

## The Gujranwala Theological Seminary's Education System and its Influence on Community Leadership and Social Engagement

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### **Abstract**

*The research article titled "Protestant Christian Religious Education in Gujranwala: Analyzing the Role of Gujranwala Theological Seminary in Shaping Clerical Leadership" explores the impact of the Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) in Pakistan's Protestant Christian community. The study highlights GTS's history, establishment, and development, emphasizing its contributions to Christian education, particularly in training clergy and lay leaders. Established in 1877 by the Presbyterian Church, GTS has evolved through various institutional changes, offering diverse programs and degrees in theology. The seminary has become a central institution for training pastors, educators, and social leaders who play significant roles in religious and social sectors across Pakistan. The article provides a critical evaluation of GTS's curriculum, teaching methodologies, and infrastructure, suggesting areas for improvement in inclusivity, modernized facilities, and pedagogical methods. The research concludes by underscoring the influence of GTS graduates, who serve in varied capacities, including evangelism, education, journalism, and social advocacy, contributing to the broader Christian community's resilience and growth in a pluralistic society.*

**Keywords:** Gujranwala Theological Seminary, Christian Education, Clerical Leadership, Religious Impact, Pakistan

## Introduction

Christian education has historically received significant attention within both state and church systems. The church, as Lois E. LeBar (1907–1998) emphasizes, plays a central role in this educational mission, with its primary objective being the instruction and spiritual development of individuals.<sup>1</sup> During the British colonial period, Christian missionaries, representing both Protestant and Catholic denominations, actively promoted education in the Indian subcontinent. They established numerous schools and higher learning institutions, far exceeding government efforts. By 1853, missionary schools numbered 1,668 with 96,177 students, compared to only 404 government schools serving 25,362 students.<sup>2</sup> These institutions were explicitly designed to disseminate Christian teachings among non-Christian communities, as missionaries sought to convert and solidify the faith of new adherents. Despite the end of colonial rule in 1947, these institutions continued to thrive, contributing significantly to the Christian community's religious and educational needs. Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), founded in 1877, stands as a key example of this enduring legacy.

Gujranwala, historically known as Khānpur Sānsī, was renamed due to the prominent influence of the Gujjar tribe. It boasts a rich cultural and educational heritage and holds strategic importance as it lies along the historic Grand Trunk Road in Punjab, Pakistan, approximately 65 kilometers from Lahore, serving as a vital regional hub.<sup>3</sup> Gujranwala holds a pivotal role in Christian education in Pakistan, hosting renowned institutions such as Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), United Bible Training Center (UBTC), Faith Theological Seminary (FTS), and the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES). GTS, originally established by the Presbyterian Church in Sialkot in 1877, was relocated to Gujranwala in 1912, driven by the area's substantial Christian population and its growing educational needs. This move also aligned with the support of the Christian Technical Training Center, which further enhanced vocational and theological training. Together, these institutions have shaped

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<sup>1</sup> Lois E. LeBar, *Focus on People in Church Education* (Westwood: N.J. Revel, 1968), p. 25

<sup>2</sup> George Trevor, *India: Its Native and Missions* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1859), p. 254

<sup>3</sup> Faqir Muhammad Faqir, *Tarikh-e-Gujranwala* (Lahore: Bazm-e-Faqir, n.d), 28.

Gujranwala into a key center for Christian learning and leadership development.<sup>4</sup> The United Bible Training Center (UBTC), founded in 1939 in Rawalpindi, relocated to Gujranwala in 1947 to provide specialized Bible training for women, operating in close collaboration with Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS).<sup>5</sup> In 1968, Faith Theological Seminary (FTS) was established following internal disputes at GTS, offering diverse theological programs through both regular and correspondence courses. Additionally, the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES), founded in 1971, plays a vital role in promoting adult education. Affiliated with several national and international organizations, ABES focuses on empowering communities through literacy and skills development, further solidifying Gujranwala's position as a hub for Christian education.<sup>6</sup>

### Need and Establishment of Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS)

The Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), established in 1877 by the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) of North America, was founded to train individuals for ordination and other ministries in alignment with its mission to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ. GTS has remained committed to this purpose since its inception, annually training approximately twenty men and women from various denominations for ministry roles.<sup>7</sup> Situated on a serene campus in Gujranwala, the seminary provides an environment conducive to study, reflection, and worship.

### Background to the Establishment of GTS

To understand the context of GTS's foundation, it is essential to first consider the missionary work by the UPC in Sialkot, initiated in 1855 by Andrew Gordon, the first UPC missionary in India.<sup>8</sup> Before the UPC's arrival, there were no Christians in Sialkot. Gordon, upon arrival, felt called to evangelize among the local population, marking the start of an active missionary

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<sup>4</sup> Robert Stewart, *Life and Work in India* (Philadelphia: Pearl Publishing Co, 1896), 221, 241.

<sup>5</sup> Aslam Barkat, *Tarikh-e-Kalisiya Pakistan* (Clark Abad: Saint peter Publication Society, 1993), 549.

<sup>6</sup> Barkat, *Tarikh-e-Kalisiya Pakistan*, p. 546-547.

<sup>7</sup> Prospectus of Gujranwala Theological Seminary, p. 1; Farman Ali, Interview with Arthur James, March 22, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> John O'Brien, *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, Lahore, 2006), 551.

presence. He documented this calling in his writings, stating, “My life’s work is now before me”.<sup>9</sup> Over thirty years, Gordon baptized hundreds, with one of the first converts being Rām Bhajan, a high-caste Hindu, in 1857. Gordon considered this event significant, describing the conversion of both a high-caste Hindu and a lower-caste jeweler’s son as “our first fruits”.<sup>10</sup>

Over time, conversions increased significantly. By 1881, there were 1,373 Christians in Sialkot, a figure that rapidly grew.<sup>11</sup> This growth led the missionaries to envision establishing a theological institution to train local ministers. By 1891, the UPC had 10,165 members, highlighting the increasing number of Christian converts.<sup>12</sup> By 1947, Protestant adherents in undivided Punjab had reached 493,081, demonstrating the effectiveness of Protestant missions.<sup>13</sup> John O’Brien identifies eight primary motivations for these conversions, such as seeking divine salvation, protection from oppression, and the promise of better opportunities. Conversions were driven by a desire for justice, communal unity, employment, and educational opportunities for children.<sup>14</sup> An earlier South Indian missionary conference highlighted similar reasons, including a belief in Christianity’s truth, protection, educational opportunities, and the influence of Christian relatives.<sup>15</sup> Recognizing the need for trained clergy, missionaries felt compelled to establish a theological training institution.

### The Establishment Process

The need for a theological institution to support the growing Christian community in Punjab led to the formation of the Sialkot Presbytery in 1859, a training center to support the local ministry.<sup>16</sup> Gordon reflected on the necessity of education, stating that “the presbytery...elected

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<sup>9</sup> Andrew Gordon, *Our India Mission* (Philadelphia: Inquirer Printing Co Stereotypers and Printers, Lancaster, 1886), 57.

<sup>10</sup> Gordon, *Our India Mission*, 177.

<sup>11</sup> Mary Jane, *In the Shadow of Himalayas*, p. 23

<sup>12</sup> Stock F & M, *People Movement in the Punjab* (Pasadena, 1978), 8.

<sup>13</sup> O’Brien, *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity*, 553.

<sup>14</sup> O’Brien, *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity*, pp. 564-65.

<sup>15</sup> O’Brien, *The Construction of Pakistani Christian Identity*, 565.

<sup>16</sup> Noshīn Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmat* (Gujranwala: Mark Printing Agency, 2005), 6.

the J. S. Barr, D.D. senior professor...designating a four-year course of study” covering theology, church history, and Bible exposition.<sup>17</sup> The seminary was officially founded in 1877 with nine initial students. Two professors, J.S. Barr and J.P. McKee, established the institution's guidelines and secured funding, including a donation of forty thousand rupees from Indian Arch Bold Stuart, designated for mission work in India and Egypt.

The UPC decided to allocate the funds exclusively for theological education, and the seminary was initially housed in the Christian Training Institute (CTI), Sialkot, founded in 1855. The institute at “Bārah Pathar” (Twelve Stones) Sialkot became a foundational site for theological training in the region. Robert Stewart, in his reflections, affirmed the institution’s vital role, emphasizing that “the hope of the India church lies largely in the increased growth and efficiency of its theological institutions”.<sup>18</sup>

### Developments in Gujranwala Theological Seminary

This section examines significant developments at Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), focusing on its infrastructural growth, including building expansions and modernization. It also explores advancements in educational levels, the introduction of new programs, shifts in academic periods, and revisions to the curriculum, reflecting the seminary’s evolving approach to theological education and training.

### Building Expansions

Established in 1877, the Gujranwala Theological Seminary initially lacked a permanent building, necessitating several relocations. From 1877 to 1897, the seminary operated in Sialkot, then moved to Pasrūr (1897-1900), Jhelum (1900-1910), back to Sialkot (1910-1912), and finally settled in Gujranwala in 1912.<sup>19</sup> When the seminary established itself in Gujranwala, the UP Church of North America purchased land to construct its first building, which was governed by specific conditions: the land was solely for theological training, and if it was not used for this purpose, the church reserved the right to reclaim it.<sup>20</sup> The original campus included three residences for

<sup>17</sup> Gordon, *Our India Mission*, 483.

<sup>18</sup> Stewart, *Life and Work in India*, 293.

<sup>19</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 6.

faculty, a classroom building, and accommodations for students. Significant contributions, such as a donation from A. Landrum in memory of his late wife, helped fund these developments.<sup>21</sup> The subsequent growth in facilities reflects a commitment to creating an environment conducive to theological education.

In 1949, a five-year plan was established, aiming to increase student enrollment to 45 and the faculty to six, along with plans for new buildings. The supervisory board sought funding from various church organizations, receiving significant donations, including \$75,000 from the UP Church of North America and \$20,000 from the Presbyterian Church of the USA.<sup>22</sup> By 1952, new buildings had been constructed, culminating in the completion of the main seminary building on November 21, 1958, under Dr. James D. Brown's supervision, featuring classrooms, a library, a chapel, and offices.<sup>23</sup> Further developments included additional residential quarters for faculty and married students, culminating in a girls' hostel built in 1992 under Principal Arthur James's leadership.<sup>24</sup> The period from 2005 to 2010 saw another five-year plan, which included the construction of new classrooms and other facilities, such as a community hall and guest accommodations for international visitors.<sup>25</sup> While the seminary's physical expansion indicates growth, it raises questions about sustainability and the adequacy of resources to maintain these facilities over time. An introspective approach would be necessary considering how these expansions align with the seminary's mission and the evolving needs of its community.

### Expansion in Educational Levels

As far as developments in the levels of education is concerned, Gujranwala Theological Seminary has adapted its educational programs over time, conferring degrees such as Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.), Graduate in Theology (G. Th.), Licentiate in Theology (L. Th.), bachelor's in theology (B. Th.), and master's in divinity (M. Div.). The requirements for the B.D. degree stipulate that

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<sup>21</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 5-6.

<sup>22</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 6.

<sup>23</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 20

<sup>24</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 21-22

<sup>25</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 21-22

students hold a B.A. or B.Sc. from a recognized university and achieve 80% overall in their studies, along with a thesis submission.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the G. Th. degree requires students to have an F.A. or FSC qualification, score 75% in their program, and complete a project.<sup>27</sup> For the L. Th. degree, students need a Matric qualification, a minimum of 70% in their studies, and a project.<sup>28</sup> Presently, the seminary awards B. Th. and M.Div. degrees, adhering to similar requirements as the previous degrees. This evolution of educational levels demonstrates GTS's responsiveness to the changing landscape of theological education. However, it also highlights the potential barriers for students from less privileged backgrounds, who may struggle to meet these stringent admission criteria. The Seminary could benefit from implementing support systems to ensure a more inclusive educational environment.

### New Theological Programs

Since its establishment in Gujranwala, GTS has introduced numerous educational and non-educational programs. One of the earliest initiatives was the education of students' wives, starting in 1912, with the faculty's wives serving as instructors. Initially, primary education was required for admission, but by 1947, this responsibility shifted to the United Bible Training Center (UBTC), which was established in 1939.<sup>29</sup>

### Evolution in Curriculum

The curriculum has evolved over time, incorporating various subjects relevant to contemporary educational needs, as detailed in the curriculum overview.<sup>30</sup> In 1972, an extension education program was launched to accommodate students unable to attend regular classes due to work or other commitments. This initiative was primarily led by John Meadowcroft and aimed to provide access to theological education for interested Christians.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 21-22

<sup>27</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 22-23

<sup>28</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 23

<sup>29</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 24.

<sup>30</sup> The prospects of Gujranwala Theological Seminary, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 25.

## Women Education

The inclusion of Christian women in theological education in Pakistan was a significant milestone achieved through the efforts of Arthur James, former principal of GTS, the country's oldest theological seminary. Prior to 1992, women were systematically denied access to theological training, as church authorities believed it unnecessary due to their exclusion from liturgical leadership. However, in 1991, James presented a proposal advocating for women's theological education, which was initially rejected. Through persistent efforts, he succeeded in 1992, when GTS admitted its first female student, Zarinah Yūsuf, who graduated in 1994. This marked the gradual inclusion of women, with other seminaries such as FGA, LTC, and OTS following suit. By 2009, 42 women had graduated from GTS. In contrast, the Catholic Church has yet to adopt formal theological education for women, offering only short biblical and theological courses through collaborations with liberation theologians and para-church organizations.<sup>32</sup>

## Para-educational Initiatives

In addition to educational programs, GTS has made strides in para-educational initiatives. The establishment of a nursery in 1956, primarily driven by Miss Brown, aimed to care for the children of married students during their studies.<sup>33</sup> A dispensary was also established to provide medical assistance to students and staff, although it has been closed since 2008.<sup>34</sup> These para-educational programs highlight the seminary's recognition of the broader needs of its students and their families. However, the closure of the dispensary raises concerns about the long-term support available to students. The Seminary might explore partnerships with local healthcare providers to ensure that students and staff have access to essential health services.

## The Educational Period

The educational period at GTS has undergone several changes. Initially, the academic year lasted five months, from May to October. In 1882, the seminary adopted a three-term academic year

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<sup>32</sup> Farman Ali, Humaira Ahmad and Ambreen Salahuddin, "Christian Feminist Theology in Pakistan," *Feminist Theology* 31, 1 (2022), 9-19 at p. 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 25.

<sup>34</sup> Jalal, *Critical Analysis of the Ministry of Female Graduates*, 6.

modeled after Western institutions, which persisted until 1971. A shift in 1972 extended the program to four years, but by 1990, the duration was reduced to three years, a structure that remains today.<sup>35</sup>

In a nutshell, the developments at Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) reflect a dynamic adaptation to the evolving needs of theological education, but there are areas that require critical improvement. Building expansions and enhancements in facilities, though commendable, raise sustainability concerns. These expansions must be balanced with available resources, ensuring ongoing maintenance and alignment with the seminary's mission. Introducing support from external partnerships could help GTS secure funds for upkeep and future growth. Educational program expansions have diversified learning opportunities, yet stringent admissions criteria may deter candidates from less privileged backgrounds. Offering scholarships and preparatory courses would foster inclusivity and broaden access to theological education. While new programs, such as the extension and women's education initiatives, underscore GTS's progressive approach, further efforts are needed to promote women's leadership in ecclesiastical roles. Encouraging mentorship and leadership pathways for female graduates would enhance their impact in church and community settings. In para-educational support, GTS has made strides with nurseries and other family-oriented services. However, since the closing of the dispensary, it has struggled to provide essential student services. Collaborations with local healthcare providers would be beneficial in restoring comprehensive health support. GTS could also enrich its curriculum with courses in digital theology, social ethics, and interfaith studies to prepare graduates for modern ministry demands. Overall, by addressing resource limitations, inclusivity barriers, and expanding contemporary studies, GTS can foster a more resilient and high-standard theological education

### Educational systems of Gujranwala Theological Seminary

This section delves into the notable advancements at Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), highlighting its infrastructural growth through building expansions and modernization efforts aimed at enhancing its facilities. It further explores improvements in educational standards, the launch of innovative programs, adjustments in academic periods, and curriculum updates,

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<sup>35</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 25.

showcasing GTS's commitment to providing comprehensive and contemporary theological education and leadership development.

### Faculty Members

The GTS faculty comprises six core professors led by Principal Dr. Arthur James, a Pakistani native and long-serving faculty member with degrees in theology from Princeton Theological Seminary and Waynesburg College.<sup>36</sup> Dr. James, principal since 1990, teaches subjects including New Testament studies, Homiletics, and Greek. Vice-Principal Dr. Aslam Ziya'i specializes in Old Testament (OT) studies, covering OT exegesis, its historical background, and priesthood concepts.<sup>37</sup> Dr. Maqsood Kamil, a professor of Systematic Theology and Homiletics, emphasizes theological studies within the Pakistani context, having completed advanced studies at Louisville Seminary.<sup>38</sup> Salim Younas, who joined the faculty in 2003, teaches Hebrew, Urdu, and Culture & Religion, adding local language expertise to the curriculum. Jaehwan Lee, a South Korean scholar involved in the M.Th. program at GTS, teaches Missiology, contributing an international perspective on Christian missions. Lastly, Noshin Khan, the sole female faculty member, teaches Women's Issues, Christian Education, and Church History, drawing from her M.Th. studies in the U.S.<sup>39</sup> In addition to the primary faculty, Dilshād Masīḥ, a clerk with teaching responsibilities, covers courses for the extension program. GTS also employs fourteen para-teaching staff who provide essential support, from accounting and legal advising to ground maintenance and security.

### Educational Plan

The seminary's admission policy is inclusive, admitting students from various denominations. Applications are solicited in November, with classes starting in April. Typically, 20-25 male and female students are admitted annually across four-degree programs: M.Div., B.Th., M.Re., and B.Re. The M.Div. and B.Th. programs require three years, while the M.Re. and B.Re. programs

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<sup>36</sup> Nosheen Khan, Sabir Gull, Salim Younas, *Peghāmāt-e-Haq* (Gujranwala: Mark Printing Agency, 2004), 8-11.

<sup>37</sup> Khan, et all, *Peghāmāt-e-Haq*, 19.

<sup>38</sup> Jalal, *Critical Analysis of the Ministry of Female Graduates*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Khān, *Gujranwala Theological Seminary kī 125 sāla khidmāt*, 9.

are two years long.<sup>40</sup> Admission qualifications vary by program, requiring prior degrees at the undergraduate or graduate levels depending on the course. A distinguishing feature of GTS admissions is its emphasis on the applicant's background in religious education and pastoral potential. Faculty members interview applicants, assessing candidates on their ability to pursue pastoral roles. A church recommendation is generally required for admission, ensuring that students have ecclesiastical endorsement.<sup>41</sup>

### Curriculum and Teaching Methodologies

The GTS curriculum includes subjects in theology, church history, languages, and cultural studies. Faculty employ diverse teaching methods such as lectures, discussion-based classes, and practical exercises. While the prospectus does not detail specific instructional strategies, the variety of faculty specialties suggests that students gain exposure to different theological and ministerial perspectives.

### Examination System

GTS's examination system integrates both written and oral formats. Evaluations are conducted mid-term, with individual and group assignments contributing to students' grades. Assignments are scored out of 100, and students who do not pass may retake exams. The grading system is straightforward, with only the top three students being ranked, while the rest are classified as passing. To qualify for a degree, students must complete the curriculum and pass all exams satisfactorily. The Seminary has credit-based degree requirements, where M.Div. and B.Th. students must complete between 108 and 120 credit hours, while M.Re. and B.Re. programs require 72 to 78 credit hours. Coursework includes project work, with M.Div. and B.Th. students completing 36 courses, and M.Re. and B.Re. students undertaking 24.

The GTS system effectively combines theological training with practical ministry preparation, yet several aspects could benefit from further development.<sup>42</sup> The faculty's

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<sup>40</sup> GTS Prospectus, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Farman Ali, interview with Arthur James, March 22, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Contextual dimensions of the Christian theology have been discussed in the writings of Farman Ali; the important writings include, Ali, F. (2022). The contextualisation of Christian Eucharistic worship in Pakistan. *Practical Theology*, 16(1), 82–94. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2022.2128273>; Ali, F. (2023). The contextualisation of

international and diverse academic backgrounds enrich educational experience. However, the reliance on part-time or extension program instructors like Dilshād Masīḥ indicates potential gaps in full-time teaching coverage, which could affect the consistency of instruction. Furthermore, the dependence on oral interviews and church recommendations for admission aligns well with GTS's pastoral focus but may limit access for otherwise qualified candidates lacking church endorsements. The grading policy, which does not rank students beyond the top three, reflects a possibly communal and less competitive academic culture. This approach may encourage cooperation, but it could also hinder students who may benefit from a more detailed evaluation of their academic standing. Lastly, the broad range of support staff ensures smooth seminary operations, yet expanding academic resources—such as additional library facilities, language support for foreign students, or a mentorship program—could enhance the student experience.

#### Study Programs at GTS: Proper and Extension Theological Education

The Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) offers two primary programs of theological education: proper (traditional, on-campus) and extension education. The traditional program divides the curriculum into a terminal system, with three terms per year, each term lasting around two to three months.<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, the extension program, established in 1972, provides education for those unable to attend regularly due to professional or personal obligations, offering a path to earn a Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) degree through a flexible credit-hour system.<sup>44</sup>

#### Proper Theological Education Program

In the traditional program, the curriculum spans three years and is divided into nine primary areas, which include Old Testament (OT), New Testament (NT), Church History, Systematic Theology, and Practical Theology, among others. Each subject area includes both linguistic and interpretive components. For example, Hebrew and Greek are taught as foundational languages

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Mary in the Catholics of Pakistan. *Practical Theology*, 16(6), 707–719.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2270796>.

<sup>43</sup> (Prospectus of GTS, 4-5.

<sup>44</sup> Standing Committee of the Nelson, *Harvest of Race: Essays in Celebration of 150 Years of Mission*, 2010, p. 361.

for the OT and NT, enabling students to interpret the biblical texts accurately. Courses in OT studies involve typology and allegory to explain the connection between OT narratives and the New Testament, specifically in their portrayal of Jesus.<sup>45</sup> The curriculum also includes courses on exegesis, where books like Genesis, Exodus, and Psalms are explored, emphasizing historical context, authorship, and responses to scholarly critiques. Similarly, NT studies cover Greek language, historical context, and theological themes like Pauline Theology. Topics in NT studies include books such as Matthew, Luke, Acts, and Revelation, with special focus on the early Christian Church and theological ideas such as the divinity of Christ.<sup>46</sup>

Practical Theology<sup>47</sup> courses address essential skills for pastoral roles, with subjects like Christian Education, Homiletics, Church Music, and Evangelism.<sup>48</sup> A unique aspect is Pastoral Theology, which includes comprehensive training in subjects like sacramental practices, church governance, stewardship, and leadership. In the third year, students are required to engage in various church practices, such as Sunday school and board sermons. GTS also incorporates contemporary studies into the program, such as Women's Studies, Religion and Culture, and Computer Education, acknowledging the relevance of these areas in modern ministry.<sup>49</sup>

The day at GTS starts with a morning devotion at the chapel, involving prayers, sermons, and hymn singing. There are four academic periods each day, with Saturdays dedicated to lectures from visiting scholars, who may be translated by GTS faculty if they are non-native speakers. Classes run from Tuesday to Saturday, with Sunday and Monday as rest days.<sup>50</sup>

### **Theological Education by Extension Program**

The extension program at GTS was introduced to offer theological training for individuals unable to participate in the traditional program. The program was designed by John

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<sup>45</sup> Prospectus of GTS, 4-5.

<sup>46</sup> (Arthur James, Introduction to the New Testament; Interview on March 22, 2011).

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<sup>48</sup> James, *Christian Education* ((Gujranwala: Mark Printing Agency, 1999).

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Dilshad Masih, August 11, 2011.

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Dilshad Masih, August 11, 2011.

Meadowcroft and approved by the Anglican Diocese of Nelson in New Zealand in 1972.<sup>51</sup> This program requires students to complete 30 credit hours, covering a variety of topics, including Biblical Hermeneutics, Doctrine of Jesus Christ, Apostles' Creed, and Christian Education. Like the proper program, the extension students receive a B.Th. degree but are ineligible for ordination as pastors without completing an additional two-year program on campus. The extension classes take place once a week for two hours, with the curriculum covering the same subjects as the traditional program. However, no facilities or financial support are provided to these students, who are expected to cover their own expenses. The examination and graduation processes are conducted similarly to the traditional program, with ceremonies held together.<sup>52</sup>

The GTS program's strength lies in its comprehensive curriculum that spans both traditional theological studies and practical ministry skills. The inclusion of OT and NT language studies enables students to engage with scriptural texts in their original languages, fostering deeper understanding and nuanced exegesis. However, the program's heavy reliance on lecture-based learning, particularly in subjects like Church History and Historical Theology, may limit students' ability to engage critically with the material, as students are expected to write notes verbatim rather than participate actively in discussions.

The extension program represents an important step in making theological education more accessible. However, the limitation on ordination for extension graduates may discourage prospective students who are balancing other commitments from pursuing the program. Additionally, the curriculum's traditional focus, with a limited emphasis on contemporary subjects, might not fully address the challenges faced by modern Christian leaders, such as interfaith relations and digital ministry. Expanding contemporary studies to include subjects like social justice and digital ethics could better equip graduates to engage with today's pluralistic society.

Overall, GTS's theological education programs offer a thorough foundation for Christian ministry, albeit with areas for potential growth. While the core curriculum remains academically rigorous, the Seminary could benefit from pedagogical diversity, perhaps

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<sup>51</sup> Standing Committee of the Nelson, *Harvest of Race*, 2010, 361.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Dilshad Masih, March 22, 2011.

incorporating more interactive teaching methods and expanding course offerings in response to evolving societal needs.

### Teaching Methodologies

Predominantly, the lectures are conducted in Urdu, though English is occasionally used for theological terms, as observed by senior students Emanuel Abbot, Simon Bashir, and Adil Imran in September 2011. Teaching tools include blackboards, maps, pictures, and PowerPoint, with blackboards being the primary medium, though full-time faculty rarely use presentations.<sup>53</sup> Questions from teachers often kickstart discussions, helping assess student knowledge, while students mostly ask questions post-lecture. This methodology reflects a traditional approach but with limited interactive and visual learning aids, which might restrict comprehensive engagement, especially for complex theological topics.

Assignments and presentations form a significant part of the curriculum, with individual and group assignments focused on Christ-centered theology. Group work emphasizes collaboration, with a follow-up presentation and Q&A session to encourage comprehension and articulation in either English or Urdu, depending on the student's language preference.<sup>54</sup> This approach facilitates teamwork but lacks faculty-driven feedback during presentations, potentially missing out on deeper evaluative guidance. Research work, particularly for final-year students, is diverse, encompassing topics like Bibliology, Soteriology, and Christology, alongside comparative studies of Christian and other religious perspectives, with languages based on student ability.<sup>55</sup> However, the absence of viva exams diminishes critical assessment opportunities, which may be crucial for theological rigor.

In terms of practical experience, GTS emphasizes fieldwork across Christian and non-Christian communities. Students participate in various religious and social activities, preparing them for future ministry work. Assignments during summer in local churches ensure continuous hands-on training. Special lectures from visiting professors cover diverse topics, including psychology, hermeneutics, and evangelism, some delivered in foreign languages with

<sup>53</sup> (Abbot, Bashir, & Imran, interview with Farman Ali, 2011)

<sup>54</sup> Abbot, Bashir, & Imran, 2011.

<sup>55</sup> James, 2010).

translations. This exposure to international scholarship is beneficial, but limited translation resources can constrain non-English speaking students' understanding.

GTS encourages sermon practice, with students preparing outlines, receiving advisor feedback, and presenting sermons every Thursday. Evaluations focus on presentation and advice for improvement, providing structured, practical ministry training. Religious exercises and social programs, including Friday praise and prayer meetings and social gatherings like the Christmas and farewell parties, foster community spirit and spiritual development. However, the gender restrictions in prayer meetings reflect traditional values, possibly limiting inclusive community building.

### Library

Library facilities at GTS support theological study with over 20,000 volumes, including rare missionary archives and Asian Church History resources, making it a rich repository for theological education.<sup>56</sup> (Librarian selection is based on students' interest in study, which peers and faculty members observe, reflecting an informal yet interest-based selection. Library access is restricted to Christians and limited hours (5-9 PM) may restrict usage for students with other responsibilities. Policies also include a four-book borrowing limit, and in the case of loss, students must pay a penalty.<sup>57</sup> Despite its extensive resources, these restrictive rules could hinder broader access and in-depth research engagement.

### Hostel and Scholarships

Student housing and scholarships at GTS are managed through two policies: church-sponsored students, whose expenses are largely covered by GTS and their sponsoring church, and self-financed students, who bear their costs independently. Church-sponsored students also have access to scholarships based on marital status, a practice that helps ensure basic support for those in need.<sup>58</sup> Additional facilities, such as a mess system, washing machines, and playgrounds, provide a functional living environment. Security is tight, with surveillance at both main gates. However, a lack of internet and a campus canteen poses significant limitations for students,

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<sup>56</sup> GTS Prospectus, p.9-10

<sup>57</sup> Masih, 2011

<sup>58</sup> James, 2011.

particularly in an era where online resources are increasingly essential. GTS organizes an annual graduation ceremony with a structured procession, praise, awards, and a sermon from a chief guest. The ceremony reflects a rich traditional display with symbolic Christian elements, such as processions with cross-bearing students and gowns of designated colors for different student groups. While maintaining decorum, this structured event also serves as a morale boost and signifies the culmination of students' educational efforts.

### **Critical analysis of the Educational Systems of GTS**

GTS's curriculum demonstrates a strong commitment to theological education and practical ministry preparation. Teaching methods, however, appear quite traditional, with a heavy reliance on lecture-based formats and blackboard instruction. Modern teaching aids like multimedia, discussion-led learning, and active learning strategies are sparsely used, indicating an area where GTS could evolve to foster deeper engagement and understanding. While sermons, presentations, and fieldwork are emphasized for practical experience, limited faculty feedback during presentations or research projects could be a shortcoming in the development of critical thinking.

Library access restrictions and limited opening hours reduce the potential for comprehensive research, while librarian selection based on peer observation seems informal for an institution of GTS's academic caliber. Access to online resources is a pressing need, as it would enhance the breadth of theological learning and connect students with global theological discourse. The institution's emphasis on gender-segregated religious exercises and traditional social structures may need re-evaluation for fostering a more inclusive environment. Additionally, logistical limitations like the lack of internet and on-campus amenities hinder students' academic growth and daily convenience. Expanding these services could significantly improve the academic environment. Overall, GTS provides robust theological training, though modernization in teaching approaches, enhanced facilities, and more inclusive practices could elevate its role in developing theological scholarship and ministry skills in a dynamic, global context.

## The Role of GTS in Shaping Clerical Leadership

The Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) has made a significant impact on Pakistan's Protestant Christian community, producing pastors, theologians, youth ministers, Sunday school teachers, church administrators, journalists, authors, and social workers who are active in various religious, media, educational, social, and political spheres. Their contributions span a variety of roles, from religious leadership to interfaith dialogue, prison ministry, and Christian education.

### Religious Role

The primary area of influence for GTS graduates lies in religious services. Many pastors from diverse Protestant denominations—including the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, Pentecostal Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Anglican Church, and Evangelical Church—received their theological education from GTS. These graduates engage in pastoral ministry, serving in both urban and rural congregations across Pakistan. Their pastoral duties range from leading formal worship services to performing ceremonies (such as marriage, ordination, and memorial services), providing biblical teaching, and addressing family and congregational issues. Some graduates hold senior positions, such as bishops and moderators, within prominent churches (e.g., Presbyterian Church Rājā Bāzār Rawalpindi and Multan Diocese). Additionally, GTS graduates are actively involved in prison ministry, providing spiritual support and legal aid to prisoners, particularly during major Christian holidays<sup>59</sup>

### Role in Imparting Theological Education

GTS has contributed to Christian education in Pakistan by fostering an environment where religious education is prioritized across generations. In alignment with the objectives set forth by the Jabalpur Conference of 1964, GTS seeks to help pupils know God and participate in church life to foster responsible Christian citizens.<sup>60</sup> The graduates from GTS serve as Sunday school teachers and trainers, providing education to children, youth, adults, and women through various denominations' Sunday school programs. The programs aim to nurture children as

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<sup>59</sup> Aslam Barkat, *A'ina-e-Church of Pakistan*, (Lahore: Shani Mini Printers, 2003), 298.

<sup>60</sup> Robe Evans and Tosh Arai, *The Church and Education in Asia* (Singapore: Christian Conference of Asia, 1980), 76.

disciples of Jesus and instill positive values, with children's curriculum covering biblical stories and values. Youth ministry programs incorporate group studies, games, biblical movies, and educational tours, focusing on building religiosity in youth and involving them in productive activities.<sup>61</sup>

GTS graduates are also involved in adult education programs, such as those organized by the Adult Basic Education Society (ABES), which offer literacy programs and income-generating skills to illiterate adults to improve their socioeconomic status. GTS pastors play a critical role in ABES, encouraging community members to participate in education and assisting in administrative activities.<sup>62</sup> (Furthermore, GTS alumni contribute as instructors in theological institutions across Pakistan, such as Open Theological Seminary (OTS) in Lahore, United Bible Training Center (UBTC) in Gujranwala, and St. Thomas Bible College in Karachi, teaching subjects like apologetics, church dogma, and biblical languages.

### Evangelical Role

Evangelism has historically been a significant aspect of Christian outreach in South Asia, with various forms categorized by Raphael Vanier as E-0 through E-3, representing different levels of engagement with Christian and non-Christian audiences.<sup>63</sup> Numerous missionary societies, such as the Society of the Propagation of the Faith and the Holy Childhood Society, raised substantial funds for missionary work across continents, including \$41 million for Asia in 1992.<sup>64</sup> GTS graduates participate in evangelism primarily within the Christian community, while foreign missionaries often undertake broader missionary work among non-Christians. Despite this division of labor, GTS graduates continue to become more active in evangelical work, focusing both on intra-faith evangelism within Christian society and outreach to non-Christian communities.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Javed Masih, interview, February 22, 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Vincent A. David, interview with Farman Ali, February 16, 2012.

<sup>63</sup> Bashir, *Bain-ul-Thaqafi Basharat*, 27–30.

<sup>64</sup> *Alam-e-Islam aur 'Isayat*, May 1992, p. 20).

<sup>65</sup> Munir Bashir Masih, *Bain-ul-Thaqafi Basharat* (Hyderabad: Diocese of Hyderabad, 1997), 9.

## Evangelical Work in Christian Society

Evangelism in Pakistan is organized through various religious conventions and seminars held in both rural and urban areas, although not all are accounted for due to the high number of programs. Among the most prominent is the Sialkot Convention, the oldest evangelical convention in Pakistan. It is held annually in the month of September; it has been organized since 1904 by John Hyde and McCheyne Peterson. For the past four decades, its speakers are graduates or faculty members of Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS). Each year, a speaker is chosen, and a main sermon is published, with topics and sermon portions selected by the convention's committee.<sup>66</sup>

## Evangelical Work Among Non-Christian Societies:

Evangelical efforts also target non-Christian communities in Pakistan. Notable evangelists include Alexander David (1925–2005), a Hindu convert who became an evangelist after studying at GTS, and his efforts included distributing gospel literature, which led to the conversion of several Muslims, including a student who later became known as Esther John.<sup>67</sup> Another figure, Ghulām Massīh Nu'mān (1920-1998), a Muslim convert to Christianity, began his evangelical journey among Hindu tribes and the Gughrā community, ultimately leading to the conversion of several families.<sup>68</sup> Today, evangelical activities continue among Hindu communities and nomadic tribes in Sindh and southern Punjab, with denominations like the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan (PCP) and evangelists such as Shakil Munawwar involved in these efforts.<sup>69</sup>

Despite ongoing efforts, there is skepticism about the claimed impact of these evangelical activities. Conversion figures are often perceived as exaggerated, with some estimates not supported by evidence, which brings into question the authenticity of reported conversions.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Manzur Ziya' *Sialkot Convention*, 4.

<sup>67</sup> Mazharuddin Siddiqi, *Modern Reformist Thoughts in the Muslim World* (Islamabad: Islamic Research Institute, 1982), 3.

<sup>68</sup> Ghulam Masih Nu'man, *Torn Nest* (Switzerland: The Good Way, 2010), 7-9.

<sup>69</sup> Pervez Sultān, *Small but Significant* (Pakistan Praxis of Modern Mission, 2010), 78.

<sup>70</sup> Michael Wakely, *Can It Be True? A Personal Pilgrimage through Faith and Doubt* (United States: Kregel Publications, 2005), 114.

## Role in Women's and Youth Education

Women's religious education is a notable focus in Gujranwala, with institutions like GTS and UBTC offering programs that cater specifically to women from Protestant Christian backgrounds. GTS graduates contribute as educators, promoting the theological education of women in their community. Additionally, youth education programs—overseen by the youth ministry—provide educational opportunities such as group studies and biblically-themed activities to strengthen the youth's religious knowledge and engagement with the church. These programs aim to keep youth involved in church life and offer a constructive alternative to potentially harmful activities.<sup>71</sup> Beyond religious and educational realms, GTS graduates have left a footprint in broader social spheres, including media and literature. Their writings are used as textbooks in theological institutions, and their involvement in social services extends to various community support activities. These contributions collectively enhance the GTS legacy, influencing multiple facets of Christian and interfaith life in Pakistan.

## Educational Impact

Beyond religious evangelism, the Christian community in Pakistan has significantly impacted the educational sector. Catholic and Protestant missionaries historically established numerous educational institutions with the objective of promoting Christian education. The first Catholic school was established in Sialkot in 1850, and the first Protestant school in 1858, also in Sialkot.<sup>72</sup> A 1853 comparison showed Christian schools serving a much larger student body than government schools, highlighting the mission-driven expansion of education among local populations.<sup>73</sup>

Prominent institutions such as Forman Christian College in Lahore and Gordon College in Rawalpindi educated notable figures, including Muhammad Ali Jinnah, founder of Pakistan, and Allama Iqbal, a revered poet and philosopher.<sup>74</sup> Other notable figures educated in these

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<sup>71</sup> Patras Masih, interview with Farman Ali, February 16, 2012.

<sup>72</sup> Emanuel Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians* (Lahore: Hamsookhan Publication, 2007), 167-182.

<sup>73</sup> Christian vernacular education society, *Christian education for India in the mother tongue*, ((London, William Nicholas) 25.

<sup>74</sup> Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians*, 168.

mission schools include poets, journalists, politicians, and activists such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Asma Jahangir.<sup>75</sup> Christian schools and colleges have continued to play a role in Pakistan's educational landscape. In 1972, many of these institutions were nationalized, but several have since been denationalized and remain operational. Presently, there are around 518 Christian educational institutions in Pakistan, with 456 managed by the Catholic Church and others by the Presbyterian and Church of Pakistan.<sup>76</sup>

GTS graduates contribute to education by establishing secular institutions and serving in academic roles. Notable figures include Alexander John Malik, bishop of Lahore diocese, and Aslam Barkat, a GTS graduate who serves as vice-chairman of the Lahore Diocesan Board of Education (LDBE), managing nineteen institutions under the Church of Pakistan's administration. These institutions are open to students of all communities and religions.<sup>77</sup> GTS graduates also occupy academic roles, such as Tony William, a Hebrew language expert at the University of Punjab, and Arthur James, a member of the board of governors at Forman Christian College. Vincent A. David, another GTS graduate, made strides in adult education by establishing the "Adult Basic Education Society" to promote literacy among adults.

In conclusion, Christian denominations and institutions in Pakistan continue to pursue evangelical and educational initiatives, despite challenges and political constraints. Their legacy is seen both in religious outreach and in the education sector, where they have historically contributed to both religious and secular learning. However, the efficacy and impact of evangelical efforts remain debated due to possible exaggerations in conversion figures, reflecting broader tensions within Pakistani society around religious outreach.

The graduates of Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS) have had a significant impact on society through their contributions in print media, primarily by authoring books and articles in religious magazines and newspapers. Their writings cover a range of theological, pastoral, educational, and exegetical topics, enriching the intellectual and spiritual lives of Pakistani

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<sup>75</sup> Zafar, *A concise history of Pakistani Christians*, 168-170.

<sup>76</sup> Najma Denial, *Ta'limi Taraqi ore Masihi Idarey* (Gujranwala, Maktaba Anaweem Pakistan, 2005), 81.

<sup>77</sup> Barkat, *A'ina Church of Pakistan* (Lahore: Lahore Dioceses, 2002), 43-150.

Christian communities and theological institutions. This section delves into their impact, examining the topics, objectives, audiences, and legacy of the GTS graduates' publications.

The body of theological literature produced by Pakistani Christian scholars is rich and diverse, meeting the needs of catechumens, pastors, and laypeople alike. Dr. Arthur James, a prolific author with 47 publications in Urdu and English, has significantly contributed to theological education in Pakistan through textbooks, pastoral guides, and exegetical writings. His works, published by Mark Printing Agency, the Sialkot Convention Committee, and the Adult Basic Education Society, support Pakistani churches and theological institutions by offering accessible resources in essential Christian theological fields, such as Christology, Soteriology, and Ecclesiology. Notable titles like *Study Methods*,<sup>78</sup> *Introduction to the Bible*,<sup>79</sup> and *Christian Leadership*<sup>80</sup> demonstrate James's commitment to theological education, particularly for the Urdu-speaking community.

Dr. Maqsood Kamil, a professor of systematic theology at Gujranwala Theological Seminary (GTS), has significantly contributed to Christian theological education in Pakistan through his Urdu works, including *Atashi Nak, But I Say Unto You*, and *Peace*, which serve as foundational textbooks for catechumens. His book *Kalimāt-e-hayāt*<sup>81</sup> offers an exploration of Jesus's teachings from the Sermon on the Mount, helping students grasp Christian doctrines within their cultural context.

In theological historiography, Professor Noshin Khan has documented GTS's history in *Gujranwala Theological Seminary ki 125 Sala Khidmat*, an essential resource for understanding the seminary's growth over 125 years. Old Testament scholar Dr. Aslam Ziya'i has enriched theological studies with his trilogy, covering Old Testament history through works like *Tafhim-e-'Ahd-e-'Atiq*, *Tarikh-e-'Ahd-e-'Atiq*, and *Astanoḥ kī Bunyādiyḥ*, which provide in-depth insights into

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<sup>78</sup> Arthur James, *Study Methods*, (Gujranwala: Mark Printing Agency, 1991)

<sup>79</sup> Arthur James, *Introduction to the Bible*, (Gujranwala: MPA, 1990)

<sup>80</sup> Arthur James, *Christian Leadership*, (Gujranwala: MPA, 1993)

<sup>81</sup> Maqsood Kamil, *Kalimāt-e-hayāt* (Gujranwala: MPA, 2001)

the lives of Old Testament prophets and the Jewish priesthood. His exegetical series, including *According to Shigionoth* on Habakkuk, supports both pastoral education and general study.

Pastor and author Hanukkah David's *Munkashif Bhayd* is an expository study on Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, valuable for both laypeople and pastors, especially at the Sialkot Convention. Samuel Pervez, vice-chairman of the Sialkot Convention Committee, has authored sermons such as *Haqiqi Zindgi Kay Rahnuma Asul* and *Masihi Zindigi Kay Rahnuma Asul*, which provide guidance on Christian living. Pastor B.M. Aslam, editor of *Didghah* magazine, has contributed works like *Kalisiya ka Sacha Rup* and an early Urdu commentary on Colossians, showcasing the growth of Christian Urdu literature in Pakistan.

Eric Sarwar, founder of the Tehillim School of Church Music & Worship, has emphasized the significance of worship music within Christian faith through his works *Ibadati Mosiqi* and *Mosiqar Khuda*. Oliver Jamshayd's books, *Principles of Church Growth in the Book of Acts* and *Divine Favor*, focus on ecclesiology and biblical blessings, serving as resources for church growth and theological reflection. Pastor 'Azimm 'Amir's *Asr-e-hazir ka Da'ud* examines the contributions of I.D. Shahbaz to Punjabi Christian history, particularly his translation work on the Psalms.

Aslam Barkat's publications, including *The Nicene Creed, Council and Afterword*, *The History of the Church of Pakistan Lahore Diocese*, and *The Christian Concept of Salvation*, provide valuable insight into salvation theology and the Church's history in Pakistan. Jacob Dean's apologetic trilogy, *AaIna-e-Haq*, critiques various religious movements, while *Furman-e-Ilahi aur Insani Barghashistgi* focuses on Jesus's teachings. His 22-lecture series on the Book of Revelation is an extensive guide for theological study.

Pastor Sharif 'Alam's *Ahd-e-'Atiq Banazar-e-'Amiq* offers accessible introductions to the Old Testament books for general Christian education in Pakistan. Sabar Gul's works, *The Day of the Lord: Expository Study of 2 Thessalonians* and *You Are Honored: Expository Study of 1 Thessalonians*, provide valuable expositions on Pauline letters. Manzur Ziya' contributed with *Hamaysha ki*

*Zindigi*, a commentary on the First Epistle of John, and expositions on the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, initially written as academic theses.<sup>82</sup>

Tony William, a Hebrew language instructor, co-authored *Introduction to the Hebrew Language*, a key resource at GTS and the University of the Punjab for Old Testament language studies. The late Iqbal Nithar, former principal of GTS, wrote *Zinda Masih apni Kalisiya se Mukhatib haiñ*, an expository work on Revelation, though much of his work is no longer in print. Pastor Majid Abel, general secretary of the Interfaith Peace Council, co-authored *The History of Protestant Christians in Pakistan*, which addresses Christian history and is part of the Old Testament Studies curriculum at GTS.

Finally, Mebub M. Ummid's *I Have Committed the Sin of You* explores penitential Psalms as a guide for integrating them into Pakistani Christian worship. Sadiq B. Mull's *The Study of the Bible through Questions and Answers* is a widely accessible resource designed for children, featuring around twelve thousand questions to help young learners engage with the Bible. These collective contributions enrich Christian theological literature, particularly in the Urdu language, fostering theological education and spiritual growth in Pakistan.

Together, these scholars have created a comprehensive body of theological literature that equips Pakistani Christians and theological students with resources for understanding and practicing their faith. A statistical analysis of GTS graduates' literary contributions shows that their work spans multiple fields within Christian theology, with specific percentages allocated to each category:<sup>83</sup>

- 28% Exegesis: The largest category, encompassing verse-by-verse interpretations of individual biblical books. These exegetical works focus on deep textual analysis, primarily aimed at pastors, theological educators, and advanced students, with an emphasis on making intricate theological insights accessible to native Urdu speakers.

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<sup>82</sup> Farman Ali, *Christian Muslim Religious Education and Society: A Comparison of Gujranwal Theological Seminary and Nusrat-ul-Uloom Gujranwala* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, 2008), 125-40.

<sup>83</sup> Farman Ali, *Christian Muslim Religious Education and Society: A Comparison of Gujranwal Theological Seminary and Nusrat-ul-Uloom Gujranwala* (Unpublished Master's Thesis, 2008), 125-40.

- 17% Christian Education: Books focused on educational resources for teaching and catechism. These writings include introductions to biblical and theological studies, helping laypeople and theological students develop foundational knowledge in Christian doctrine.
- 13% Ecclesiology: Contributions in this category address church organization, leadership, and pastoral roles. These resources are vital for developing church leaders who can guide congregations effectively.
- 10% Christology: Writings on the nature, actions, and teachings of Jesus Christ make up this segment. These works delve into the theological implications of Christ's parables, miracles, and character, making it one of the most extensively explored topics among GTS graduates' writings.
- 9% Polemics: Works in this area address controversial doctrinal issues and respond to external theological challenges. They are essential for defending core Christian beliefs and clarifying doctrine in response to both internal and external critiques.<sup>84</sup>
- 8% Biblical Science: Texts in this category cover the history, origins, and structure of the Bible. These works provide comprehensive overviews of biblical content, beneficial to students, pastors, and anyone seeking a structured understanding of biblical history.
- 8% Beliefs and Liturgy: These works address sacraments, liturgical practices, and the Lord's Prayer, serving as essential guides for church practices and the Christian faith.
- 5% Miscellaneous: This segment includes works that do not fit neatly into other categories, reflecting the diverse theological interests of GTS graduates.
- 2% Evangelism: A smaller but significant portion of writings focuses on outreach, missionary work, and spreading Christian teachings. These books provide strategies and theological insights for effectively engaging non-Christian communities.

<sup>84</sup> For further detail to see this trend in the christin muslim writings see: Ali, F. (2023). The contextualisation of Mary in the Catholics of Pakistan. *Practical Theology*, 16(6), 707–719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2023.2270796>. Ali, F., & Humaira Ahmad. (2021). A Study of the Inter-Religious Dialogue through Syed Ahmad's Reconciliatory Approaches in Tabyin-ul-Kalām. *Al-Milal: Journal of Religion and Thought*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.46600/almilal.v3i1.125> and Farman Ali. 2018. "Early Christian Sīrah Writings of Subcontinent". *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 8 (1), 129-43. <https://journals.umt.edu.pk/index.php/JITC/article/view/97..>

The writings of GTS graduates encompass various dimensions of Christian thought, education, and practice, with a particularly significant contribution to exegesis, Christian education, and ecclesiology. Their literary efforts have not only enriched theological discourse within the Pakistani Christian community but have also provided a robust framework for understanding and practicing Christianity in Pakistan. These writings reflect a dedicated commitment to theological education and an ongoing effort to make complex theological topics accessible to Urdu-speaking Christians.

### Christian Journalism

Journalism is another area where GTS graduates make an impact, especially through Christian magazines and religious publications. Notable Christian journals in Pakistan include *Shalom*, *al-Mushir*, *Tajdid*, *Catholic Naqib*, and several others, which explore religious, social, and theological issues. Among these, GTS graduates contribute actively to magazines like *Masihi Awaz*, *Rabban*, *Pasban*, and *Didgah*, all of which are centered on Christian discourse. Key Publications by Graduates of GTS include:

1. *Masihi Awaz*: A monthly magazine led by Amjad Niyamat, *Masihi Awaz* includes content such as Christian theology, health, poetry, minority rights, and news. Columnists like Shazadah Khurram write on theology, and Salamat Akhtar addresses political issues affecting Christians, including the advocacy for dual voting rights.
2. *Rabban*: This magazine, run by Shiraz Shahzad, focuses on the Presbyterian beliefs and community awareness, addressing social, religious, and political concerns of the Presbyterian Church in Pakistan. Regular contributors discuss theological doctrines and community issues, emphasizing Presbyterian identity.
3. *Pasban*: A seminary magazine distributed bi-annually and freely, written largely by students and faculty of GTS, supervised by editors like Arthur Tames and Aslam Ziya'i. Its Christ-centric content aligns strictly with Presbyterian theology, covering in-depth theological discussions.
4. *Didgah*: A quarterly publication edited by B. M. Aslam, this magazine focuses on the Christian condition in Pakistan and spiritual topics like resurrection, salvation, and hope.

through Christ, providing a balance of theological, health, cooking, and children's content

Several GTS graduates contribute regularly to various magazines, focusing heavily on Christology. Columnists such as Dr. Arthur James, Dilshad Masih, Noshin Khan, Maqsood Kamil, and Qaiser Julius are prominent figures in this regard. Their writings emphasize theological themes like resurrection, incarnation, and salvation, with a significant focus on Christ as the savior. This emphasis underscores Protestant doctrine, particularly the importance of faith in Jesus, as a central tenet of Christianity.

### **Social role**

Christian social services are integral to the outreach and humanitarian efforts led by churches and Christian organizations in Pakistan. Inspired by missionary work, these services include establishing hospitals, schools, shelters, orphanages, and centers for the disabled. The Christian Hospital and Health Centers Association (CHAP) is notable for its healthcare contributions, overseeing hospitals and dispensaries across Pakistan, such as the United Christian Hospital in Lahore and Mission Hospital in Quetta. Through these institutions, GTS graduates not only provide healthcare but also create a supportive environment that conveys Christian compassion. Additionally, Christians have established villages such as Martinpur, Francisabad, and Clarkabad to support low-income communities. The Church of Pakistan's initiative, like the Bait al-Sakun housing project near Kala Shah Kaku, and housing efforts in Narowal, reflect their commitment to addressing poverty and homelessness. In times of natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, the United Presbyterian Church has raised significant funds for relief efforts, underscoring the Christian mission of charity. These efforts often include both aid and religious teaching, blending social service with evangelism.<sup>85</sup>

### **Political role**

GTS graduates also influence the political sphere, primarily concerning issues related to religious minorities. While some support dual voting rights, others advocate separate electorates, revealing a diversity of opinion within the Christian community. Figures like Alexander John

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<sup>85</sup> Farman Ali, "Contemporizing Christian Theological Trends in Pakistan: An Analytical Critique of Christian Discourses Since 1970," (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, 2020), 180.

Malik, a bishop, endorse dual voting, while others argue against it, as seen in the views of Karnal W. Herbert. The controversial *separate election system*, championed by leaders like Tariq C. Qaiser, highlights the community's divided stance on political representation. Christian leaders, including bishops and pastors, have participated in protests and advocacy, such as the movement to remove religious identification from national identity cards—a campaign significantly influenced by two GTS graduates, Bishops Samuel Izraya and Samuel Pervez. These actions demonstrate the graduates' role in rallying for equal treatment and rights for Christians in Pakistan.

The blasphemy law remains another contentious issue, with Christian leaders widely opposing it for enabling persecution. Instances like the suicide of Catholic Bishop John Joseph in 1998 as a protest against this law highlight the gravity of this matter within the Christian community. Leaders such as Alexander John Malik have publicly criticized the law, viewing it to intimidate and discriminate against minorities. Similarly, issues related to minority rights, such as the right to establish churches, receive welfare funds, and access higher education, reflect ongoing struggles within the Christian community. The pastors often articulate these concerns, either through public advocacy or by raising awareness within their congregations.

Despite the presence of a segment that refrains from direct political involvement (55% of surveyed pastors), these leaders exert political influence by fostering awareness and providing guidance to their followers. This division of opinion reflects a broader debate within the Christian community on the role of religious leaders in politics, with some advocating active engagement and others emphasizing a focus on spiritual matters.

The multifaceted roles of GTS graduates in Pakistani society reflect their strong influence across educational, journalistic, social, and political domains. Through teaching, publishing, social services, and political advocacy, they contribute not only to the preservation of Christian identity but also to the welfare and upliftment of the community. The emphasis on Christology and theology in their publications and teachings underpins a Protestant theological focus that seeks to defend and promote faith in Christ as the core of Christianity. Through these efforts, GTS graduates assert their presence in Pakistan's pluralistic society, aiming to foster religious understanding, social cohesion, and respect for minority rights. In essence, GTS

graduates continue the legacy of Christian service established by earlier missionaries while navigating the complexities of modern Pakistan. Their work provides a bridge between faith and society, balancing religious conviction with a commitment to social justice and human dignity for all.

## Conclusion

The article "Protestant Christian Religious Education in Gujranwala: Analyzing the Role of Gujranwala Theological Seminary in Shaping Clerical Leadership" underscores the impactful yet complex role of GTS in fostering Christian leadership in Pakistan. While GTS has undeniably contributed to Christian education, training graduates who serve as pastors, educators, and social advocates, a critical examination reveals areas where the institution's approach could evolve to better meet the challenges of a diverse and modernizing society. One of the primary strengths of GTS lies in its responsiveness to the community's educational needs, illustrated by program expansions for women, extension students, and bilingual instruction. However, despite its progress toward inclusivity, the seminary's initiatives for marginalized groups, such as women and economically disadvantaged students, remain limited. GTS's stringent admissions criteria and funding gaps create barriers for many aspiring students, which runs counter to its mission of providing accessible theological education. The Seminary could further its impact by implementing more inclusive policies, expanding scholarship opportunities, and investing in outreach programs to attract diverse applicants.

In terms of curriculum and pedagogy, GTS's approach is largely traditional, with limited integration of modern, interactive teaching methods that foster critical engagement and practical application. For an institution dedicated to developing leaders who must navigate complex social and theological issues, a move toward more innovative and interactive teaching methodologies would be essential. Integrating digital resources, experiential learning, and interdisciplinary studies could equip students to address the ethical and spiritual challenges of today's globalized society. Furthermore, GTS's contributions to social and interfaith initiatives are notable but could be expanded. The seminary's community outreach demonstrates a commitment to social justice, yet a more robust framework for interfaith dialogue and social advocacy could empower graduates to act as peacemakers and bridge builders in Pakistan's

pluralistic society. Collaborations with international theological institutions, along with initiatives in conflict resolution and social ethics, would strengthen this focus. Overall, while GTS has laid a solid foundation for Christian education and leadership, a critical assessment points to the need for greater inclusivity, pedagogical innovation, and a proactive role in interfaith and societal issues. Addressing these areas could enhance GTS's relevance and impact, ensuring it not only prepares leaders for church ministry but also equips them to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's broader social and religious landscape.

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