



Shaffaf Launches Multi-Faceted Ministry

Publisher Boaz Gill (boaz@brain.net.pk) shares Shaffaf Christian Communications' vision for serving Pakistan's 1.9 million Christians.

Shaffaf Christian Communications, in Lahore, Pakistan, is a non-profit, multi-faceted interdenominational organization.

"We seek to spread the Word of God and work for the advancement of the Christian faith," says Boaz Gill, founder and director.

Print resources

One effective way to spread the Christian message is book publishing. "However," says Gill, "in Pakistan people usually do not have the habit of reading books." This is partly due to a lack of awareness of available resources. "We want to not only publish books," adds Gill, "but to organize programs to create awareness among the people of Pakistan."

The young enterprise in this predominantly Muslim country has eight books in progress. Four that are now ready for publication. Shaffaf plans

to publish Sunday school materials, books on the Bible and general knowledge of Christianity, and materials on health education and literacy. In addition, Shaffaf hopes to publish books and other items for children.

Shaffaf's other main project is a magazine. In 1999, *Rahbar* (Guide), an Urdu-language Christian family magazine that had been published for over 15 years, temporarily ceased publication. Seeing that *Rahbar* provided solid biblical teaching to Christians and non-Christians, Shaffaf decided to revive it in 2000.

"We took the initiative to restart *Rahbar*. It has gone very well," reports Gill. "In the future," he continues, "we hope to publish it as a bilingual publication in Urdu and in English."

Writer development

One obstacle to producing good print resources is the lack of

good, trained Christian writers in Pakistan.

"There is a lot of potential," says Gill, "but many believers do not have access to universities and other institutions related to journalism."

Shaffaf hopes to organize its first workshop in October 2002, with the help of international Christian writers in the U.S. "We want Pakistani believers to get training to be good writers," says Gill. Shaffaf's workshop will help them to develop communication skills, press techniques, creative writing, and a clearer understanding of the use of the modern technology in communication."

Audio and video production

Shaffaf's work extends beyond publishing to education. Shaffaf is involved in literacy programs. It aims to open adult literacy centers for the Christian Community in particular, and for other communities at

large, to increase the level of literacy in Pakistan. In the meantime, to reach non-literates effectively, Shaffaf will produce audio and video resources.

"We produced a tape of Christian music," says Gill. Two more tapes are in production. Shaffaf's audio products only feature Christian singers and musicians. "It is hard to do this," adds Gill, "but God is giving us men and women in this field!"

Multi-faceted ministry

There are so many areas in Pakistan where there are no churches and pastors," he adds. "People are waiting for the Word of God and we want to be ready to launch different projects according to the need of the time."

The ministry has worked to establish 26 home churches in Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad and other cities. Shaffaf has also arranged rallies and meetings to proclaim peace, reconciliation and relationship building, not only for Pakistan and India but for people in all countries of the world. ❖