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Multi-Language PUBLICATIONS



Bringing the Written Word to the World

The effort in Pakistan reported in this issue is an alternate method of the Board for World Missions. This method also reflects one of the purposes of Multi-Language Publications--to provide Christian literature in other areas of the world where our synod does not have resident missionaries.

Rev. Paul Hartman, Editor
<paulhartman@mlpwels.com>



Pakistan

We have come to associate this Islamic country with war and terror. Can Christians even survive there, let alone share the gospel? Yes they can! Based on responses to an interview with the director of a Christian outreach effort in that country, this issue demonstrates how dedicated Christians are not only holding on to their faith but discovering an amazing response as they proclaim the gospel.

For understandable reasons, the names of people and places are withheld.

The Bible Correspondence and Teaching School in Pakistan

(Based on an interview with the director of the school.)

The Christians in Pakistan

Unlike most of Pakistan there are twelve villages, called Bastees, in which more than 100,000 Christians live within 200 kilometers of my home. Most of the Christians perform cleaning jobs in the cities, such as sweeping houses and cleaning offices and public places. Theirs is a thankless job.

Christians in Pakistan are ready to suffer and die for Jesus, but unfortunately they have very little knowledge about their faith because most of them cannot read and write. Their children are literate but unfortunately the churches in their areas are not able to give them any literature.

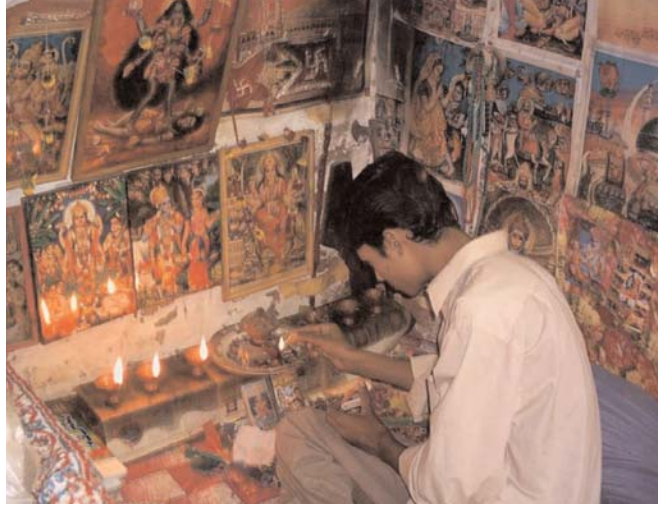
On Sundays in most of the places where Christians live there is a worship service that lasts more than two hours. Only five percent of the faithful attend because the others go to work. In most of the places Friday is the day off. The worshipers sit together in the church from infants to the elderly. A man stands among the people who are sitting on the ground, and with a stick in his hand he tries to keep everyone quiet. Anyone who makes noise is asked to leave the church. The pastor starts the

service with two or three hymns followed by a sermon that lasts about an hour. His sermon provides some teaching and preaching, but generally it is very difficult to remember the entire sermon because it is too lengthy and complicated.

There is no Sunday school or any regular youth program with the exception of preparation led by the pastor for a Christmas drama and carols. The rest of the year there is no activity in the church, although some youth groups do carry out some activities independently.

Because the churches are financially independent, the pastor has to visit every house to obtain money and perhaps food for his family to eat. While the pastor is visiting, the children are watching television and their mothers are cooking, so they ask the pastor just to read one Bible verse and have a short prayer. The pastor doesn't object because he fears that if he upsets the family, it will not give him any money.

This is all a Christian family receives from the Word of God. In most of Pakistan there is no Christian literature available for the families and their young ones, although they have much material from other sources available to them.



Use of Bible Correspondence Program Materials in homes

Because proper Christian education is not provided, especially for the youth, many Christians have mixed beliefs. They are like the Samaritans. For example, in one Christian Bastee, where everyone is labeled Christian on his identification card, the people have a small room in their homes where they practice Hindu, Sikh and Islamic rituals. These people will tell you that yes they are Christians who do believe in Jesus but that they love the other gods too.

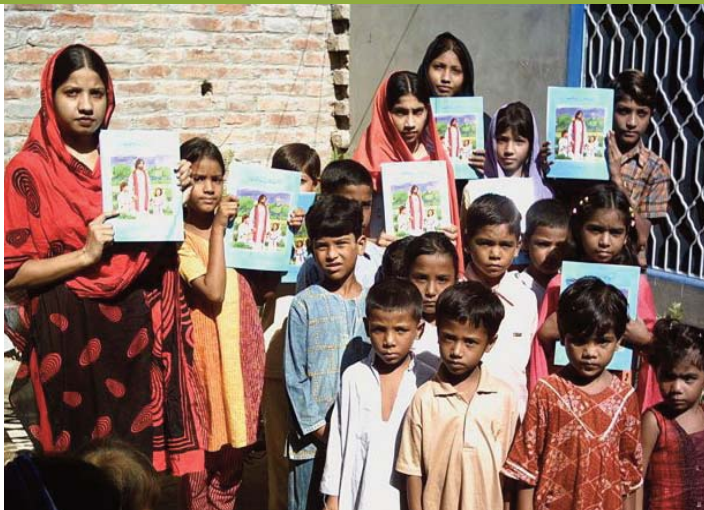
Christians are interested in receiving Christian literature, but they are not the only ones. Muslims also want to read Christian literature—especially those Muslims who have heard about the Lord Jesus Christ like to read The Bible and other literature to learn more about him and the Christian faith. In Pakistan where the Muslims overwhelmingly are devote Muslims they are at the same time curious and want to learn more about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Through these circumstances the Holy Spirit moved me to ask the WELS to provide Christian literature for both my Christian brothers and sisters and for Muslim fellowships. Surprisingly, the Muslims who are using the literature have shown more interest than many Christians. Indeed, some of them have completed all the books in the *Bible Teachings Series* and are now waiting for new books to be completed. This program has not only blessed other people but also my own family very much.

A Website

The Bible Correspondence and Teaching School is now available on the web which posts eight of the *Bible Teachings Series* books. Through the site we have gained 456 students, most of whom are Muslim. Because many people in Pakistan don't know how to return their answers to the tests in Urdu, they contact us through email, and we send them the books. After completing the test at the end of the books they return it to us through the postal system. This site has been seen all over the world, including 200 hits from Romania and 300 from other countries. We are pleased that this site has been seen more frequently in Pakistan in recent months, including 5,000 hits in November.

I have received many comments regarding this website. Most of the respondents are Muslims. Three respondents were very angry especially because our materials say that Jesus Christ is God, but thirty-seven respondents were very positive saying that this is the first time they learned more about Jesus Christ. Seventeen persons are eagerly waiting for new books to be printed.



Use of Bible Correspondence Program Materials in schools

The Bible Teachings Series is used in two Muslim schools and in several Christian schools where the teachers help the students answer the questions in the books. There is no organized Christian material available like this series in Pakistan. Some churches do have some material but it has not been distributed in the schools. The correspondence program only uses the books from the *Bible Teaching Series*. We do distribute *Bible Stories* for the children to take home, but we don't have a teaching program to follow up those books. We only follow up the seventeen books in the *Bible Teaching Series*.

A couple of years ago we learned that in our region there are five to seven Christian students in every Muslim school. Those schools had no program for Christian students while the Muslim students were studying the Koran and other Islamic materials. The Christian students were merely excused from the religion class. I asked the Muslim teachers to help us teach the *Bible Teachings Series* to the Christian students.

They not only happily allowed this; the Muslim teachers also volunteered to teach this course, and not only to the Christians but to the Muslims as well.

By the end of 2008 a large number of students were enrolled in the Bible Correspondence and Teaching School in the cities of Karachi, Lahore, Gojra and Sahiwal and in surrounding villages as well. The vast majority of the books have been distributed by our field correspondents and about 15% of the books have been distributed in the previously mentioned schools. More than 95% of the students return their answers to the tests at the end of each book through our field correspondents.

Delivery of Books

Most of the books are distributed personally by eleven field correspondents, whereas only thirty to forty people contact our program monthly through the postal service. The books are distributed in 261 locations such as schools, villages and hospitals. Outside of the schools, the books are used in small groups. Of the 16,050 copies that were distributed of the first book in the series, *Jesus the Christ*, 8,768 final tests have been received by our program.

In addition to the teachings series, we also provide *Bible Stories*, *Jesus Is Born* and *The Promise* to children and adults at weddings, church services, and in hotels. We give them to sick people, friends and relatives. We have also used them when visiting prisoners and kiln workers where the people are depressed and despised by the majority. On Christmas and Easter we visit as a family those who work in the kilns. We have also started distributing the books to the children of the Bustees.



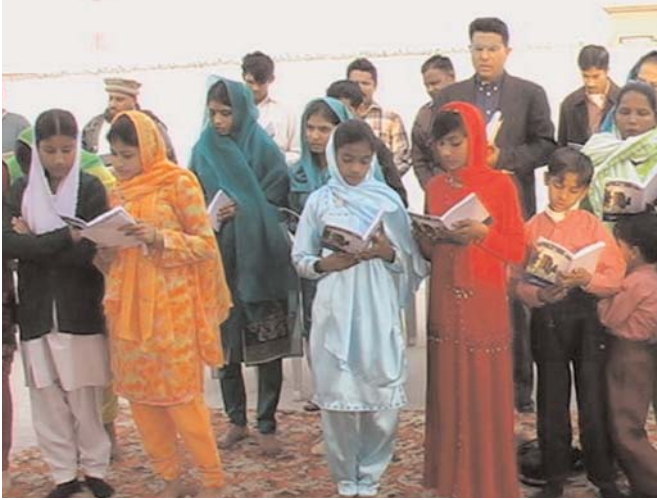
Use of Bible Correspondence Program Materials to help people

Three years ago we started a Sunday school class in a typical Christian Baste, where the people's faith is mixed with the tenets and rituals of Islam and Hinduism. A seven-year-old boy lived with his mother, who worked as a sweeper in Muslim houses. (His father had died years earlier.) The young boy started going to a mosque with his friend and wearing a cap on his head, which every Muslim uses when going to a mosque. He began to learn all the Muslim prayers and started behaving and talking like a Muslim. When the Sunday school was started in his school, this boy proved to be very dependable and receptive. Soon he learned many Bible passages. In his home early in the morning he started praying in a corner the same way Daniel in the Old Testament used to pray. This was a very new experience for everyone in the home. The first opposition came from his grandfather who used to believe in Hinduism and who asked why was his grandson praying loudly in the morning and introducing a new style of worship in the home. But the boy's mother and her aunt supported him, and after a couple of weeks his grandfather also started listening to what was written in *Bible Stories*. After two months everyone in the home was happy that the boy was teaching them *Bible Stories*. Now his family has a strong faith in Jesus Christ, and they are a living witness to His life and sacrifice.

A young woman, who works as a sweeper in a government hospital, received the first book of Bible Correspondence and Teaching School course from one of our field correspondents while she was on duty at night. She started reading the book, but being afraid to read it in front of the other people, she read it when every one else was sleeping. She would keep the book on one of the partition walls in the washroom because that was the only safe place she could find. One of her Muslim friends who accidentally saw the book asked to read it. Eventually her Muslim friend took the book home where others started reading. Soon this family asked us to help them complete the course. We enrolled five of the family members, who are happy to follow this course with us. We thank our Lord and all those who have helped develop this Christian education course, for now this family also believes in Jesus Christ.



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Use of Bible Correspondence Program Materials

What is next?

After prayer and discussion with my family and staff, I have a five year proposal for future work in Pakistan. Please pray about it and see how the Holy Spirit leads the WELS to work together with us for the next five years. Whenever it will be needed I will send details. Briefly our goals are:

- Enroll 50,000 unreached in five years in the Bible Correspondence and Teaching School
- Run public health clinics in different villages
- Provide health awareness lectures in our hospital
- Run Mobile Health Clinics four days in a week in surrounding villages
- Start the first Lutheran church associated with the WELS in Pakistan
- Start income-generating projects in Pakistan and in the USA
- Make the whole ministry of the WELS financially self-supporting in Pakistan

After completing the *Bible Teachings Series*, I am praying that God enables us to start the *People's Bible Teaching Series*. The course which the students are presently using is very simple and basic. They are asking us to start the *People's Bible Teaching Series* with them.

I think it would be a very good idea to translate books on the topic of Spiritism (animism and superstition) in Urdu. I also have a burden in my heart to write or translate any book which is written on faith healing. I see, when I attend a big faith healing convention attended by more than 100,000 people, that the people want instant healing. I am not sure whether they receive that in fact, but very few are interested in listening to the Word of God and learn about salvation through Jesus Christ. For these masses of people I have a burden to teach them a balanced approach toward faith healing.

I would like to complete all of the *People's Bible Teaching Series*. We have already translated *Justification, Law and Gospel, Holy Spirit, and Christ*. A fifth book, *Creation*, is in translation. We will also be very happy to get an Urdu version of the movie *The Road to Emmaus*.

Humanitarian Aid

After the earthquake in Pakistan, with the help of the money the WELS sent us and with the joint effort of Joyce Myers Ministries we established a hostel near the earthquake zone in Murree for six months to provide immediate shelter in the winter for the injured people. We helped more than 700 people and provided shelter for nineteen families in the hostel. The victims had a chance to study *The Promise*, and their children were blessed by reading *Bible Stories*. After finishing the earthquake program, the leader of their community visited us. He took 300 copies of *The Promise* back to his area. Unfortunately we have not been able to follow up.



Bible Correspondence Program

In this issue,
read about the
impact of this
program in
Pakistan

Thank God for His blessings in Pakistan!

Many years ago a Muslim representative of a medical company told me that I was a famous God-fearing doctor. How had I helped my Christian community and the other poor communities? I could not give him a satisfactory answer. I felt very ashamed that I have not been more helpful to all the people around me. I started praying about it and I also started writing to the different churches in the United States. I am thankful to God that the WELS started correspondence with me and that very soon God used me through his grace to be helpful to my family and to my people around me. This is his grace that I, as a small servant of God and an insignificant person, have been used by Him to provide Christian literature to many Christians and Muslims in Pakistan. At the same time the public health clinics, Friday free clinics, lectures on medical awareness and helping earthquake victims have added icing to the cake. May God bless all those people who have been so gracious and compassionate in proclaiming the Word of God to this part of the world. I deeply appreciate their kind gesture.

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2500 George Dieter Drive
El Paso, TX 79936
800.876.1388 ph
915.857.1388 fx
www.mlpwels.com

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