

On the road to 2033:

Stages of a journey to the heart of the Church in Pakistan



By Martin Hoegger

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11. Conclusion of our stay in Pakistan: a path of unity, courage and hope towards 2033

From 18 to 25 November 2025, a journey took Olivier Fleury and Martin Hoegger through Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Taxila, opening a window onto the Church in Pakistan. Ten stops revealed a contrasting picture: social fragility and persecution on the one hand, creativity, courage and hope on the other.

During their meetings with leaders of churches, movements, educational institutions, social works, hospitals, digital initiatives and liberation projects, the same question kept coming up: how can 2033 be not only a date to celebrate, but also a path of conversion, unity and witness in the concrete context of Pakistan?

The ten articles thus present a contrasting mosaic: a warm welcome from communities, a commitment to the education of young people, concern for the poorest, the search for unity between denominations, the development of new tools – from digital technology to self-help groups – and constant attention to proclaiming the Resurrection in the heart of a predominantly Muslim society. This journey is not just a report; it appears to be a time of shared discernment, where the Spirit already seems to be preparing a future harvest.



Welcome at the Goldberg Presbyterian Church, Lahore

1. An amazing first day in Pakistan.



Lahore, 18 November. This first day in Pakistan marks the beginning of several visits as part of the JC2033 initiative. Between a flower-filled evening welcome, meditations, Church meetings and celebrations, it already reveals the main themes of this trip.

Our arrival in Lahore, after a long journey and a stopover in Doha, takes place in the middle of the night. It is half past two when we (**Olivier Fleury**, founder of JC2033, and myself, **Martin Hoegger**) walk through the airport doors. To our great surprise, five men are still waiting for us: among them, **Obaid Khokhar**, Secretary General of the National Council of Churches in Pakistan, and **Reuben Qamar**, President of the Presbyterian Church. Both are also JC2033 ambassadors.

Their warm welcome, with large bouquets of roses and gladioli, showed a kindness that touched us deeply. We immediately felt the warmth of the relationship that had developed during the [JC2033 gathering in Geneva](#) a few months earlier. They took us to the headquarters of the Council of Churches, where we would be staying.

Meeting with the Council of Churches: realities and challenges



In the morning, we meet **Victor Azariah** and **Obaid Khokhar**, the former and current general secretaries of [the National Council of Churches](#). They present the Christian situation in Pakistan. Thanks to long-standing educational efforts, many Christians have improved their situation, but the contrasts remain stark.

On the left, Obaid Khokhar, Victor Azariah.

In the villages, where the majority of Christians live, families are poor, poorly educated and relegated to the outskirts, in underserved areas. A form of implicit social hierarchy, similar to the caste system in India (which is only a few kilometres from Lahore), still exists. Education

appears to be a major issue. Many pastors have not received theological training, and the Council of Churches is developing accessible discipleship training.

In the city, the situation is different: Christians are better educated, more aware of their rights and more integrated. The Council collaborates with all Christian traditions and runs a popular retreat centre.

An ecumenical commission for justice and service

We then meet **James Rehmat**, director of the [Ecumenical Commission for Human Development](#). He presents an organisation committed to justice and education, humanitarian aid and human dignity. Its work focuses on young people, children and orphans.

From left to right: James Rehmat, Obaid Khokhar, Martin Hoegger and Olivier Fleury



The lack of public structures for orphans creates a void that their mission seeks to fill. Their vision is rooted in Luke 4:18, where Jesus announces Good News that liberates and uplifts.

We then discuss the perspective of JC2033 in a predominantly Muslim context. Jesus is recognised as a prophet, but not as crucified and risen. This requires discernment in planning a national celebration.

Some regions may emphasise the birth of the Church at Pentecost; others may choose a more direct testimony. The essential thing is to allow the local Church to discern its own path.

Scripture Union: a springboard towards the Risen One

The meeting with **Sharaz Shahzad**, secretary of the Scripture Union, and his team brings a lively note to the day. Their ministry, focused on children and young people, aims to lead the new generation into a living relationship with the risen Christ.

The announcement of 2033 aroused real enthusiasm among them. They expressed their desire to see the Church in Pakistan grow in personal and deep faith. They want children to



discover Jesus not only in his story, but in his present presence. *Scripture Union* is even considering dedicating an annual theme to the question: "Who knows the risen Christ?"

The Scripture Union team

Worship in a Presbyterian church: what a joy!

The day ends with a service at Goldberg Presbyterian Church in Lahore. The welcome is simple and warm: we are once again greeted with flowers and dances by children. The liturgy led by Pastor **Samuel Massey** expresses a clear faith in the Triune God. Obaid, Olivier and I take turns to encourage an already convinced congregation about the importance of the journey towards 2033.

The final prayer, led by young girls, is touching in its simplicity and freshness. The Urdu sometimes slips into a freer, almost heavenly language. This moment concludes the day on a unique note: overflowing joy!

From left: Martin Hoegger, Olivier Fleury and Obaid Khokhar



Thus ends this first day, punctuated by sincere exchanges and simple gestures that give a concrete face to the Church in Pakistan. The following days will allow us to meet other communities and discover with surprise and gratitude the path already well laid out by our ambassadors towards 2033.

2. Visit to the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan



Welcome during the general assembly in Gujranwala

As part of our stay in Pakistan, Olivier Fleury and I were invited to speak at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan in Gujranwala. On Sunday, 23rd November, I also preached in one of its communities in Lahore.

We were invited by the moderator of this Church, Pastor Reuben Qamar, who introduced us as follows: "JC2033 is working to network churches around the world in preparation for the 2000th anniversary of Jesus' resurrection. They are here with us for that purpose, and we thank God for bringing them to Pakistan to share the Word of God with us. "

Olivier presented his vision of a great celebration at Easter 2033, linking it to the text of Revelation, where people from all nations celebrate the Risen One (chapter 7). He then presented the JC2033 initiative as a strong call to unity. Drawing on the image of the five rivers of Punjab, which separate and then unite before reaching the sea, he recalled Jesus' prayer: "May they be one." The goal of our endeavour is to come together to better serve God's people. Unity gives strength and credibility to Christian witness.

A message of solidarity from Switzerland

For my part, I conveyed a message of solidarity from the President of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Switzerland, Rita Famos, expressing her support after the terrible floods of the summer and her gratitude for the fraternal ties forged with the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan through JC2033. She concluded by praying that God would strengthen this Church, comfort it and encourage it in its mission.

I then meditated on two parables from Luke 15, the lost sheep and the lost coin, both of which end with a celebration. This is not a detail: Jesus reveals that God's heart rejoices

when human beings return to him. The path to 2033, the 2000th anniversary of the Resurrection, is also a path to a great celebration, which arises from two essential spiritual realities: repentance and perseverance. ([Read my message here](#))

A Presbyterian Church service

On Sunday 23 November, I was invited to preach at the Presbyterian Church on the campus of *Forman Christian College University* in Lahore. The congregation, which was sparse at first, gradually filled the auditorium until there were nearly 500 people.



The service began with a prayer for Christian educational and health institutions, for political and economic stability in Pakistan, and for peace in the country and throughout the world. A prayer was also offered for the sick and for childless couples.

A warm welcome! On the right, Pastor Reuben Qamar

Reuben Qamar then introduced me to the congregation and briefly mentioned the JC2033 initiative, of which he is one of the ambassadors in Pakistan.

The Road to Emmaus

After reading the story of the disciples of Emmaus (Luke 24), I preached on this important text in relation to the three values of JC2033. I also mentioned our experience of walking the Way of Emmaus, the next edition of which will take place from 10 to 17 April 2026. ([See here for the announcement of this walk](#))

For the first time, I publicly shared a dream in which the face of the Lord Jesus appeared to me to offer me encouragement. This personal testimony illustrated the theme of the service: trusting through trials. God is close to those who are broken-hearted (Psalm 34:18).

The road to Emmaus in Pakistani culture



The disciples of Emmaus also received this encouragement during their brief but decisive encounter with the Lord. ([Read my sermon here](#)). Following my sermon, Reuben Qamar said a beautiful prayer that echoed the experience of the disciples of Emmaus:

Lord Jesus Christ, we thank you for the way you filled the lives of these two disciples on the road to Emmaus with comfort and hope.

In the same way, you come to us today on our roads of suffering, discouragement and doubt. We entrust each one of us here to you: may we experience your presence, hear your Word, and recognise you in the breaking of bread.

Strengthen our faith, give us peace, and make us your witnesses, here in Pakistan and to the ends of the earth. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the offering, Holy Communion was celebrated according to a traditional liturgy. The service, accompanied by many lively hymns, concluded with the Lord's Prayer and the final blessing.

On the way out, R. Qamar and I greeted the congregation, blessing the women and children with the laying on of hands, as is traditional.

We then took a walk around the campus of *Forman Christian College University* before being welcomed into the Qamar family home for an excellent Pakistani meal prepared by his wife Nadia and daughter Benaiah.



The large gathering at Forman Christian College University

Conclusion

Participating in the General Assembly and a worship service of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan was a joy for us. We discovered a welcoming and vibrant church. We were particularly touched by the energy of the singing, the participation of a large congregation and the warm relationships between people. As we left, we felt united with these brothers and sisters by the same hope in the risen Jesus. This experience of communion remains for us a powerful sign of the universality of the Church and of our common journey towards 2033.

3. Meetings in Gujranwala: building the future and healing divisions



Meeting with some leaders of the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan

Gujranwala, 22 November 2025. At the heart of our visit to Pakistan, the day spent in Gujranwala (north of Lahore) was particularly rewarding. Between discovering a technical institute supporting disadvantaged young Christians, meeting with the leaders of the theology faculty, and sharing the JC2033 vision, we witnessed a dynamic Church that is determined and deeply committed to training, service, and unity. This stage also opened up a space for dialogue and truth about the internal divisions within the Presbyterian Church, in a spirit of reconciliation.

A large part of the Christian population comes from very modest backgrounds and cannot afford to pay for education. The Christian Technical Training Centre (CTTC) linked to the Presbyterian Church is a real blessing for them: thanks to partner organisations, financial assistance is found and many young people are able to receive training. "The college staff," says **Imran Azhar**, its director, "perform their duties with faith and self-sacrifice, often for modest salaries, but always in the name of Jesus Christ."

With him, we visit the various training programmes and meet students and teachers at work in their various fields: mechanics, civil engineering, electronics, electricity, automotive mechanics, architecture and information technology.

The Faculty of Theology



The campus also houses a faculty of theology. Several employees of the institute have obtained certificates, diplomas or degrees there.

Among the teachers is **Sharaz Alam**, a young pastor and professor of missiology, who is also a JC2033 ambassador. His wife, **Romella Robinson**, is also very involved in the Church and the ecumenical movement: she sits on the central committee of the World Council of Churches.

With Sharaz Alam and Romella Robinson

The seminary is located just behind the Technical Centre. We will visit it: Olivier will speak to the students about the vision of JC2033 and I will bring a message based on the story of the disciples of Emmaus.

The commitment of the Pakistani churches

Obaid Khokhar, JC2033 ambassador and general secretary of the Pakistan Council of Churches, outlines the local strategy for this journey towards 2033 in Pakistan: to involve all denominations and movements. The Easter message is essential in a context where death and resurrection are the main points of divergence with the Muslim perception of Jesus. It is also a matter of preparing a generation: today's seven-year-old will be fourteen in 2033, then twenty-one in 2040, ready to bear witness.

A reconciliation meeting in the Presbyterian Church

Obaid Khokhar introduced the second part of the meeting: reflecting on the three values of JC2033: unity, witness and celebration. "How can a divided Church bear witness to Christ in a coherent way?"

I am invited to speak. I am asked to address the issue of internal divisions within the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, which is currently fragmented into four groups.

I begin by sharing the message from Rita Famos, President of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Switzerland, and then I speak about what I call "the key to unity": Jesus crucified. Read my message here:

<https://www.hoegger.org/article/keys-to-unity-2/>

Olivier then takes the floor and calls for mutual love: to stand humbly before Christ so that he may enlighten what needs to be purified in the ministry. He reminds us that God's love is always full and available.

The moderators' response

The first moderator expresses his gratitude and publicly declares that the Church is ready for reconciliation, "at any cost". He asks us to help bring all parties together and affirms that the Church will accept the formula for peace that we propose.

The second moderator, who is close to retirement, announces that he is ready to do anything to promote peace. He wants to put an end to the conflicts.

He adds that the third moderator – who was unable to attend – shares the same sentiment.

All affirm that there should be one united house, and that this house should choose its own leaders. They mandate us to meet with the fourth moderator, which we will do the following day in Lahore.



A call for a clear path to Easter 2026

Olivier concludes by encouraging us to take clear action between now and Easter 2026: that all stages of reconciliation be completed by then.

He emphasised that reconciliation progresses better around a fraternal meal.

This process will be painful, he said, but in the end everyone will be able to say, "I did my part," and the Lord will be honoured.

This day in Gujranwala left a lasting impression on us. It allowed us to discover a vibrant Church, sustained by the steadfast faith of its educators, pastors and leaders. Between its commitment to the most vulnerable young people, the ecumenical ec e

momentum surrounding JC2033 and the sincere desire to heal old divisions, we sensed a genuine sense of hope.

The powerful words of the moderators, who are prepared to make sacrifices in order to restore communion, testify to a genuine desire for reconstruction. While the path to renewed unity will undoubtedly be challenging, it is now open.

May this momentum continue until Easter 2026 and beyond, so that the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan may proclaim with one voice the good news of the risen Christ!



Echoes of the Presbyterian Church Synod

4. Meetings with the Pentecostal Churches of Lahore



A visit to the Full Gospel Assemblies Seminary.

By Martin Hoegger

During our stay in Pakistan, Wednesday 19 November in Lahore was marked by intense meetings with various Pentecostal churches. Between a time of sharing at the *Full Gospel Assemblies*, a theological exchange with theology students, and a fraternal dialogue with the Assemblies of God, a common thread emerged: spiritual preparation for the year 2033, the 2000th anniversary of Christ's Resurrection. All these meetings were an opportunity for us to re-examine our own callings, to encourage Christian unity, and to rekindle together the desire that every inhabitant of Pakistan may hear: "Christ is risen."

A fraternal welcome at the Full Gospel Assemblies

Accompanied by **Obaid Khokhar**, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Pakistan, and **Reuben Qamar**, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, we met **Liaqat M. Qaisar**, a distinguished Bible scholar and current director of the Full Gospel Assemblies Theological *Seminary*.

He expresses his gratitude for our visit, and very quickly the atmosphere becomes friendly, fraternal and open to dialogue. The seminary, located in the heart of Lahore, trains many pastors and evangelists who are committed to working in a challenging context.

Regarding the path to 2033, he highlights a crucial issue: Christian campaigns and gatherings almost exclusively reach Christians. However, in a predominantly Muslim



country, the challenge is immense: how can the Good News of the Resurrection also resonate with Muslims, while respecting cultural and security limitations?

Olivier Fleury's book on the vision for 2033 in Urdu

Through our discussions, the idea emerged to form an interfaith working group, bringing together leaders from various churches and institutions. Its mission would be to pray together, reflect on a national strategy for 2033, and coordinate an annual ecumenical event at Easter as a sign of unity and public witness.

This initiative, still in its infancy, has been very well received: many feel that the time has come to collaborate more closely towards a common vision.

Teaching "revelation": meeting with theology students

On the same campus, we then meet the theology students of this Church, immersed in the study of the Book of Revelation – the text that opens with these words: "Revelation of Jesus Christ". The theme lends itself perfectly to sharing our own spiritual experiences.

Based on the text of chapter 7 – "After this I saw: it was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language " (v. 9), Olivier shares his vision for 2033, which he received in Australia: the earth seen from afar, crossed by explosions of light bursting forth from all nations, then a great multitude, of all languages and colours, worshipping Jesus. An inner voice says to him: "Here are my people, praising me for the 2000th anniversary of my Resurrection." He then understood that God was calling him to work so that every language, every people, every person could hear: "He is risen."



I in turn shared how the Word of God pierced my heart during my theological studies, leading me from atheism to a living faith. Revelation is not just a mysterious book: it is a call to let ourselves be reached by the Risen One, even today.

The students listen with great attention. We sense their spiritual thirst and their desire to understand how God can reveal himself in ordinary lives in order to transform them. (Read our testimonies here:

<https://www.hoegger.org/article/witnesses-to-revelation/>)

Assemblies of God: missionary zeal and spiritual partnership

In the evening, we meet with the Assemblies of God, a very dynamic organisation in Pakistan, at the headquarters of the National Council of Churches. Pastor **Davis Shouq**, senior pastor, participates in this meeting.

The discussion focused on missionary projects. Olivier mentioned his meeting in Colombia with the continental coordinator of the Assemblies of God, who is leading the MM33 project: to plant one million churches by 2033!

Olivier was delighted: "If this is what God is asking you to do, then plant churches!" It is a matter of walking as spiritual partners: each one keeps his or her calling, each

one remains faithful to his or her charism, but all decide to give glory together to the risen Christ in 2033.

However, he warns against the temptation of the "big brother" syndrome: large movements must not forget their "little brothers" – minority churches, fragile communities – if the whole family of God is to be united around Jesus.

Intercession for a pastoral couple in distress

A particularly powerful moment is the time of prayer for a pastoral couple threatened by Muslim extremists. They have been under pressure for two years and are also hoping to receive the blessing of a child.

We pray for their mission, for the Lord's protection and for the gift of life. I then meditate on the book of Ruth: a story of faithfulness, friendship – her name means "friend" – and rebirth, which becomes a symbol of hope for them. Walking towards 2033 also means walking together, like "Ruths", united by friendship in Christ beyond borders.

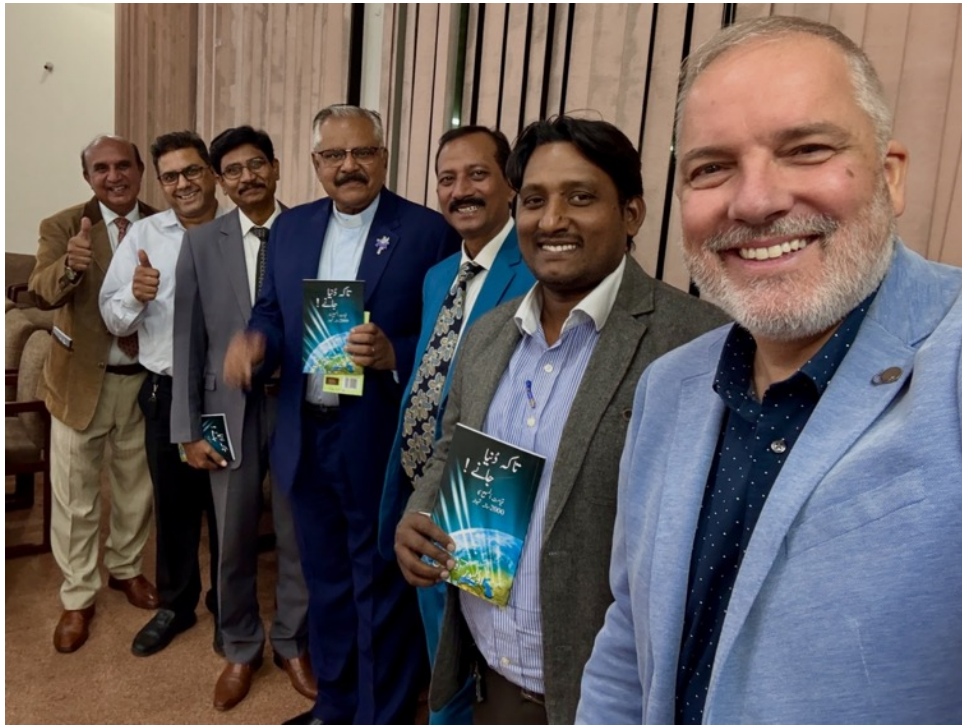
The same fire, from Pakistan to 2033

This day with the Pentecostals of Lahore touched us deeply. We saw a Church that is alive, courageous, passionate about mission, and animated by a genuine thirst for unity.

Sharing testimonies, fervent prayer, vision for 2033, solidarity with the persecuted: everything converges on the risen Christ, the centre of our faith and the source of all hope.

We leave convinced that the Lord is preparing his Church in Pakistan – as everywhere else in the world – to live the coming years not as a simple jubilee, but as a renewed revelation of Jesus Christ, destined to ignite the witness of believers and touch the hearts of peoples.

5. An appeal to the Pentecostal churches of Pakistan



Olivier Fleury during a meeting with pastors from the Assemblies of God

During our visits to Pakistan, we met with several Pentecostal churches: Assemblies of God, Full Gospel Churches and other communities animated by the fire of the Spirit. On the evening of 19 November, Olivier Fleury, himself from this tradition, addressed a vibrant message to them. Here is the essence of his appeal.

"During a trip to Colombia, I met the leader of the Assemblies of God for all of Latin America, a dynamic young pastor. I told him about JC2033 and he replied, 'We already have a project, MM33.'

MM33 is a bold dream: to plant one million Assemblies of God churches around the world. There are already more than 300,000. The idea is simple: if each church plants two, we will reach one million.

When I heard this, I was filled with joy: "This is exactly what the Lord is asking you to do: plant churches. You have the know-how, the anointing, even the resources. Go for it!"

He then asked me, "Wouldn't you rather we join your JC2033 project?"

I replied, "I don't need you to join my project. If you obey what God is asking you to do – plant churches – you are already serving God's vision. I only ask that when you reach that million churches, you give all the glory to Jesus, especially in 2033, by celebrating the 2000th anniversary of his resurrection everywhere."

Thus, we become partners not through a signed agreement, but in the Spirit: each one retains his charism, his ministry, his identity, and together we give glory to Jesus.

The challenge of the "big brother"

The Assemblies of God are today one of the most dynamic movements in global Christianity. But this strength can become a temptation: that of the "big brother" who forgets the "little brother" — the smaller, more fragile, less visible churches. If the Father invites us to celebrate 2,000 years of the resurrection together, then the whole family of God must be around the table.

What I have received is simple: "Every person living on earth must hear that Jesus is risen."

This concerns every inhabitant of Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Faisalabad, and every village in Pakistan. Everyone has the right to hear in their own language that Christ is risen.

I am often asked, "What is your strategy?"

I reply, "I don't have one for Pakistan or any other country. How could a Swiss person tell Pakistani pastors how to evangelise their country? It's up to you to discern."

Whether you choose the media, rural areas, prayer and fasting, church planting or discipleship training—go for it!

My only message is: "Do what the Lord has asked you to do, with excellence, and with a view to 2033."

I have no authority over you. I come only as a little brother from Switzerland to beg you: for the sake of Pakistan, use everything God has given you so that everyone may hear the Gospel.

A global wave... and the fight against fear

All over the world, churches and movements have put 2033 on their radar. Some talk about "the Gospel for all by 2033", others about "'s harvest of a billion souls". But a spiritual battle is intensifying. The Enemy is using fear: fear of war, disease, economic collapse, terrorism, ideologies.

As 2033 approaches, the world will be shaken. The temptation will be to shut ourselves away, paralysed.

That is why the Lord calls us to choose faith over fear. Even if we lose our lives, we know where we are going. This assurance will enable us to stand firm and bear witness.

All for the glory of Jesus

I wrote a book about this vision. I gave it as a legacy to my sons and told them, "You will not become rich with this book. I give it to the Church."

Today, it is available in more than twenty languages. We waive the copyright: the only thing that matters is spreading the vision, for the glory of Christ.

The JC2033 logo and our tools are also freely available: may they serve the Church!

May the Lord grant you, here in Pakistan, to fully enter into this vision:

- by remaining faithful to your Pentecostal calling to proclaim the Gospel with power;
- by living in unity with brothers and sisters from other Churches;
- by preparing now for the jubilee of the resurrection in 2033;
- and by working to ensure that every Pakistani hears: "Christ is risen!"

Embracing a broader vision

This call is addressed to churches that are full of fire and vitality and rooted in mission. Recalling the importance of unity, faithfulness to the call received and spiritual preparation for 2033, Olivier Fleury invites Pentecostals in Pakistan, but also throughout the world, with humility and brotherhood, to enter into a vision broader than their own projects: that of the risen Christ glorified in all nations. May this call bear fruit for the mission and for the glory of Jesus.

Interview by Martin Hoegger

6. Meeting with movements in Pakistan on the road to 2033



With the Focolare community in Rawalpindi

During our stay in Pakistan, we met with several Christian movements and organisations involved in proclaiming the Gospel: the Bible Society, student movements, Focolare communities, Youth With A Mission (YWAM) and the Billy Graham Association. Everywhere, the same question came up in our discussions: how can we prepare together for the^{2000th} anniversary of Christ's Resurrection in 2033 and what "gift" can we offer to the Lord on this occasion?

The Bible Society, servant of the Churches and of unity

Together with Pastor **Azhar Mushtaq**, General Secretary of the Bible Society of Pakistan, Martin Hoegger, former Director of the Swiss Bible Society, recalled the vocation of Bible Societies: to serve the Churches by spreading the Word of God, and thus to serve Christ who died and rose again for all. The Bible Society, in connection with all denominations, is at the heart of inter-church relations. Hence the crucial question: what will it bring to the great "banquet" of 2033?

Azhar Mushtaq confides that the prospect of 2033 is already present, particularly in the Catholic Church, with which the Bible Society collaborates in Lahore.

The challenge, he insists, is not to limit 2033 to one denomination or one major national event, but to make it a journey experienced throughout the country, at the local level, involving children, young people, women and men.



For A. Mushtaq, it is a priority to think about the younger generation, which is strongly influenced by digital technology, and to produce digital material as well. Easter and the Resurrection seem to him to be the centre of faith, even more so than Christmas; in 2033, it will be necessary to celebrate it on a large scale in this predominantly Muslim country, with a clear public witness.

Azhar Mushtaq, Secretary General of the Bible Society, in the Bible Museum

Obaid Khokhar, General Secretary of the Council of Churches of Pakistan, sees the Bible Society as an actor capable of playing a coordinating role recognised by all. He proposes to start in practical terms with joint meetings, video exchanges and online meetings in order to involve leaders on a broad basis. He emphasises that everyone must play their part according to the calling they have received, in the spirit of John 17, where Jesus prays for the unity of his disciples.

The depth of small Bible study groups

Still in Lahore, we meet the *Pakistan Fellowship of Evangelical Students* (PFES), known in Switzerland as the "University Bible Groups".

<https://pfes.tripod.com> (The Fellowship of Evangelical Students in Pakistan). Its general secretary, **Philip Chandi**, highlights another facet of the mission. Present for nearly 70 years, the PFES has chosen the path of small groups rather than large gatherings. There are about 90 Bible study groups in the country, with patient work of training, follow-up and personal accompaniment.



Leaders recognise the limitations of large events: crowds, high budgets, heavy logistics, but little follow-up. Sometimes the quality of the meals is remembered more than the biblical content, and a week later it is difficult to find those who "answered the call". Conversely, the PFES encourages participants to contribute financially, even modestly, so as not to feed a prosperity gospel based on material benefits.

The Focolare Movement: a laboratory of unity



With the Focolare community in Lahore

In Lahore, we visited a particularly interfaith community of the Focolare Movement, rooted in the Catholic Church but open to a wide range of ecclesial traditions. Catholics, Protestants, Anglicans, Pentecostals and Adventists walk together there. The charism of the movement combines spiritual roots with fraternal openness, in the dynamic of Christ's prayer: "that they may all be one"!

From the moment we arrived, we were touched by the friendship and support shown by the members of the community. Their immediate adherence to the vision of moving forward in unity towards 2033 testifies to their desire for Christian witness to gain in relevance and credibility. A visit to the Focolare has become an almost natural part of our journey in each country, as this movement embodies a concrete experience of communion.

A few days later, we join the community in Rawalpindi. A sumptuous meal awaits us, with two huge freshwater fish carefully prepared. I am delighted to see **Stella John**, the community leader, whom I met last year in Rome.

As in Lahore, we shared the initiatives underway in the Catholic Church for 2033, in particular the "Agenda 2033" desired by Pope Francis, which brings together various Catholic and non-Catholic movements, including JC2033. (Read here: <https://www.jc2033.world/en/blog/together-around-2033-to-celebrate-jesus-christ-744.html>). Olivier presents his vision for 2033 and talks about his private meeting with the Pope in 2016, a key moment in his ministry.

We encourage the Focolare in Pakistan to inform their bishops, to disseminate the available resources and, if possible, to appoint a JC2033 ambassador to accompany the process locally.

The meeting concludes with a common prayer. Everyone expresses their joy at having shared a moment of fraternity, in an atmosphere of simplicity and unity.

Youth With A Mission and Billy Graham Association: mission and translation



In Islamabad, the meeting with **Toqueer Rasheed** and **Lubna Tabsam** illustrates the link between mission and modern tools. Youth With A Mission is present in several locations in Pakistan; some 450 people have attended a "Discipleship Training

School", 150 of whom live full-time on their faith and the support of donors.

With his wife and a team, Toqueer also collaborates with the Billy Graham Association to translate training materials. Certain topics, which are easy to deal with in the West, require great sensitivity in Pakistan; the texts are adapted culturally and theologically, then validated before use.

The couple then testify about their shared commitment to the mission and the ordeal they endured with the loss of a child. Their faithfulness to Christ in the midst of suffering becomes a sign of hope for others. A time of intense prayer is devoted to asking for consolation, healing and blessing on their lives, as a couple and as future parents.

The "gift to offer"

These encounters with various movements reveal a Pakistani Christianity that is alive, creative and well-rooted in its context. They show that the preparation for 2033 is not limited to a single major event or strategy, but involves a multitude of paths: Bible distribution, youth formation, small communities, interfaith and interreligious dialogue, translation work, and humble witness in a pluralistic Muslim environment. At the heart of it all remains the same conviction: the true "gift" to offer for the 2000th anniversary of the Resurrection is a Church that walks together, listens to the Word, allows itself to be transformed by Christ and bears witness to him, with gentleness and courage, in the concrete reality of Pakistan.



7. A Christian Hospital in Pakistan



On the left, Pastor Ejaz Sahotra; on the right, Dr Nadeem David, director of the Christian hospital in Taxila

During our visit to the Islamabad-Rawalpindi region, we had the privilege of visiting the Christian Hospital in Taxila, a place marked by history, prayer and sometimes tragedy. In the midst of a fragile context, this hospital embodies an active, humble and resilient faith. During our visit, we met dedicated caregivers, shared the Word at morning worship and discovered a moving memorial dedicated to those who gave their lives in service. Here is the story of our visit.

A site marked by the history of Saint Thomas

Dr **Nadeem David**, director of the Christian hospital in Taxila, north of Islamabad, points out that one place in the region is officially recognised as being linked to Saint Thomas. This is exceptional in a predominantly Muslim country. Here is what an archaeologist wrote in a scientific journal this year:

Around 52 AD, he settled in Mailepuram (Mylapore), then in Taxila. After preaching in Taxila, he left for China. He converted many prominent leaders, including Gondophares, the king of Taxila, and his brother Gad. The research aims to (a) trace and identify the remains of St. Thomas' presence in Taxila, (b) add historical evidence to the history of the Eastern and Western Churches, (c) fill in the gaps in the history of early Christianity in Pakistan. Historical evidence has revealed the existence of a Jewish colony long before St. Thomas' visit to Taxila¹.

¹ Wajid Bhatti, "Historical Sketch of Saint Thomas in Taxila," [*Vol. 2 No. 1 \(2023\): The Journal of Cultural Perspectives*](#)

Theoretically, this site opens up a space for interfaith dialogue. But in the current climate, marked by tensions and discriminatory religious laws, N. David is cautious: he never speaks of Islam, only of his own faith.

Morning worship at the hospital



The day begins with a hearty breakfast, washed down with traditional Pakistani spiced tea, served at every meeting and at all hours.

Every day, the hospital begins with a time of prayer. Olivier and I are welcomed according to local tradition: we are given flowers. The hospital pastor, **Ejaz Sahotra**, greets us: "Your visit is a blessing. I believe that your coming here is part of God's work."

During the service, Dr David talks about the JC2033 initiative:

It is a great task. We hope that it will bring unity and harmony among the churches, so that we may all be on the same page. The Lord Jesus Christ did not die and rise again for a few, but for all of us. He has delivered us from our sins: let us move forward, let us not return to evil, let us remain united and walk in the way of Christ.

Then he adds: "Let us pray that this good news will reach all of Pakistan. And instead of saying 'we are Presbyterians', let us simply say: we are Christians, and God is doing great things for us."

I then shared a short meditation to encourage the healthcare staff, based on Jesus' words: "*I was sick and you took care of me.*"

(Click here to read my message: <https://www.hoegger.org/article/encountering-christ/>)

A place marked by violence: the memorial of 9 August 2002

After the service, we visit another church located on the hospital grounds, where, on 9 August 2002, four young women lost their lives in an attack.



Three employees – a nurse and cleaning staff – died instantly, the fourth shortly afterwards. All were Christians, working at the hospital.

This attack was part of a series of attacks against Christians in 2002, even though the hospital served all patients, regardless of religion.

The monument erected on the site bears the words "*lest we forget*". Inside the church, there are two clocks: one is working; the other stopped at 7:48, the time of the attack.

Dr. David then emotionally recounts several recent tragedies: neighbourhoods burned down, villages ravaged, people killed on the basis of false accusations. He recounts how he brought aid and support to the villages of [Gojra and Korian](#), where refugee families lived among the graves, in tents. Despite everything, he emphasises that many Christians consider persecution to be a price paid for Christ.

A light for all

In Taxila, we discovered a hospital where faith, service and the memory of martyrs are intimately intertwined. In a fragile context, these men and women humbly bear witness to the Gospel through their daily prayer, courage and silent commitment. Their faithfulness is a light for the Church in Pakistan – and for us.

8. Pakistan Partnership Initiative: liberating, gathering and preparing for 2033 in Pakistan



From left: Sharoon Sarfraz, Olivier Fleury, Ashraf Mall and Martin Hoegger

Islamabad, 25 November 2025. A meeting between Ashraf Mall, director of the *Pakistan Partnership Initiative* (PPI), Olivier Fleury and Martin Hoegger, accompanied by Sharoon Sarfraz, JC2033 ambassador to Pakistan, reveals both the gravity of the situation of Christians in Pakistan and the emergence of creative responses. Based on a clear-eyed assessment of the Church, poverty and modern slavery in brick kilns, A. Mall and his team have launched a process of transformation. After our visit, they decided to incorporate the 2033 horizon into their action.

<https://ppicollaboration.org>

An uncompromising diagnosis of the Church in Pakistan

It all began with a study published in 2017. It showed that the Pakistani Church had been largely abandoned by the global Church due to problems with capacity, transparency and accountability. Disunity and conflict undermine the credibility of Christian witness, while young people are turning away from the churches. Resources are insufficient and many Christian organisations are struggling to survive.

Faced with this situation, Ashraf refused to let the report gather dust on a shelf. Taking a leap of faith, he created, with other partners, the *Pakistan Partnership Initiative*. After some preparatory work, he left his job in July 2019 to devote himself

fully to the initiative. PPI now mobilises resources for around 40 organisations and, more broadly, collaborates with over 500 churches and 70 Christian organisations to strengthen their impact in the country.

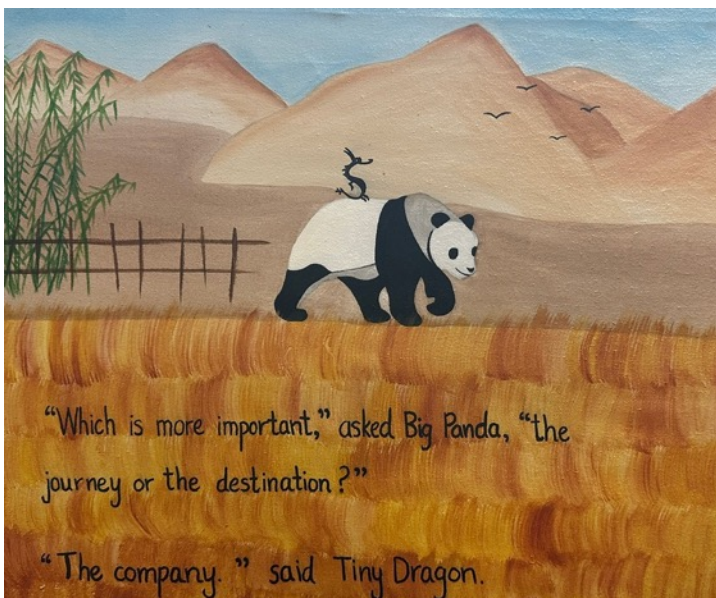
Slavery in brick kilns: an open wound

One of PPI's most significant areas of action concerns Christian families enslaved in brick kilns. In Pakistan, nearly 99.8% of bricks are made by hand, under extremely harsh conditions. It is estimated that more than one million Christians work in these brick kilns, often trapped in debt incurred to meet basic needs such as food, healthcare and marriage.

This debt never decreases because wages are very low and production quotas are high. It is passed down from generation to generation, from grandfather to father to children. Miners aged 6 to 15 are already working there. Housing is unsanitary, space is cramped, and sanitary facilities are often lacking. Many women and girls suffer abuse there.

PPI has already contributed to the liberation of around 2,700 families, or between 15,000 and 16,000 people, the vast majority of whom are Christian, with a few Muslim families in particularly dire situations.

A strategy of liberation and resilience



Liberation is not enough if nothing prevents families from falling back into the spiral of debt. That is why PPI has developed a network of self-help groups, inspired by community microfinance approaches. More than 130 groups already exist, and the goal is to reach 140 to 145 by the end of the year, then several hundred in the following years.

"What is more important," asked Big Panda, "the journey or the destination?" "The company," replied Tiny Dragon.

These groups meet weekly, save money together, lend money to each other and learn how to manage their finances. They are linked to local churches for spiritual support, prayer and pastoral care. PPI also offers vocational training, basic skills courses, education for children and trauma therapy support, with around 20 sessions already completed.

At the same time, the team is campaigning for the gradual mechanisation of the brick industry in order to tackle the system that makes debt bondage possible.

Youth at risk and a weakened Church

PPI is also concerned about another dynamic: the departure of many young people, especially young Christian women who marry Muslim men. Ashraf believes that most of these conversions to Islam are voluntary, even if the context encourages such choices. There are many reasons for this: poverty (around 70% of Christians live below the poverty line), a lack of educated young Christian men, the appeal of a more stable life, and a desire to escape marginalisation.

He highlights the absence of true "discipleship" in the churches, often replaced by a simple "membership" approach, without any deeper accompaniment. PPI is planning a specific study on these phenomena in order to better understand the causes and outline appropriate pastoral and social responses.

An ecumenical movement and an emerging ecological consciousness

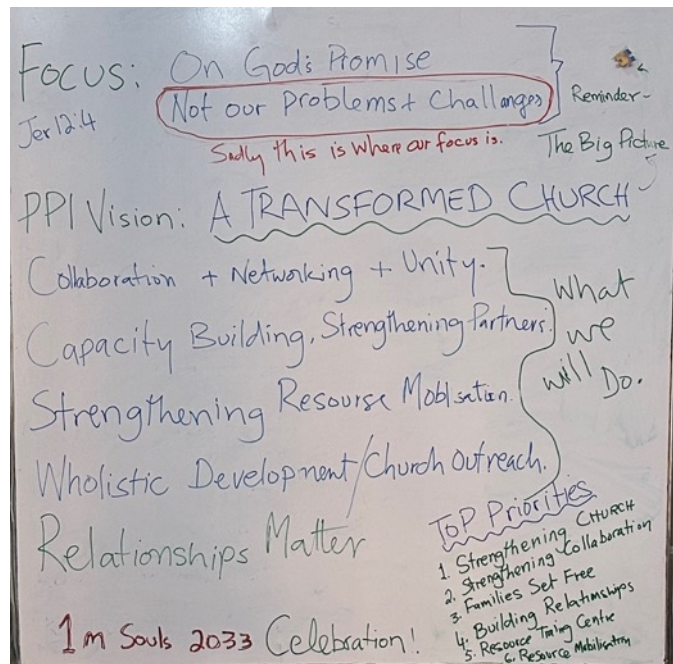
PPI sees itself as a platform for collaboration. Its partners come from many denominations, including Anglican, historic Protestant, Pentecostal and Catholic. This joint work is seen as one of the broadest ecumenical spaces in the country.

PPI also develops climate-related projects, particularly in southern Punjab, to help communities cope with floods and natural disasters. These community resilience projects incorporate biblical reflection on creation and Christian responsibility towards the environment, in conjunction with international networks such as the World Evangelical Alliance.

Horizon 2033

The meeting with JC2033 resonates with these commitments in a broader perspective. We presented the vision of a global preparation for the year 2033, centred on three areas: unity, witness and celebration. We recount how this vision has spread to many church and mission leaders around the world.

The 2033 vision is now part of the programme!



Ashraf welcomes this perspective as a call to action. He has a specific dream: that the million Christian slaves in the brick kilns may be freed and celebrate together the resurrection of Christ in Pakistan in 2033. This vision will be part of PPI's strategic thinking for the coming years.

A sign of liberation

This conversation highlights a path where lucidity and hope go hand in hand. Lucidity in the face of modern slavery, poverty, the fragility of the Church and the crisis of Christian youth in Pakistan. Hope in liberated families, the growing number of self-help groups, collaboration between churches and organisations, the awakening to ecological responsibility and the momentum of preparation for 2033.

Through the *Pakistan Partnership Initiative*, the possibility of a more united Pakistani Church is emerging, one that is closer to the poorest and more aware of its mission, on the way to an Easter celebration in 2033 that will also be a sign of liberation and resurrection for an entire people.

9. An entrepreneur called to serve the Gospel through digital media.



Martin Hoegger, Kashiv Joseph, Olivier Fleury and Sharoon Sarfraz

The last stop on our journey in Pakistan was to meet Kashiv Joseph in Islamabad on 25 November 2025. He told us about his radical transition from a life marked by professional success and personal pride to a commitment to serving Christ, particularly through digital media. Through a dramatic family crisis, an unexpected healing and a clear call from the Lord, his journey led him to put his skills at the service of proclaiming the Gospel in Pakistan and in the perspective of 2033, the bicentenary of Christ's resurrection.

From a brilliant career to a trial

Until 2014, Kashiv led a comfortable life. Coming from the corporate world, he ran a subsidiary of a major American software publisher in Pakistan, supervised more than 200 employees and rubbed shoulders with the leaders of large multinationals. A Christian "CEO" – *Christmas and Easter Only* – he kept his distance from the Church, convinced that his success came from his own talent. However, this pride became his downfall. He lost his job and, certain that he would easily find another, was met with a string of rejections.

A healing that changes everything

At the same time, his wife suddenly developed severe pain in her arm, which swelled up and became immobile. Despite consultations, tests and expensive treatments, the doctors were powerless to help and the family exhausted their savings. Unable to pay the rent, they were evicted and had to take refuge with the in-laws. To ease the pain, hospitals administered powerful opioids, until one day, after an injection, his wife's blood pressure dropped. The doctors refused to keep her in, fearing legal trouble.

Kashiv then called on a pastor he knew. His wife, lying on a sofa, was cold, cyanotic and struggling to breathe. Together, they prayed at length. Gradually, he felt his wife's hand warm up. The pastor invited him to thank God. The next morning, she woke up without pain or swelling and could move her arm freely. For the couple, it was a miracle. In 2015, they both knelt down, dedicated themselves to the Lord and opened the Bible "at random". They came across Joshua 24:15: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." " This verse became their lifeline, despite unemployment and precariousness. We read it at the entrance to her house.



Islamabad Street, the new capital of Pakistan

From day labourer to the top of the state

The following years remained difficult. In 2017, Kashiv, still unemployed, had to work as a labourer on a construction site, carrying bricks, even though he had once served great leaders. Yet he continued to pray, "Thy will be done." " God then opened an unexpected door: he was called by the Pakistani government to head the country's largest business incubator. He worked directly with the president and prime minister, negotiated with Amazon, Facebook, Microsoft, Google, and became one of the drafters of the national information technology policy in 2019–2020, the only Christian to hold such a role.

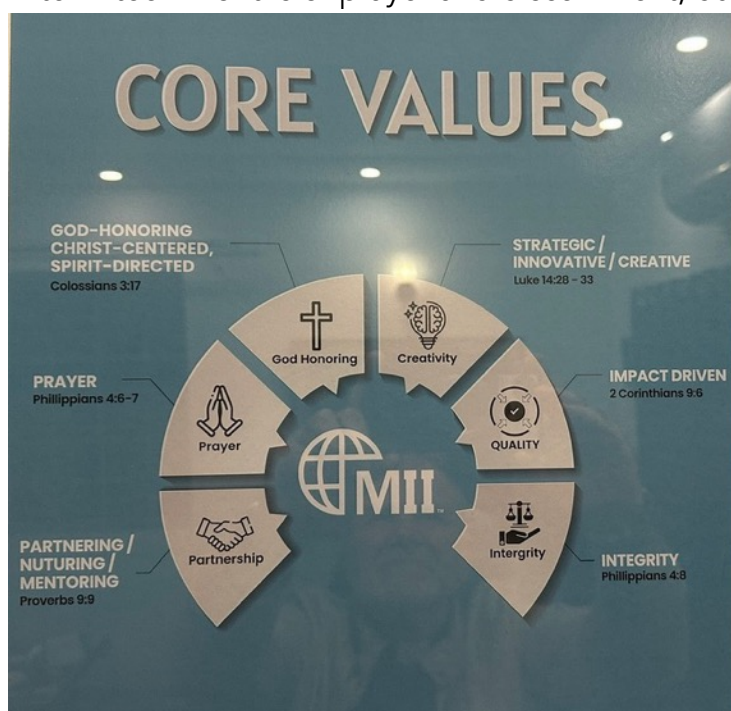
While visiting Facebook's offices in Singapore, he became fully aware of the power of digital media. This experience nurtured an intuition in him: these tools can be used to spread the Gospel, especially to young people and in sensitive regions.

Media Impact International: the Gospel in the digital age

K. Joseph then wrote a short concept note on the use of digital media for evangelism in a context such as Pakistan. Passed from contact to contact, this text reached David Benware, founder of *Media Impact International* (MII), an American organisation engaged in digital evangelism in the "10/40 Window". D. Benware saw in this vision exactly what MII was already doing and invited Kashiv to join them.

After fifteen months of prayer and discernment, during a business trip to Cairo,

Kashiv asked the Lord for a clear sign. Kneeling down, he heard a distinct voice say, "Kashiv, I need you." " He told his wife, who encouraged him to resign. He then left his government job without knowing how he would be compensated or how his family would survive, and joined *MII* in 2020.



The values of Media Impact

International

Today, he leads a team of 24 people in Pakistan, working mainly from home for security reasons. *MII* trains churches and organisations in the use of social media for Christian witness, runs online campaigns and facilitates follow-up centres via Facebook, WhatsApp and other platforms. Millions of messages have been exchanged, hundreds of people have accepted Christ, and dozens have been baptised. For Kashiv, this is the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work through a modern tool.

Encounter with JC2033 and vision for 2033

In this context, Kashiv discovered the vision of JC2033, which is preparing a great time of witness and celebration for the 2000th anniversary of Christ's resurrection in 2033. When we met him, he recognised in this initiative a resonance with his own vocation: to make the resurrection known to as many people as possible. He fully supports the three pillars of JC2033: Christian unity, common witness to the resurrection and, subsequently, joyful and attractive celebrations in each country.

Kashiv emphasised, however, that for 2033 to be meaningful, it is first necessary to "build a narrative": to inform and raise awareness among a population that is largely unaware of this milestone. For him, digital media are precisely the ideal tool for spreading this narrative in a country of 250 million inhabitants.

From success to service

Kashiv Joseph's story is one of transition from pride to surrender, from worldly success to service to Christ, catalysed by a family trial and a healing that reoriented his entire life. By putting his technological skills at the service of the Gospel, he shows how digital tools can become instruments of grace at the very heart of fragile societies. His encounter with the vision of JC2033 places this personal journey in a broader perspective: that of a Church called, united, to bear witness to the resurrection even in the digital space, on the way to 2033.

10. Meetings in Rawalpindi and Islamabad: a Church moving towards unity and mission



Meeting at the Raja Bazar Presbyterian Church, Rawalpindi

The JC2033 vision served as a catalyst for re-reading the calls and encouraging churches to walk together. The stages in Rawalpindi and Islamabad particularly highlighted the search for sustainable structures, solidarity with the most vulnerable believers and the desire to prepare communities to be witnesses to Christ in an often difficult context.

The Evangelical Alliance of Pakistan: training and service

On 24 November in Rawalpindi, a meeting with **Ikbāl Khokhar**, president of the Evangelical Alliance of Pakistan, highlighted the importance of solid structures to support communities. This Alliance oversees five major ministries: a Bible college, a correspondence Bible institute, a youth camp, a girls' high school and a Christian hospital.

Together with the director of the Bible Seminary, we participated in a time of fellowship with forty students gathered in the chapel. Olivier Fleury shared the vision of JC2033, encouraging deep spiritual and missionary preparation. The meal that followed provided an opportunity to address a sensitive subject: that of believers from an Islamic background.

Believers from a Muslim background: faith and survival



The situation of *Muslim Background Believers* (MBB) remains extremely precarious. Conversion to Christianity exposes them to mortal danger.

With Ikbal Khokhar, president of the Evangelical Alliance of Pakistan

As identity cards mention religion, any change is impossible and poses a constant risk. Some pastors have to accompany these converts into exile. To support them, regular meetings are organised to pray, read the Scriptures and strengthen an essential spiritual bond.

The day continues with a meeting at the Raja Bazar Presbyterian Church with pastors and young people, followed by a moment of fellowship with the Focolare community.

Technology at the service of a vulnerable Church

The next day, we meet **Sharoon Sarfraz**, JC2033 ambassador to Pakistan, in Islamabad. After a career in large companies, he founded an IT company employing Christians and Muslims. His most notable project, the PS91 app – named after Psalm 91 – aims to bridge the information gap between victims, pastors, lawyers and authorities in a context of persecution. He also supported the digital logistics of the General Assembly of the World Evangelical Alliance in Seoul.

The Council of Churches: twenty years of building unity

In Islamabad, a meeting with Pastor **Samson Sohail** and his team from the *United Council of Churches* provided an overview of how local churches have evolved over the past twenty years. The Council has a well-structured team responsible for project coordination, finance, human resources, supplies and a major disaster risk reduction

project. This structure is the result of a long process of consolidation undertaken after an initial observation: in the early 2000s, the churches were divided.



Samson Sohail, Director of the Islamabad Council of Churches, and Sharoon Sarfraz, JC2033 Ambassador to Pakistan

Birth and growth of a council

In 2005, S. Sohail initiated a pastoral council bringing together four churches. But there are more than a hundred churches in the region. Since then, the network has grown: 65 churches in one year, followed by collective work to obtain administrative recognition of Christian acts (births, marriages, deaths), long ignored by the national system.

From 2010 onwards, a decisive shift took place: moving from internal evangelical campaigns to a holistic commitment based on governance and social service. A report led to the creation of a programme to strengthen the capacity of churches to carry out credible projects, supported by the *Pakistan Partnership Initiative*, whose director, **Ashraf Mall**, we had just met.

Forming strong and missionary churches

Today, 153 congregations from ten denominations are being supported, and nearly 500 are being reached throughout the country. The focus is on discipleship, mission, management, governance and disaster preparedness. One of the fundamental principles is that every believer is a missionary, called to witness in their professional environment.

This vision resonates with the Pakistani context: a Christian minority of 1.6% living among 240 million Muslims. The development of "indigenous missionaries," rooted in the language and culture, is emphasised.

The vision of JC2033 is deeply in line with the network's intuitions. It is not a question of joining a movement, but of discerning how the year 2033 can become a spiritual and missionary lever. Pastor Samson confides at the end that he plans to extend his strategic plan until 2033.

Prayer and shared discernment

After this meeting, a dozen pastors gathered for a time of prayer. They asked God to guide the preparations for 2033, prayed for a new harvest and for the missionary renewal of the Church in Pakistan.

Martin Hoegger invoked the unity desired by Christ, in particular a concrete unity in the service of the poorest. Olivier Fleury shared a message calling both for spiritual revival and for inner strength in preparation for increased persecution. A few days after this meeting, one of their colleagues in Islamabad, Pastor **Kamran Salamat**, was murdered by an extremist!



Prayer time with pastors from Islamabad

11. Conclusion of our stay in Pakistan: a path of unity, courage and hope towards 2033

At the end of this journey, we discovered that the Church in Pakistan, although a minority and often vulnerable, is rich in precious witness to the global Christian family. Through prayer and perseverance, the memory of martyrs and social commitment, it manifests a faithfulness that challenges us.

The prospect of 2033 acts as a discreet but powerful lever, helping each person to re-examine their mission in the light of Christ's Resurrection.

This path is neither simple nor triumphalist. It involves an acute awareness of limitations, poverty and dangers, but it is carried by a hope that refuses fatalism. If there is a "gift" to offer Christ for the 2000th anniversary of his Resurrection, it will undoubtedly take the form of a Church that is more united, closer to the poor, and bolder in its witness. The visit to Pakistan suggests that this path is already underway.



A time of prayer in a village near Lahore. Sadhu Sundar Singh Presbyterian Church. A stone's throw from India.