



# KARACHI

Is it really “one of the most violent cities on earth”?



## What future for this child of a Karachi slum?

TIME Magazine, in its January 15 issue, called Karachi “dangerous, chaotic, ungovernable—and essential to global stability.” Last year in Karachi “more than a thousand people died in ethnic turf wars.”

**Karachi is doomed.**

**Karachi is indestructible**

Behind these horrific headlines live 18 million people who want to survive and live in peace.

Among them tens of thousands of Christians are battling oppressive poverty and living in squalid slums—dreaming of a better future.

Karachi has several fine Church schools—and many Government schools. Very few of them are accessible to most Christians, who work on low wages as labourers, sweeping the streets and cleaning the sewers. There is however some good news for Karachi — see the next page.



# HOPE for KARACHI

**“We must live together without fear.”**

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> January was a terrible night for Christians in New Mianwali Colony, Karachi. Some Christian boys were in church preparing for the Sunday service. They switched on the loud speaker to play worship songs. It was the time of prayer at the local mosque, and the boys from the mosque came over and began to abuse and beat the Christians. One of the Muslims was beaten and landed in hospital with 25 stitches in his head. Then the Police arrived.

Anser Javed visited the hospital and offered all possible help. The next day Anser met with Christian and Muslim leaders to try to resolve the conflict. “There were more than 50 armed Muslims surrounding us. I have witnessed the power of the Lord. The Muslim *imam* said that they wanted to be at peace with the Christians: ‘Our Prophet said it is our duty to take care of minorities.’”

A month later Anser wrote: “Yesterday evening, I had a cup of tea with the *mullah*, who is the head of the mosque that created the problem. We were laughing and had a wonderful time. Mullah Furqan said that this incident had saved us from any big trouble. I told him it is written in the Bible.”

Pray for peace and mutual understanding between the communities in New Mianwali Colony.



## Two beacons of light

Starfish Asia supports two schools in Christian colonies in Karachi. Both have faced tension and trouble in recent weeks — Karachi lives up to its reputation for violence and crime — and both can bear witness to God’s mercy and provision.



### Morning Star Primary School Zia Colony, Karachi

The school was broken into in January and about £200 was stolen. Destined for teachers’ salaries, the money has been replaced. The school is in a very rough area with no paved roads and set amidst depressing poverty. George Thomas (*pictured, left, with his wife Fehmida*) expects to have a total of 320 children by the time new classes commence in April.

In our newsletter four years ago (2008) we reported:

The Morning Star Primary School opened in Korangi 2½, Karachi in January and now has 50 excited children. There is lots of room for improvement—but at least it is open!

Little did we realise how the school would grow to serve so many.

### Holy Shepherd Grammar School Mianwali Colony, Karachi

Anser Javed sent us this story of just one of the students who graduated from his school last year:

“Nabeel Basheer (*pictured above right, together with his new bicycle*) passed his matriculation exam last year from Holy Shepherd and received a scholarship to go to college. He was very happy to be able to continue his studies. His ambition is to be a Chartered Accountant which he believes he can easily achieve with the support of a Starfish Asia scholarship. He walks 45 minutes each way to go for tuitions in the evening because his father can’t afford to pay for transport. I offered to buy him a bicycle. Nabeel said he had never ridden a bicycle but was willing to learn.” He has now got his bicycle!

## Vocational Training for the Christians of Mianwali Colony

**February 21 Karachi: Anser Javed signs the agreement with the Consul General of Japan in Karachi for the construction of a new Vocational Training Centre for the Christians of Mianwali Colony.**

With Starfish Asia help, in 2008 Anser purchased land next to the Holy Shepherd School in the hope that one day he could build a Centre for skills training for Christian young people from Mianwali Colony. That day has arrived, thanks to a generous grant from the Japanese Government that provides 90% of the funding for construction of the building. Further funding — and a lot of hard work — will be required before the Centre is open and ready to serve the community. In his response at the signing, Anser thanked the Japanese people and added: “Each training course will accommodate 15 young people and more than 200 will be trained in different skills every year.” Building will begin in March.

# The crisis facing Pakistan's Christians

*"We need to do much more than put sticking plasters on the wounds. We need to cure the disease."*

Two years ago, on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010 in Lahore, 12 year-old Shazia Basir died while working as a servant in the home of a wealthy lawyer. According to the *post mortem* examination, her body had 13 injuries "caused by blunt means, while rest of the injuries were caused by a sharp edged weapon." Her employer was arrested but quickly acquitted and the case was closed. Shazia was from a Christian family. Her funeral was attended by a large number of prominent Bishops and Church leaders.

Such stories have been widely reported in the Christian press. We receive them regularly from our own contacts and friends in Pakistan. The killer of two children in 2009, one of them a student at a school supported by Starfish Asia, was released without charge in 2009. Justice is expensive and is rarely accessible to poor Christians. There is no doubt that discrimination and injustice are on the increase.

The most notorious of these cases regularly attract the attention of international Christian Human Rights organisations who do a fine work to provide help for those who have suffered. The injustice of Asia's death sentence for blasphemy in 2010 is widely known. Her husband and five children receive help from several Christian organisations.



## Plasters on the wound or a cure for the disease

We receive many requests to help Pakistani Christians suffering the results of prejudice, poverty and injustice. We can only respond to a few. Thanks to a generous donor, we were able to provide funds for Christmas gifts of food and clothing to many widows and poor families and we have also provided for polio and hepatitis vaccinations for children. We recently highlighted the case of Waseem, a disabled boy who lost his job, and we are forwarding funds to help him open his own workshop. But these are plasters on the open wounds, not cures for the disease.

We have consulted with many Pakistani Christians and without doubt there will be no solution for prejudice and injustice without Christian-based education, available and accessible to the poor. Christians are currently deprived of this privilege by a Government that makes no realistic provision for poor minorities.

It is the poor who are defenceless against injustice. It is the illiterate who are exploited, the daughters of the servants and sweepers who are raped and abused. We have many dreams of a community that can stand tall in Pakistani society, with the dignity of literacy, pride in their Christian identity and the ability to answer their accusers. It can only happen when a generation of the poor and the downtrodden have gained their Masters degrees and taken their place alongside the nation's elite.

Twelve year-old Shazia Bashir should never have been killed—but she should never have been serving in the home of the wealthy. She should have been in school studying for her exams, but her family was too poor. We have a dream one day to open the Shazia Bashir Memorial School in her honour.

people matter



## New Director for CAP

While Kaleem Din and Nagina are out of Pakistan for an extended period, Mrs. Hazel Waseem (*above, right*) has been appointed Director of Community Advance Programme. Having been a teacher at a leading Catholic High School for many years, she has much experience in both teaching and management and is well known to us as a person of both integrity and ability. Hazel is ably assisted by her Project Co-ordinator, Mrs Shahida Shafqat (*above, left*), and a strong team of School principals and staff.

## Kingdom of Heaven School

Babar, who directs the KOHM School, and Pastor Ernest run a Bible School for the Christians of Village Dera Chahal.

"Twenty students are learning the basic concepts of the Word of God. All our students are showing good interest. We are doing it with a great passion. Please keep these students in your prayers."

View the KOHM website at: [http:// kohmpk.org](http://kohmpk.org)

## Bibles for Bilal Town Christians



Shamshad Luka who runs the Gospel School and Church in Bilal Town, requested 200 Bibles for poor Christians in his locality. These were provided through a Starfish Asia grant. This is Shamshad's report:

"People were really thankful for this gift. Mr Shoukat said: 'In my all life I saw the Bible in the Priest's hand but now the Bible is in my hand. This is a blessing for me.' Mr Javed said: 'It was difficult for me to purchase a Bible, but now I am thankful to Gospel Church who gave me this gift.' This year we need 400 more Bibles."



"I take pride in having the privilege to become the father of the 26 daughters of Abba Home! My life companion, Wilma, and I aim to ensure that all of these girls entrusted to us become worthy members of their families and citizens of Pakistan and the World!"

Ashraf Naheed, Director  
Orphan Care Organization

## Abba Home

Ashraf and Wilma have never lacked initiative or compassion in their care for 26 girls from abusive families and broken homes.



View the excellent website at: [www.abbaorphancare.com](http://www.abbaorphancare.com)  
Request the 2012 Annual Report from [mike@starfishasia.com](mailto:mike@starfishasia.com)

In 2011 Abba Home celebrated Mothers Day, Fathers' Day, Peace Day, Independence Day, Easter, Christmas and more. They visited the Museum, the Wild Life Park and even hosted an American Jazz Band to teach the children.



## another BIG Thankyou to our Volunteers!



Thank you to the generous churches in Chilton Cantelo, Ashington, Mudford, Rimpleton and Marston Magna in Somerset and for an amazing 10-month campaign of events and initiatives that raised more than £5,000 for the work of the Miracle School in Lahore.

## Hard to beat

As part of the churches' initiative to raise funds for the Miracle Schools, Chris and Penny Cope-land participated in an annual Cruiser-Racer trans-Atlantic event. Leaving Las Palmas on 20<sup>th</sup> November, they reached St.Lucia 16½ days later.



Penny wrote afterwards: "It was an amazing experience never to be forgotten with both terrifying and exhilarating moments... The sponsorship raised a grand total of £843. It was a cause close to my heart and I am over the moon for the children whose lives we have helped."

## We look forward to hear from you

- I'm interested. Please tell me more about Starfish Asia
- Please send me the regular Newsletter
- I enclose a gift of £ / US\$ / \_\_\_\_\_ for Starfish Asia

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In UK, return the coupon to: **Freepost RRAY-KKCU-SGZC**  
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In USA, return to: Starfish Asia, P.O. Box 603, Westerville, OH. 43081 (USA)

In Singapore: Contact Geraldine Lee at [Geraldine@starfishasia.com](mailto:Geraldine@starfishasia.com)

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Starfish Asia is a member of the Fundraising Standards Board



## STARFISH ASIA

giving hope to the children of Pakistan

I was walking on the beach one morning and I saw a young man picking up starfish from the sand and flinging them back into the sea. I asked why he did it. "If I don't, they will die in the midday sun," he said. "But there are thousands of starfish," I replied. "What difference does it make to save 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!" he said.

[www.starfishasia.com](http://www.starfishasia.com)

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