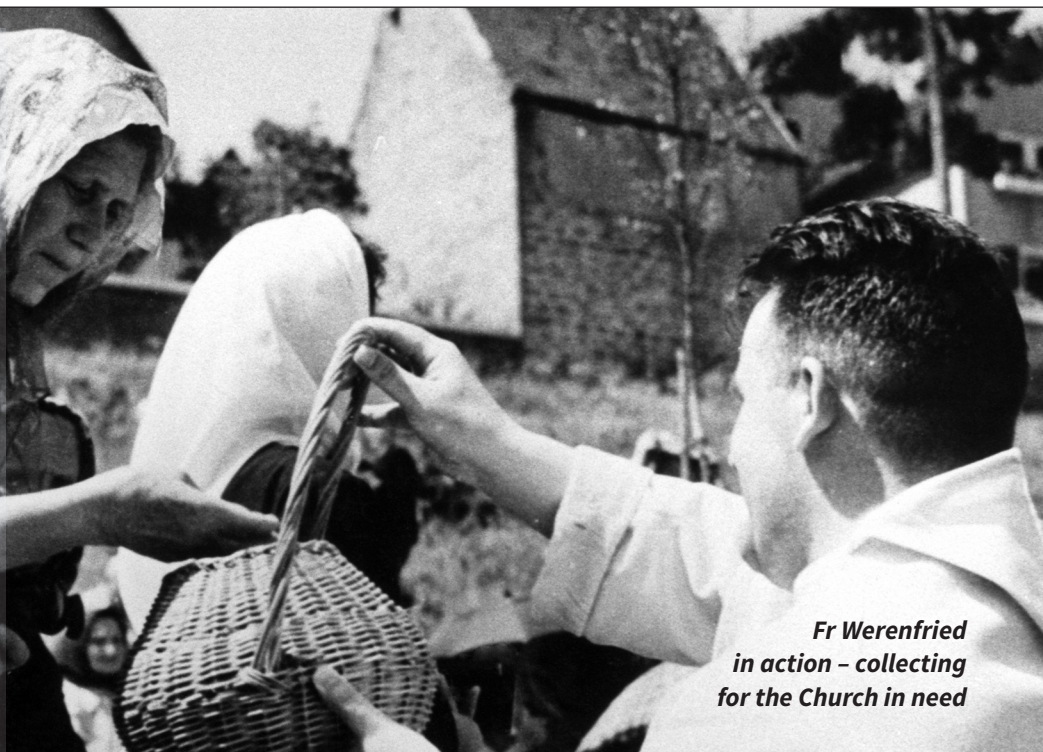


“I have no other capital than your kind hearts. Hearts of saints, but mostly hearts of sinners. The same law of love is binding on us all.”

Fr Werenfried van Straaten
Founder of ACN



**Fr Werenfried
in action – collecting
for the Church in need**

Dear Friends,

People sometimes say, “We don’t talk about money” or “All they ever talk about is money”. It is not easy for us to talk about money, especially in the Church, which is so often attacked over this very topic. Yet money enables much to be achieved, even in the Church. The practical business of living costs money. That is why we have our fundraising talks and appeals for donations. The apostles themselves had a common purse and Jesus too spoke about the correct way to deal with money. Once he watched as people put money in the Temple offerings box (Mk 12:41-44). Many rich people gave large sums, while a poor widow threw in just two small coins – all she had to live on. It was precisely this “widow’s mite” that Jesus held up to his disciples to show where the true value of the Gospel lies – she had given all she had, more than all the rest.

There are many good people who are willing to give generously for a good cause. Many give because they have something to spare, others because they want to look good and still others to ease a troubled con-

science. Only God knows our true motives. His gaze alone can measure the value of our giving. It is precisely in the paltry sum of two copper coins that he shows us the true attitude of heart he expects of us. The poor widow gives away the last resources she has to rely on and entrusts herself totally to God. For “whoever would save his life will lose it” (Mk 8:35). All that matters to God is our commitment and our giving in a man-



“How much am I willing to give for the House of God and the community of the Church?”

ner that transcends the logic of human calculation.

The widow puts her last remaining coins in the temple collection box. This money was intended for the maintenance and improvement of this great Jewish sanctuary. After the fire in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, many ‘big businesses’ and super-rich individuals promised millions for the rebuilding of this piece of ‘world cultural heritage’. Billionaires outdid each other in offering donations. God alone can judge their motives.

Of course we need great symbols and cultural monuments, but above all we need a house where God can dwell. Otherwise, as with the Temple in Jerusalem, not one stone will be left standing on another (Mk 13:2). The purpose of our gifts must be to build up the House of God, the community of the Church. This is a community always in need of repair, with its diminished fervour, widespread loss of faith, intellectual pride,

inadequate resources. Yet it is truly worth investing in, so that the House of God may become truly beautiful and the community dwelling within it worthy of the gifts of God. Jesus held back nothing for himself. He threw

everything into the divine offering box of the Eucharist. It is this Sacrament of Love that is the true sustenance of the Church. How much am I willing to give for the House of God and the community of the Church?

My grateful blessing on you all,

P. Martin M. Barta

Fr Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



Making dreams come true

“Blessed are they who dwell in your house, forever singing your praise” (Psalm 84). Bishop Bassène at the building site.



Dreaming of a chapel: Sister Candelaria and some of the residents.



When fire devastated the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris this April, one newspaper declared: “In the week of the Passion of Christ, Notre Dame is burning. In the heart of a city without God the very stones began to cry out.”



Stones can indeed cry out. And they do not have to belong to UNESCO’s world cultural heritage in order to do so. The small but growing parish community of Saint Germaine in Marsassoum, in **Senegal**, are dreaming of such stones. For “they are the visible sign of the Church and its presence in a Muslim environment”, says Bishop Jean-Pierre Bassène of the Diocese of Kolda, explaining his request for help.

In 2003 there were barely a hundred parishioners in the community, all well able to fit into their small chapel. But their dreams had been too modest and so the Holy Spirit blew powerfully. The number of baptisms increased along with the numbers of people turning from animist beliefs to the Catholic Faith. Work to build a church (see illustration left) with seating for 250, a slender campanile and imposing doorway, befitting the entrance to the Lord’s House, started in 2016.

Many parishioners rolled up their sleeves to help and the walls began to rise up. However, resources soon fell short and inflation along with the cost of materials and

transport swallowed up their remaining reserves, so the “visible sign” has not yet been completed. We have promised **£12,800**, so that it may indeed become visible.

Similarly, in La Ceiba in **Honduras**, the Franciscan Sisters have their own dream. They would like to have a house chapel built in their Divine Providence old people’s home, where they can pray with and for the 30 residents under their care. Bishop Miguel Lenihan of La Ceiba also anticipated something else the Sisters needed, namely decent accommodation and a private room for themselves. It can be hard work caring for elderly people, many of whom they have quite literally brought in off the streets. In addition to this calling, the five Sisters are also involved in the youth and family apostolate and catechesis.

The retirement home depends on outside donations. Doctors and local clinics provide medication while friends provide food. Money is spent only on the most basic essentials. There is absolutely no additional funding for building projects. So we have promised **£17,100** to help the Sisters’ dreams come true. As divine providence is better than any dream.



At a glance: the dormitory in the Divine Providence Retirement Home.



Seeking shared values

**Reconciliation is not always easy:
A workshop in Jerusalem for “multipliers”.**



**Who we are:
Fr James describes the life of Christians.**



According to Pope Francis, an indissoluble bond unites us all in the richness of our ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences. But in order to recognise this diversity as a true richness, we need formation of spirit and heart.

The formation required for us to recognise this wealth and so overcome prejudices can be conveyed through discussion groups, symposia, courses and seminars. The Centre for Peace in the archdiocese of Lahore in **Pakistan** offers a whole range of approaches for the promotion of dialogue between Christians and Muslims. In this way “we can come to know the religion of the other person and create a culture of tolerance, acceptance and peaceful co-

existence”, says the director of the centre, Dominican Fr James Channan. Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Archbishop of Karachi, also recognises the importance of this dialogue, given the current situation in Pakistan. He adds, “We are seeking shared values. We are offering a message that will help to overcome prejudices.” The centre has established a three-year project that will run until 2021. In this overwhelmingly Islamic nation, Christians make up barely

1.8 percent of the population and over 40 percent of the population can neither read nor write. Violence, discrimination against minorities, fanaticism and abuse of the so-called blasphemy laws are a daily occurrence, so peaceful dialogue is no mere matter of window dressing but rather one of sheer survival. Fr James has asked our help, and we have promised him **£12,800**.

Coming together in a spirit of forgiveness is the goal of the Rössing Center for Education and Dialogue in Jerusalem. Only in this way can reconciliation grow in hearts and minds. Around 100 Christians, Jews and Muslims from Israel and Palestine are taking part in a new, two-year course, which involves several intensive multi-day seminars and workshops in Israel and Jordan. Delegates are being trained as experts in conflict resolution and later will also serve as “multipliers”, who will spread the message of practical, brotherly love to others.

The course, “Fostering Reconciliation, and Overcoming Hatred” is a model project and quite unique in terms of Israeli-Palestinian relations. The total cost of the two-year project is £77,470. ACN is contributing **£42,700**.



Equal dignity for all: young women in Lahore explain.



Space for three times the number

In **Mali**, in the Sahel, many Christian communities are flourishing, despite the shadow of Islamist terror. The parish of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus in Sebenikoro, close to the capital city Bamako, is just 20 years old and the parish church accommodates 400 people. Over three times this number attend Holy Mass every Sunday and when it comes to baptisms, weddings and funerals, they have to celebrate in the open air. "What is that among so many?" one might ask as one of the disciples did before Jesus multiplied the loaves (Jn 6:9). The parishoners are now planning to enlarge the church thanks to your help. Fr Jacques Badji is "overjoyed" and together with his people sends us his heartfelt thanks. They are praying for you and "asking the Lord to bless your mission".

Need, love and thanks – your letters

"Still a great deal to be done"

It was not without reason that our dear Fr Werenfried used to say to us, "I can actually only say that there is still a great deal to be done." I still think back on his words and recall his visit to our village. I will continue to support Fr Werenfried's mission as long as I live. I wish God's continued blessing upon your important work.

A benefactor in Belgium

Helping to spread the Faith

I would like this money to be used in support of priests and religious and their work of spreading the Faith. There are enough charitable organisations to help people in physical need. When people are taught about God and His promises, they can help themselves, which they cannot do if they don't know God.

A benefactor in Australia

My offering for Christians in Africa

My name is Cyprien, and I am 12 years old. My parents are benefactors, and that is how I know about ACN. I would like my donation to be used to help Christians in Africa, above all in Nigeria where there is so much violence. My brother and I organised a savings box during Lent, to raise money for ACN, and I would like to continue it for my part. All the best with your work.

A young benefactor in France

Seeds of love

Every donation should be seen by the one giving as a seed of love, which must be planted in fertile soil. This is an excellent opportunity for us. ACN is this rich soil, we are the sowers and donations are the seeds. God is the one who will make them bear fruit. So let us plant generously.

A benefactor in Brazil



Thomas Heine-Geldern,
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

Buildings convey a sense of identity, security and common purpose. This was something we all experienced as we helplessly watched footage of the burning Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. There was a widespread sense of loss – not only among Parisians – and the wave of generosity it prompted for the rebuilding of this symbol of the Christian West exceeded all expectations.

At the same time, however, many of us were also aware that many churches and pastoral buildings around the world have gone up in flames and the reasons for this have not been technical or accidental, but hatred, intolerance and rabid nationalism.

It has been our privilege for decades now to help our embattled brothers and sisters in their home countries in the building of churches, seminaries and religious houses so they can have the opportunity to give and receive, to celebrate Eucharist together, to pray, teach the Faith to their children and train their own priests and religious.

The fact that we are able to do this is something we owe to your kind generosity and in order to continue to do so, at a time of the dramatically increasing persecution of Christians, I humbly ask your continued generous support.

Yours in gratitude,

Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Our address: Aid to the Church in Need, 12–14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA. Please use the Freepost envelope – it saves you money and helps us. If you give by standing order or direct debit or have sent a donation recently, please accept our sincere thanks. This Mirror is for your interest and information.

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ACN UNITED KINGDOM

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Annual Report 2018



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www.acnuk.org

12-14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA ☎ 020 8642 8668

Dear Friends,

Thanks to your generosity we were once again able last year to fulfil our mission and support over 5,000 projects. The publication of the most recent *Religious Freedom in the World* report has prompted media interest as never before, and inspired interest and real concern in many different countries.

Pope Francis constantly reminds us that we can all be "Artisans of peace". Our contribution here consists in praying for one another, informing people about the situation of our persecuted brothers and sisters, and giving practical help. We are quite certain that the combined efforts of you, our generous benefactors, along with our own committed staff and co-workers, together ultimately serve the cause of peace. But peace does not just mean the absence of war, but the peace that God alone can give us, and which has been the constant theme of the Scriptures during the Easter season.

Rest assured, we are determined to continue our mission as a pastoral charity at the service of peace and will indeed do so, with your help!

With our grateful thanks and good wishes,



Thomas Heine-Geldern,
International
Executive President



Neville Kyrke-Smith,
National Director

Thomas Heine-Geldern *Neville Kyrke-Smith*

Where your help went:



The figures below relate to projects funded by all 23 of ACN's national offices in 2018.



*e.g. help for refugees and other emergency aid provided via the local Catholic Churches.

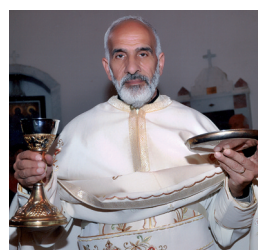
• 2,470 Construction projects around the world

We funded or co-funded chapels and churches, convents, retreat houses and seminaries, also helping repair and rebuild hundreds of houses for returning Christian refugees in Iraq and Syria.



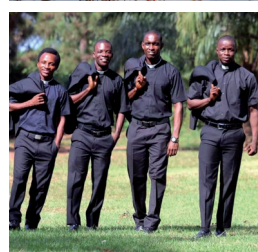
• 1,421,001 Mass Offerings

1.4 million Masses: On average, every 22 seconds, somewhere in the world, Holy Mass was being offered for the intentions of one of ACN's benefactors, which means 40,569 priests in 87 countries were supported, spiritually and financially, in this way. Most of these Mass intentions went to priests in India, Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania and Venezuela.



• 11,817 Seminarians supported

Thanks to you, we were able to support one in every 10 seminarians worldwide. Most of these were in Africa (5,600), Asia (2,391) and Latin America (2,375). Special emphasis in their formation was placed on the areas of human maturity and spirituality.



• 11,046 Religious Sisters supported in their apostolate and/or training

This equates to one in every 60 women religious worldwide. In most cases this was support for basic formation or further studies.



• 370 cars, 189 motorcycles, 342 bicycles, 2 buses, 2 lorries, 2 boats

During 2018 most of the vehicles went to Ukraine, India and Belarus.

You supported a total of 5,019 projects during 2018

Overall, the number of requests and applications for support rose slightly, to 7,607, but sadly, as in every year, we had to turn down many projects – more than 2,000 last year – for lack of funding.

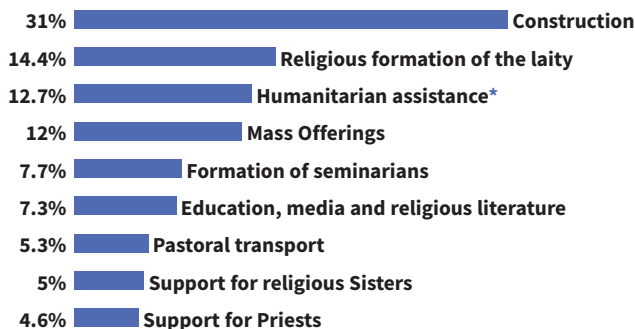
You helped in 139 different countries and 1,160 different dioceses. You helped over 14,000 catechists, above all in Latin America and Asia. On your behalf we were also able to reach out to those hungering for the Word of God by sending out over 1 million religious books in a huge number of different languages.

As in previous years, overall the biggest proportion of our aid was spent on building projects. The number of such projects has, in fact, doubled because of initiatives such as the reconstruction programmes we are supporting in the Middle East.



These figures relate to aid projects funded by the UK office of ACN in 2018.

ACN (UK) figures

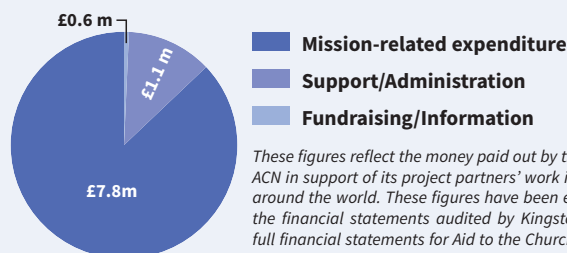


*e.g. help for refugees and other emergency aid provided via the local Catholic Churches.



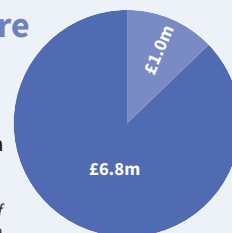
ACN's 2018 Westminster Event: The UK's national director Neville Kyrke-Smith (far right) stands with Sister Luma from Iraq, and friends and family of Asia Bibi – the first woman to be sentenced to death for blasphemy in Pakistan.

ACN (UK) detailed use of funds



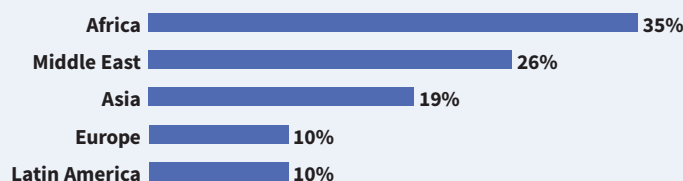
These figures reflect the money paid out by the UK office of ACN in support of its project partners' work in 80 countries around the world. These figures have been extracted from the financial statements audited by Kingston Smith. The full financial statements for Aid to the Church in Need (UK) are available on the Charity Commission website.

Mission-related expenditure



Mission-related expenditure is expressed as a percentage of total charity income, excluding trading and legacies receivable.

Aid allocated per region



Thanks to you, the UK office of ACN was able to allocate a total of £7.8 million – 87.4 percent of our annual income – for mission-related expenditure, specifically project work and evangelisation, communication and advocacy. Although the charity's income was down in 2018, meaning we could fund fewer projects, we were very grateful that your faithful support meant ACN (UK) was able to help 385 vital projects around the globe. God bless you for your love.

Worse than ever before

Much of our help has gone to Africa and the Middle East – between them they received over half the total aid paid out both by the UK office and internationally. In these regions the needs of Christians are growing, and we have been able to help directly through the local Church.

In Syria and Iraq alone, ACN's 23 national offices supported a range of projects amounting to more than £13 million in 2018. The Middle East as a whole received a quarter of our total aid budget. One of ACN's key concerns was repairing and rebuilding of the homes and houses of Christians in Iraq who had been driven out by extremist group Daesh (ISIS) – another was emergency aid for Syrian IDPs and refugees. The continent of Africa, where the Church has also been ravaged by extremist groups, received £17.5 million (27 percent of the total). Within Africa, many aid requests came from Nigeria, Madagascar and Ethiopia. Other countries that received significant international aid from the charity included India (£4.5 million), Ukraine (£2.9 million) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (£2.5 million).

In 2019 and 2020 our aid for the Christians in the Middle East, and especially in Syria, will continue to be absolutely necessary. Their situation today remains very serious. Although the fighting has subsided, so has the amount of global publicity – houses are ruined and the hospitals lack even the most basic equipment and medication. Meanwhile, many of the major aid agencies have pulled back.

At the same time there is still a pressing need to continue supporting the Church's catechetical mission in Asia, where persecution is rising, and Latin America, where the activities of various sects are causing harm to the faithful.



'Thank you' – from the renovated kindergarten of the Sisters of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour in Aleppo, Syria. Their gratitude is echoed by so many other religious, children and persecuted Christians around the world.