

Where is God... when tragedy strikes?

By profession Shaukat Nawaz is a mason. He is a Christian and lives in Lahore, where two of his daughters — Florence (7) and Christina (5) — attend the Lahore Christian High School. His son Astishna is just 2½ years old.

In early September tragedy struck the family. Shaukat's wife died while giving birth to a still-born baby. Such tragedies are sadly common in Pakistan where (according to WHO) 75 out of 1000 children die at birth. Shaukat was left alone at home to care for the three children. With no money he still had to go out for work. Then the second tragedy struck.

Shaukat fell from the third storey of a building and broke both arms. His life fell apart. Thank God that the ladies of the Fellowship of Christ were there to give immediate comfort and relief. They will continue to provide help to the family until Shaukat has recovered his health and can work again.



Where is God when tragedy Strikes?
Shoukat found Him in the comfort of the help provided by the Fellowship of Christ team of ladies. Pray for this small suffering family, that they will find hope and strength to build their lives again.

Is this our next big challenge?

A School for the children of Christian Brick Kiln workers

The life of a worker in Pakistan's brick kilns has no romance, little hope and no prospects of improvement. Hundreds of kilns dot the countryside around Lahore. A family together can make about 1000 bricks a day in good weather, for which they are paid about £2. Many of these workers are Christians.

One such community is located in an area known as Youhannabad No.2 east of Lahore. The children have no access to education, no access to Christian teaching outside their homes, and no hope of a future away from making bricks. They are trapped in poverty.

For some months Rubina, Angela and her sister Edna from the Miracle School have been holding a Sunday School for the Christian children at the brick kiln. Now they want to open a school...

- To provide free primary education for 100 children.
- To provide basic hygiene and health care to the families
- To give Christian teaching



"The village is underprivileged, backward and deserves the basics of a free education, free medical facilities, books and evangelism," says Angela. "These children also have a right to know Christ and to understand the Bible."

The Starfish Asia Fund wants to help the Miracle School ministry to open this free school for the brick kiln children. The school will be owned and run by the Miracle School and funded by the generous donors of the Starfish Asia Fund.

To let you know...

A lot has been happening in the world of our Starfish Asia Fund partners over the past months. This is not a complete report—we will produce a fuller newsletter before Christmas. But we send this to keep you abreast of some events and changes...

And we ask for your prayers for those who are being helped by the gifts and compassion of our Starfish Asia donors, such as *Shaukat* whose story (above) has touched our hearts. The Fellowship of Christ ladies are also supported by the Starfish Asia Fund.



From our partners in Pakistan

Miracles in prison

Tariq Iqbal in Sargodha shared this testimony from a prisoner whom he has been visiting in the jail. Farooq Anwar, nominally Christian, was a gang leader prior to his imprisonment for theft:

'I was a great sinner, but a wonderful thing happened to me on September 24. Tariq Iqbal visited our jail. He distributed leaflets to 50 Christian prisoners. I received this life-changing tract in Urdu. Until that time I didn't want Jesus; I read it just to pass the time, but these words touched my heart: *Have you been born again?* Then I was afraid for my sins. I confessed my sins to Jesus. Now I am free. Jesus touched my heart. He gave me peace, joy and happiness.

'On October 2, I attended the service and Tariq preached on the raising of Lazarus. What a wonderful sermon! Three prisoners received the Holy Spirit and I was one of those. Please pray for me. I am so grateful for Tariq Iqbal. God bless you abundantly for spreading the word of God inside the Jail.'



This church near Sharakpur was damaged in a confrontation between Christians and Muslims in August. Through the Fellowship of Christ we will provide funds to repair the church.

Good news for RDC

Shahid Ambrose wrote with the news that the RDC school has received a substantial grant from the Punjab Education Foundation. We may now be able to allocate our funds to other more needy projects. Shahid wrote:

"I would like to thank you, on behalf of the Board of Directors, Parents, Staff and Students, for the financial support from Starfish Asia Fund to our school at Rakh Dera Chahal. We have overcome the fear of closing down this school due to shortage of funds, and due to your financial help we are able to continue to serve the Christian community at RDC by providing quality education."

Donkeys and carts

In July Pastor Aziz Khursheed had the satisfaction of providing a donkey and cart to two poor Christian families. A third received a horse and *tanga* (carriage). Nasir Masih worked in the brick kiln for 20 years, but was unable to send his four children to school. "Now I got a *tanga* and am riding it. I get sufficient amount from it."

The Starfish Asia Fund plans to give funds to Pastor Aziz to give similar help to five more families.



Special people Special needs

Twenty-eight handicapped children now attend the School for Special needs in Sharakpur overseen by Arshad and his wife Nighat. The Sharakpur School is a project of the Fellowship of Christ and is supported by the Starfish Asia Fund. Ashley Arshad has written: "I have promised to give 2 sewing machines to the Sharakpur School and we need to have two or three wheelchairs and about 15 chairs for the handicapped children to teach them to sit and eat at the table."

The doctor who attends to the free clinic in Lahore now also visits Sharakpur two days each week to provide free consultation and treatment to the poor.

Give the children a chance!

Christians in Pakistan are a 2% minority in a land of 160 million Muslims. Though guaranteed full rights under the Constitution, it is no surprise that many Christians are treated as second-class citizens and are intimidated by the constant promotion of Islam. Furthermore, due to their origins, the Christian community is largely found among the poorest of the poor; mostly illiterate and quite ignorant of their faith.

The government education system in Pakistan is totally inadequate to meet the need. The Asian Human Rights Commission states that 'Pakistan offers worse conditions for children than any other country in South Asia...'

About 23 million children in Pakistan have never been to school... Some churches run private schools – but their fees are beyond the reach of most Christians.

By promoting free schools for poor Christian children – which is a high priority for the Starfish Asia Fund – we are preparing the next generation of Christians, not only equipped to have decent jobs and to take their place in society, but also with faith in Christ and an understanding of the Scriptures.

These are our brothers and sisters – we owe them a chance in life!



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US\$ gifts for Starfish Asia may be sent to Kevin Reilly at the following address:

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I was walking the beach one morning and saw a young man flinging starfish into the sea. I asked him why he did it. "Because if I don't, they will die in the noonday sun." "But there are thousands of starfish on this beach. What difference does it make?" "It makes a big difference to this one," was his reply.