

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



Suffering Church Action  
and Awareness Week

SUNDAY 27 OCTOBER – SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2019  
**19 PAGES OF INFORMATION AND RESOURCES INSIDE  
FOR YOU AND YOUR CHURCH**

# ONE IN TEN

*... whatever you did for  
one of the least of these  
brothers and sisters of  
mine, you did for me*

Matthew 25:40

### We work by:

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

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

### We seek to:

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

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

### We believe:

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

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

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### Front Cover: Young Christian girl working with her family at a brick-kiln in Pakistan

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 hope and aid for the persecuted church

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 REGULATOR**

## Fruitful suffering

**"M**an is born to trouble as surely as sparks fly upward," said Eliphaz to Job (Job 5:7). "Suffering is part of the human condition, and it comes to all," wrote Billy Graham.<sup>1</sup>

But is that all negative? Not necessarily. "The key is how we react to it," continued Billy Graham, "either turning away from God in anger and bitterness or growing closer to Him in trust and confidence." The apostles Peter and Paul both taught this. Peter told the early Christians that they may have to suffer all kinds of different troubles but these came to test and prove the genuineness of their faith (1 Peter 1:6-7). Paul wrote of glorying in our sufferings "because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." (Romans 5:3-4).

A simple calculation of population figures shows that at least one in ten of those who are called by the Name of Christ live today in situations where marginalisation, discrimination, harassment, violence, torture, imprisonment or even death are an everyday possibility.

But, if suffering is part of the human condition, then all Christians suffer, albeit in different ways. Whether it is sickness (mental or physical), poverty, bereavement or broken relationships, we all know what it is to suffer. Do we look on these painful experiences as an opportunity to grow in Christ-likeness, a tool to test and strengthen our faith?

Suffering can lead to bitterness and hatred if it causes us to grumble and rebel against God. But if we embrace our suffering as part of the divine will, it can create in us a character that is noble, beautiful and gracious.

So suffering is a vital part of our faith and growth in the Lord, especially suffering for Him. Jesus told His disciples – and the future Church – to expect persecution: "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20). Suffering was to be an essential part of their lives as faithful believers. Paul, who was repeatedly beaten and imprisoned, wrote that he bore on his body "the marks of Jesus" (Galatians 6:17). They were a badge of honour. But even if we are not granted the privilege of suffering for Christ, we all have opportunity to die daily to self, laying aside a life of ease and satisfaction in order to walk more closely in the footsteps of our Lord, as we witness for Him. Only a few have the privilege of dying for Christ, but we can all be "living martyrs".

In our troubles, God is very present (Psalm 46:1). The God of all compassion enters into the very depths of our emotions and feelings. He sent His only Son into the world to suffer and die for the redemption of humankind. Isaiah tells us of the Suffering Servant, "despised and rejected... a man of suffering, and familiar with pain" who was "pierced for our transgressions ... crushed for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:3-5).

If suffering can bring such blessing, are we right to try to avoid it? To seek for ourselves nothing but sunshine and mountaintops, avoiding shadowy valleys? Are we even right to pray that our brothers and sisters should be spared suffering? Or should we pray for them that they will know God's sufficient grace to endure (2 Corinthians 12:8-9)? The Bible and the lives of the saints show that there is no single answer, because God guides different individuals in different ways.<sup>2</sup>

Should the increasingly persecuted Church of today look for protection from earthly governments? Paul appealed to Caesar, but that was in the context of Roman state structures at a time when a reasonable measure of justice could be expected. What if we live in a country where the authorities are predictably unjust and harsh towards Christians? Should we turn to another country's government for help? The King of Judah was once warned: "I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him." (Isaiah 36:6) When the people of God are threatened or attacked, we cannot rely on other nations to save us – our trust must be in the Lord alone. There is no secular solution to a spiritual problem.

Some people ask why the Lord allows His people to suffer. They find it difficult to trust an almighty and omniscient God who does not intervene, who seems not to hear our fervent prayers. We want to intervene ourselves to save our brothers and sisters from their ordeal. But we have seen how suffering can produce fruit of faith and Christ-like character. Is it then so strange that a loving God allows His children to suffer "for a little while" as Peter says (1 Peter 1:6)?

Jesus Himself prayed that the cup of suffering might be taken from Him, but added "Yet, not as I will, but as you will." (Matthew 26:39). In order to take away the sins of the world, it was necessary for Jesus to suffer. For us, there are other reasons why suffering may be "necessary" (as many translations of 1 Peter 1:6 put it). This is the key to all our intercessions for those who suffer and for ourselves in our own suffering: "Your will be done."

Paul urged Timothy to pray for all in authority so that "we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness" (1 Timothy 2:1-2). It is not wrong to ask for a peaceful and quiet life, free from persecution. But if God does not grant that peace and quiet, perhaps it is because He has a better plan for us and wants to give us greater opportunity to grow in godliness and holiness.

<sup>1</sup> Billy Graham, *Just as I am*, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> For a much fuller treatment of this subject, see *Hated Without a Reason*, by Patrick Sookhdeo, especially chapter 14: "Christian Responses to Persecution" (more details on the back cover of this magazine).

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Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week 2019

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# how barnabas is helping

## Medical care for God's servants in Uzbekistan

Pastors in Uzbekistan suffer greatly from state-backed persecution and discrimination from the Muslim community, which affects their wives and children too. Pastors are often arrested and fined. They have busy work schedules and low incomes so cannot take care of their health.

Barnabas contributes to a medical fund for pastors and their families. Each couple was given a complete check-up, and medical treatment as required, during a short period in a clinic away from the pressures of their ministry. Many serious conditions were diagnosed and treated at an average cost of £323 (\$405; €360) per person.

When Pastor D's heart pain intensified, the only treatment he had available was to put a heated brick on his back to relieve the pain. Leading a Sunday service, his main concern was, "If only I do not lose consciousness during the worship service." After treatment the pain has gone.



One of the pastor's wives who received medical help

**£13,586 (\$17,046; €15,154)**  
for medical aid fund

Project reference: 57-1197

## Loving neighbours, even your enemies, in Nigeria

Christians in northern Nigeria have suffered terribly in attacks by Boko Haram Islamist militants and certain groups of Fulani herdsmen. Barnabas is supporting trauma counselling and Bible-based training for Christians impacted by this violence.

The goal of the programme is to help Christians understand that God loves them and has not forgotten them, and to process the trauma, learning to forgive, and even love those who have harmed them.

In the first half of 2019, a total of 447 participants took part in ten-week training sessions in eight large groups, which broke down into smaller groups for discussion. Some groups were in camps for internally displaced people and others included widows. At least 174 participants took up the option of training so they will be able to lead similar groups in the future. The programme is continuing in the second half of the year.



A trauma counselling group can meet anywhere, even in front of a shoe shop

**£10,564 (\$13,202; €11,846)**  
for costs for one year

Project reference: PR 1455

## School a refuge for children in Holy Land

A Christian school in Bethlehem has provided Christian children with a quality education in a loving Christian environment for 16 years. The school has grown from just 15 pupils to 660.

Non-Christian schools can be hostile places for Christian children in Bethlehem and other Christian schools are too expensive for most Christian families. With support from Barnabas, the school offers subsidised fees so that even children from the poorest Christian families can attend school. The school also gives employment to 66 local Christians.

One father commented, "The school is a refuge from the severe community Bethlehem is developing," meaning a refuge from the harassment often experienced by Christians in daily life in Bethlehem. Clara, 13, says, "Our school is like the church. We pray every morning ... all together and ask Jesus to give us a happy day."



Clara thinks, "no other school in [the area] is more blessed than our school"

**£52,583 (\$66,038; €58,582)**  
to help with school running costs for four months

Project reference: 65-420

## Compassion in action

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



## Legal assistance for churches under pressure in Siberia

Barnabas is funding a team of four Russian Christian lawyers to provide legal services and training to churches in Siberia.

In the first half of 2019, the lawyers helped 29 churches in 15 towns. Twelve seminars were held for church leaders, administrators and accountants on how to deal with toughening regulations, including the tendency in 2019 to ban worship services in private homes. Subjects included keeping and using literature in a church building, book-keeping, inviting people to home groups, personal evangelism, public events, registration of church buildings, and using private homes for Christian meetings.

The legal team also represented Christians at four court hearings, helped seven churches dealing with real estate, assisted seven churches/groups to register, brought statutes of four churches into compliance with the law, and more. This helped many churches avoid being fined or have administrative cases started against them by the authorities.



State Duma Building, Moscow

**£10,134 (\$12,700; €11,281)**  
for funding of legal assistance team for six months

Project reference: PR 1453

## Love in action for survivors of Sri Lanka Easter terror bombings

Barnabas Fund has been giving practical help to Sri Lankan Christians injured or bereaved by the coordinated bomb attacks by Islamic State on Easter Sunday.

Our support began with covering the funeral costs of 30 Christians (at least 14 of whom were children) who died at Zion Evangelical Church, Batticaloa. This included the funeral of Ramesh, who died bravely and self-sacrificially escorting the bomber outside the crowded church building, and Arun, who, ignoring his own wounds, cared for others amid the carnage until he collapsed. He died from his injuries on 4 June after 40 days in intensive care.

We moved on to help with the medical costs of the injured, like “Kamala”, a convert from Hinduism who was determined to go to church on Easter Sunday even though forbidden by her husband. We are also sending support to some families who have lost their breadwinner.



Barnabas helped pay for medical costs for those injured in the Easter bombings

**£12,020 (\$15,072; €13,387)**  
for victims of Easter Sunday bombings

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

## Uninterrupted power and clean drinking water for schools in Pakistan

Frequent power cuts, lasting many hours, are a feature of life in Pakistan nowadays. But no longer for two Christian schools in a slum area of Islamabad, where Barnabas has paid for solar panels to be installed. These ensure 24 hours uninterrupted supply of electricity throughout the year, and also reduce the cost of the electricity bills.

Water filters and dispensers were also installed in these two schools bringing improved health to all who study or teach in them. The filters provide clean drinking water for pupils, staff and visitors, preventing the spread of waterborne diseases. Prior to this, the school had to buy bottled water which was costly.



A triplet water filter installed at a school in Pakistan

**£1,598 (\$1,995; €1,788)** for solar systems for two schools; **£259 (\$323; €290)** for water filters and dispensers for two schools

Project reference: 41-1318

# ONE IN TEN

**A**round the world **One in Ten** Christians are facing pressure and persecution, ranging from everyday harassment and discrimination to violent attack. The rise of extremist violence has intensified around the world in the past year, with a stream of reports of brutal attacks in the Sahel region of Africa as well as the atrocity of the Easter Sunday bombings in Sri Lanka that killed around 254 Christians. But we also remember the compassion and bravery of an elderly imam, Abubakar Abdullahi, who received an award in July 2019 recognising his courage in saving the lives of 262 of his Christian neighbours in 2018, when he sheltered them from a Fulani militia raid in northern Nigeria.

*The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me'* – Matthew 25:40

But amid the strife and chaos, as Christians we follow the Prince of Peace who entreats us to take up responsibility for the needs of our brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering. In His parable of the Last Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46), Christ says there will be a separation of sheep from goats on that Last Day – a separation that will reflect how we have lived out our love for Him through our care and compassion for our Christian family.

**Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week (SCAAW)** is an opportunity for us to stand alongside our suffering brothers and sisters, in every corner of the globe, and demonstrate Christ's love to each one of them, whatever they are facing.

With this magazine and the free SCAAW Resource Pack, there is a range of resources to help you, your prayer group and your church participate in Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week. We suggest 27 October - 3 November but these resources can be used at any time that suits your church's calendar.

Here is a guide to what resources are available and how you could use them. For further supplies and more information, please contact your local Barnabas office (see inside front cover for details).

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**SUFFERING CHURCH ACTION AND AWARENESS WEEK**  
27 OCTOBER – 3 NOVEMBER 2019

## SCAAW 2019 ONE IN TEN INSPIRATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

Our resource pack contains the following items. **Please tell us the quantities you would like of each – all free of charge** (go to [barnabasfund.org/scaaw](http://barnabasfund.org/scaaw) or contact our UK Coventry office, details inside front cover):

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <b>Large (A3) posters</b> to promote your Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week service or event (a smaller cut-out poster is also on the opposite page)             |
|  | <b>Eight-day devotional booklet</b> to help you pray for suffering Christians during SCAAW week   |
|  | <b>Praying for the Persecuted Church</b> (2018) booklet covering 39 countries   |
|  | SCAAW 2019 <b>Prayer bookmark</b>   |
|  | <b>Money box and Gift Aid envelopes</b> for UK tax payers   |
|  | Extra copies of this <b>SCAAW issue of Barnabas Aid</b> magazine, <b>Eight-day devotional booklet</b> and our <b>SCAAW 2019 Prayer bookmark</b> to hand out at your event |

A range of digital media resources are available to download from our website:

Barnabas Chamber Choir's recording of the SCAAW inspirational hymn *Jesus Christ Was Hungry* (p19)

Powerpoint sermon outline with images

Printable PDFs of: *Bible study, Sermon outline, Poster, SCAAW hymn score and lyrics and Barnabas Aid* magazine

*Praying for the Persecuted Church* booklet (2018 edition)

To access these resources visit [www.barnabasfund.org/scaaw](http://www.barnabasfund.org/scaaw) where you can also order extras of any of the items listed above

And enclosed with your magazine

**Eight-day devotional booklet**

**New 2019 Prayer bookmark**

# ONE IN TEN

*... whatever you did for  
one of the least of these  
brothers and sisters of  
mine, you did for me*

Matthew 25:40



*What we're doing for Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week*

*What*



*When*

*Where*



[barnabasfund.org/scaaw](https://barnabasfund.org/scaaw)



Suffering Church Action  
and Awareness Week

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





**ONE**

**IN**

**TEN**

**ARE SUFFERING  
RIGHT NOW!**

THE PERSECUTED  
CHURCH AROUND  
THE WORLD



## A FOCUS ON OUR PERSECUTED FAMILY AROUND THE WORLD

# IT

is estimated that there are 2.4 billion people in the world who identify as Christians and right now, as you read this, at least 240 million of them, the one in ten, are facing discrimination, hostility, oppression or outright persecution because they bear the Name of Christ.

Over the following pages we look at different regions of the world and the forms of discrimination, oppression and persecution that our brothers and sisters in Christ are facing. Some of the stories are harrowing, but we need to be aware of their suffering before we can take action to help our persecuted family.

We can also be empowered, uplifted and encouraged by knowing that our Christian brothers and sisters suffering throughout the world are remaining steadfast and courageous even, sometimes, unto death. For they know and understand that “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Revelation 21:4 KJV).

### EAST AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA



Discrimination and persecution against Christians is widespread in these regions, particularly in Buddhist or Muslim-majority countries or those with communist governments. In China the good news is that the Church is growing and flourishing, but this revival has led to authorities cracking down on Christians in some parts of the vast country.

As for North Korea, it is probably the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian. Christians have been executed for owning a Bible and, if they gather to pray together, they risk long years in a labour camp, where they may be starved or tortured to death.



A Christian Kachin woman is carried on the back of her grandson as they escape aerial bombardment by the Myanmar army. Many who fled were able to carry some possessions with them but these two could carry nothing, not even a change of clothing. Barnabas Fund provided clothes and other aid for Kachin refugees



Pastor Wang Yi of Early Rain Covenant Church and his wife, Jiang Rong, before they were detained in China. Jiang was released after six months, but Wang remained in custody. His "Letter from a Chengdu jail" included the words, "Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and my family – the authorities are capable of doing all of these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith."

### Ethnic cleansing in a Buddhist-majority country

"I told my family to leave me alone in my home because I cannot walk. But my grandson insisted on carrying me," said a frail and elderly Kachin Christian. Grandmother and grandson were escaping from an attack on their village by the Myanmar (Burmese) army. The heavy airstrikes began very suddenly on 11 April 2018, and 10,000 mostly-Christian Kachin civilians, taken by surprise, fled in panic.

Much of the violence directed at the mainly-Christian ethnic minorities (especially the Kachin, Chin and Karen) stems from Buddhist nationalism, i.e. extremism, which is common in Myanmar and in the upper echelons of the military. Government jobs are usually given to Buddhists. Children from Christian families often have to go to Buddhist schools if they want an education, but there they are forced to embrace Buddhism.

### Crackdowns in communist countries

While the Chinese government only recognises state-registered churches and admits the existence of around 22 million Christians, there are at least seven times that number of believers in the country of 1.4 billion, most of whom are part of the vibrant "house church" movement, which the avowedly atheist state sees as a threat to social harmony.

Chinese Christian leaders have witnessed a pattern of increased pressure since new religion regulations came into force in February 2018.

More than 200 church leaders issued a brave declaration calling for religious freedom on 12

September 2018. It concluded, "For the sake of the Gospel, we are prepared to bear all losses – even the loss of our freedom and of our lives."

### Clampdown on online preaching

The declaration came two days after the Chinese government announced new draft regulations to control online religious activity that will ban the live streaming of church services and require organisations publishing religious information online to obtain a licence. These regulations also prohibit foreign pastors from preaching online.

Earlier in September, the authorities had shut down one of the largest unofficial churches in Beijing after church leaders refused to allow government authorities to install CCTV cameras inside the building.

Authorities have also removed crosses from buildings, forced churches to hang the Chinese flag and sing patriotic songs, and barred minors from attending services.

### Mass arrests and detentions

Wang Yi, pastor of one of China's most prominent unofficial churches, asked his congregation in Sichuan province, "If tomorrow morning the Early Rain Covenant Church suddenly disappeared from the city of Chengdu, if each of us vanished into thin air, would this city be any different? Would anyone miss us?"

Two months later, more than 100 members of Early Rain including Pastor Wang and his wife, Jiang Rong, were arrested in a series of coordinated raids that began on Sunday 9 December 2018.

### Christians intimidated and viewed with suspicion

In communist Laos, Buddhists enjoy comparative religious freedom but Christians are viewed with suspicion by the authorities. Churches are required to register with the government, and get approval to hold services and import literature.

Christianity is tolerated in most areas of Vietnam, another communist country, but Christians from minority ethnic groups (which account for more than half of Vietnamese Christians), and believers who advocate for religious freedom and human rights, experience intimidation and harassment.

### Harassment in Muslim countries

For more than a decade, Barnabas Fund has been supporting church-planters on the Indonesian island of Java where the population is around 90% Muslim. Intimidation and intolerance of these embryonic churches and the courageous pastors that lead them is widespread. Children from Christian families are marked down in school so as to deprive them of higher education, mail to and from pastors mysteriously goes missing, permits to hold worship services are not granted, Muslim extremists encourage antagonism, witch-doctors cast spells and Christmas celebrations are banned.

## LEST WE FORGET ...

### Spying and informing on Christians

Guangzhou became the first major city in China in 2019 to offer cash rewards to people who inform on any neighbours engaged in “illegal religious activities”. The biggest reward of up to 10,000 yuan (£1,160; \$1,450; €1,300) is offered if a foreign pastor is snared.

An app, “Smart Pakam”, created by the Indonesian government is described as a tool to educate Muslims on “misguided” or “heretical” beliefs and enable them instantly to report possible violations. Users are encouraged to report beliefs ambiguously described as “harmful”, and can upload photos as evidence.

One of the most divisive issues is some Muslim extremists objecting to Christians being buried in village cemeteries. “(Christian) people are getting older and are threatened by their Muslim relatives that once they die, they will remain unburied,” said one of the Java pastors. Another told of how a mosque was offering money to Christian converts if they return to Islam.

Aceh province, in the far west of Indonesia, is the most Islamic and also intolerant part of the country for Christians. Some provinces in the east, where Christians were dominant in the twentieth century, are now becoming Muslim-majority as a result of the government’s policy of transmigration, causing large numbers of Muslims to settle in Christian areas.

## SOUTH ASIA



The Easter Sunday 2019 bombings in Sri Lanka, when Islamist terrorists killed at least 254 people in a targeted attack against Christians at churches and hotels, was a frightening reminder that, despite the defeat of Islamic State in Syria, those pledging allegiance to the jihadi group remain a real danger the world over, including South Asia.

Islamist terror groups have also targeted churches with suicide bombings in Pakistan, where violence against Christians remains a major threat despite new Prime Minister Imran Khan calling for all citizens to be treated with equal respect. On 24 December 2018, Pakistani police foiled an attempted terrorist attack on Christmas celebrations in Karachi after a shootout with militants.

### “Blasphemy” accusation in Pakistan

Pakistan is a country where the mere accusation of “blasphemy” against Muhammad is enough to incite a vigilante killing by a mob of angry Muslims.

There was a tremendous answer to prayer, when Christian mother-of-five Aasia Bibi was safely re-settled in Canada in April 2019, after spending nearly eight years on death row in Pakistan. She was sentenced to death under the country’s notorious “blasphemy” law, but released after the Supreme Court acquitted her on 31 October 2018.

But this good news is shadowed by the fact that at least eight Christians are still incarcerated on death row in Pakistan on charges of “blasphemy”, at the time of writing.

It remains uncertain if the release of Aasia Bibi was a “landmark ruling” that will improve the plight of Pakistan’s Christian minority – around 2% of the population, or about 4 million.

Christians are often falsely accused of defiling the name of Muhammad, a crime under section 295-C of the Pakistan Penal Code that carries a mandatory death penalty.

Pressure from local Muslims and individual judges treating a Muslim's testimony as superior to that of a non-Muslim makes it difficult for Christians to receive justice for crimes committed against them.

### Hard-pressed on all sides

Christians throughout the Indian sub-continent, in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, face hostility from a variety of sources.

India is home to an estimated 50 million Christians, but also to a growing number of extremists who believe Christianity, Islam and other minority religions that did not originate in India, have no place there and want them eliminated.

Attacks on Christians have been on the rise in India, particularly in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state at more than 200 million inhabitants. Targeted violence and hate crime directed against Christians in Uttar Pradesh almost tripled in 2018 compared to the previous year, according to the Evangelical Fellowship of India.

### When conversion is a whispered word

Converting from one religion to another can create major problems in India, Pakistan and Nepal.

In Nepal, you can find yourself in jail if you are caught evangelising. A law came into force in Nepal in September 2018 that makes it an offence to "involve or encourage in conversion of religion" or "hurt religious sentiment". While the constitution already prohibited proselytisation, the new law is very vague about what an "attempt" to convert someone might involve and means any public Christian activity is potentially illegal.

Four Christians were released from custody on 29 April 2019 in the Dang district of Nepal, six days after they were accused of trying to "lure conversions" to Christianity.

India's anti-conversion "freedom of religion" laws have been introduced in several states over the last few years. These ban the use of force, fraud or allurements in conversion. False accusations that Christians are employing these methods have been used as an excuse to target Christians and disrupt church services.

### Blind pastor and wife found innocent after three-year ordeal

Blind pastor Balu Saste, his wife and ten other Christians were found innocent of charges of making "forced conversions" by a court in Madhya Pradesh, India, on 6 May 2019.

In January 2016 a large mob of extremists stormed a church in a village in Madhya Pradesh state, beating worshippers. The mob threatened to burn down the building with the Christians locked inside. Police intervened and arrested Pastor Balu, his wife, who is also blind, their two-year-old son and

five men and five women from their congregation.

The pastor and his wife were stripped, beaten and detained in jail, along with their son, for eight days before being released on bail. The police charged all those arrested with contravening anti-conversion regulations.

### Forced conversion to Islam

In Pakistan, the spectre of forced conversion to Islam is very real. It has been estimated that every year around 700 Christian girls and women are kidnapped, forcibly converted to Islam, and forced to marry a Muslim man, often the one who kidnapped them.

A 14-year-old Christian girl was kidnapped, sold to a Muslim man and forced to marry him in February 2019. The underage girl also had to endure a forced conversion to Islam before the illegal marriage.

Thankfully in this case, a judge ordered she be reunited with her parents, but normally the authorities do little or nothing to help the Christian victim.



**LEST WE FORGET ...**  
Persecution in "paradise"

In the Maldives, a popular tourist destination, a citizen can be jailed in the 99% Muslim country for simply having a Bible in their house.

In 2016, the Maldives government passed the Defamation and Freedom of Speech Act, criminalising comments against "any tenet of Islam".

Propagation of a religion other than Islam is a criminal offence in the Maldives and it is illegal for Muslims to convert to another religion.



Barnabas quickly sent funds to pay for the urgent hospital treatment of Christians, such as this boy, injured in the Easter Sunday terrorist bombings in Sri Lanka

**I WAS**  
**THIRSTY**

Christian families in slum areas of Islamabad find it difficult to secure clean, safe drinking water because they are poor, and they are poor because they are despised by many of the Muslim majority and discriminated against. Barnabas fitted two Christian schools in the slum areas with water filters so the children, such as those in the photo, could avoid catching diseases from contaminated water

**CENTRAL ASIA**



Christians in most Central Asian countries face the dual threat of oppression from secular governments *and* persecution from Muslim extremists.

All religions in the region were brutally suppressed under the communist Soviet Union. When that dissolved in 1991, not only did the new countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan spring into existence, but fledgling churches emerged, comprised of converts from the region's dominant religion, Islam.

Christianity is often associated with negative foreign influences in Central Asia and Muslims who convert to Christianity face the most severe persecution.

These converts can expect persistent day-to-day discrimination from family members and neighbours, but sometimes a simmering hostility towards Christians boils over with devastating consequences.

**Converts: Under attack**

Eldos, 25, was at his Christian uncle's home in the village of Tamchi, Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan, when three men attacked him on 17 October 2018. They asked Eldos if he was also a Christian. When he said he was they repeatedly kicked him in the head, fracturing his jaw and smashing his teeth. They then threatened that they would come back to kill him if he did not leave the village by the morning.

In 2019, Eldos and his lawyer were called to the Internal Affairs office in the capital, Bishkek, on 23 February to meet with his attackers, whose lawyer tried to force Eldos to drop the charges. “We are going to lock you in prison and you are going to beg me for your life,” was just one of the threats made by the lawyer.

The defendants’ lawyer also ripped the phone out of the hands of Eldos’ lawyer, deleted recordings on it and physically assaulted her. A government investigator present did nothing to end what turned into a 10-hour ordeal.

### Converts: Denied employment

In the Muslim-dominated Central Asian region Christians are often discriminated against by being denied work, or even, in Turkmenistan for example, sacked from their jobs.

While in Kyrgyzstan, many businesses, especially in rural areas, insist that workers actively practise Islam. This means that many Christian men are forced to leave their communities to search for employment, leaving their wives and children behind and their small churches weakened by their absence.

Barnabas Fund has provided cows for five Christian families in one isolated district of Kyrgyzstan to start up their own business to avoid this fate.



Cows purchased by Barnabas Fund have enabled five Christian families in Kyrgyzstan to provide for themselves. In the region Christians are often denied work by Muslim bosses, so funds for such start-ups are of immense help to persecuted communities

## LEST WE FORGET ...

### Bibles

A Christian man was fined two weeks’ average wages (around £50; \$60; €55) in January 2019 for giving a New Testament to a non-Christian neighbour in Uzbekistan, where using a New Testament for “missionary purposes” is a crime.

In Kazakhstan and Tajikistan religious materials need to carry a stamp of approval.

In January 2019, 5,000 Bible verse calendars sent to Christians in registered evangelical churches in Tajikistan were burned by authorities.

### Blocking fellowship

In Central Asian countries, churches are required to be registered. That sounds simple, but it isn’t. Various hurdles, some impossibly high, are placed by governments in the path of Christians wanting to register their congregations, and in the case of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan a specific place of worship is required too.

If a congregation is not registered then any church activities are viewed as illegal. So are spiritual activities outside of a registered building in Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. This gives police a reason, or excuse, to strike. There are frequent police raids on meetings and homes, seizure of church equipment and Christian literature and the closure of church buildings. Christians are fined and sometimes detained.

Much of the legislation restricting religious freedom through registration of congregations or churches has been passed over the last decade. This was apparently intended mainly to restrict Islamist extremism and terrorism, but has been used against peaceful Christian communities, forcing many to meet illegally.

To obtain registration, churches in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan are required to provide the names and addresses of at least 50 members, an impossibility for small congregations especially in rural areas. Mercifully, in Tajikistan a more accomplishable ten members are required. In Kyrgyzstan, 200 names are necessary, while in Uzbekistan it is 100.

### Pray for those that persecute you: Church raid in Uzbekistan

Eighteen undercover security agents entered an Uzbek church where Christians were holding a secret youth prayer meeting on 1 December 2018, and attempted to film the service on a mobile phone. The interlopers stopped filming when a female worshipper asked the other young people to pray for those in authority – i.e. for those who had come to persecute them.

Later, the agents took the Christians to a police station to check their identities before they were released.

## MIDDLE EAST



A number of divisions run across the Middle East, creating political, social and religious tensions of many kinds. Regional powers compete with one another to achieve outcomes that will best serve their own agendas. This also further jeopardises the already precarious position of Christians, the most vulnerable minority in the Middle East.

### Convenient alliance ignores Christians' plight

Western oil interests and a quest for Middle Eastern "stability" mean Saudi Arabia is welcomed as an ally of the so-called "Christian" West – a profound contradiction that ignores the country's treatment of Christians and their export of repressive Wahhabi Islam around the globe. The largely unquestioning support of Western governments for Saudi Arabia is an insult to Christ's followers there who live in the shadow of death.

In line with sharia law, it is a capital offence for a Muslim to convert to Christianity in Saudi Arabia. Although none have been officially executed, as far as is known, some converts have been murdered by family members. There are hundreds of thousands of Christians among the estimated two million non-Muslim foreign workers in the kingdom, but they tread a tightrope as it is illegal to manifest any religion publicly except Islam. Even prayer meetings in private homes are sometimes raided by religious police.

### Post-Islamic State, struggle continues for Christians in Iraq

Christians have lived for centuries on the Plains of Nineveh in northern Iraq. It's August 2014, and a Christian woman "Rashel" receives a phone call. "You have three options: convert to Islam and get your properties back, leave the Islamic State for good and your properties will be owned by Islamic State, or be killed," the intimidating voice says.

Cut to late February 2019 and the liberation from Islamic State (IS) of historically Christian towns in northern Iraq has brought neither security nor justice for survivors.

The minister of a church in the once predominantly Christian town of Bartella had a gun held to his

head in February 2019 when he asked the local Shia Muslim militia, who helped defeat IS, to stop intimidating Christians by firing shots into the air outside his church.

These Shabak militiamen have now taken many of the properties once owned by Christians in the town.

The minister said the Christian community was "completely vulnerable" adding, "Who can guarantee us a permanent presence here on the Nineveh Plain? Who can guarantee peace and security?"

### Embattled Syrian Christians

There are similar chaotic post-IS issues in Syria from the physical, political and societal rubble left by the civil war that began in 2011. President Bashar al-Assad's government, although demonised in the West, has a history of protecting Christian communities in Syria. Before the civil war around 10% of Syria's population was Christian and they were treated with respect and equality, but since the uprising began Syrian Christians have been ruthlessly targeted by Islamist militants amongst the rebel groups, as well as IS; their churches have been destroyed, their homes taken over and their people kidnapped and killed.

Now there are thought to be at least half a million Christians among the five million refugees who have fled Syria since the violence began in 2011. Many of them are facing discrimination and even violence in the countries they have fled to.

While the Kurds are seen as Western allies, the fact is that Christians are harassed in the Kurdish region. Christian property is often marked for confiscation by Kurdish militia and Christians are forced to fight as conscripts against the Turkish military.

### Tensions with Western governments could hurt Iranian Christians

The wonderful news from the Islamic Republic of Iran is that more and more Muslims are coming to know the Lord Jesus and the Church is flourishing, despite the hostility of the hard-line authorities.

But tension between the West and Iran, for example, threats of force made by the US against Tehran, could cause Iranian Christians to come under even more pressure as they are already viewed by the government as "agents" of the supposedly "Christian" West.

In the summer of 2019 as tensions rose between the US and Iran, eight Christians were arrested by security agents in the city of Bushehr in south-west Iran.

Historic Assyrian and Armenian Christian minorities who have their own languages, not spoken by the Muslim majority, are usually allowed to worship freely in those languages. However, Christian worship meetings in Farsi, the national language, spoken by the Muslim majority, are often targeted by the Iranian authorities, in their efforts to discourage conversion of Muslims to Christianity.

## LEST WE FORGET ...

### Tricks in Turkey

The number of Christians in what is now Turkey has fallen from as many as three million at the start of the twentieth century to fewer than 150,000 now, due to the killing fields of the Armenian, Assyrian and Greek Genocide. Recent years have seen a rise in anti-Christian media reports.

In May 2019, a boy, 13, from a Christian family was tricked on Turkish TV into "converting" to Islam by repeating the words of the Islamic creed. Some Muslims believe that the mere recitation of this Islamic creed converts a non-Muslim to Islam and once a Muslim the person is considered an apostate if they return to their original religion. According to the Hanafi school of Islamic law, which is dominant in Turkey, the punishment for a boy (child) apostate is to be imprisoned until he comes of age and then killed.

## AFRICA



### SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The news is grim from sub-Saharan Africa, especially in the belt that lies below the northern deserts and above the savannah to the south. In this Sahel region, Islamist extremism is spreading rapidly. Many Christians are being massacred in attacks on villages, when homes, churches and food stores are burned down.

Boko Haram and other Islamist terror groups murder Christians and others in West Africa, while the Somali-based terror group Al-Shabaab has repeatedly targeted Somali converts from Islam, and Kenyan and other Christians in East Africa. In Nigeria, Christians are also oppressed by sections of the Fulani



population. The death toll in Christian villages across Nigeria's Kaduna State reached almost 300 in February and March 2019 alone after a merciless killing spree by militant Fulani herdsmen.

### Islamist violence intensifying

One of the most perilous areas for Christians in the whole world is centred on Lake Chad, the shores of which are shared by Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. Islamist extremism has also spread into Mali and Burkina Faso, as Boko Haram seeks to eradicate Christians in the region and establish a caliphate.

### NORTH AFRICA

#### The riddle of church registration

The North African Maghreb region – that is, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia is between 97% and 99% Muslim, while Egypt, though mainly Muslim, has an estimated Christian minority of about 15%. Christianity's continuous presence in Egypt goes right back to the first century, while in the rest of North Africa, the Church was wiped out by the invasion of Islam in the seventh century, and not re-established until many centuries later.





# I WAS

# A

# STRANGER

Precious and her two children were left homeless and traumatised after their village in Benue State, central Nigeria was attacked by militant Fulani herdsmen. She was brought to a Barnabas-supported Christian mission in Nigeria where the family receive shelter and food and the children receive a good education.

The only North African countries where Christians can function visibly are Egypt and Algeria, but in both these countries there are many problems for Christians, including the need to register a church so that local Christians can legally enjoy fellowship and attend worship services without harassment.

In Algeria, churches have been facing a rise in harassment since committees made up of officials of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Fire Brigade, the national Gendarmerie and the Intelligence



A church building interior in Mali, fire damaged in a jihadi attack. At least 100 Christian men, women and children were slaughtered in the mainly-Christian village of Sobame Da by heavily-armed Islamist extremists on 10 June 2019 (see page 26)

Department started to increasingly visit them in late 2017. Sometimes it seems they are looking for reasons to close them down, such as non-registration or dubious “fire and safety” issues, but churches are sometimes allowed to reopen after protesting a closure.

Boudjima Church in Tizi Ouzou province is a prime example of harassment from the authorities. It was shut down in May 2019 even after a court had ordered that it could legally operate as a place of worship.

In Egypt, the total number of church buildings licensed under the new Law for Building and Restoring Churches rose past the 1,000 mark in July 2019. Progress has gained pace since April 2019 when Prime Minister Mustafa Madbouli told officials to speed up work begun in 2017 and clear the backlog of unlicensed church buildings.

Of the 3,730 churches that originally applied for approval after the law was introduced, 2,709 are still awaiting licences as of July 2019. A number of churches were already licensed before the law was introduced in September 2016.

Although Christians have been treated more favourably under the current Egyptian authority, the opening or registering of a church has often been used as a pretext for violence against Christians in rural communities. In April 2018, a mob of about 300 Muslims attacked a church building in al-Kumeria, forcing it to close, shortly after it received official recognition.

## LEST WE FORGET ...

### Marxist Eritrea

Eritrea, has been ruled by a repressive Marxist government since 1993, and only three Christian denominations are legally permitted. Other Christians are severely persecuted.

Christians can be arrested if more than three meet together or just arbitrarily.

There may be as many as 3,000 religious prisoners, most of whom are Christians, detained in Eritrea's notorious prison system, where abuse and torture are widespread and where some have been held without charge for more than ten years.



Oluwole Ilesanmi [Image source: Christian Concern]

For many people, especially in the West, persecution is thought of as something that only happens somewhere else, in other countries, and certainly not at “home”.

But the “golden era” of religious liberty may be coming to an end in, for example, the UK, unless people stand up for religious freedom.

#### **UK: Police vs. street preacher**

Oluwole Ilesanmi was preaching outside Southgate Underground Station in London on 23 February 2019 when he was arrested by two police



Oluwole Ilesanmi's Bible was snatched from him by British police, then he was handcuffed and taken away after refusing to stop preaching the Gospel outside a London Underground station

officers. One of the officers snatched his Bible out of his hands and Mr Ilesanmi was handcuffed and led away.

One officer told him to “go away” as he was “disturbing people’s days”. The street preacher responded, “I will not go away because I need to tell them the truth. Jesus is the only way, truth and life.”

Mr Ilesanmi was later “de-arrested”. In the UK, it is not lawful for a police officer to order someone to stop preaching unless their actions incite violence.

#### **France and Germany: Spate of church vandalism**

In France, attacks on church buildings are now averaging three a day. Attacks on churches have also been reported in Germany.

Militant secularists and Islamists have been blamed for the vandalism in France, although it is difficult to catch the culprits. The National Council of Evangelicals in France reported that there had been an increase of 25% in serious incidents of vandalism against churches in early 2019, compared with the same period in 2018.

Among the incidents in February and March 2019, a fire was started at the Cathedral of Lavaur, excrement was smeared in the shape of a cross on a wall of a church in Nîmes, and in Dijon a church interior was defaced.

# JESUS CHRIST WAS HUNGRY

Taking inspiration from Matthew 25, a new hymn for this year's SCAAW theme *One in Ten* was written by Caroline Kerslake (Barnabas' International Director of Projects). The words are sung to the tune of *Nöel Nouvelet*, a late fifteenth-century French Christmas Carol. It is also the tune associated with the popular Easter hymn *Now the Green Blade Riseth*, a stirring metaphor for Christ's resurrection. This score will suit any four-part singing group as well as organ or piano.

Caroline Kerslake Jesus Christ Was Hungry Traditional French (adapted)

$\text{♩} = 70$

S  
A  
T  
B

Jesus Christ was hungry nothing there to eat, But He says you  
saw and brought Him bread and meat, When did we feed You,  
Lord, when did we see? When you fed My brothers you were feeding Me.

2. Jesus Christ was parched, the sun beat down its worst,  
But He says you saw and helped Him quench His thirst.  
When did we help You? Lord, when did we see?  
**When you helped My sisters, you were helping Me.**
3. Jesus Christ was homeless, wandering on His own,  
But He says you saw, ran out and brought Him home.  
When did we do that? Lord, when did we see?  
**Welcoming the least of Mine was when you welcomed Me.**
4. Jesus Christ was naked, cold, ashamed, exposed,  
But He says you saw and came and brought Him clothes.  
When did we clothe You? Lord, when did we see?  
**When you clothed My little ones, you were clothing Me.**
5. Jesus Christ was sick and fevered, cut and bruised.  
But He says you saw and came to tend His wounds.  
When did we nurse You? Lord, when did we see?  
**When you nursed My lowly ones, you were nursing Me.**
6. Jesus was in prison, lonely, wretched, sad,  
But He says you saw and came and made Him glad.  
When did we visit? Lord, when did we see?  
**You refresh believers? you're refreshing Me.**
7. **Blessed of My Father, come, oh come to Me.  
Come, beloved flock, stand on My right and see:  
Here is the Kingdom, long prepared for you,  
You who loved My people, faithful, kind and true.**



## Sermon outline

# SHEEP & GOATS

### Matthew 25:31-46

*This sermon outline can be used at a Suffering Church service or meeting. It can be read out as it stands or you may want to add some illustrations of your own or take some from the information on pages 8-18. You might also find helpful material in the **small group Bible study** on page 22 or the **eight-day devotional booklet**. Alternatively, the outline can be used as a framework for your own ideas and applications.*

## 1. Introduction

Christians have a “duty of care” for each other. We are called to minister to each other’s needs, both spiritual and practical. Matthew 25 contains teaching by the Lord Jesus about the Last Judgment. This includes the parable of the sheep and the goats (v. 31-46) where the focus is on the importance of caring for our fellow Christians which is, in fact, caring for our Lord Himself.

## 2. Who are Christ’s little ones? (Matthew 25:40)

The lynchpin of this parable is verse 40 where the King explains to the mystified sheep when it was that they had shown Him the care He is praising them for. What they had done for Him was whatever they had done for “the least of these my brethren”, as the King James Version expresses it. Other Bible translations speak of “brothers and sisters of mine” or “my people” or “members of my family” but the point is that the King says those helped were **His**.

Some interpret this parable as the King looking at help given to anyone. But it is clear from Jesus’ words that He did not mean this. In this parable, He is talking about help given to His followers, whom He calls His brothers and sisters. Matthew has already told us (Matthew 12:46-50) how Jesus defines His brothers and sisters – they are His disciples, those who do the will of His Father in heaven.

The Greek word for “brothers” is *adelphoi*, literally “of the same womb”. The Church is a community based on a shared origin. There is a bond so strong that it unites two brothers or sisters from the same womb. It is the unbreakable bond that holds together the family of Jesus, a bond that transcends race, class, colour, culture, tribe, ethnicity or nationality.

The early Christians were so bound together that they were like a new race. Around 196 AD, a Christian from Edessa (in modern Turkey) wrote of “the new race of us Christians, whom Christ at His coming planted in every country”.<sup>1</sup> Non-Christians also saw Christians as a separate race – neither part of the dominant pagan culture nor Jews. Writing from North Africa, Tertullian said that Christians were being talked of disparagingly as “the third race”.<sup>2</sup>

The beneficiaries of the help were not people of status, respected in the eyes of the world. Quite the opposite. Various Bible translations call them “the least”, “the least important”, “the least significant”, “the smallest”, “the humblest”. They were lowly and despised.

## 3. What did the “sheep” do?

This parable “opens the way to glory to the simplest people”. For the help that the sheep gave was basic everyday care. Anyone could do it.

The sheep were totally unaware of the significance of their actions. They did not expect praise. They did not even pat themselves on the back and secretly bask in self-esteem. Their generosity was just love for their Christian family, shown in natural ways, as opportunity arose.



### a. You gave me something to eat

Food is essential to life, and throughout the Bible God feeds His people. The Garden of Eden was filled with fruit trees for Adam and Eve. Quails and manna appeared daily for the Israelites in the desert. A raven brought food for Elijah.

Jesus knew hunger. He fasted in the wilderness before He began His ministry (Matthew 4:2) and, as a travelling preacher, He must have often been hungry. When He fed the five thousand, who had grown hungry as they listened to Him all day (Mark 6:34-36) or the four thousand, who had been with Him for three days (Matthew 15:32), He too must have shared that hunger.

It was in this context that Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." (John 6:35).



### b. You gave me something to drink

"I thirst," said Jesus on the cross (John 19:28).

An adult human body is about 60% water and we need constantly to replace the water that is lost in normal bodily functions. Without water we soon die.

But water is also a symbol of spiritual life. Jesus gives living water, a spring that wells up to eternal life (John 4:10,14), a water that satisfies all our desires.

But many of Christ's "little ones" today are thirsty. They lack clean drinking water. In Guinea, Muslims and followers of traditional African religions in some villages banned the Christian minority from using the village water source. But Barnabas Fund financed the cost of a well for the Christians in each village. The Christians had enough water for their needs and also shared the water freely with those who had been persecuting them.



### c. You invited me in

Refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in society. During His infant years, our Lord Jesus Himself became a refugee in Egypt, when Joseph and Mary took their little son and escaped the murderous wrath of King Herod (Matthew 2:13-23).

He was homeless again during His years of ministry. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." (Matthew 8:20).

Indeed, Jesus' whole life on earth was a kind of homelessness, as His real home was in heaven. He came to "dwell" among us (John 1:14), but the Greek word indicates a temporary home, like a moveable tent.



### d. You clothed me

Jesus knew what it was to be naked, for the victim of a Roman crucifixion did not wear a loincloth.

Many persecuted Christians are in need of clothes. Those who flee from violent attack may reach safety with nothing but the clothes on their backs. When Syrian Christians, held hostage for months by Islamic State jihadists, were released, Barnabas Fund gave them clothes, for they had only what they happened to wearing when they were kidnapped.

Beautiful clothes are a Biblical way of portraying how God has covered our sin and shame (Isaiah 61:10).



### e. You looked after me

We do not know whether Jesus, truly human yet divine, was ever sick. But we do know that He would grow tired after long hours of ministry, that He sweated blood in the Garden of Gethsemane before His coming death, He was cruelly flogged, and that He endured on the cross not only the agony of the most painful execution method the Romans could devise, but also the crushing spiritual weight of the sins of the world (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus is our healer. On earth, a touch of His robe brought health and wholeness (Matthew 9:20-22). Three times He raised the dead. By His wounds we are healed of our sins (Isaiah 53:5).



### f. You came to visit me

When Jesus was taken into custody, no one came to visit Him. His friends and followers deserted Him. They could not have changed His situation, but they could have brought Him comfort – just by being there.

The Apostle Paul often found himself in prison. How precious to him were the visits of his friends. "May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains." (2 Timothy 1:16). Through the centuries, many Christians have known what it is to be imprisoned for their faith, and it continues today, for example, in North Korea, China and Iran.

## 4. How does it all end?

In Jesus' parable, the people gathered before the throne will be separated by the King into two groups: sheep and goats. In some parts of the world, sheep and goats look very different from each other, but in the Middle East they look quite similar and it takes some skill to distinguish them. The King knows how to tell them apart and He separates them, setting the sheep on His right and the goats on His left (v. 32-33).

He sends the goats away. "Depart from me" (v. 41). First they are separated from the sheep and then they are separated from the King. Theirs will be an eternity of suffering that cannot be reversed (v. 41,46).

The sheep, however, will enjoy eternal life in the Kingdom which the Father has prepared for them since the foundation of the world (v. 34,46).

Is Jesus preaching a doctrine of works? Is He saying that we enter heaven because of our good deeds? No. We have received God's free gift of eternal life in place of sin's wages of death (Romans 6:23). Our passing from death to life (1 John 3:14) is expressed in love for our brothers and sisters.

On the Day of Judgment, love for our fellow believers will be seen as evidence of our relationship with Jesus, who has enabled us to pass from death to life by His redeeming work on the cross.

<sup>1</sup> Bardaisan, *Dialogue on Fate*.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, *To the Nations*, chapter 8.

# THE KING WILL REPLY



## READ MATTHEW 25:31-46.

1. What are the six actions, meeting six basic needs, that Jesus describes?
2. The six basic needs were examples of everyday needs in the society in which the first hearers of this parable lived, but which of these needs are common in your society? If some are not relevant for your context, think of alternative examples that are. There may be plentiful safe, clean drinking water in your country but a lack of loving care for the elderly. So you could change the second action to: *I was frail and isolated, trapped in my flat, never meeting anyone from one week to the next, and you took me out for a drive, a coffee and a chat.*
3. It has been said: "There never was a parable which so opened the way to glory to the simplest people." Why does the parable of the sheep and the goats "open the way to glory" for ordinary Christians? How does this make you feel?
4. In verse 40 the King explains the basis for the way in which He has separated the sheep from the goats. What are the two features He identifies in those who have received help from the sheep?
5. What does Jesus mean by "least" (v. 40 KJV, NIV, NRSV, ESV)? If members of the group are using different translations of the Bible, it may be illuminating to compare how this verse is translated in various versions. Or go to [www.bit.ly/Mat25-40](http://www.bit.ly/Mat25-40) to see 59 English translations of the verse.
6. What does He mean by "my brethren" (v. 40 KJV)? See Matthew 12:46-50. How would you answer someone who claimed that this parable is teaching that God will judge us according to our reaction to general human need?
7. What are the two aspects of the reward for those who cared for their fellow Christians? (v. 34,46)
8. What are the two aspects of the punishment for those who did not? (v. 41,46)
9. We know from other parts of the Bible that we do not enter heaven because of our good deeds (Ephesians 2:8-9) and that eternal life is a free gift which we do not earn (Romans 6:23). In the light of this truth, how do you understand a parable which seems on the surface to be saying that we gain eternal life as a reward for helping other Christians? (Hint: think about expression or evidence, and read 1 John 3:14. Or read the last two paragraphs of the sermon outline on page 21.)

This study looks at the same Bible passage as the sermon outline (pp.20-21). It can be used before or after hearing the sermon. If it is used without the sermon, it may be useful for the group leader to read through the sermon outline beforehand. You may also like to read the SCAAW 2019 eight-day devotional booklet, which is enclosed with this magazine and can be ordered from [barnabasfund.org/scaaw](http://barnabasfund.org/scaaw) or contact your nearest Barnabas Fund office (details inside front cover).

The section headed "Digging Deeper" is for those who would like to explore the theme in more depth.

10. Can you think of other Bible passages which encourage us to care for others as if we were caring for the Lord Himself or for His heavenly messengers? Here are some ideas: Genesis 18; Colossians 3:23; Hebrews 13:2.

11. About the year 200 AD, a Christian leader described the giving of the Church in Carthage (modern Tunisia):

"On the monthly collection day, everyone who wants to puts in a small donation, but only if he wants to, and only if he is able. There is no compulsion; it is all voluntary. These gifts [are used] to support and bury poor people, to supply the needs of boys and girls who are destitute and orphans, and of old people who are confined now to the house; shipwrecked people, too; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing else than their faithfulness to the cause of God's Church, they are looked after by their fellow believers."<sup>1</sup>

How does this compare with the way giving is organised at your own local church and the purposes for which the money is used?

12. As planet earth is now a "global village", we can be aware of the needs of other believers far away and even do something to help them, which was not possible for the followers of Jesus many centuries ago. How should we use this opportunity?

13. Decide on one practical thing you will do to help an "unimportant" Christian in need. If you like, share your decision with the rest of the group, so they can pray for you and the person you are going to help. Could the group do something together to provide practical help – perhaps some gardening or DIY for a church member who is sick or disabled?

## DIGGING DEEPER

14. Read through Matthew 24 and Matthew 25:1-30. How does our passage fit into the general theme?
15. In the Gospels, Jesus says more about hell than about heaven. He also says more about hell than any other Biblical character does. What should we learn from this?
16. Jesus' emphasis in this parable is on helping His brothers and sisters. The Greek word for "brothers" is *adelphoi*, literally meaning "of the same womb". Do you feel as close to fellow Christians as if you had come from the same womb? Do you feel that you are part of a separate Christian "race" – as Christians were seen by themselves and by others around the year 200 AD? If you do not feel this close to your fellow believers, why not? And, how can you change the situation?

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *Apology on Behalf of Christians*, chapter 39.

# GETTING INVOLVED WITH

## SUFFERING CHURCH ACTION AND AWARENESS WEEK



### SHOW YOUR LOVE IN A PRACTICAL WAY WITH A CHURCH OFFERING

If you wish to give to a particular need, such as helping persecuted converts, your church could make a donation to a specific project (see p4-5 for some examples). Alternatively, you could give to our General Fund and we will use your gift wherever the need is greatest. This funding enables us to react quickly to emergency situations, and to meet needs that are too sensitive to publicise.

You might like to fundraise to help suffering Christians by holding a coffee morning at your church, asking members of the congregation to donate cakes and sandwiches. Composer and Barnabas supporter Richard Rice-Oxley (p27) has had the wonderful idea of generously donating two free Christian opera scores, *The Jesus Story* and *Peter – the Rock*, that can be used in church or group performances for Barnabas fundraising events. You can access these through the SCAAW resources website: [barnabasfund.org/scaaw](http://barnabasfund.org/scaaw).



### SHOW LOVE FOR YOUR SUFFERING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

There are many ways to show your love for persecuted Christians around the world this Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week. You may wish to commit to praying regularly for a project (some examples can be found on p4-5), a country, or Christians in a particular context of persecution (explored on p8-18). Every *Barnabas Aid* magazine includes a Prayer Diary to inform and inspire your prayers each day.



### HYMNS AND SONGS FOR YOUR ONE IN TEN CHURCH SERVICE

#### O Let the Son of God Enfold You

By John Wimber  
*Complete Mission Praise* 502

#### What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Joseph Medlicott Scriven  
*Praise! Our Songs and Hymns* 412

#### Even Though I Walk [through the valley]

By Matt and Beth Redman  
*Singing the Faith* 626

#### A Mighty Fortress

Martin Luther  
trs. Frederick H. Hedge  
*Hymns of Faith* 11

#### Faithful One

Brian Doerksen  
*Ancient and Modern* 625

#### The Servant King

Graham Kendrick  
*Complete Mission Praise* 162

#### Jesus Shall Reign

Isaac Watts  
*Praise! Our Songs and Hymns* 246



### SUNDAY SERVICES OR GROUP MEETINGS

Among the resources that may be helpful for your *One in Ten* themed service or group meeting are our sermon outline (p20-21) with a Powerpoint presentation available to download from our website, the overview feature *ONE IN TEN are suffering right now!* (p8-18), suggested hymns and songs above, and also our new hymn for 2019: *Jesus Christ Was Hungry* (p19). Your service could be on Sunday 27 October or Sunday 3 November (or any another Sunday that suits your church calendar).



### A PRAYER FOR THE SUFFERING CHURCH

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are hungry,  
They are in want of food.  
Father, feed them  
*All: From Your gracious loving hand.*

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are thirsty,  
They are in want of refreshment.  
Father, give them water  
*All: In Your abundant mercy.*

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are strangers,  
They are in want of acceptance.  
Father, give them a home  
*All: According to Your lovingkindness.*

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are naked,  
They are in want of covering.  
Father, give them clothes  
*All: According to the riches of Your grace.*

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are sick,  
They are in want of care.  
Father, heal them  
*All: In Your unfailing compassion.*

Lord Jesus,  
Your family are in prison,  
They are in want of hope.  
Father, sustain them  
*All: With Your everlasting faithfulness, Gracious and eternal God of love, hear our prayer, In the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ.*

*Amen.*



### ORDER YOUR ONE IN TEN INSPIRATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

Barnabas Fund offers free resources to help you plan a Sunday service or Bible study session. See page 6 for a list of resources that you can request from Barnabas Fund free of charge.

# ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



This is Paulus from Bangladesh and he wants to tell you something. "In my village we had no school. My family never thought that I can have education. But thank God the church opened a new school in my village." Barnabas Fund helped establish this school and now supports it. "I become very happy," says Paulus

**I**magine being bullied all the time because you love Jesus. People shouting nasty things at you or even attacking you. Even trying to kill you. Perhaps it's best not to imagine it, because it is a horrible thing to even imagine.

But many, many children and young people all around the world, people just like you, have to suffer like this. Some are hungry and thirsty and sick because they are persecuted, just because they are Christians. Some don't have money to buy clothes because their Christian parents are denied work. Many are in such danger that they have to run away to other countries where they are strangers. And some Christians are even thrown in prison just because they love Jesus.

Your life might be different from theirs, but we are all brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, no matter where we are.

### Why not sponsor a Christian schoolchild?

Christian children are often bullied in schools in countries where Christians are in the minority. Classmates bully them. Even teachers bully them. Teachers mark them down in tests or fail them in exams, or make them sweep the floor while the other children are playing. They can even be pressured to reject Jesus and follow a different religion. And some Christian children and young people are from families so poor they cannot go to school at all.

### You yourself, or with a friend, or the church youth group, can sponsor a Christian schoolchild by joining Living Streams.

Sponsoring a schoolchild will enable them to escape this kind of persecution and instead go to a safe Christian school where they can grow in their faith.

On average it costs just £18 per month for a Christian child to go to a Christian school. But you do not have to give as much as £18 a month to be a sponsor with our Living Streams programme. A regular donation of ANY amount will be fine.

### If you sponsor a child, we will send you a prayer card with a photograph and details of the person you are helping.

Please note that we usually cannot arrange for an exchange of letters between a sponsor and the schoolchild. (This is to keep down administration costs, and in some places also because of security issues.) But we will send you a newsletter about twice a year, with updates on some of the sponsored children – perhaps including the one you are sponsoring.

### Raise awareness through social media

It is easy to help suffering Christians by just sharing our Facebook page with your family and friends on social media. And ask them to do the same. **Our Facebook page is [www.facebook.com/BarnabasFund](http://www.facebook.com/BarnabasFund)**

### Don't forget to pray

For a prayer guide, please check out the *Barnabas Prayer* booklet enclosed in this magazine or look online at: **[www.barnabasfund.org/prayer-diary](http://www.barnabasfund.org/prayer-diary)**. There are prayers about persecuted Christian children and young people on 21, 25, 26 and 29 October.

Also, why not try out the special **Barnabas prayer** on page 23?

**Find the six basic needs and the six actions that help mentioned in Matthew 25:37-39 (NIV) (for the action to the fifth basic need please turn back to v.36).**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | E | F | H | H | U | N | G | R | Y | C | V |
| J | O | I | R | S | W | A | Y | U | Q | I | L |
| T | C | V | I | N | V | I | T | E | S | G | S |
| H | G | E | G | K | O | S | Q | I | M | O | I |
| I | W | T | H | Y | A | G | T | E | C | O | C |
| R | K | H | T | T | U | K | N | I | R | D | K |
| S | O | O | E | A | O | W | Y | S | Q | S | M |
| T | C | U | O | G | K | L | M | I | E | A | R |
| Y | O | S | U | Q | S | C | C | R | P | M | E |
| J | R | A | S | L | N | L | H | P | B | A | G |
| D | E | N | N | F | M | O | S | E | S | R | N |
| V | T | D | E | T | Z | T | X | T | N | I | A |
| H | F | N | S | P | R | H | L | E | A | T | R |
| D | A | F | S | F | E | E | D | R | M | A | T |
| V | K | X | J | I | B | S | Z | T | A | N | S |
| D | O | J | N | R | C | W | V | P | A | L | F |
| R | O | V | Z | H | U | K | B | X | N | P | M |
| D | L | I | K | G | B | P | R | I | S | O | N |

**There are a number of examples in the Bible of the Lord meeting the basic needs of His children. Do you know them? Look for them in the puzzle above.**

1. How many people did Jesus feed with five loaves and two fish?
2. Who struck a rock and water came from it?
3. What term is used to describe the person who helped a stranger on the road to Jericho?
4. What kind of robe are believers clothed with?
5. A young servant girl helps her master to receive healing of leprosy. What was the name of her master?
6. Which disciple was rescued from prison by an angel?



## Cross put back on Assyrian church in Iran, but eight more converts arrested

IRAN



The Assyrian Evangelical Church in Tabriz with its cross, left, (viewed from the rear of the building) after the authorities tore it down on 9 May, centre, and with its cross restored on 9 July, right

A cross forcibly removed from the top of a 100-year-old Assyrian church in Iran was restored to its rightful place on 9 July, although the congregation is still locked out.

Security agents tore the cross from the evangelical church in Tabriz on 9 May. They also changed the locks, installed monitoring equipment and barred Assyrians from worshipping there.

The Assyrian member of the Iranian parliament, Yonathan Betkolia, called on 25 May for urgent action to reopen the church and restore the cross.

In June, a senior legal adviser to the Iranian president said he had “serious doubts about the legality”, referring

to Article 13 of Iran’s Constitution, which states that religious minorities are recognised and free to perform religious ceremonies.

Christians were encouraged to see the cross restored on 9 July, although the authorities have yet to hand back the keys of the building and grant permission for worship to resume.

Eight Farsi-speaking Iranian converts to Christianity were arrested at their homes in Bushehr by Ministry of Intelligence agents on 1 July. A 61-year-old woman was later released because of her age. The remaining seven were held in solitary confinement at the Ministry’s office in Bushehr.

## Boy’s gift of Christian books to classmates leads to big fines for parents in Azerbaijan

AZERBAIJAN

A six-year-old boy who took Christian booklets to school as gifts for classmates landed his parents in trouble with authorities in Azerbaijan.

The head teacher called the police who then raided the parents’ home, seizing Bibles and Christian pamphlets. Police also discovered that, on New Year’s Eve 2018, the Christian couple, Safqan and Gulnar Mammadov, had held a Christian event for children at their home and

that twelve youngsters had each received a book about Jesus.

The couple were charged with possessing religious literature that did not bear a government “control mark” and holding a children’s meeting in violation of the law. The Mammadovs’ appeals against individual fines of 1,500 manats (£700; €785; \$880), the equivalent of three months’ average wages, were rejected on 4 June by the Shirvan Appeal Court.

## Cuban pastor and wife jailed for home-schooling their children because of their Christian faith

CUBA



Pastor Ramón Rigal and his wife, Ayda, have been jailed for giving their children – Ruth, 13, and Daniel, nine – a Christian home-schooling education in strongly atheist, communist Cuba

A Cuban pastor and his wife have been jailed for giving their children an education at home, to avoid them being taught atheism at school in the communist country.

Pastor Ramón Rigal was jailed for two years and his wife, Ayda, for one-and-a-half years on 23 April after being charged with “acting against the normal development of a minor”.

***Pastor Ramón Rigal was jailed for two years and his wife, Ayda, for one-and-a-half years on 23 April after being charged with “acting against the normal development of a minor”***

The couple admitted they home-schooled Ruth, 13, and Daniel, nine, because of the promotion of atheism and socialism in state-run Cuban schools. They said their children had also been bullied at school because of their faith.

Pastor Ramón was previously prosecuted and sentenced to a year of “correctional labour”, later reduced to house arrest, for home-schooling his children in 2017.

## Jihadists wipe out Christian village in Mali as armed violence surges across the Sahel region

MALI



A boy returns to a burnt out home in a Christian village ransacked by Boko Haram

Almost the entire population of more than 100 men, women and children were slaughtered in Sobame Da, a mainly-Christian village in the Mopti region of central Mali, by Islamist extremists on 10 June.

A Barnabas contact described it as the “worst massacre in Mali since 1946”. He said the jihadists encircled the isolated village of ethnic Dogon people at night and “burned the entire village including all the people who stayed or did not dare to go out. Only a few men were able to escape the gunfire”.

This is just one example of a rising surge in armed violence that threatens to bring about an “unprecedented humanitarian emergency” in the Sahel region of Africa where 4.2 million people are displaced, warned UN aid agencies and NGOs on 27 June.

Boko Haram Islamist militias intent on establishing an Islamic caliphate in the Sahel region are moving out of their bases in northern Nigeria to launch increasingly frequent attacks, often targeting

Christians, in Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

Over the past six months Barnabas Fund has reported a number of separate incidents of lethal Islamist attacks against Christians. At least 49 Christians were killed during this period by jihadists in Burkina Faso, causing 82 pastors and 1,145 Christians to flee different locations in the north of the country to the city of Kaya, Sanmatenga province, in early June.

Barnabas contacts estimate that around 1,120 families in Cameroon are “living in distress” after at least four Boko Haram attacks on villages the Far North Region in July in which the Islamist militants set fire to homes, killing livestock and plundering food stores.

Boko Haram is also active in south-eastern Niger where, on 11 June, they told Christians to flee for their lives or be killed. On 15 June a Muslim mob burned out a church in Maradi City, Niger, after an imam criticised a new religious law as “anti-Islamic”. He later apologised to Christians.

## Wife of Pastor Wang Yi released from jail in China

CHINA



Pastor Wang Yi's wife, Jiang Rong  
[Image source: Early Rain Covenant Church via Facebook]

Jiang Rong, the wife of pastor Wang Yi of the Early Rain Covenant Church, Chengdu, was released from detention in China on 10 June, after six months in jail.

Her husband remains in “secret detention” on charges of “inciting to subvert state power”. A second charge of “illegal business operation” has since been added against him. Four other members of the church are still in detention at the time of writing.

The church said in a Facebook post on 11 June that Jiang had been released on bail under surveillance and was reunited with her young son, Shuya.

Jiang and her husband were arrested on 9 December 2018 along with about 100 other Early Rain Covenant Church members.

Pray for Pastor Wang Yi through the Barnabas Fund webpage: Christian Prisoners of Conscience.



**CHRISTIAN  
PRISONERS OF  
CONSCIENCE**

[www.barnabasfund.org/en/Christian-Prisoners-of-Conscience/Wang-Yi](http://www.barnabasfund.org/en/Christian-Prisoners-of-Conscience/Wang-Yi)



To view our most current news scan this with your device

## Supporters in Spain raise a grand total during "Barnabas week"

Members of New Life Church in the village of Huerca Overa in southern Spain raised an incredible £1,197 for Barnabas during their recent fundraising week.

The week began with a 20-minute presentation about Barnabas' work helping Christians suffering for their faith around the world at a Sunday morning service.

Various events took place during the week, including craft activities and a prayer morning followed by a hearty soup and roll lunch.

The week closed with a three-course dinner on the Friday evening, accompanied by the songs of the congregation's choral group.

Our grateful thanks go to all who organised and took part in the week. The church group are now enthusiastically preparing for more fundraising events, including a Barnabas barbeque.

## Birthday couple celebrate fabulous 50th with fruitful Facebook fundraiser

Barnabas supporters Adam and Martine celebrated their 50th birthdays by asking family and friends not to buy them gifts, but instead to donate the money they would have spent to Barnabas Fund.

Their fabulous 50th fundraiser, carried out via their Facebook account, raised an amazing £300.

Martine said, "We have never done a birthday fundraiser before but what a great idea! Barnabas has, and always will be, a cause very close to our hearts."

The couple say they will continue to support Barnabas Fund "in as many ways as possible", including leaving a legacy in their wills to help ensure our work continues for future generations.

Birthday fundraisers are simple to create on Facebook. The social media giant sends a notification to individual Facebook users two weeks before their birthdays, giving them the option to create a fundraiser for their favourite cause. The account user then sets a target amount, creates a custom message and, on their birthday, their friends receive a notification asking them to donate.

## Barnabas Aid USA relaunches with move to new office in Pennsylvania and new CEO at helm

Barnabas Aid USA has moved its operational office from McLean, Virginia, to Lancaster, Pennsylvania starting 1 September.

There are several reasons for the switch, including the logistics and cost of running the previous office in the DC area. Together with this change, we are relaunching our work in the US with the appointment of a new Chief Executive Officer, Jeremy Frith, who is moving to Lancaster with his family to set up Barnabas' new base.

Jeremy and his wife, Stacy, who is originally from Pennsylvania, have been living in the UK for the last eleven years. Jeremy has been the Chief Operating Officer at our UK office for the last ten years and is blessed with a great deal of experience and knowledge of Barnabas' work.

Our new office is located at:

**Barnabas Aid, 80 Abbeyville Road, Lancaster, PA 17603.**

Our telephone numbers, email addresses and website will remain unchanged, but postal communications should now be sent to the new address above, from 1 September. Mail forwarding will also be in place.

Jeremy said, "We are excited about this new location and the future of Barnabas Aid USA. Thank you for your support for our work and please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions regarding this change."

## Christian composer offers free music scores for fundraising events

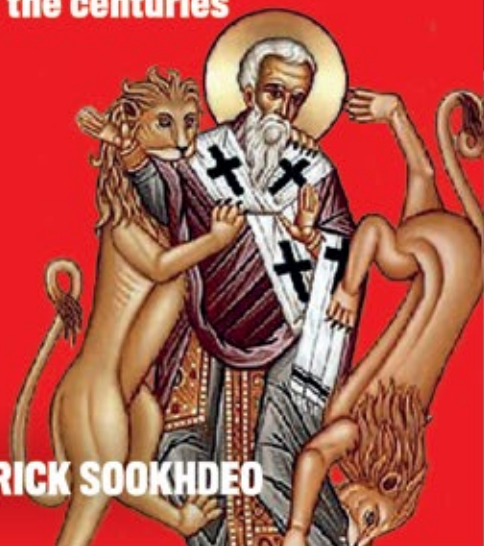
A Barnabas-supporting composer, Rev. Richard Rice-Oxley, is donating music to be used for fundraising events that supporters may like to hold for the suffering Church, during SCAAW week or at another time.

The opera scores *The Jesus Story* and *Peter – the Rock* are provided free to Barnabas supporters. Please go to: [barnabasfund.org/scaaw](http://barnabasfund.org/scaaw), for further information and links.

*The Jesus Story* is a 24-song multi-style musical journey through the birth, life ministry, death and resurrection of our Lord; while *Peter – the Rock* is a recently composed 21-song musical for choir, soloists and instrumentalists, with a linking narration.

# HATED WITHOUT A REASON

The remarkable story of Christian persecution over the centuries



Historically and geographically panoramic in its information, this very important survey is admirably balanced, both in substance and tone. Its profound and subtle reflectiveness does not impair its readability. Most timely, and needed.

John Finnis FBA,

Professor of Law and Legal Philosophy at the University of Oxford 1989 to 2010, and now Professor Emeritus

This is an important, timely and very challenging book. Christians are being persecuted across the world. Sookhdeo examines this issue with theological and historical insight. He honestly faces the times when Christians persecuted others. But he leaves us with the haunting question: Christ predicted such hatred without reason. Real Christian discipleship attracts persecution. Read it.

Gavin D'Costa, Professor of Catholic Theology,  
University of Bristol, UK

This book offers an empathetic view of suffering for the sake of Christ; its examples and stories, many of them taken from the lives of Christians in Asia and Africa, bring this suffering close to the reader. Most of these sufferers have been little known or completely unknown. Now, readers can hear them, feel the heartbeat of their love for the Lord, and listen to their otherwise silenced voices. This book encourages Christians to stand fast in the midst of persecution and to love their fellow believers.

Daniel Jeyaraj,

Professor of World Christianity, Liverpool Hope University, UK

This fine book powerfully shows how the persecution of Christians has been a constant feature in human history, and continues today. Yet it also concludes that Christians must proclaim freedom of religion for all, and act accordingly. Freedom is God's gift to humanity.

Professor Roger Trigg,

Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion, University of Oxford, UK

This book explores the persecution of Christians throughout the ages. It shows that persecution of Christians is not restricted to a certain region nor to a certain era. It emphasizes that the persecution of Christians has become a mark of the church that cannot be ignored. Under "The forgotten genocide: Assyrians", Dr Sookhdeo talks about the genocide of the Syriac-speaking people (Sayfo) which took place at the turn of the twentieth century in the Ottoman Empire. He highlights the ongoing effects of the persecutions and how uprooting the Christian community from the birthplace of Christianity is the most dangerous action that can be done to destroy Christianity in a systematic way. This book also hints at the hope that, despite the worldwide persecutions, missionary work is still effective, and the word of God is still spreading throughout the world.

Ignatius Aphrem II,

Patriarch of Antioch and All the East,  
Supreme Head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church

## Hated Without a Reason

The remarkable story of Christian persecution over the centuries

"If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also," said the Lord Jesus Christ to His first followers. Christian believers have suffered for their Lord down the centuries and across the world. *Hated Without a Reason* tells the glorious story of their courage, faith and endurance, including many moving and inspirational examples that are little known. At a very personal level, Dr Sookhdeo's book considers the different ways in which individual Christians could respond to persecution. It also explores the wide sweep of causes of persecution over two thousand years, whether religious, political, economic or ideological, finding lessons from the past which are relevant and applicable in the twenty-first century.

**£9.99 +P&P**

ISBN: 978-1-7321952-4-0 Cover: Paperback  
P&P:£4.35

To order, please contact your nearest Barnabas Fund office (addresses on inside front cover). Cheques for the UK should be made payable to "Barnabas Books".

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hope and aid for the persecuted church