

# **Christian Communities and Mission: a case study of Christian Villages and Christian *Bastis* in Pakistan**

By Rev. Dr. Pervaiz Sultan

## **Abstract**

“Christian Communities and Mission” has biblical bases. Israel and the Church as communities have a mission calling to be a blessing and covenantal light carrying evangel to the nations (Gen 12:3, Isaiah 42:6, John 13:34-35, Mark 16:15). The early church lived out the gospel in context. To further the mission engagement of communities, St. Paul called on the Church to be united in Spirit (Acts 2:44-47, 4:32-35, Eph 4:1-4).

The Christian villages in the Punjab were established in the early 1920s by expatriate missionaries and national pastors for socio-economic and religious reasons. Historically, the *Bastis were urban dwellings established by local governments* for street sweepers, many of whom were Christians. Christian villages and bastis are the focus of this study against the background of challenges and opportunities for Christians in Pakistan.

Worship, Integrity, Unity, fellowship and witness have been virtues of Christian villages and bastis. They were internally hindered by adverse factors like religious nominalism, party-bazi- (group formation to oppose others), gambling and drinking. Externally, socio-religious, legislative and political pressures were a setback. Despite these constraints these communities have maintained inclusive mission consciousness. This study is a reflection on their witness and assessment of the general situation of Pakistan in the background of the feudal landlordship, corrupt political system and religious radicalism causing oppression, discrimination and persecution of Christians and other vulnerable communities. This should open discussion for a commitment to mission research and engagement in Pakistan.