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX

### Name and full postal address of your bank or building society

### Name(s) of account holder(s)

### Bank/building society account number

### Branch sort code

Service User Number

### Reference (Barnabas Fund to complete)

**Instruction to your bank or building society:** Please pay Barnabas Fund Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured to by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Barnabas Fund and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society. DD18

### Signature(s)

### Date

## GIFT AID DECLARATION (Applicable to UK tax payers only)

Name of charity: **Barnabas Fund**

Please treat as Gift Aid donations all qualifying gifts of money made:

(Please tick all boxes you wish to apply)

- this gift and if applicable  in the past 4 years  in the future

I confirm I have paid or will pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April to 5 April) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that all the charities or Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) that I donate to will reclaim on my gifts for that tax year. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signature ..... Date .....  
 Please inform us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return this form to Barnabas Fund at your national office or to the UK office. Addresses are on the inside front cover. Barnabas Fund will not give your address, telephone number or email to anyone else.

**Supporters in Germany:** please turn to inside front cover for how to send gifts to Barnabas Fund. Phone **0800 587 4006** or visit our website at [www.barnabasfund.org](http://www.barnabasfund.org) to make a donation by Direct Debit, credit or debit card. From outside UK phone **+44 24 7623 1923**.

\*If the project chosen is sufficiently funded, we reserve the right to use designated gifts either for another project of a similar type or for another project in the same country. Registered Charity number 1092935 Company registered in England number 4029536

## ALTERNATIVE GIFT CARD



If you would like to make a donation as an alternative gift for a friend or relative, we can supply you with an attractive "Thank you" card, which you can send to the person for whom you have made the donation. Please fill in the details as you would like them to appear on the card.



"Dear ..... A gift of £ ..... has been received on your behalf

from ..... This gift will assist Christians who are persecuted for their faith. With many thanks on behalf of the persecuted Church"



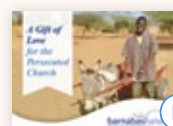
Tick here if you do not want the amount to be stated on the card

Tick here if you do wish details about the project to be included on the card

Please state your preferred card choice (see left): .....



If you would like to have the card sent directly to the recipient, or if you would prefer to receive blank cards and fill them out yourself, please contact your national office (address details on inside front cover).



If you would like more cards, please photocopy the form or attach a separate piece of paper with the details for extra cards and send it with your donation. You can also call your nearest Barnabas Fund office with the details and pay by credit/debit card over the phone.

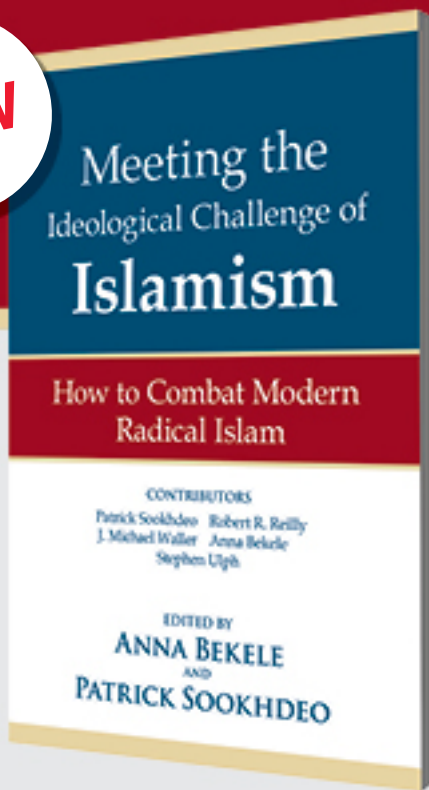
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## THE DIRECT DEBIT GUARANTEE

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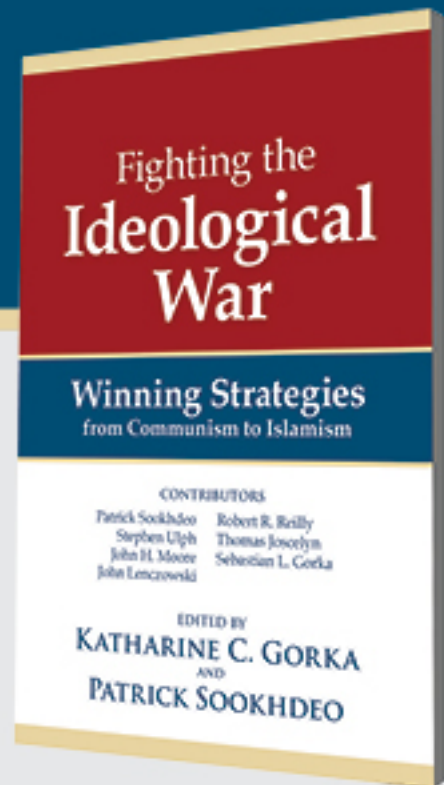
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