



# **The Christians of Pakistan: The Passion of Bishop John Joseph**

*Linda Walbridge*

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In May 1998, John Joseph, the first native Pakistani Catholic bishop, shot himself in front of the courthouse where a Christian had been sentenced to death for blasphemy. This book tells the story of the Christians in Pakistan, with Bishop Joseph as its centrepiece. It is an account of outcastes who sought hope through Christianity, but who now find themselves victims of a struggle to define Islam in Pakistan. The majority of Pakistani Christians are descendants of untouchables converted to Christianity in the late 19th century. In Pakistan a minority religion is linked with low status, perpetuating the Indian Hindu caste system even though the Muslim majority has disassociated itself from all things Hindu and Indian. The book also deals with enculturation in the Pakistani church, the rise of native clergy, conflicts between the local church and Rome, the rise of 'fundamentalist' Islam and the position of women in society and church.

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