

Prayer for Pakistan (7th~ 13th Oct.)

[Pakistan]



[Geography]

• Area: 796,095 sq km
which includes 83,700 sq km of UN-divided Kashmir controlled by Pakistan. Arid mountains in the north and west. Desert in the east and southeast. Vast irrigation schemes in the fertile Indus River valley.

- Population: 184,753,300
- Annual Growth: 2.19%

- Capital: Islamabad
- Urbanites: 37%

[People / Language]

- Peoples : 463 (97% unreached)
- Official language : English
- Languages : 77

[Religion]

- Christians : 4,526,456 (2.45%)
- Evangelicals : 1,140,589 (0.6%)
- Muslim : 176,993,661 (95.80%)

[Challenge for Prayer]

- The violence and war conducted by insurgents, especially in the scenic northwestern Swat Valley, emptied hundreds of villages, towns and schools, cost thousands of lives and disrupted the lives of millions. The militants' success gave them temporary control over the region and forced concessions by the government, which has largely wrested control back.
- The imposition of shari'a in the northwest – a result of government compromise with the militants – spells woe for many, especially non-Muslims. It also invites further aggression from the militants, since such tactics previously yielded significant gains and concessions.
- The proliferation of madrasas (estimated at 20,000 in number) – religious schools that in shari'a-controlled areas usually offer little education beyond memorizing the Quran and pushing the brand of Islam favoured by the militants. These schools, located throughout Pakistan, exist in part due to the lack of quality state-run schools and the expense of private ones, and they produce a new generation of recruits for the militant cause.
- The status of women under such militant values is miserable. They endure almost no freedoms or rights, minimal education and widespread domestic abuse; social structures and cultural morés make it extremely hard to evangelize them. Pray that the true nature of such an expression of Islam might be exposed for all to see, and thereby rendered powerless. Pray for safety for those most at risk under the rule of shari'a. Pray for the government to have insight in how to deal with this force that appears impossible to root out.

Discrimination and persecution against religious minorities take many forms and are directed not only against Christians but also against Hindus, Ahmaddiyas and Shi'a Muslims. The list of wrongs perpetrated makes for very sobering reading.

- Institutionalized discrimination against minorities has increased since the government started pursuing a policy of Islamization in the 1980s. This affects government posts, employment and education opportunities, and much of public life. It also entrenches the lower status of minorities and prevents their social and economic advancement. Financial and social inducements to convert to Islam also present a problem to non-Muslims, who are generally poorer and have fewer career and education opportunities.
- The notorious blasphemy law imposes the death penalty on anyone who defames Mohammed, and life in prison for anyone who defiles a Quran. Extremists routinely use the law – as a pretext for underlying personal motives of revenge or envy – to falsely accuse innocents and stir up enough religious frenzy to generate mob justice. Half of those charged under the blasphemy law have been Muslim.
- Persecution and violence are reality for many Christians and for others. Frequently, churches are vandalized or destroyed and people are beaten, murdered, abducted, raped or forced to convert. Police are usually either cowed by or complicit with the fanatics and mobs, and reparation or justice is often not attained.
- An atmosphere of intimidation and fear pervades the lives of Christians and other minorities. Although sharing the gospel is legal, few Christians try to do so with Muslims due to fear of violent repercussions. Christians' prevailing negative attitudes towards Muslims must also be overcome. Pray that religious freedom might be maintained, both in law and in practice. Pray that those seeking to abuse Pakistan's laws to foment terror and hate might themselves be subject to justice. Pray that Christians might always be prepared to share about Jesus, and to repay prejudice with forgiveness and violence with love.

[Alumni] 13 alumni of ACTS are currently in ministry in Pakistan