

**"AWAKENING"  
CHURCH OF  
GOD  
STARA ZAGORA,  
BULGARIA**

# Mission Trip to Pakistan

BY PASTOR DIMITAR LUCHEV



## The Christian Minority in Pakistan



The Islamic Republic of Pakistan is one of the many countries located in central Asia. Its population of 160 million people makes it one of the largest Islamic countries in the world. Pakistan, which was a former part of British India, became an independent country in 1947 as a result of a militant conflict between the Indian Hindus

and Muslims, a conflict which continues even to this day. Pakistan is a state established by the Muslims and therefore its official religion is Islam. More than 90% identify as Muslims which makes Christian and Hindu communities an exclusive minority. Despite the fact that Christianity has not been outlawed, due to Islamic fanaticism the life of the Christians (and Hindu as well) has been very tough. Christians are forced to live in so called "Christian colonies". They are often discriminated and do not receive the same opportunities to study or work. Christian villages and colonies around the country have often been attacked and burned, Christians are being abused and even killed. The security

of the Christian community is growing weaker by the day.

In that difficult and dangerous context, Christians are working hard to establish ministries and spread the Good News even among radical Muslims despite the threat on their lives. They are ready to conquer with love and the message of peace. Their success depends not only on their commitment to the work of the Gospel but on the support of the international Christian community.



### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- The Christian Minority in Pakistan
- Our Mission in Pakistan
- Seminars for Pastors and Ministers
- Church Services
- Evangelization among the Hindu People

## Our Mission in Pakistan

I landed at the International Airport in Karachi, the Pakistan's largest city (over 16 million inhabitants) on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February. That was my first mission trip east from my home country Bulgaria.



The rest of the team - my father in law Michael Breiler (pastor from the Church of God in Germany), and bro. Hashim Zehi, who was the pioneer in that missionary work and the organizer of the trip has arrived two

days earlier than me. The three of us were in Karachi as a response to the invitation of pastor Shafqat Rahmat, the Chairman of Church of God in Pakistan, a denomination that formally organized itself two years ago with a headquarter in Karachi. Brother Shafqat is a charismatic leader who has successfully managed to organize a number of



free Pentecostal churches in a network. He is a wonderful pastor,

husband and a father of 7. He organized two weeks of intensive ministry in seminars and local churches services for us. The posters he had prepared, the announcement in the local news papers and the brochures which were prepared for the occasion were showing an excellent organization and planning. We were happy to be there and strengthen the work he had started.

# Seminars for Pastors and Ministers



The first seminar for pastors and ministers that was scheduled took place in "Central Brooks Memorial Church", down town Karachi. In a block of four sessions per day, both pastor Breiler and I taught two courses on "The Content of Christian Faith" and "The Person of the Holy Spirit".

Sound Biblical teaching is one of the things our brethren in Pakistan need the most since they have very few educational opportunities. Pastors and ministers are open to be taught and instructed. Their humbleness and willingness to learn more about the faith made this seminar a tremendous blessing for us.

The seminar was attended by more

than 150 ministers from different denominations. At the end of the second day they all got a certificate for attending the seminar. We were happy to witness the harmony in which Pakistani Christians work together. We had much time for fellowship with them and enjoy their wonderful spirit. The seminar was a true celebration of unity and love, of the Kingdom of God.

The second seminar we did took place in the sanctuary of Orange Town Church of God in one of the suburban areas



of Karachi. It was a one day seminar for pastors and leaders who was a continuation of the previous one even though it was at-



tended by different people. There we also taught about the Christian faith with great confidence.

Our time with the brothers and sisters was wonderful. On one hand we thoroughly enjoyed their unique culture and way of worship, their clothes, food and humble presence, on the other they enjoyed feeling part of the international family of God. The time spent together brought much joy and happiness to all of us.



I loved doing seminars, for I felt they make a real difference, but since I am involved in pastoral ministry, I was really looking forward to minister in some of the local churches. This is exactly what our team did for the rest of our time. We wanted to meet with pastors one of one to hear their hearts, their needs, pray with them and encourage their congregations to stay firm in Christ.

Many of the churches we visited did not own church buildings. The small sanctuaries were built into private properties, often the pastor's homes. Many of them were located deep in the heart of Christian colonies (neighborhoods in which only Christians live) away from the presence of Muslims.

The pastors always had to report to the police about the meetings that they have scheduled with us. At some of

## Church Services

the meetings, especially outside of Karachi, we had armed guards to protect us from spontaneous outburst of rage from the Muslims. Thank God they did not have to use their guns to defend us. Our meetings did not draw the attention of any fanatical Muslims, only to faithful Christians who were there to be refreshed in the presence of God and once again declare their faithfulness to Jesus Christ.

In all of those meetings we experienced an incredible move of God. Nearly at every meeting each one of us was asked to share from the Word of God. There were much prayers for heal-



ing and blessing. We also witnessed some deliverances from evil spirits. The believers were encouraged to receive greetings from brothers and sisters around the world and feel connected to the Body of Christ. We admonished them to keep their precious faith even in the face of great opposition and live a holy life of dedication to God.



It was so wonderful to worship with those faithful saints in Pakistan in their own way. I do know how much we encouraged them, but they certainly did encourage us. Their passion and hunger for God was stunning. One thing is sure, God sealed them on my heart.

# Evangelistic Outreaches - Touching the Untouchable

Most of the evangelistic outreaches that were planned had to be held in doors and some had to even drop out because of the critical situation in Karachi. Nevertheless we were able to visit two Hindu villages in the area of Mir-Pur-Chas (150 km north-east of Karachi). For me that was the most exciting part of my trip to Pakistan, not only because we were able to experience another, totally different culture, but because we were there to show love and compassion to very hurting people who are commonly addressed as "the untouchable". They represent the lowest cast in Hinduism and it is believed that one is not supposed to touch them if one is to keep pure.

Pakistani society, weather the Hindus are uneducated and scattered in rural areas. They live in colonies and work for Muslim landlords.

The villages we visited had an average population of 500 hundred people. Our purpose was to bring them some medicine

ever seen. The elders of the villages brought us under a sugar cane roof covered with mud (something like a community center) which made a nice shade.

In the first village we took a tour around to see how people live. Their houses were extremely primitive: mud walls in a round shape covered with a straw roof, mud floor, which serves both as table and bed, small furniture, if any at all, to store the clothes and dishes, no electricity or running water.

The utter simplicity in which those people live made me reflect on the goods that God has blessed me with and made me wonder wheatear they make my life easier or harder. One becomes very clear for those who are able to read the faces of the Hindu people: one can have very little and still be happy.

We went there almost empty handed, little medicine and candy for the children, and yet we were bringing them the greatest truth they can ever know – God loves them and He cares. All we could tell them is that God wants to touch them. Our visit was a real proof for that.



which was purchased from German sponsors and show them that there are no untouchable people for Jesus. The local pastor who brought us there was a Hindu convert. He has been able to establish Christian mission though medical actions. For the last couple of years he has been visiting the villages once a month and after attending those who have minor health problems he has preached the Gospel. Due to his hard labor among the untouchables he as been able to not only help many to recover from illness but lead them to the Lord.

In both places we were welcomed extremely well. People gathered around us right after we got into the village. We were surrounded by dozens of children who were curious to see the color of our skin. For some of them we were the first white people they have



Hindu people, just as Christians, are an exclusive minority in Pakistan which are heavily discriminated and segregated in separate communities. The difference between the Christian and Hindu minority is that Christians are well educated and integrated in

## Prayer requests:

At this point I would ask you to join me in prayer for the following things:

- Pray that God would protect the pastors and ministers, their families and congregations from the harm that Muslims can bring them.
- Pray that Christians would find successful ways to witness to Muslim and Hindu people and get them converted to Christian faith.
- Pray for better integration of Christians in politics and the social and economic life of Pakistan.

- Pray for the growth and the strengthening of ministries and the starting of new churches.
- Pray that God would provide for the physical needs of our brothers and sisters who live in extreme poverty and specially for those who pastor congregations and have to find ways to feed their families.
- Pray for all missionaries and missions in Pakistan.
- Pray that the international church would have a greater contribution to the spreading of the Gospel in Pakistan.
- Pray that God would give me another opportunity to visit Pakistan and do more mission work there.

