



The next generation

William and Ruth live in a small Christian community at the heart of a bamboo plantation close to the eastern border of Pakistan. William owns his own home and had a steady job cutting bamboos. Their lives were stable and secure—but not content. Their



concern was the children of the poorly paid Christians in the village, who had no school to attend, no future to look forward to. In 2005 they opened a school in their own home which was quickly filled with children.

Today's unsung heroes preparing for tomorrow's world

William and Ruth were slow to ask for help, but we came to know their needs and arranged a grant to build an extension to their home to make space for new classrooms. William left his job to help his wife with the growing school and Starfish Asia began to provide a small regular grant. We could do no less to help William and Ruth give these children a future. Our prayer is that they may come to know Christ and to be equipped to face tomorrow's world.



Unsung heroes



Pakistan's real Emergency

A State of Emergency was declared in Pakistan on the evening of 3rd November in order to stabilize the country and 'rescue democracy'.

We now hear that the Emergency will be lifted on 16th December. The real emergency however is not over—that is the emergency that grips the 80 million Pakistanis struggling to survive on less than £1 or \$2 a day.

Our special concern as Christians is for the 3 or 4 million of our brothers and sisters in Pakistan who are too poor even to send their children to school. Some heroic men and women of faith are working to make a difference, and they need our support. *That surely is the real emergency!*

—Mike Wakely

In the past month I have again been visiting our Starfish Asia partners in Pakistan—as well as some others we are still not able to help. I am moved by the sheer heroism and faith of so many Pakistani Christians. It's not just that they are doing well in meeting the needs of the poor. Very often they are doing it on a shoestring, with little promise of outside help. These are the ones we love to come alongside!



The village children of Akhtarabad

Sajida spent two years in Bible School in England and had to choose whether to return to her village or to take up the opportunities that were offered to her overseas. She chose to return to her village. With no assurance of regular income or support, she bought land and built a small school that opened in October to 20 Christian village children.

Starfish Asia has so far not been able to contribute much to this magnificent project.



The Gospel School

Shamshad and Rubina's Gospel School in Bilal Town has grown to 200 children, excited that they have a school to attend and teachers that care for them. Starfish Asia provided some support to enable them to rent a better building, but we quickly realized that more money was needed to provide furniture, more space and better salaries. We have now provided regular funding and some money for furniture. Shamshad and Rubina have shown their faith and determination to make a difference in their community even when funds were not available.

The Bible gives a catalogue of heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. The writer runs out of space ("Time would fail me to tell..."), and so have we. Salome who runs a small school for Christian children in her home; Ashraf and Wilma with 15 girls crowding their house; pastor Iqbal and the 12 disabled children who call him 'papa'... We long to be able to provide the support they need to do their job.

Ian Stackhouse, pastor of Guildford Baptist Church (seen here on the fun train with the girls of the Ananias Home for the Blind), visited Pakistan in November. We asked him to record his impressions.

Quite apart from the cricket, which I love, and the music, which is wonderful, my brief trip to Lahore in November of this year was truly inspiring. As Pastor of Guildford Baptist Church, which is a supporter of Starfish Asia, I was keen for Mike to show me around the various projects in Lahore, as well as preach in various churches of course. Brochures are good, but there is no substitute for first-hand experience. And what I found there were some truly remarkable people, doing some quite outstanding work among the needy with relatively few resources. We were garlanded more times in ten days that I have been in my whole life; the Pakistani Christians have a delightful way of receiving you. But more importantly I was impressed by the quality of the work being done, and the dedication of the people Mike has connected with.



Pakistan is a country in crisis. I left on the day after President Musharraf declared a State of Emergency — a President very popular with the Christians, by the way. The New Testament, with its emphasis on suffering and persecution makes a lot of sense in Pakistan, far more than it does in our affluent west. Thus, it is no surprise that the church is alive, the worship is rich, and the Christians are in good heart.



Ian handing out apples to the children at the Brick Kiln School



The Miracle Ministries family

When in 2003 we first started talking to Rubina and her family about supporting them to run a school, they were not sitting back waiting for the money. They had already gathered 50 children from poor homes in their neighbourhood and they were teaching them in their front room. We finally yielded and provided a little financial help. Immediately they launched out to open a school with 230 students—a huge leap of faith both for them and for us. Now they are running two schools with 400 children—not to mention the parents and families they visit and serve. *That is why they belong in our list of heroes!*

Scared of heights?

Khalida Nelson is mother to the 20 girls in her care at the Ananias Home for Blind Girls in Lahore. She loves to take every opportunity for an outing and in November it was our privilege to go with them to Lahore's Gulshan Park – a grassy area with a boating lake, swings and roundabouts – all the trappings of a fun park. We began with a picnic and a short performance from the girls. Their skits usually make gentle mockery of one another—and of us—the Punjabis have a unique sense of humour. Then they went on the fun rides, the model train (for the timid at heart) and the swinging galleon (for those not scared of heights). This is a truly special family...



Making a Difference

Steve Tamburello is now the US Director of *Starfish Asia*, a non-profit corporation registered in the State of Ohio. Steve is working on national charity status, but \$ checks may now be paid to *Starfish Asia* at the US address:

Starfish Asia
P.O. Box 603, Westerville,
OH. 43081 (USA)

Steve spent two weeks in Pakistan in November. He writes the following:

One of the deepest longings we have in life is to know we are making a difference, that we are doing something significant with our lives. I wish to thank each of you who choose to pray for the children and families of Pakistan and those of you who make financial investments in them through *Starfish Asia*. The Gospel is being preached, people are coming to Christ. Thousands of children are receiving an academic and biblical education in school. Family needs are being met and people are being shown God's love because of your participation.

I can share with you from first-hand experience that remarkable progress is being made in the ministries supported by *Starfish Asia*. *Know that you are making a significant difference in this world through your continued partnership with Starfish Asia in God's work in Pakistan.*

Mr. Ghauri's dream

Mr. Ghauri was a teacher in a Government school for many years. On retirement he opened a private school to provide low-cost education to the poor in his Christian community. That is when he met *Starfish Asia*.

We had selected 60 Christian children from poor homes and we were looking for a school with low fees that could give them a start in life. We chose Mr. Ghauri's school. That was in 2003.

The Ghauri Wisdom school at that time required very low fees (which attracted us to them) — not more than £1 /



\$2 a month), but the school facilities were very poor—small, cramped classrooms, almost no furniture. Finally this year *Starfish Asia* helped Mr. Ghauri to rent a larger building with rooms suitable for a school. We also provided money for school furniture and increased our monthly grant, so that he could hire extra teachers and increase salaries.

The Ghauri Wisdom School gave us a special welcome when we visited them in November!



Beyond Graduation

More than fifty students from schools sponsored by the Starfish Asia Fund passed their Matriculation exam this year. That is an achievement for those who had no hope of being able to study—but it is only a stepping stone in life. Here are a few stories of 'our' graduates who aspire to go further. Pray for them...



"You have made my life"



Kiran Clarence has no father. Her mother and two brothers work to meet the needs of the family. Kiran had the chance to study at the Holy Shepherd

School in Karachi. She passed her Matric exam this year.

"Sir, I was not able to pay my monthly fee to school and I know that my mother couldn't pay the fees for the last one and a half years. I did not know how I could ever pass my Matric if people wouldn't help me. Now, when I passed matric, you are helping me to get my Intermediate education. Please convey my gratitude to donors. Without their help I would not achieve this. You have made my life. Thank you."

Starfish Asia Fund gave a small grant to pay college admission fees for some students.



A dream come true



Dennis Younis studied for several years at the Lahore Christian High School, passing his Matric exam privately with a good mark. His ambition was to go on to college,

but he was prevented by the high cost of admission and books. The Fellowship of Christ has a fund for people in need and was able to pay for his admission to Forman Christian College. "I am so grateful to Ashley and Seema, who have made it possible for me to go to FC College." FOC also provided Dennis with a bicycle to reduce the costs of his travel to college each day.



"I had no hope..."



Faisal Nazir had no hope of reaching Matric level. His father was sick and he had to start work, together with his brother Daniel, who also passed Matric this

year. He assumed he would be a sweep-er all his life, because he had no hope of going on to college.

"I had no hope of paying my college fee and buying books and uniform. I was not able to pay my examination fee, but it was paid by the school. I am thankful to Anser who is caring for me more than my father. Now, I hope that I will be a doctor one day. I wish I too could reach out to help poor and needy people.

"I pray the Lord may bless the donors who helped the guys like us to continue our studies. My brother Daniel and I are the first and only boys from our family who are in college."

Starfish Asia Fund

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As I walked on the beach one morning, I saw a young man picking up starfish from the sand and flinging them back into the sea. "If I don't save them, they will die in the noonday sun," he said.

"But there are thousands of starfish on this beach. What difference does it make to save just a few?"

He looked down at the starfish in his hand and flung it to safety in the waves. "It makes a big difference to this one."

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