Hope in the midst of disaster

KERALA AND SULAWESI
Hope and recovery after double disaster

ZANZIBAR
Life for persecuted Christians in tropical island resort

INDIA
Courageous Christians facing increasing pressure and hardship
The Barnabas Fund Distinctive

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 money, 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

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

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 persecuted 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)
Sohail, a young Pakistani Christian man from a poor family, was arrested and charged with murder, on the basis that he was tall, like one of the four suspects. He had been at work when the murder was committed, but, without money or influence, he could not hire a good lawyer. At his trial no witness from his workplace was called to disprove the false accusation, and he was found guilty.

The normal sentence for murder in Pakistan is hanging. But because no one could positively identify Sohail the judge gave him a life sentence. Instead of yielding to despair and anger at his unjust treatment, Sohail found his faith in Christ carried him through both the period before his trial, when he feared getting a death sentence, and afterwards when decades in jail stretched before him.

Sohail saw the great needs around him and decided that he would seek to help those, like himself, caught in a hopeless situation. For those on death row he would speak to them of a hope and forgiveness in Christ, he would walk with them to the gallows, or even carry there the ones who had collapsed. So great was Sohail’s faith that he petitioned the authorities to have a Christmas gathering for the Christian prisoners and the Muslims also attended. He then got permission for a church building, which he and other Christian inmates constructed with their own hands. All the while he was spending time reading in the prison library, which is how he discovered he could appeal. Slowly he put together his case, and after ten years behind bars he was released on bail. It was another five years before he finally cleared his name.

On being released, Sohail married his fiancée, who had waited a decade for him. After two years of happiness together she died in childbirth. But Sohail put aside his sorrow and continued to serve prisoners, particularly those on death row, travelling all over Pakistan to help and encourage them.

Sohail’s experience of false accusation and expecting a death sentence is not dissimilar from another Pakistani Christian, Aasia Bibi, who knew well what it was to suffer as her Lord had suffered - to be falsely accused, to be beaten up, spat upon, imprisoned, tried, found guilty and sentenced to death. Throughout it all, she remained faithful to her Lord and confident that He would deliver her.

Earlier saints have faced the same appalling suffering as these modern day believers. One such was Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), a German pastor and theologian who strongly opposed the Nazi regime. From prison, Bonhoeffer wrote a hymn which includes this verse:

And when the cup you give is filled to brimming
With bitter suffering, hard to understand,
We take it gladly, trusting though with trembling,
Out of so good and so beloved a hand.1

This cup of suffering is none other than the cup from which our Lord Jesus Christ drank (Luke 22:42).

The agony of Gethsemane, the betrayal, wrongful arrest, false imprisonment, beating and torture, the unjust trial, the undeserved death sentence, rejection by the crowds, abandonment by His disciples, and above all the terrible moment on the cross when it seemed as if the Father had turned away His face, causing Jesus to cry out in agony, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

The reality of Christian experience is born of pain and suffering. It is when all has gone wrong and yet we still hope and go on. This is the experience that tests the nature of who we are and the quality of the faith we have. But suffering in this life is not the end. There is hope - the hope of the resurrection is a reality. Jesus died and rose again gloriously. For Sohail and Aasia Bibi there was a “resurrection” in being released from prison. But for the countless others who live with false accusation, ignominy and shame and die without being cleared or freed, there is an eternal hope of life with Jesus, where “all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well”.

1 English translation by Fred Pratt Green and Keith Clements
God’s power at work through Kenyan missionaries

In remote and dangerous regions of Kenya, Barnabas Fund is supporting Kenyan missionaries as they share the Good News of Christ with unreached Muslim peoples. The dedicated missionaries first live amongst the communities for two years, learning languages and culture so that they can witness and disciple new believers in a sensitive and relevant way.

The 30 missionaries, who received training and a stipend for practical needs, are seeing powerful answers to prayer. A Muslim family asked one of the missionaries to help carry a woman, presumed dead, to a burial place. On the way, the missionary felt that God was telling him that the woman was not really dead. He held the woman’s hand and prayed, “Father that your glory and power be shown to these people through this action. Live!” At which moment, the woman coughed.

He told Barnabas, “This incident has made every person who was in that entourage start to enquire more about this Jesus Christ in whose name a woman was ‘brought back to life’ before their very eyes.”

Two projects helping Zimbabwean Christians

2018 saw the worst decline in Zimbabwe’s economy since 2008, when Barnabas first provided food and other help for the neediest Christians.

Barnabas Fund is helping destitute elderly Christians access life-saving medical treatments. Martin lost everything in the collapse of 2008 and sleeps on a friend’s couch in an elderly people’s home. Martin got treatment for severe dental infections and dentures to replace his lost teeth. He told us, “The pain was unbearable but I had no means of seeking treatment so suffered in silence. I cannot thank you enough for taking the pain away.”

With food so scarce, many are going hungry in Zimbabwe. Barnabas Fund is supporting a Christian agricultural training scheme, funding 13 Zimbabwean trainers, to increase food production. In 2018, 264 farmers attended ten training sessions in new farming methods that significantly increase crop yields.

“arre so grateful for the support. To know that people care and want to help is humbling ... knowing there are people willing to assist us in our old age makes everything less frightening.”

Food factory provides jobs and nutritious meals for displaced Christians in Iraq

Displaced Iraqi Christians in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, have safety and security, after fleeing from Mosul and the Nineveh Plain when Islamic State seized the region in 2014. But as newcomers it is very difficult for them to find work to support themselves.

Barnabas has helped by supporting a church to set up a food processing factory.

The factory will process chicken, fish, potato and dough into food items of many kinds. It will provide 65 much-needed jobs for local displaced Christians and generate income for the church’s ministry.

£89,159 ($116,655; €102,858) to set up and equip a food processing factory

Project reference: 20-1376

Barnabas Fund is helping local Kenyan missionaries plant churches and establish communities of believers in locations that are under terrorist threat

£30,000 ($39,207; €34,593) to support 30 missionaries in Kenya. Around £80 ($100; €90) to support a Kenyan missionary for a month

Project reference: 25-017

Project reference: 91-762

Project reference: 91-751

Project reference: 20-1376

£10,877 ($15,000; €12,400) in medical help for 104 impoverished elderly Christians. £20,000 ($26,150; €23,081) training farmers to improve crop yields

Project reference: 91-751

Project reference: 20-1376
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.

**Warm floor enables Central Asian believers to keep meeting during cold months**

Central Asian winters are bitterly cold, and church buildings are often very simple with basic facilities and insufficient heating. That means gathering for worship during freezing weather can be an endurance test, which the elderly cannot cope with. Numbers attending drop during the coldest months.

Barnabas Fund has helped to provide a new under-floor heating system in a church building in a Central Asian country. Our support also allowed the kitchen to be improved, the toilets to be rebuilt and the courtyard retiled. The church building is now suitable for many purposes and can be comfortably used for worship, outreach and other ministry all year-long.

**Pakistani orphan girls thrive in loving home**

Young Christian girls from Punjab and Sindh provinces in Pakistan suffer terrible deprivation as orphans, or if their parents are too sick or unable to care for them. The Abba Home in Lahore, which Barnabas Fund helped to build, provides a loving home, nutrition and a Christian education. The girls thrive in the warm and devoted care, becoming healthier and mentally happier.

Bed ridden with kidney disease, Jennifer’s father couldn’t work. Her family was suffering extreme hardship. Her mother faced the impossible choice of feeding her children or paying for her husband’s medical treatment. Jennifer arrived at the home at the age of seven so weakened by dietary deficiencies that she was physically and mentally below the normal level of development for a child her age.

But with the care of staff – as well as proper bedding, three nutritious meals a day, clothes and schooling – she is growing well and improving in every way. Jennifer now likes taking part in sports and staff at the home have noticed how she does her daily chores “joyfully”.

**Building up isolated Kazakh converts in the mountains of Mongolia**

Kazakh converts from small and isolated churches in Mongolia have little opportunity to receive pastoral encouragement or instruction in God’s Word. The new believers, from Muslim backgrounds, are also experiencing ongoing persecution from local authorities and their Muslim neighbours.

In a three-day seminar supported by Barnabas Fund, 54 converts received spiritual guidance from a church leadership team, worshipped together and spent time reading and studying the Bible.

One convert had not been to church for a long time but after the seminar he “took courage” from the preaching and decided to become a pastor. He has since been preaching the Gospel to a community where the houses were destroyed during a mudflow. Another excited new believer said he now wanted to “read the Bible every day”.

The seminar, which cost just £60 ($79; €70) per person, established connections between scattered convert groups as well as strengthening the faith of individuals.

**Project reference: 111-1353**

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**Project reference: 41-1095**

£2,624 ($3,418; €3,012) to help support the Abba Home for girls for six months

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**Project reference: 00-637 (Church Buildings Fund)**

£3,284 ($4,276; €3,770) to help support the Abba Home for girls for six months

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£3,400 ($4,410; €3,905) for church building improvements and heating system

- Underfloor heating installation: £3,032 ($3,950; €3,482)
- Retiling of courtyard: £806 ($1,050; €925) and kitchen improvements: £806 ($1,050; €925)

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Jennifer looking healthy and smiling happily – vastly improved physically and mentally from her appalling condition when she first came to Abba Home
One of the most densely populated countries of the world, the secular nation of India is home to around 64 million Christians. Although numerous, they are a tiny minority of around 2% in a country where 80% of the 1.3 billion population is Hindu. Hinduism is seen as strongly connected to Indian identity, and some Hindus therefore distrust followers of any other religion and often assume they are unpatriotic.

Persecution of Christians and other minorities has been on the rise in India since Narendra Modi became prime minister in 2014. There was a sharp escalation of persecution incidents against Christians in 2017, when around 736 were recorded by the Evangelical Fellowship of India (of which 351 were violent). This compares to 548 persecution incidents recorded in 2016. However, it is likely that many incidents do not become widely known so the true figures are probably much higher.

Christian communities are being particularly targeted by religious extremists and militant groups. Intensifying violence is also being seen in several of the more stable states where persecution has been much less prevalent in the past.

Anti-conversion laws make Christians vulnerable to persecution
Anti-conversion “Freedom of Religion” laws have been introduced under the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in
several states. These ban the use of force, fraud or allurement in conversion, but make Christians who are active in sharing their faith vulnerable to false accusation.

A recent “Freedom of Religion” bill passed in Jharkhand in September 2017 requires anyone changing religion to obtain prior permission from a magistrate. Under the law, charges of conversion through “coercion” are punishable by a three-year prison sentence.

Accusations that Christians are breaking anti-conversion laws often lead to violence or arrests and have been used as an excuse to target Christians and disrupt church services. The BJP is supportive of the laws being rolled out nationally.

The upcoming general election, expected between April and May 2019, poses a particular threat to the Christian minority in India. Elections are a time when nationalist policies and ideologies are promoted and tensions run high, often bringing heightened persecution. The opposition party has also swung to the right, which may lead to even greater intolerance of religious minorities.

**Christians face social exclusion, sabotage and pressure**

Attacks against Christians include violent assaults, social exclusion and the sabotage of church buildings and houses which can force Christians to flee villages, damaging communities. Christians also face pressure to renounce their faith under threats of violence and boycotting, with popular campaigns known as “Ghar Wapsi” (homecoming) encouraging this practice.

In January 2017, Bartu Urawn, a 50-year-old Christian convert from a tribal area in eastern India, was tied up, along with his wife, and immersed in a cold pond for 17 hours by local villagers who demanded he renounce his faith. Bartu refused, saying repeatedly, “I will not deny Christ ... I will continue to believe ‘til my last breath.” He died shortly afterwards – a subsequent police investigation concluded his death was due to “natural causes”.

Rural Christian communities in India are often very isolated and particularly exposed to assaults and mob attacks, especially on church buildings when Christians have gathered for prayer and worship. The response from law enforcement is typically poor. All too often, the Christian victims are arrested by the police, while the perpetrators of the violence go free.

Dalit Christians doubly disadvantaged

Many Christians are also Dalits – at the very lowest level of the Hindu caste system – and although there are quotas to ensure Dalits can access education and employment, these do not apply to those who are Muslim or Christian. Christian Dalits stripped of these benefits are doubly disadvantaged. They are among the very poorest in society and extremely vulnerable to attack. Persecution against them has included sabotaging homes, churches and water sources which in turn leads to displacement and utter destitution.

Early origins of Christianity in India

According to South Indian Christian tradition, the Gospel was brought to the Indian sub-continent by the apostle Thomas, who arrived in 50 or 52 AD. The Mar Thoma Christians of Kerala state believe that he founded churches in seven towns in south-west India, setting up a cross in each, and won thousands of converts from various castes by his miracles and the example of his saintly life.

Tradition also says that he suffered many false accusations and other kinds of opposition. Eventually, in about the year 72, he was martyred at Chennai where he was stabbed to death for refusing to worship the Hindu goddess Kali. One notable pilgrim to visit his tomb at nearby Mylapore was Sighelm, an ambassador from the English kingdom of Wessex, who visited in 883 to present thank offerings from King Alfred the Great.

Early Christian writers record that the apostle Nathanael (Bartholomew) also visited India to preach in the first century, bringing with him a copy of the Gospel of Matthew in Hebrew.

Documentary evidence suggests that Christianity had reached parts of the Indian sub-continent by the beginning of the third century. By 225 AD there was a bishop of Baith Lapat (later Gundeshapur, now Shahabad, in north India) caring for Indian Christians who had been converted by missionaries from Persia and Mesopotamia.

An Indian Church seems to have been established by the early fourth century when John the Persian signed the Nicene Creed, in 325, “on behalf of [the churches] in the whole of Persia, and in the great India”. 

"I will not deny Christ ... I will continue to believe ‘til my last breath.”
Palm jaggery production gives new hope to remote Christian communities

Barnabas Fund is providing livelihoods for Kandhamal Kui peoples who live in remote rural villages in Odisha state (formerly called Orissa), north-east India. At least 50 Christians were murdered in the region in August 2008. Some were burnt alive and others cut to pieces in a rampage of anti-Christian violence. Three villages were cleansed of Christians, with homes, churches, relief camps and even orphanages razed to the ground by extremists.

In these desperately poor and downtrodden communities jaggery production is bringing new hope, health and a stable income.

With minimal cost and some simple training the families can harvest palm tree sap to produce jaggery which can be sold locally, providing a secure and stable income. Jaggery, a natural sweetening product, is rich in minerals and known to benefit digestive and respiratory health as well as increasing immunity.

Local community leaders welcomed the success of the low-cost enterprise programme as a sustainable and "dignified" way for families to generate income.

Barnabas is helping to give Christian children a bright future in Bangalore

The Divya Shanthi children’s ministry in Bangalore, south India, now has a wonderful new school building. Funded mainly by Barnabas supporters, the building was completed in 2018. The ministry cares for 63 children who live in the small compound, and more than 500 others come each day to attend the school or other activities.

This building dramatically improves the educational facilities the school can offer its pupils, providing extra classrooms, a laboratory, a computer room and a library. Teachers and children alike are thrilled with the spacious, light and cheerful environment they now have to work and learn in.

Other improvements mean that the girls in the residential home now each have their own cupboard for their clothes and possessions, which they love. The children particularly appreciate the new bathrooms with modern showers and toilets. Previously they washed with a bucket and cup and the toilets were very basic.

There are around 522 pupils at the school, ranging from preschool age up to sixth form, including pupils with special needs. Barnabas Fund provides support towards subsidised school fees which the school offers to pupils from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds. This enables them to escape the cycle of poverty by obtaining a good school education and qualifications which will increase their future prospects and build up their communities. Many will be able to get well paid jobs that their parents could only have dreamt of.

Through the high standard of Christian schooling, at the new well-sponsored school, the children will be able to escape the desperate cycle of illiteracy and poverty, get decent jobs and bring new hope to their families and communities.
Commit to a regular monthly donation, and you will enable a child to grow in body, mind and spirit.

It costs £20 per month to feed, clothe and educate a child at the Divya Shanthi Children’s Home.

But you can sponsor a schoolchild by giving any regular amount, large or small.

We will provide you with a prayer card showing a photograph and details of your sponsored child, as well as regular updates about their progress.

To donate or sponsor a Divya Shanthi schoolchild call: 0800 587 4006 (UK) or +44 24 7623 1923 (Outside UK) or visit our website: barnabasfund.org/divya-shanthi

Please see the Living Streams leaflet enclosed with this magazine for more information and postal donation forms.
Christianity spread to Zanzibar during periods of missionary activity

Because of its position on the maritime trade routes, Zanzibar has always been a significant marketplace between Africa, Arabia and Persia. It was also a central location for the Arab slave trade, with 90% of the islands’ population being enslaved at one point in history.

It was settled first by Africans in the first century AD and later by Persians and Arabs who arrived in the tenth century, converting the islands to Islam. European Christian missionaries brought Christianity to Tanzania and the islands in the sixteenth century and again in the nineteenth century.

The British missionary David Livingstone had several stays on Zanzibar and a house in the capital, Stone Town, was given to him by the Sultan. The building, Livingstone House, is today the National Chamber of Commerce.

Zanzibar has its own president, court system, and legislature. Muslims in Zanzibar can bring cases to either a civil court or qadi (Islamic court or judge) for family law matters and other issues covered by Islamic law.

Islamic militant threat to Christians is growing

The growing threat of radical Islam on the island has been closely associated with a group called the Association for Islamic Mobilisation and Propagation or “Uamsho”. Originally established as an Islamic NGO to promote the culture and heritage of the archipelago’s Muslims, Uamsho has become radicalised and has been involved in violent street protests, church burnings and acid attacks.

Two members of Uamsho, linked with Boko Haram¹, were responsible for a horrific acid attack in 2013 on two young British women who were working as volunteers for a Christian charity. The group, although outlawed by the government, continues to enlist followers with the promise of independence from the mainland and full implementation of sharia (Islamic law).

Muslim communities despise Christians who are perceived to be “immoral”

The perceived immorality of Western tourists, assumed by locals to be Christian, alongside abject poverty and the growing influence of Islamist extremist groups has created an increasingly hostile situation for the island’s Christian communities.

On Pemba Island, churches need constant police protection from arson attacks. One church in the capital has built 3-metre walls to protect its congregation following a mob assault in 2012. Christian butchers and their customers have also been attacked for not using halal slaughtering methods.

1 Boko Haram is a very violent West African Islamist militant group associated with Islamic State (IS), founded in 2002 by Muhammed Yusuf in north eastern Nigeria.

Acid attacks, church arson and assassinations

Life for Christians in tropical Zanzibar

Once hidden behind a façade of idyllic tropical beaches, imposing historic fortresses and opulent five-star resorts, Christians in Zanzibar face increasing pressure and persecution. In the last five years, church buildings have been burned, church leaders brutally assassinated and Christians assaulted as Islamist extremism takes hold on the islands.

Zanzibar is a small, semi-autonomous tropical archipelago 16 miles off the coast of mainland Tanzania. The islands’ population of 1.3 million are 99% Muslim, but there is a small Christian minority that includes many converts from Islam.

When mainland Tanganyika joined Zanzibar to form Tanzania in 1964, the population of Tanganyika was 30% Christian, 35% Muslim and 35% traditional African religions. Today mainland Tanzania has a 60% Christian population, with Muslims numbering 36%.

A modern spice market. Spices are the main export of Zanzibar, historically the world’s largest producer of cloves, but today agriculture is struggling and tourism has become the biggest national industry with more than a million holidaymakers visiting a year.

The old slave market. One of the underground rooms that was used to hold slaves before they were taken to the slave market for auction can still be seen today. The Anglican Cathedral is built on the spot where the market itself was.
It is possible that the Gospel first reached Korea in the seventh to ninth centuries, thanks to the work of East Syriac missionaries who came along the Silk Road to China, but there is no solid evidence for this. Apart from this possibility, Christianity in Korea is remarkable for having developed entirely without foreign missionaries for perhaps 200 years. The only non-Korean Christians known to have set foot on Korean soil before 1794 were Christian troops amongst the Japanese military force which invaded Korea in the 1590s. It is not known whether they ever discussed their faith with the Korean population they were trying to conquer.

Koreans must have met Christians while travelling in other countries of East Asia, and brought the Gospel back to their homeland. Koreans living in Japan in the second half of the sixteenth century may have met and discussed with Christians there, either foreign missionaries or Japanese Christians. The first known Koreans to believe were some of the prisoners of war brought back by the Japanese from Korea as slave labour in the 1590s. Over 2,000 of them became Christians in Japan, and at least 24 were martyred there.

Around the same time, educated Koreans visiting China encountered Christians and Christian literature there. Neo-Confucianism was the state religion of Korea and many Koreans viewed Christianity as a minor variant of Buddhism, a religion they despised. But some were drawn to study the monotheistic faith and, in a slow trickle, Koreans began to convert, most of them from the middle or upper classes.

A landmark occurred in 1777 when, for the first time, a group of Korean believers began to pray together and set aside every seventh day for rest. Very soon they were writing hymns. The Church gradually grew as Koreans shared the Gospel with each other.

In 1785, police caught some young men meeting for Christian worship in a clinic in Seoul belonging to Kim Beom-u. They were all arrested and Kim Beom-u was imprisoned. He was tortured but refused to deny Christ, so was banished. About a year later he died of his injuries, thus becoming the first martyr of the fledgling Church in Korea. In 1787, the king ordered that all Christian books be destroyed and no more imported. Some Christians hid their books, but many burnt them – after memorising the contents.

**KOREA**

**Reverence for parents and ancestors – a challenge for Christians**

Traditional Confucian ancestral rituals posed a problem for the young Korean Church. Were the rituals expressions of filial piety (which a Christian could perform with a clear conscience) or were they idolatrous worship (as most Christians thought)? In 1791, two cousins called Yun and Gwon were executed for burning their ancestral tablets and not performing ancestral rites. Their homes were destroyed and their relatives banished or enslaved. Church leaders and others were rounded up, beaten, tortured if necessary, and made to renounce their faith in Christ.

Filial piety was just one aspect of a serious tension between Christian doctrine and Korean culture. Koreans considered that social relationships (e.g. filial piety) were essential for a good and stable society. Christianity emphasised an individual’s relationship with a transcendent God and their own personal salvation. This seemed irresponsibly selfish to the Korean neo-Confucians. In the Ten Commandments, filial piety was far down the list at number 5, instead of number 1. Loving your neighbour appeared a dubious way to organise a society in comparison with the Korean emphasis on caring for your family. Christianity seemed like a recipe for anarchy.

**Foreign missionaries and persecution**

In 1794, the first foreign missionary arrived. He was Chinese and had been sent in response to repeated requests from the Korean Christians. Over the next five years, the number of believers in Korea more than doubled to about 10,000 but the Korean authorities soon discovered the presence of the foreign missionary, an order was issued for his arrest (which he evaded), and moderate persecution began.

The first episode of severe persecution of Korean Christianity occurred in 1801. It was initiated by Dowager Queen Kim. Her late husband, the king, had received many complaints against Christianity, including that it was too class and gender inclusive, thus contradicting neo-Confucianism’s belief in human inequality. The queen banned Christianity, after which 672 Christians were arrested, mostly from the upper classes and a quarter of them women. They were tried in court, beaten and tortured. Some 400 were exiled, 156 were beheaded and many others died in prison.
The Silk Letter
In October 1801 a Christian called Hwang Sa-yeong wrote a letter to the Bishop of Beijing on a piece of silk, to be hidden in the collar of a courier. In its 13,311 tiny Chinese characters, the Silk Letter described the persecution of the Christian community in Korea, requested financial support,¹ and asked the bishop to ask the Pope to ask the Chinese emperor to decree that Western missionaries be allowed into Korea. Two other suggestions made in the Silk Letter for ending the Korean government’s persecution of Christians were for China to take over part of Korea or for Western battleships to come and threaten Korea.

Unfortunately for Hwang, the courier betrayed him and the contents of the letter reached the Korean authorities. Hwang was arrested, tried and executed by the method reserved for the worst criminals – death by slow slicing. About a hundred alleged collaborators were executed too.

An edict was then issued that Christians should be treated as traitors and put to death so that they would have no descendants.

After this the Church in Korea was no longer a church of aristocratic scholars, for they had mostly been killed or had apostatised. It became an underground church, drawn mainly from the middle and lower classes of society, who endured a series of bouts of persecution.

Whole families were deprived of their livelihoods because one person was a Christian. Impoverished and ostracised, up to three-quarters of the Christian community fled to the mountains where they established small Christian villages and tried to survive by foraging, subsistence farming, or making pottery. Village leaders organised daily prayers and special meetings on Sundays. All social classes lived together and took joint responsibility for the care of children orphaned by persecution. Other social outcasts came to join the Christians in their villages.

The first European missionaries eventually managed to get into Korea in 1831, and others soon followed. The Church grew,² but after a few years the Korean authorities discovered the missionaries, which triggered the fourth major persecution (1839).

This began with arresting the leaders, many of whom were women because so many male leaders had already been martyred. Three French missionaries gave themselves up to the authorities; their heads were hung up on public display but it did not stop the persecution. At least 254 Christians were arrested, of whom 121 were either executed or died in prison. Whole families perished together. When the authorities realised that people were quite willing to die for Christ, they focused on encouraging apostasy. Believers aged from 13 to 79 were tortured to death.

The Great Persecution (1866-1871)
This period of persecution and martyrdom culminated with the Great Persecution when an estimated 8,000 Korean Christians died, that is, more than half the Christian community. Only about a tenth of the deaths were official executions; most died when they were unofficially killed by the authorities, lynched by their neighbours or starved to death in the mountains.

The Great Persecution was worse than the other persecutions because it was targeted not only at leaders, but also at Christians of any position in society. The vast majority of those killed in the Great Persecution were ordinary believers, poor and uneducated, who could not defend themselves in court as the scholarly church leaders had in 1801.

For a couple of years, the number of Christian arrests declined but the overall persecution situation got worse as the general population began to vent their anger on Christians, whom they saw as linked to Russian and European aggressors.

In 1871, American warships came to retaliate against the destruction of the General Sherman. Hearing that Korean Christians had made secret contact with the Americans, Korean Grand Prince Heungseon announced that any Korean who called for conciliation with the “Western barbarians” was betraying their country. He then intensified his efforts to persecute Christians, but by now they were so widely scattered that few were caught.

After 70 years of persecution
The Korean Church emerged from 70 years of persecution poor, weakened and marginalised, but it began to grow again. Until this point it had been entirely Catholic, but now the influence of Protestant missionaries began to be felt. The Protestant missionaries operated in a very different way from the Catholics. The Protestants brought their families with them, lived in American-style houses and wore Western suits. The Catholics lived in mission stations built in traditional Korean style, dressed either in Korean clothes or clergy robes, and lived on salaries a fraction of the size of the Protestants’. A Russian Orthodox mission to Korea was established in 1897.

Korean Christians would often prepare the way by moving to live in non-Christian villages. After creating interest in the Gospel and buying property, they would then ask a missionary (foreign or Korean) to come and establish a church. Many single and widowed women were very active in ministry; they became known as “Bible women” and travelled widely in their evangelistic and pastoral work. In 1891 the Presbyterian missions officially adopted the Three Self church-planting method,³ and other missions soon followed suit.

During this period there were occasional episodes of persecution.

Several factors in late nineteenth-century Korea helped the spread of Christianity: Confucianism was losing its former grip on Korean society, the West was seen as an ally against Korea’s traditional foe Japan, and a yearning for modernisation had begun – Protestantism was seen as attractively modern. Protestants developed a Christian ancestral memorial ritual, which must have made it easier for Koreans struggling with the issue of ancestor veneration to commit to following Christ.

In 1894 Korean men began to convert to Christianity in significant numbers, usually bringing their entire household (sometimes their entire village) to faith with them. The new Christians were very zealous in prayer, giving (labour or rice if they had no money) and self-sacrifice.

It was during the 1890s that the north-western city of Pyongyang became the centre of Protestant Christianity in Korea and was called “the Jerusalem of the East” because it had so many church buildings.

Under Japanese rule
In 1905 Japan occupied Korea. The harshness of Japanese rule and the humiliation of the situation caused a wave of Korean nationalism. Christian leaders called for personal repentance from sin as a necessary prelude to national recovery. More prayer meetings were set up. Tens of thousands of Koreans emigrated because they did not
want to live under Japanese rule, including some church communities which moved en masse and set up Christian villages in nearby countries.

Catholic leaders in 1906 declared that the Japanese government was the lawful and God-appointed authority in Korea. Running completely counter to popular feelings in Korea, this stance had a negative impact on the growth of the Catholic Church in Korea.

Meanwhile a great Protestant revival had begun, which peaked in Pyongyang in 1907.

In 1910 Japan formally annexed Korea and continued to rule the peninsula until defeated in 1945 at the end of the Second World War. Thus, to the Korean mind, colonialism and imperialism were Japanese, not Western. This doubtless spared the Korean Christians some of the hostility that Christians in China and Japan faced due to their assumed links with the West.

### The Conspiracy Trial (also called the 105-Man Incident)

At first the Japanese colonial rulers tried to win over the Christians, especially the powerful Western missionaries, arguing that they and the missionaries had a shared objective to uplift the Korean people.

But in 1911 several hundred men were arrested, mainly Christians, accused of plotting to assassinate the Japanese governor-general. Of these, 123 were brought to trial in February 1912. Most of them had been tortured and three had already died in custody. The trial was a farce, and no evidence was given except the men’s own written confessions. Nevertheless 105 were convicted of treason and given prison sentences. Western nations protested (mainly because their missionaries were accused of encouraging the conspirators) and the sentences were reduced.

### The March 1st Independence Movement

In 1915, the Japanese colonial government banned religious instruction in private schools. They also ruled that on days when the emperor sacrificed at Shinto shrines, private schools must hold appropriate ceremonies. This was one of the main reasons why many Christians, concerned about the impact on Christian schools, got involved in the Korean independence movement.

A Declaration of Independence was drafted and signed by 33 religious leaders including 16 Christians, and huge pro-independence demonstrations were held on Saturday 1 March 1919. The Japanese banned church services the next day and began to arrest people. Orderly non-violent demonstrations continued for weeks, often on church property. The Japanese police and army attacked the demonstrators; sometimes riots ensued. Thousands were arrested, held without trial, and tortured, raped and flogged. Again, Christians were a main target, and virtually every pastor in Seoul and Pyongyang ended up in jail. Many Christians were killed and many church buildings burnt. In one case the Japanese herded about 30 villagers into a Methodist church before setting fire to it. Western “Christian” governments condemned the Japanese brutality. Thus Christianity became linked with Korean nationalism in the minds of both Koreans and Japanese.

### Surveillance, suppression and control

After this, Japanese colonial policy became less military in style, and some concessions were made to Korean language and culture. A new governor-general relaxed the rules regarding church ownership of property. But at the same time surveillance of Christian activities was increased. The 1920s also saw the rise of communism, which, being inherently atheist, created anti-Christian feeling.

Christians living under such continuing pressure found comfort and strength in remembering the martyrs of long ago.

In 1925, the Japanese began to force Koreans to prove their loyalty to their Japanese colonial rulers by participating in rites at state Shinto shrines. Korean Christians resisted this, considering it idolatrous. In 1935, two American Presbyterian missionary teachers publicly refused to take part in the opening ceremonies of an education centre at a state Shinto shrine. The result was widespread persecution of Korean Christians, with many pastors put in prison.

In 1937, the authorities ordered the churches themselves to conduct Shinto rites and visit shrines. The Korean Catholic leadership, accepting the regime’s argument that the rites were not religious, had already ruled that Christians could participate in shrine worship. Soon the various Protestant denominations issued similar statements.

Some church members strongly disagreed with their leaders on this issue. Large numbers left the official churches, which they considered apostate; they emigrated, moved to the mountains, or just waited for Christ’s return. Many Christians were arrested for not participating in shrine worship, and some 50 died under torture or in prison. Around 200 Protestant churches were closed.

The Korean authorities wanted the churches to sever their foreign links and for all the Protestant denominations to join together as one. By 1942 the churches were effectively under complete government control. Police permission had to be obtained for each church meeting, and police would always be present at the meetings. The content of the meetings was also strictly regulated. Christians were not allowed to preach or read Bible passages about judgment or the Second Coming. They were not allowed to sing or pray about the Kingdom of God or the Lordship of Christ.

But true faith survived. Catholics had a long history of being an underground church and Protestants had a tradition of self-support and family worship in the home.

### 1945 and freedom

The pressure came to a sudden end when Japan was defeated in 1945. It is a sad irony that it was the dropping of America’s second atomic bomb on Nagasaki, which had once been a Christian city, that finally caused Japan to surrender on 14 August. Soviet troops had moved into northern Korea on the day Nagasaki was bombed, and American troops moved into the south in September.

In 1945, the Korean Christian community was about 2-3% of the population overall, but a much higher percentage of the educated classes. Christians therefore played a significant part in the leadership of Korea after the Second World War and the interim governments set up in the north and south were both led by Christians.

Churches and Christian institutions across the country reopened, and church building projects resumed. Believers who had been worshipping in private flocked back to the churches. Many hoped to establish a unified Christian nation.

However, the powerhouse of Korean Christianity in 1945 was in the north. Three-fifths of the Protestants (200,000 people) lived in the north and so did many of their best church leaders. There were also about 100,000 Catholics.
1946 and Kim II-sung
In January 1946, the pacifist Presbyterian leader of the interim northern government mysteriously disappeared and was never seen again. A young communist freedom fighter called Kim Il-sung seized power. He came from the Christian middle classes and his mother and maternal grandfather were staunch Presbyterians. Kim began a gradual suppression of Christianity. Although many Christians were leaving the north, those who remained strongly resented Kim’s actions against them.

1948 and division
In 1948 Korea was divided into two nations. Northerners who wanted to leave at this point were allowed to do so, and amongst them were a large proportion of Christians.

The northern Christians were very much outsiders when they arrived in the south as refugees. They clung together and did not join the southern churches, instead starting nearly 2,000 churches of their own. The newly arrived northerners challenged the southern churches to a greater Christian commitment, in particular to be conservative, self-supporting, self-propagating, hardworking and anti-communist.

The Korean War (1950–1953)
On Sunday 25 June 1950 North Korea launched an unexpected attack on South Korea. Most Protestant missionaries fled the country. Korean church leaders and foreign Catholic leaders were taken prisoner by the rapidly advancing communist army, and later carried back to the North when the communists retreated again. These Christian leaders were never to return to the South. An estimated 500 died in captivity, some executed and others perished from cold or starvation.

Between the end of the Second World War and 1953, when a truce was agreed in the Korean War, an estimated 80,000 Protestants and up to 20,000 Catholics moved from North Korea to South Korea. This depleted the north of one third of its Christian population.

Two opposite extremes
In South Korea the Church has grown rapidly, becoming a dominant influence in society, and sending out missionaries all over the world. By contrast, North Korea, ruled by Kim Il-sung and his descendants, is a place of terrible persecution, as Kim Il-sung and his descendants, is a place of terrible persecution, and probably the worst country in the world to be a Christian.

1 Persecution had greatly impoverished the Church, as its wealthy members had their property confiscated.
2 Korea had a China-centred worldview and were very respectful and subservient towards its powerful neighbour to the west, paying tribute to China every year. Koreans felt it natural that they, as a small country, should depend on and serve the larger country.
3 The number of Christians increased from 6,000 to 9,000 in the three years 1836–1838.
4 Churches should become self-propagating, self-supporting and self-governing as soon as possible.
PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION LAUNCHES BARNABAS BOOKLET ON ABOLITION OF THE TEST ACTS

At a special parliamentary reception on 15 January in the Palace of Westminster, Barnabas Fund launched a new booklet celebrating 300 years since the first abolition of a Test Act. The repeal of the Schism Act in January 1719 was a watershed moment in history that ushered in an era of religious liberty in the Western world.

Speaking at the event, Sir John Hayes, MP for South Holland and the Deepings and formerly Home Office Security minister, urged that “people stand up for freedom”. Sir John also highlighted in his foreword to the Barnabas publication that “religious believers are, once again, facing increased pressure to restrict their faith to the private sphere”.

Hendrik Storm, Chief Executive of Barnabas Fund, spoke of the need to protect religious freedoms today, “This 300th anniversary of the 1719 Repeal is a reminder that we cannot rest on our laurels in making a case for religious freedom. Barnabas Fund is used to defending religious freedom in many parts of the world but we are now seeing forms of discrimination and marginalisation in Europe we must be alert to. Nor should we risk repeating the mistakes of the past by giving in to pressures to introduce new ‘Tests’ of secular humanist belief.”

Countries with “Test Act”-style laws today
Just as the seventeenth century Test Acts in Britain required people to affirm that they were members of the established Church, so some countries today exclude their citizens from key public offices unless they hold certain beliefs.

- In Pakistan the office of Prime Minister is only available to Muslims.
- In the Maldives only Sunni Muslims are allowed to be members of the People’s Majlis (parliament).
- In communist states, including China, Eritrea and Vietnam, it is a requirement to affirm the government ideology in order to hold public posts and, sometimes, to attend university.
- The President of Lebanon must be a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister must be a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of Parliament a Shia Muslim.
- Christian and Muslim Dalits in India are excluded from government quotas for education and jobs as they do not belong to a religion of Indian origin (Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism or Jainism).

HOW BRITAIN LED THE WORLD IN DEVELOPING FREEDOM OF RELIGION

300 years ago the first of the Test Acts was repealed in Britain - new booklet by Barnabas Fund. The booklet is available to download from: www.barnabasfund.org/booklet
Four Christians detained in Nepal on charges of forced conversion

After being secretly filmed, four Christians were arrested in November 2018 near Kathmandu, and charged with breaking Nepal's anti-conversion laws.

It was alleged that the individuals, two of them Japanese nationals, had been “proselytising” door-to-door, “targeting Dalits” (the lowest level of the Hindu caste system, considered “untouchable” by high-caste Hindus).

If convicted, the two Nepalis arrested could face five years in prison and a 50,000 rupee (around £340; $440) fine, while the Japanese Christians could receive the same sentence or be deported.

In September 2018, a new law came into force in Nepal, where 85% of the population is Hindu, which makes it an offence to “involve or encourage in conversion of religion” or “hurt religious sentiment”.

Dramatic rise in extremist attacks on Indian Christians in Uttar Pradesh

The number of mob attacks on churches and arrests of Christians on false charges is rising at a dramatic pace in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state.

The number of reported incidents in the north Indian state in 2018 had reached 64 in late October, higher than the previous year when there were 50 in the whole twelve months. Most were carried out by right-wing nationalists.

In one of the attacks, in October 2018, seven Christians were seriously injured by a mob of 40-50 Hindu extremists at a hotel in Agra city. None of the attackers were arrested.

Christians make up only 0.18% of the population of Uttar Pradesh.

Mass grave of Ethiopian Christian martyrs executed by IS discovered in Libya

A mass grave containing the bodies of 34 Ethiopian Christians martyred in 2015 by Islamic State (IS) militants was discovered in Sirte, Libya on 23 December last year.

The remains have been exhumed. According to the Libyan Interior Ministry, the grave was found as a result of evidence gathered from detained IS members.

Sirte, the hometown of deposed leader Colonel Gaddafi, was controlled by IS in 2015 until they were defeated in late 2016 by local forces with US support.

This is the second mass grave of Christians to be discovered in Sirte. In October 2017 the bodies of 20 Egyptian martyrs were uncovered and repatriated to Cairo. A martyred Ghanaian man killed alongside them was also exhumed. All those murdered refused to deny Christ, which would have saved their lives.

Exodus 20:3 in a Chinese Bible

A video posted by IS on social media in 2015 showed the brutal executions of the Ethiopian Christians on a beach near Sirte on the north coast of Libya

Members of a registered Three-Self church in China’s Henan province were ordered to erase the First Commandment from display during an inspection by government officials on 1 November 2018.

In an unusual intervention in a state-approved church, an official ordered that the First Commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me”, be removed from the Ten Commandments displayed in the front of the pulpit, saying it was “national policy”.

The officials then wiped off the words. Later that day, the church took down all Ten Commandments under pressure from the authorities.

Earlier in the year the communist government’s White Paper on religion announced new policies of “sinicisation” (i.e. making Chinese) with the intention of selectively reinterpreting Christianity and Scripture.
Police in China have arrested 130 Christians from Early Rain Covenant Church, an unofficial “house church” in Chengdu, Sichuan province.

In the first of a spate of raids, 100 arrests were made including the church’s Pastor Wang Yi and his wife Jiang Rong. Both remain in jail where they have been held since 9 December on charges of “inciting subversion”. Another 20 of the congregation remain in detention.

A further 30 students, gathered in a restaurant for a Bible class, were arrested in the first week of January. Their mobile phones were seized and they were interrogated for several hours, before being released.

The pastor has released a “Letter from a Chengdu Jail” in which he makes clear that he does not seek to overthrow the state but to worship freely. He writes, “Separate me from my wife and children, ruin my reputation, destroy my life and family – the authorities are capable of doing all these things. However, no one in this world can force me to renounce my faith.”

The past year has seen an intensification of government action against unofficial Chinese congregations – known as “house churches” in China. A statement signed by 279 church leaders in September 2018 said authorities have removed crosses from buildings, forced churches to hang the Chinese flag and sing patriotic songs, and barred minors from attending services.

Barnabas Fund has launched a global initiative to pray for Pastor Wang Yi through its new webpage Christian Prisoners of Conscience:


A lower court in Punjab sentenced two Christian brothers to death for “blasphemy” on 13 December 2018. Qasir and Amoon Ayub have been in jail since 2014 and are accused of posting “disrespectful” material online in 2011.

The judge handed down his verdict at a closed hearing inside the jail due to security reasons. The brothers, who are both married, have been charged under all three of Pakistan’s “blasphemy” laws – Sections 295-A, B and C of the Pakistan Penal Code. However, it is only the charge of “defiling the name” of Muhammad (295-C) that carries the death penalty.

To date no one has been executed under the law, but a number of Christians and others have received death sentences.

A lawyer who provides legal aid to Christians with support from Barnabas Fund said that any Christians being tried in the lower courts for “blasphemy” so soon after the high profile acquittal of Aasia Bibi, announced on 31 October 2018, had little chance of anything but the death sentence.

Two Christians in Myanmar (Burma) were injured when their Christmas preparations were mobbed by locals led by Buddhist monks.

The clash happened on 24 December last year as twelve Christian ethnic Chin families set up a tent to celebrate Christmas Day for the first time in the Buddhist-majority village of Sappie, in south Rakhine state.

A Christian eyewitness said the mob of about 40 locals was led by three Buddhist monks who ignored pleas to mediate.
Hope and trust in God’s help in the midst of double disaster

“...is our prayers that the Lord Jesus will continue to bless Barnabas Fund with the resources to help hurting followers of Christ in every corner of the world.”

These were the words of an Indonesian church leader as he expressed his thanks for the vital emergency aid given by Barnabas Fund supporters to help Christians struggling in desperate conditions following the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami in Sulawesi, in September 2018.

In the latter months of 2018 two major natural disasters brought devastation to the already pressured lives of Christian minorities in India and Indonesia. Working with our church partners on the ground, Barnabas Fund was able to rapidly reach Christian communities with life-saving aid in both regions, despite the aftermath chaos.

As the waters subsided in Kerala, the extent of the destruction was revealed. Many homes and other buildings were completely destroyed.
The worst flooding in almost a century devastated Christians’ lives in Kerala

The south Indian state of Kerala experienced its worst floods in nearly a century, in August 2018, following abnormally heavy monsoon rains. More than 480 lives were lost and almost 700,000 people were forced to seek shelter in crowded relief camps when floods and landslides swept away homes, land and livelihoods.

Thanks to our supporters’ swift and generous response, Barnabas Fund was able to rapidly get life-saving essentials including rice, dal (lentils), sugar, toiletries and medicines to Christians made utterly destitute by the disaster. Many were already amongst the poorest in their communities. Just two weeks after the floods Barnabas’ aid had reached around 1,800 Christian victims.

Unimaginable loss and destruction wreaked on central Sulawesi

Then, on 28 September, the Indonesian island of Sulawesi was struck by a powerful 7.5 magnitude earthquake followed by a devastating tsunami that also caused major soil liquefaction. At least 2,256 people were killed, while more than 70,000 homes and at least 84 church buildings were destroyed or badly damaged.

Once again our supporters responded with overwhelming generosity to the plight of their brothers and sisters in desperate need and distress. Barnabas Fund was able to provide soup kitchens and tents for the homeless at five churches. Our local partners also distributed parcels of essential food supplies and provided water trucks, tanks and generators.

The minority-Christian communities affected in both disaster-struck regions were in special need, amid reports that government relief supplies were being directed mainly to the Hindu majority in Kerala and to the Muslim majority in central Sulawesi.

The emergency aid received by survivors was critical, not just in keeping them alive but also lifting spirits and giving them hope. One of our partners in the region told us, “It is important for the recipients to find out that fellow believers have gone at great length to buy, transport and distribute the relief goods and to know that God is looking after them.”

Families find safe shelter to live, learn and pray in the ruins of Sulawesi

The sheer scale of the humanitarian disaster in Sulawesi, where 20% of the population is Christian, was overwhelming. Hardest hit was Palu, the capital of Central Sulawesi, where a large number of Christians live.

Several isolated Christian communities south of Palu were difficult to reach because of damaged and blocked roads. But Barnabas Fund distributed packages containing essential items like rice, sugar, cooking oil, tea, coffee, toiletries, and gave out blankets and towels to people who had lost their homes.

A Barnabas Fund partner described the impact of the temporary-shelters given to Christian families, “These tent communities are safe shelters for them, where they are helping each other, holding prayer meetings and Sunday services in the makeshift tent where the children are sleeping during the night.”

Barnabas helped Christian children survivors with food and clothes and also funded a church-based programme and provided simple resources such as books, pencils and T-shirts to help them recover from the trauma they have experienced. School equipment and materials were also supplied so that basic schooling could resume, bringing normality back into young lives.

Stories of resilience and survival amid the tragic loss of hundreds of lives

Farmer Mr Maklon’s field of maize in Sulawesi was almost swept from beneath his feet when the earthquake struck his foothill village. He had just left the field to go home, only narrowly escaping being dragged away and buried in the sliding soil. On reaching his destroyed home he discovered his wife had died beneath the rubble. Thankfully, his five children were safe. The 15 kg of rice and other necessities given to him by Barnabas sustained him and his children during the aftermath, when he could not farm his field.
Mother and grandmother Mrs Tin escaped with her two children and three grandchildren when their house collapsed. Emergency aid from Barnabas helped them survive, and they will be among the first to be provided with a safe, earthquake-resistant new home.

At the time of the earthquake Mrs Tin was at home in the village of Jonojindi with her family when an overpowering tremor hurled them all to the floor. They ran from the house and all reached safety except for Mrs Tin’s husband, who died as the house collapsed. The family were left with nothing, even the cornfield that provided their only means of making a meagre living was engulfed by a major landslide which “tore the hill apart”, according to eyewitnesses.

Mrs Tin thanks God for the life-saving rice and blankets already provided by Barnabas that helped them survive and the new home she will soon be given.

Many other accounts of tragic loss of life emerged, but also stories of near-miraculous survival. A Barnabas contact told us of a teacher, attending a Bible camp at a school in a remote area of the Sigi region. The teacher managed to flee the building with 50 students when the tsunami struck, but they found themselves trapped by swirling liquid mud. “They called upon the Lord, and suddenly the two mud streams came to a halt and the soil stopped moving. They were able to climb on top of a hardware store that was washed up close to them, and they started to pray and sing until the tsunami subsided.”

Christian communities passed over for Indonesian government aid

In one of the worst hit zones in Palu, Barnabas Fund’s partners reported that where government emergency relief had started filtering through it was being distributed mainly to Muslims with very little reaching Christians. One contact said, “There are frequent signs stating ‘khusus orang Muslim’ – for Muslims only, at distribution centres and medical posts. As we feared from the start, Christians hardly receive anything. Some people receive just some food and water and nothing else, some people receive nothing at all.”

Restoring and rebuilding: lives, livelihoods and Christian communities in Central Sulawesi

After the emergency aid had provided vital sustenance, the lives and livelihoods of victims need to be restored; church buildings and Christian schools have to be rebuilt from the rubble.

Barnabas Fund is providing simple earthquake-resistant homes in the Palu area for families who are too poor to rebuild the houses they lost. We are also supporting the building of 12 multi-purpose halls to replace churches damaged or destroyed in the disaster.
Construction has already started on the first of the earthquake-resistant multi-purpose halls to be built in Palu, Donggala and the Sigi region. These simple, low cost halls are designed so that they can be expanded when funds allow.

They will be used for worship and social gathering, and provide seating for 70 people. A Barnabas Fund partner said, “Those despairing victims need the spiritual as well as social support for gaining back their faith and hope for future life.”

**Overwhelming floods bring chaos and panic to Kerala**

The speed in which the floods engulfed Kerala was breath-taking. One of our partners said, “There was panic in the minds of people on what to do when they saw the surge of flood water rising to the homes. The water was gushing along with landslides. Some of the people could not be rescued. They were engulfed by water in the blink of an eye.”

In the midst of chaos, people grabbed whatever they could, leaving behind their simple homes and meagre possessions. Most were already poor, surviving on daily wages, but now they had nothing.

Within hours of receiving requests for help from survivors, Barnabas Fund partners were transporting essentials including clothes, sleeping mats, food, bottled water and medicines to relief camps. Feeding centres were providing meals to people who arrived on their doorstep.

The official number of Christians in Kerala is about 18%, but some Indian Christians believe the real figure is nearer to 30%. Even so, Kerala Christians experience anti-Christian pressure and violence.

A senior Indian church leader estimated that 200,000 Christians were affected by the disaster. Many of them are Dalits, considered “untouchable” by high-caste Hindus. Already despised and at the lowest level of society, they were poor before the floods but now they are destitute.

Local reports emerged that some high-caste Hindus refused to be rescued by Christian fishermen, because their job is considered “lowly” and they are considered “untouchable”. Other reports said that some Hindus viewed the floods as a divine punishment because Christians and Muslims had been eating cows, an animal considered sacred in Hinduism. In the light of such attitudes, Christians expected to be discriminated against in general aid distribution.

**Barnabas is helping to rebuild shattered lives in Kerala**

“My house is destroyed. Where do I start?”, said a Christian rickshaw driver who had lost everything.

Barnabas is helping Christians made homeless with rebuilding and repair projects. In the Cochin district alone we have helped 90 families return to their homes by repairing cracked walls, damaged roofs and removing trees felled by landslides. Most of the repairs cost little more than 30,000 rupees (£323; $422; €370), and some were much less, but it meant people could start to get back to living a normal life.

Church leaders appealed to Barnabas to help bring emergency practical aid to the many Christian flood victims including dry clothing and bedding, food and medicines

Most survivors also lost their livelihoods. Men lost the tools needed for professions like masonry and women’s sewing machines and other craftwork tools were gone. Farmers’ crops had been washed away and the land had become unfit for growing any new crops.

Barnabas Fund’s local partners are working with people to help find alternative ways for them to make a living by providing training or helping them to start small enterprises such as rearing pigs or chickens.

Quoting from Deuteronomy 15:11, one Indian project partner said that Barnabas Fund “exemplifies the teaching of our Lord. It will definitely help them to recover and re-establish their lives.”

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Varsha was buried under mud when a landslide engulfed her home, killing her uncle. She survived because she was able to raise her arm from the mud so her brother and mother could pull her free. Varsha’s parents are daily labourers, but there has been no work for them since the floods

Teenager Dikshitha’s father went to help their neighbours as a landslide threatened their home. Sadly, both he and their neighbours were buried by the mud. Barnabas is helping Dikshitha and her brother through the trauma by supporting them to continue their education

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Church leaders appealed to Barnabas to help bring emergency practical aid to the many Christian flood victims including dry clothing and bedding, food and medicines

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There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.  
(Deuteronomy 15:11)
What will happen to your earthly treasures after you have gone to glory?

Through your wise planning and investment you can continue to be a blessing to the persecuted Church long after you have gone on to glory. Once your loved ones have been taken care of, what will be your legacy?

Please remember Barnabas Fund in your will
Your gift could go a long way to bless other Christians. Barnabas Fund’s role as a channel of hope and aid from Christians, through Christians, to Christians means that your legacy will be used for the greatest impact on your wider Christian family, suffering for the Name of Christ.

Inspire them to hold firm in their faith in the midst of trial
You can bring restoration to believers who have suffered violence, feed Christians facing hunger and deprivation, give shelter to displaced families, strengthen Christian brothers and sisters in Christ with Bibles, train young children up in their faith through Christian schooling, and bring transformation to the lives of impoverished believers.

Your legacy can live on for generations
Your gift can save future generations of Christians from poverty and hardship as your witness to Christ’s love continues after your pilgrimage on this earth has ended, affirming the connection of the Body of believers to one another.

Could your church take up an Easter offering for Barnabas Fund?

This Easter – as we remember Christ’s own sufferings and celebrate His joyous resurrection – could your church take up an Easter offering for Barnabas Fund, to bring hope and aid to believers who are celebrating in the midst of persecution because of their faith in Christ?

As the Apostle Paul reminded the Corinthian Church, when one part of the Body of Christ suffers, every part suffers with it (1 Corinthians 12:26). For suffering believers, the knowledge that fellow Christians around the world are praying for them, standing with them and supporting them is a great encouragement.

Sweet success at bee-keeping event in Redruth, UK changes lives for brick-kiln Christians in Pakistan

Redruth Baptist Church congregation have been busy with a bee-keeping and honey morning event, raising £1,500 to free Pakistani brick-kiln families from bonded labour. Participants at the “honey morning” event enjoyed honey-sweetened cakes and biscuits as they learned about the fascinating business of bee-keeping from an expert apiarist church member. The kind bee-keeper also donated all the delicious honey produced by his bees for that year which was eagerly snapped up at the event.
YES, I WOULD LIKE TO HELP THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

Title .................................. Full Name .......................................................... 
Address ...........................................................................................................
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Postcode ................................ Telephone ......................................................
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PLEASE USE MY GIFT FOR
☐ Wherever the need is the greatest (General Fund)
☐ Other ........................................... *(give reference number of project to be supported)

HERE IS MY SINGLE GIFT OF .......................................................... 
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Card Number
Expiry Date ☐ / ☐ Signature
☐ I do not require an acknowledgement of this gift

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Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate
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In order to Gift Aid your donation you must mark the box below:
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Please return this form to Barnabas Fund at your national office or to the UK office.
Addressess are on the inside front cover. Barnabas Fund will not give your address, telephone number or email to anyone else.

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Please start on 1st/3rd/7th/11th/15th/21st/28th (delete as applicable)
of .................................................... (month) and then every month/quarter/year until further notice. This Direct Debit is a new one/in addition to/replaces an earlier Standing Order/Direct Debit in favour of Barnabas Fund.

ALTERNATIVE GIFT CARD
If you would like to make a donation as an alternative gift for a friend or relative, we can supply you with an attractive “Thank you” card, which you can send to the person for whom you have made the donation.
Please contact your local office to order one.

LEGACY GIFT
If you would like more information about how to leave a gift to Barnabas Fund through your will, please contact:
finance@barnabasfund.org or phone 02476231923 or fill out the form above with your details, tick the boxes below that apply to you and send it to: Barnabas Fund, 9 Priory Row, Coventry CV1 5EX
☐ Please send me .......... copies of the free booklet
A Christian guide to making and changing your will
☐ I would like you to contact me about making a lifetime legacy
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*If the project chosen is sufficiently funded, we reserve the right to use designated gifts either for another project of a similar type or for another project in the same country.
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