

# Introducing PAKISTAN

پاکستان

with prayer guide





# Pakistan: An Overview

Pakistan: a land of contrasts. Pakistan: a young nation in an ancient landscape. Pakistan: a place of mountains, rivers, deserts, glaciers, and bustling cities; a country of over 200 million inhabitants moving rapidly forward into an ever-changing future.

You may think you already know Pakistan from what you hear on the news but the reality of life in the 6th largest country in the world may well be different from what you imagine. Pakistan is a place which defies stereotypes. It contains the remains of a 5,000 year old civilisation and the thriving, modern metropolis of Karachi, one of the largest cities in the world. It features immense, sweeping deserts and picturesque mountain meadows. Its population is as diverse as its landscapes too: hundreds of languages are spoken in Pakistan, many different ethnicities are represented, and although Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim country there are people of numerous different religions living alongside their Muslim neighbours.

Yet this is a turbulent place too: a region with a volatile history and an uncertain future, a rapidly-growing population placing an increasing strain on Pakistan's natural resources, a place in which religious difference can sometimes provoke outbursts of violence. We want to be praying for God to bless Pakistan and its people, to pour out his love and his gracious provision on this precious land.

So as you read through this guide, will you pray with us?

## **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for Pakistan, and for the glorious diversity of its land and its people.
- Pray for God's peace to be on Pakistan, especially during turbulent times.



# History of Pakistan

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven*  
**Ecclesiastes 3:1**

Pakistan is a young nation in an ancient landscape. The nation of Pakistan came into existence on August 14th 1947 after long campaign for independence from Britain and for a homeland for the Muslims of south Asia. Led by the indefatigable Mohammed Ali Jinnah this campaign resulted in the creation of Pakistan and the culmination of a dream of Muslim self-determination in the aftermath of British rule. The nation consisted of two halves: East Pakistan, in Bengal, and West Pakistan, sandwiched between Afghanistan, Iran, and the Indian border.

East Pakistan became the independent nation of Bangladesh in 1971 and so the Pakistan of today consists of the provinces of Punjab, Sindh, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, along with the Northern Areas and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan has made huge strides since 1947. At the time of independence it had almost none of the structures nor resources necessary for nation-building and yet since then, and in spite of much turbulence and numerous conflicts, has developed and progressed to a significant degree.

In the years since 1947 Pakistan has demonstrated its resilience, strength, and tenacity. These are characteristics which will stand Pakistan in good stead for the challenges of its future.

## How to Pray:

- Give thanks for the tenacity and stability of Pakistan, even during difficult and chaotic times in its history.
- Pray that the Lord who has sustained Pakistan over the years will continue to protect and uphold it in the future.





# Punjab

*I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys.*  
**Isaiah 41:18**

The word “Punjab” is taken from the words for “five” and “water” and refers to the five rivers which pass through this province on their way to the Arabian Gulf. The Punjab is Pakistan’s most populous province and dominates Pakistani life both economically and politically. It contains some of Pakistan’s most significant cities: the cultural capital of Lahore, the industrial base of Faisalabad, the army headquarters at Rawalpindi, and Multan with its religious shrines.

Yet the Punjab is also a place of extremes. The wealthy élites live lives of comfort and privilege while the less fortunate struggle with poor infrastructure and a lack of opportunities.

## How to Pray

- Pray that the Punjab would continue to create wealth and job opportunities for people and that its wealth would be more evenly distributed.
- Pray that the authorities would seek to uphold the rights and needs of people in other provinces rather than just the Punjab.





# Sindh

*The desert and the parched land will be glad;  
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.  
Like the crocus, it will burst into bloom;  
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.*  
**Isaiah 35:1-2**

Sindh is the second most populous province in Pakistan. It is dominated by the Indus River, which flows through it before reaching the Arabian Gulf, and by the city of Karachi, the economic hub of Pakistan and one of the largest cities in the world. Islam entered the subcontinent through Sindh in 711 AD and the province contains a number of significant Islamic shrines, and is also home for the majority of Pakistan's Hindu community.

In recent years Sindh has been a place of migration and upheaval. Millions of refugees from India – mohajirs – moved to Sindh in the years after 1947, adding another layer to the province's ethnic and political mixture. Sindh's future is likely to depend on how its political complexity, and the fractious relationship between Sindh and Punjab, play out in the years to come.

## How to Pray

- Give thanks for the relative peace that Sindh has experienced in recent years following years of turmoil, particularly in Karachi.
- Pray that the wealth of urban Sindh would be used to benefit the rural poor in the interior of the province.





# Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa

*Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,  
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*  
**Psalm 90:2**

Formerly known as the North-West Frontier Province, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) forms Pakistan's northern border with Afghanistan and has historically been a place of migration, conflict, and intrigue. The Khyber Pass was a route of conquest for armies marching from central Asia into India while the city of Peshawar, the provincial capital, has always been a frontier city with a heady ethnic and linguistic mix. Yet KPK is also a place of astonishing beauty. The Swat Valley and the mountains of Chitral provide some of the most remarkable scenery in the world while the architectural heritage of Peshawar brings past centuries back to elegant life.

In recent years KPK has been troubled by violence and extremism. The province has suffered greatly in the War on Terror while the 2013 terror attack on All Saint's Church, Peshawar, killed dozens of Pakistani Christians. We need to be praying for KPK to experience a future of peace, prosperity, and progress after many years of violence and fear.

## How to Pray

- Give thanks that most of KPK is peaceful and stable after many years of struggling with domestic terrorism.
- Pray that the integration of the Tribal Areas into KPK would result in greater opportunities and an improved standard of living for those living in the Tribal Areas.





# Baluchistan

*He changes a wilderness into a pool of water  
And a dry land into springs of water*  
**Psalm 107:35**

Baluchistan is Pakistan's largest province, covering over 40% of Pakistan's surface area. Yet it is also sparsely populated, underdeveloped, and poor compared to the rest of Pakistan. The province contains significant natural resources including large deposits of natural gas but the fact that these resources are exported elsewhere in Pakistan, while Baluchistan receives poor investment in return and remains poor and neglected, creates resentment. Baluchistan has been afflicted by pro-independence insurgencies since 1947 and these conflicts continue to affect day to day life across the province.

Yet Baluchistan is a place of such potential! The port of Gwadar has seen large-scale investment by China and will benefit Pakistan's economy hugely. There are likely to be further natural resources in Baluchistan waiting to be found and utilised. Let's pray for peace to return to this part of Pakistan so that the potential of the land, and its people, may be fully realised.

#### **How To Pray:**

- Give thanks for the beauty and the natural resources of Baluchistan which have blessed so many people in Pakistan over the years.
- Pray for an end to violence in Baluchistan and that its people would be treated with respect and honour.





# Azad-Kashmir

*The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.*  
**Psalm 29:11**

Few names in Pakistan are as evocative as that of Kashmir. The Kashmir Valley is a place of remarkable beauty with snow-capped mountains, thick pine forests, and sparkling rivers. Yet this earthly paradise has been a place of violence and fear since 1947 since both India and Pakistan lay claim to the valley in its entirety but each control only a portion of it, separated by the Line of Control (LoC). Wars have been fought over the valley and the tension continues to the present day. Life, for Kashmiri villagers who live close to the LoC, is characterised by tension, artillery strikes, and fear.

Much of the tension between India and Pakistan is centred on Kashmir. If agreement could be reached over Kashmir the relationship between the two nations could be transformed, freeing up the huge sums of money which are currently spent on war and creating new relationships for trade, diplomacy and friendship. May God pour out a blessing on this beautiful valley, and in future years may the name Kashmir come to be associated with reconciliation, friendship and peace!

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray for reconciliation between India and Pakistan given the conflicts that have erupted over Kashmir in the years since 1947.
- Pray for development and peace so that the people of Kashmir can live free from the fear of violence and warfare.





# Gilgit-Baltistan

*Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down,  
That the mountains might quake at Your presence...  
Isaiah 64:1*

Gilgit-Baltistan, formerly known as the Northern Areas, show Pakistan at its most beautiful. This is an area of outstanding splendour with some of the tallest mountains in the world, alpine lakes, high plateaus, glaciers, and crystal-clear rivers. Gilgit-Baltistan borders Kashmir to the south, Afghanistan to the west, and China to the north. Historically this has always been a tolerant and peaceful part of the country.

Economically this is not a prosperous part of Pakistan due to its remote and mountainous terrain. It has always relied on tourism for its income but since 9-11 foreign tourists have mostly stayed away. With Pakistan's increasing stability there is hope that foreign tourists will return, bringing with them much-needed investment. Much Chinese investment in Pakistan also passes through Gilgit-Baltistan down the Karakoram Highway. With a more stable economy and improved infrastructure there is hope for a prosperous and flourishing future for this, the most beautiful part of Pakistan.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the incredible beauty of Gilgit-Baltistan and for the kindness and tolerance of its people.
- Pray that foreign tourists might return to Gilgit-Baltistan and create opportunities for wealth and employment.



# Islam in Pakistan



*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with everyone.*

**Romans 12:18**

Pakistan was founded as a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia, many of whom feared for their future as a minority in a free, Hindu-majority India. As such Islam has played a highly significant role in the creation and the development of Pakistan since 1947. The 1973 Constitution declared Pakistan to be an Islamic Republic with Islam as the state religion. At least 97% of Pakistan's citizens are Muslims, making Pakistan one of the largest Muslim nations on the planet.

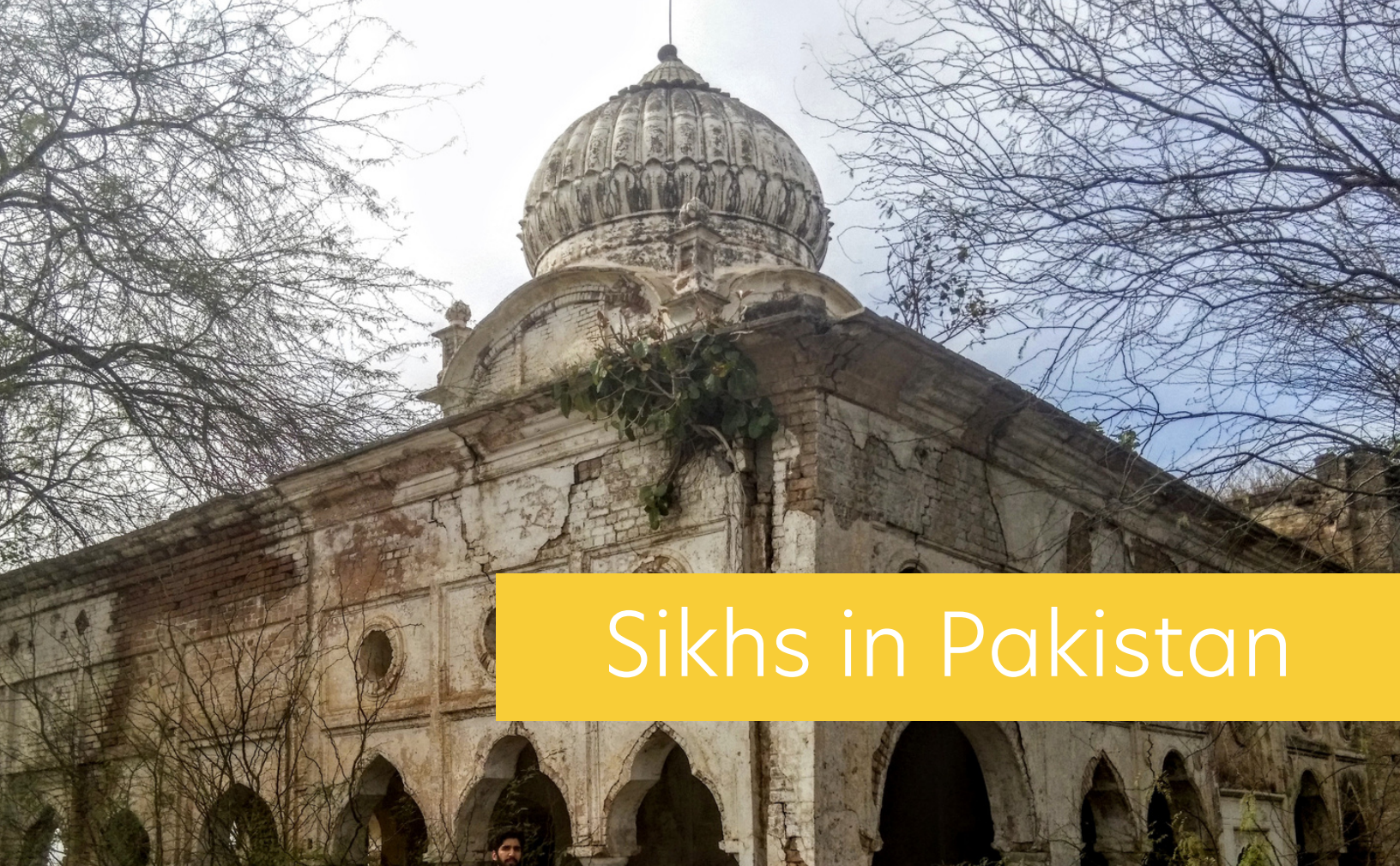
Yet Islam is a broad and diverse religion containing people of many different viewpoints and interpretations of theology. These differences have, at times, contributed to the sectarian strife which has plagued Pakistan at different times in its story. Yet we should not forget that the overwhelming majority of Pakistani Muslims desire peace, not sectarian conflict, and the increasing desire in Pakistan is for progress and development rather than for continued turmoil.

Let's pray that God would bless Pakistan and all her citizens. At a time of global discord between people of different faiths, let there be peace and mutual respect throughout Pakistan.

## **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks that the Muslims of South Asia were able to create a homeland in which they could live in peace.
- Pray that the dream of Pakistan would be fulfilled – that it would be a place of equality, respect, progress, and prosperity in every sphere of life.





# Sikhs in Pakistan

***Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness.***

***James 3:18***

Before 1849 a large swathe of what is now Pakistan was ruled by the Sikhs. Ranjit Singh controlled an empire which dominated the Punjab, reaching all the way to the Afghan border and to Kashmir. Even though the majority of the Sikhs migrated to India in 1947 their gurdwaras and other religious and cultural sites remain dotted across Pakistan. Sikh pilgrims, who continue to visit Sikh holy places such as Panja Sahib and Nankana Sahib, are held in high regard by Pakistanis and are enthusiastically welcomed when they visit.

Sikhs, like most religious minorities in Pakistan, have been occasionally attacked by a small minority of extremists who dislike anyone different from themselves. Yet official policy towards Pakistan's Sikhs is rapidly changing: in recent years permission was granted for Indian Sikhs to visit religious sites in Kartarpur, near the Indian border, a positive move which surprised and encouraged many. Wouldn't it be wonderful if this kind of peace-making continued in the years to come?

## **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the recent peace initiative of the Kartarpur Corridor, opened to Indian Sikh pilgrims, which is a valuable addition to the peace process.
- Pray that the Sikhs of Pakistan would continue to be respected as full citizens of Pakistan.





# Hindus in Pakistan

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...*  
*Galatians 5:22*

Hindus form only a tiny minority of the population of Pakistan and it is easy to forget that they used to be far more numerous, found all across the lands which are now Pakistan. Most migrated to India in the years following 1947 and those that remain are found largely in the Sindh. Abandoned Hindu temples dot the cities of Pakistan, bearing witness to the turbulence of Partition.

Pakistan's Hindus are granted equal rights under the constitution and partake in public life in many different capacities including the police and the Army. Yet there is sometimes a feeling of being second-class citizens, perhaps as a result of tensions with Hindu-dominated India, and there have been reports of forced conversions and abductions. In an Islamic Republic with fraught relations with India, Pakistan's Hindus find themselves in an awkward position.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray that the Hindus of Pakistan would be able to live in peace and not fear for their position in society.
- Pray that the Hindus of Pakistan would be seen as full citizens of Pakistan and that their rights would be respected and upheld.





# Drug Addiction

***Say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age...***

***Titus 2:12***

Pakistan has some of the highest rates of drug addiction in the world. Over 90% of the world's heroin is produced in Afghanistan and a huge amount of it is trafficked through Pakistan. Over 10% of the population of Khyber-Paktunkhwa, for example, is addicted to heroin. Drug addiction among schoolchildren, even in the elite schools of Islamabad and Lahore, is increasing; marijuana, heroin and increasingly crystal meth are the drugs of choice. A fix of heroin can cost as little as the equivalent of \$1. Secondary problems such as the spread of HIV and other diseases are also on the increase.

The official response is patchy and weak; many prefer to pretend that this embarrassing social problem does not exist. Yet the consequences for Pakistan are huge, in the form of dependency, domestic violence, sickness, and other social problems. The organisations working to eliminate drug addiction are doing remarkable work with limited resources but much more needs to be done to remove the curse of drug addiction from Pakistan.

## **How to Pray:**

- Pray against the curse of drug addiction which has so many Pakistani men, women and children in its cruel grip. Pray that they would have freedom from this evil.
- Pray that the drug trade which comes through Pakistan would end.





# Terrorism

*No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.*

**Isaiah 60:18**

Pakistan has always had the misfortune to be caught up in the wars of other people. The events of 9-11 and the War on Terror had significant consequences for Pakistan. Domestic terrorism became a serious problem in the years after 2001, affecting most parts of Pakistan but especially Peshawar, Quetta and the areas bordering Afghanistan. Terrorists targeted religious minorities of all kinds from Islamic shrines to Shi'a mosques to Christian churches.

Thankfully the authorities were eventually able to confront and largely curtail terrorism in Pakistan. Army offensives in North and South Waziristan restricted the ability of terrorists to cause carnage in Pakistan and terrorist attacks have reduced in frequency and in violence. Pakistan is a much safer, far less violent place today than it was a decade ago thanks in large part to the sacrifice and courage of the Pakistan Army.

Yet this has come at a cost, both in terms of killed and injured soldiers and also in terms of social impact. Pakistan has been influenced by terrorism and by efforts to combat it: schools are protected with high walls and razor wire while security guards are everywhere. It will take time for Pakistan to root out terrorism but we should pray that this happens soon and that future generations are able to grow up in peace and safety.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks that terrorism in Pakistan has been reduced in recent years thanks to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army.
- Pray that terrorism would continue to fall and that those caught up in terrorism would turn from their ways and repent.





# Extremism

*From the fruit of a man's mouth he enjoys good,  
But the desire of the treacherous is violence.*

**Proverbs 13:2**

While violent extremism is reducing in Pakistan, everyday extremism is still a significant problem. There are people who would not necessarily agree with the aims of the terrorists but who still hold violent intentions towards dissidents and who would deny certain religious groups the right to exist freely in Pakistan. Prominent politicians and university professors have been murdered in recent years for daring to put forward controversial opinions, while violent protests by certain religious groups are usually unopposed by society at large for fear of appearing “un-Islamic.”

There have been positive steps in recent years to protect freedom of speech and to oppose those who seek to use violence or fear to control others. Activists such as Asma Jehangir and Malala Yousafzai demonstrate that there are courageous people in Pakistan prepared to stand up for the rights of others. Yet Pakistan can still be a fractious place when it comes to freedom of expression and much work remains to be done to uphold civil liberties in the land.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray that human rights of all kinds would be protected in Pakistan and that extremists would not have the power to damage them.
- Pray that those caught up in extremism would give it up and that peace and justice would prevail in the nation of Pakistan.





# Christianity in Pakistan

*I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand...*  
**Isaiah 41:10**

Christianity in Pakistan is surprisingly strong. In an Islamic Republic in which 97% of the population is Muslim, and in which religious minorities have come under pressure in recent years, it might seem odd to have a vibrant community of people who belong to a different faith. Yet that is the case. There are several million Christians in Pakistan belonging to a wide range of denominations. They live freely, worship every Sunday, and maintain large Christian congregations in just about every part of Pakistan.

There are large Catholic communities in most cities of Pakistan. Many Protestant denominations merged, forming the Church of Pakistan in 1970, and Church of Pakistan congregations and seminaries can be found across the country. The Presbyterian Church of Pakistan was constituted in 1993 and is another significant denomination. There is also a growing number of Pentecostal churches and smaller, independent house churches.

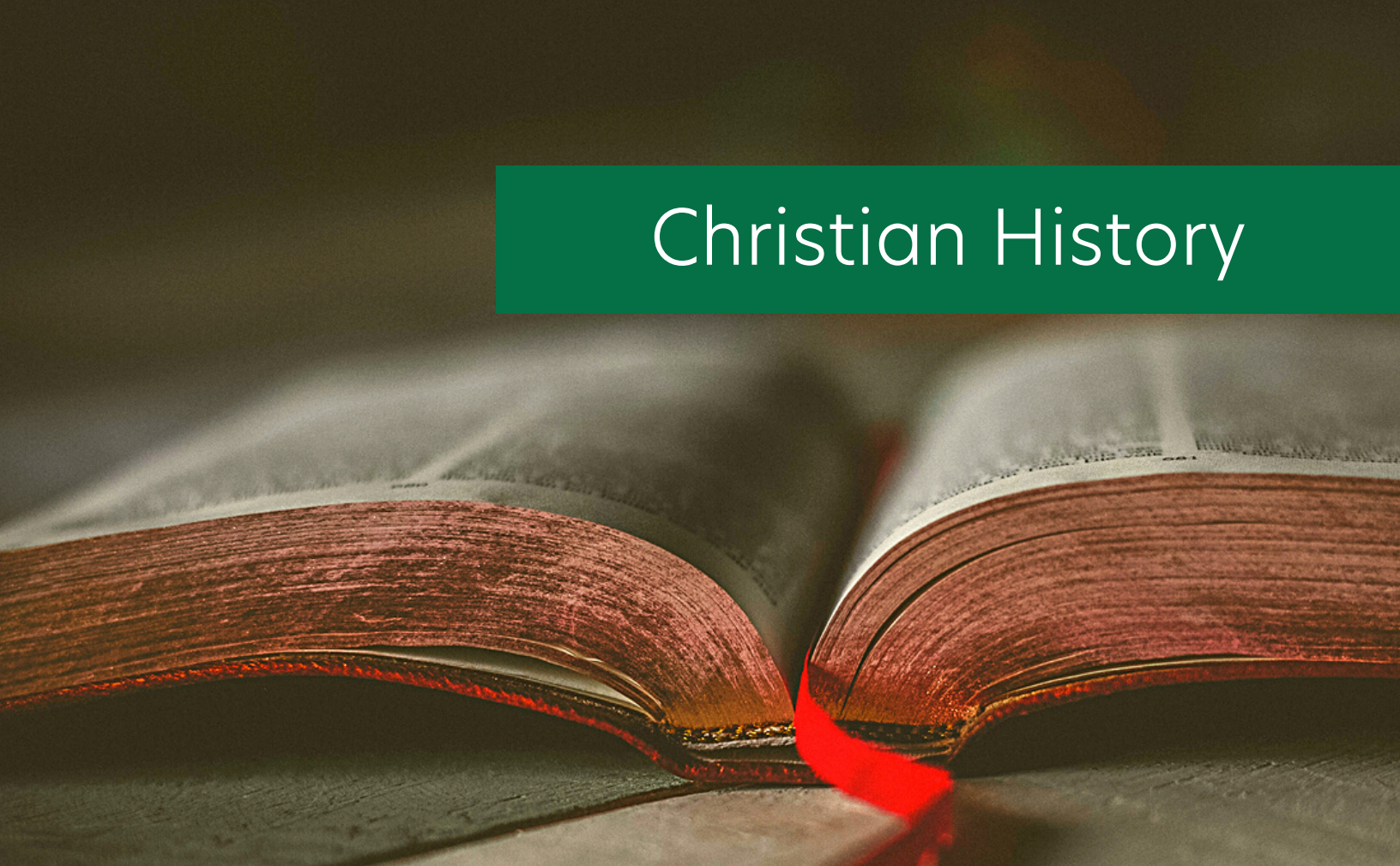
Though they suffer discrimination and occasional persecution, Pakistan's Christians are an inextricable part of the fabric of Pakistan. Christians have served in Pakistan's judiciary, armed forces, police, and political parties at the highest levels. Though they face challenges and difficulties we should not take for granted the remarkable fact that in this Islamic Republic there are several million proud and committed followers of Christ.

## How to Pray:

- Give thanks for the tenacity of the Pakistani Church which has endured much trouble in recent decades but which remains strong and committed.
- Pray for unity among Pakistani Christians and that they would be focused on Christ.



# Christian History



*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last...*  
**John 15:16**

Christianity in Pakistan is viewed, inaccurately, as a Western import. Yet Pakistani Christians proudly point to the fact that the history of Christianity in what is now Pakistan dates back to the first centuries AD when missionaries from the St Thomas church of southern India moved north to Taxila and other cities. Christianity flourished in these lands long before it reached Britain, let alone America.

Most of the growth of Christianity in Pakistan dates back to the efforts of the early Protestant missionaries in the 19th century. Much of this growth was centred on the Punjab and even today most of Pakistan's Christians have a connection to the Punjab in some way. Many of the most popular worship songs in Pakistan are in the Punjabi language while the largest Christian settlements in Pakistan are in areas such as Youhanabad, south of Lahore.

While it would be inaccurate to say that Christians in Pakistan face constant persecution, discrimination is certainly common and violence in the form of riots or terrorist attacks does break out from time to time. Christianity is often viewed as socially inferior and Pakistani Christians are sometimes patronisingly described as “sweepers”, a reminder of the fact that many Pakistani Christians are descended from low-caste Hindus. Yet they are faithful, and committed, and have remained firm in the face of discrimination and occasional violence.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray that discrimination against Pakistani Christians would end and that their rights as citizens of Pakistan would be upheld.
- Give thanks for the long and rich history of the church in Pakistan and pray that it would continue to grow and flourish in this land.





# Theological Education

*Teach me your way, O Lord,  
that I may walk in your truth;  
unite my heart to fear your name.*  
**Psalm 86:11**

There are a number of large, thriving Christian seminaries in Pakistan in places such as Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Lahore and Karachi. Every year hundreds of young men and women pass through these seminaries to receive training for ministry. Courses include theology, expository preaching, missions, evangelism, youth work, and many more. Many seminary students do fieldwork as part of their courses, taking part in activities such as open evangelism, hospital work, social work, or other forms of Christian service.

These seminaries are a cause for celebration and for thanksgiving! While Pakistan's Christians are sometimes depicted as weak and suffering there are many who want to go deeper in their faith and to play a positive role in Pakistani society. Challenges certainly exist – Christian institutions are subject to church politics and to nepotism – but overall we should give thanks that such seminaries exist. We can help them through financial support, through letters of encouragement, and above all by faithful prayer as these brothers and sisters in the Lord seek to extend the kingdom of God in Pakistan.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the seminaries and training colleges of Pakistan which do so much good work to prepare Christian men and women for ministry.
- Pray that God causes these seminaries to thrive in teaching Biblical truth, and turn out graduates who live out their faith boldly and with love.





# Being Salt and Light

*And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?*

*And how are they to hear without someone preaching?*

*And how are they to preach unless they are sent?*

**Romans 10: 14-15**

The Pakistani church has a unique opportunity to be salt and light in the nation of Pakistan. Pakistani Christians live among Muslims, work alongside Muslims, live next door to Muslims and send their children to the same schools as Muslims. Yet as a result of their minority position, and because of the social pressures on them, this opportunity is usually missed.

Very few of us face the kind of pressures that Pakistani Christians face. Yet the truth remains: The light and love of Jesus Christ can have a massive positive impact on Pakistan if presented in the right manner when evident in the lives of faithful Christians. This applies not only to the churches within Pakistan but to the global church that prays for and encourages their Christian brothers and sisters within the country.

So let's pray for courage and grace for Pakistan's Christians as they face up to this challenge and this opportunity. May we, and they, have a vision for taking the love of Christ into their communities both in word and deed.

## **How to Pray:**

- Pray that God gives Pakistani Christians vision for outreach in their own communities and beyond.
- Pray for courage and boldness and much grace as Pakistani Christians seek to make the name of Jesus known across Pakistan.





# Christian Media

***And the Lord answered me:***

***"Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so he may run who reads it."***

***Habbakuk 2:2***

For many years there was hardly any Christian media outreach in Pakistan at all. Other countries had developed networks of Christian media distribution but Pakistan had almost nothing – in spite of the fact that other religious groups in Pakistan had thriving networks. Yet over the last decade Christian media in Pakistan has been growing rapidly. Several television channels and production companies now exist, providing Christian media content for people in Pakistan. These range from Christian teaching and worship music to apologetics resources, testimonies of how Christ is changing lives in Pakistan, reality-TV and dramatizations of stories from Scripture.

In addition a number of Christians are getting involved in national media, bringing their Christian witness and influencing the stories that are being told.

It is really exciting to see the increase in Christian media in Pakistan. Christian media has changed lives and societies for the better across the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in Europe and America. Let's pray that this would lead to positive benefits for Pakistani society and for opportunities for the light and love of Christ to be understood more clearly.

## **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the growth in Christian media in Pakistan which creates opportunities for people to learn more about the Christian faith.
- Pray that Christian media in Pakistan would enable people in Pakistan to go deeper in their faith and learn more about Jesus.
- Pray for the production of amazing TV programs that shift attitudes towards Christians and the Gospel





# Overcoming Fear

*There is no fear in love.*

*But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.*

*The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*

**1 John 4:18**

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to Christian witness in Pakistan is fear. Fear of opposition, fear of persecution, fear of the consequences of expressing one's faith openly. This is understandable. The social pressures on Pakistani Christians can be extreme. While overt persecution remains relatively rare, the possibility of being attacked for expressing one's faith is always there. Those of us living in relatively safe conditions in the West should not be too hasty to criticise people living in less tolerant, less safe situations.

Yet the Biblical instruction to tell other people about Jesus applies to Christians in all countries of the world. It is a task for Christians in Pakistan just as much as any other country around the world. The challenge of fear needs to be acknowledged and overcome if the love of Jesus is to be expressed in Pakistan. It will not be easy, but like any commandment from Scripture it has to be taken seriously.

It is time for the global church to put its mandate to "love one another" into action to partner with Pakistan's Christians as they publicly identify with Christ and reach out with his love.

## **How to Pray:**

- Pray against the causes of fear – persecution, discrimination, and violence. Pray that Pakistani Christians would have a new anointing of the Holy Spirit to overcome these challenges.
- Pray against the spirit of fear, which is a strong temptation in Pakistan. Pray for boldness, courage, and a spirit of love to replace the fear that many people feel.





# Young People

*In the last days, God says,  
"I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions..."*

**Acts 2: 17**

The majority of Pakistan's population are young. Well over half the population of Pakistan are under the age of 25. This means that the Pakistani church contains large numbers of young people which presents exciting opportunities for growth and for telling others about Jesus.

Most Pakistani churches run Sunday school programmes for children and young people. It is less common to find such activities for teenagers, resulting in some drop-off in church attendance once children are older. Yet this is often the point at which young Christians face increasing pressures at school and when Christian input is most important. There is also the challenge of leadership: some organisations and churches limit leadership training, resulting in a small number of elderly leaders and few opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills for themselves.

The opportunities are huge – and the challenges are significant. Let's pray for Pakistani Christian young people to rise up and take their faith forward into a land which needs to hear about it.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the large numbers of young people in Pakistan which create such opportunities for growth, training and energy in the church.
- Pray that these young people would be given leadership opportunities and would have the courage and vision to make the most of them.





# Hospitality

***Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers,  
for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.***  
**Hebrews 13:2**

“Khush amdeed!” “Welcome!” The tradition of hospitality in Pakistan is perhaps one of its most wonderful characteristics. In every part of the country, in every town and city and village, Pakistanis will respond to guests with offers of food, drink, assistance, even accommodation, all at their own expense. Pakistanis at every level of society will delight in offering hospitality to guests, whether it is a lavish dinner at an expensive private house or a bottle of Coke and a bag of samosas bought from the bazaar. Hospitality is woven into the very soul of Pakistan.

It is worth thinking about this. Pakistan is a nation which has suffered over the years from interventions by foreign powers. These interventions – from the involvement of the British in Partition through to the events of the War on Terror in the present day – have often caused bloodshed and destruction. Yet the Pakistani desire to express hospitality, often to guests from the same nations which have caused disruption to life in Pakistan, continues undiminished. It is remarkable, beautiful, and heartfelt.

We should not take it for granted, but should give thanks to God for the hospitality of Pakistani people. It reflects the generosity and love of God, and it should be acknowledged.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the Pakistani tradition of hospitality which is so profoundly beautiful.
- Pray that more people would be able to experience this hospitality for themselves and would have more favourable impressions of Pakistan as a result.



# Inter-faith Dialogue

***Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification  
without which no one will see the Lord.***

**Hebrews 12:14**

Religious conflict in Pakistan makes the news. Positive religious cooperation, including inter-faith dialogue, does not. Yet there are Pakistanis from all religious backgrounds who work hard to promote religious peace in Pakistan, often at considerable personal risk. There are scholars and religious leaders who hold conferences together to promote religious tolerance, grass-roots events at which young people from different religious communities meet one another, and student exchanges between different religious schools and universities to encourage students to meet people from other religions and to learn about their beliefs.

Recognising the humanity in all of the people that surround us is a key part of reducing fear and hatred of people who are different from us and this kind of work is much needed in Pakistan. Let's pray for courage and protection for people who want to work together to reduce sectarian hatred and to build a more peaceful Pakistan.

## **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the courageous men and women who run inter-faith dialogue events, and pray that they would be protected from harm.
- Pray for more minds to be transformed by events such as these so that militancy and extremism might be reduced.





# Natural Beauty

*The heavens declare the glory of God,  
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

**Psalm 19:1**

Pakistan is undoubtedly one of the most physically beautiful nations in the world. This beauty is often unknown or ignored by people outside Pakistan but it takes the breath away from anyone fortunate enough to see it for themselves. The mountains and glaciers of Pakistan's north, the rivers and lakes of the Kaghan Valley, the sweeping farmlands of the Punjab and the endless deserts of the Sindh and Baluchistan combine to create a panorama of remarkable natural splendour which testifies to the skill and love of the creator who made it all.

The natural beauty of Pakistan also creates opportunities for the nation in terms of tourism. Although tourist numbers have dropped off in recent years there is hope that the changing visa policy will enable more people from outside Pakistan to view this natural beauty for themselves, providing much-needed foreign investment in Pakistan.

Let's pray that the natural beauty of Pakistan can continue to be a source of blessing to the nation and can be protected from environmental damage.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for the beauty of Pakistan which speaks so much about the creative genius and great love of our God.
- Pray that more people would be able to see the beauty of Pakistani for themselves.





# Mighty Rivers

*For I will pour water on the thirsty land,  
and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,  
and my blessing on your descendants.*  
**Isaiah 44:3**

Pakistan is crossed by a number of mighty rivers. Five of these – the Jhelum, Chenab, Beas, Sutlej and Ravi – form the “panch aab” (five waters) which have given the province of the Punjab its name. These rivers provide water for irrigation which in the past has turned huge swathes of desert into productive farmland, creating food, employment and tax income for the nation of Pakistan. The rivers of Pakistan literally give life to the nation; without their water life would be unsustainable.

Yet they are also under risk. Pakistan’s growing population is putting increasing strain on Pakistan’s water supply while water is not used as efficiently as it could be. Water conservation methods are required to make the best use of this vital resource while dams are also needed to help use water more efficiently. These would also help to reduce the risk of flooding which has troubled Pakistan in previous years.

Let’s give thanks for the precious gift of rivers, and the water they carry, and pray that they may be protected for the use of future generations.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray that the rivers of Pakistan would continue to serve as lifelines for the people of the nation who rely so much on the water they carry.
- Pray that the rivers would not dry up and that their water would not be wasted but would continue to sustain life in Pakistan.





# Protecting Nature

*Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture,  
that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture;  
and to drink of clear water,  
that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet?*

**Ezekiel 34:18**

Pakistan contains some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world and is blessed with rivers, forests, and farmland. Yet environmental challenges also exist. Plastic pollution is a growing problem, air pollution is an increasing challenge in many of Pakistan's cities, while in many parts of Pakistan garbage is not disposed of properly but is simply dumped, creating health issues too. Protecting Pakistan's natural resources is a key challenge if the potential of Pakistan is to be preserved for future generations.

Official efforts to limit pollution have not made much of a difference in recent years and environmental protection is not given as high a priority as it deserves. Yet if the resources of Pakistan are to be safeguarded action must be taken now.

Let's pray for a greater public awareness of environmental issues throughout Pakistan and for timely action from the authorities to limit the damage to Pakistan's natural resources.

## How to Pray:

- Pray that Pakistan's natural resources would be protected and for a fresh spirit of environmentalism among the people of Pakistan so that they desire to protect the environment around them.
- Pray against the causes of pollution which damage life so much in Pakistan.



# Pakistan & India



***Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell in unity!***  
**Psalm 133:1**

Pakistan's relationship with India has been problematic since the two nations achieved their independence in 1947. Major wars have been fought in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 while there have been smaller conflicts at other times, most recently when an Indian fighter jet was shot down over Kashmir. The ongoing tension between India and Pakistan poisons regional politics and has created an atmosphere of mistrust and anger throughout the region. It has also led to immense suffering among the people of Kashmir who experience violence on a regular basis.

With this in mind it might seem crazy to talk about a peaceful future relationship between India and Pakistan but we believe in a God who can achieve the impossible. If the relationship between India and Pakistan could be mended and an atmosphere of peace and mutual respect created it would have huge benefits for the entire region. People would be able to travel freely between the two nations, money currently spend on defence could be allocated to other areas, and countless human lives currently at risk in the event of a conflict could be protected.

Let's pray for the seemingly impossible – for peace between Pakistan and India.

#### **How to Pray:**

- We believe in a God of miracles, so pray for peace between Pakistan and India.
- Pray for full reconciliation surrounding the events of Partition in 1947 and for a spirit of release from painful memory.





# Pakistan & China

*And do not forget to do good and to share with others,  
for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

**Hebrews 13:16**

Pakistan has a long relationship of mutual respect and support with China. In recent years this has reached new heights with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, a huge programme of Chinese investment in Pakistan's infrastructure. Roads, railways, power stations, ports and a host of other projects are underway. The Pakistani government is happy that this will create wealth, jobs, and will promote development across Pakistan.

Whether this will have any negative side-effects for Pakistan remains to be seen. There is increasing scrutiny of Chinese investment around the world and the consequences for the nations receiving the investment, including being saddled with high levels of debt. Pakistan could certainly benefit from the modernisation of its creaking infrastructure but it is unclear whether this investment will have strings attached.

Let's pray that the relationship between Pakistan and China continues to be positive and respectful and that investment by China in Pakistan works to benefit both nations equally.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Give thanks for investment in Pakistan's infrastructure which is much needed.
- Pray that this investment would serve the interests of both nations and that high levels of debt would not be incurred.



# Pakistan & The West



*Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

**Colossians 3:12**

Pakistan's relationship with the West has had its ups and downs. The high levels of cooperation and trust built up during the Cold War, when Pakistan played a key role in the war in Afghanistan against the USSR, dissipated in the years around 9-11 when Western nations felt that Pakistan was not playing its part in the War on Terror. Pakistan, meanwhile, feels that the West does not appreciate how much it has sacrificed in the War on Terror, especially considering that Pakistan did not choose to be involved in the conflict.

Yet the relationship between Pakistan and Western nations is important for both sides. Cooperation between the two sides is vital in terms of promoting world peace, reducing the risk of terrorism, and creating employment opportunities.

We need to pray for an atmosphere of trust, openness, and mutual respect between Pakistan and Western nations. A relationship characterised by honesty and friendship is bound to be beneficial for people on both sides.

## **How to Pray:**

- Pray for a new spirit of trust and honesty between Pakistan and the West, given the history and significance of these relationships.
- Pray that the leaders of all nations concerned would have good relationships and would be open with one another.





# Pakistan's Future

*But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.  
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.  
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.  
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.*  
**Jeremiah 17:7-8**

Pakistan is a resilient, strong, and durable nation. It came into existence in a summer of bloodshed and chaos and despite beginning its life with almost no resources it has made remarkable progress. Yet it also faces challenges, chief among them the challenge of a growing population and limited natural resources. Will there be enough water, enough electricity, enough food, enough jobs for future generations of Pakistanis?

Pakistan deserves far more respect than it generally receives from foreign observers. It is a land with a tradition of hospitality, a land which has always welcomed visitors, a land which has played its part in the War on Terror and which has incurred a significant cost as a result. It is also a land of remarkable natural beauty, rich natural resources, a place with a rich cultural heritage.

Future years will determine what kind of nation Pakistan wants to be. Will human rights, the rule of law, and the natural environment be protected and upheld? Will peaceful relationships with India and other nations be formed? Pakistan is a place of such potential and could be a regional success story. Challenges certainly lie in wait, but they can be overcome through prayer and faith in God. Let's pray for a positive, hopeful and blessed future for the nation of Pakistan.

#### **How to Pray:**

- Pray that Pakistan would continue to be strong, safe, and resilient in facing whatever challenges may arise in the future.
- Pray that Almighty God would pour out his blessings on the nation of Pakistan and would reveal his glory to all its citizens.





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