



THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

LUTHERISCHER WELTBUND - FEDERACIÓN LUTERANA MUNDIAL - FÉDÉRATION LUTHÉRIENNE MONDIALE

Office of the General Secretary

Dr Victor Azariah
General Secretary
National Council of Churches in
Pakistan

30 October 2001

Dear Brother in Christ,

The Lutheran World Federation condemns the attack that took place in Bahawalpur on 28 October 2001 as a violation of the most basic principles of humanity and of the precepts of Christianity and Islam alike. We grieve with the bereaved families for the precious lives lost in this atrocity - those of the worshippers slain inside the church and that of the Muslim police guard killed as he sought to protect them. We pray for healing for the wounded and traumatized, and for the healing of a community torn apart by these events. And we pray that you and all church leaders in Pakistan will be given strength and wisdom for the pastoral role you must now play in the aftermath of such a tragedy.

May the Spirit of compassion and forgiveness guide you and those to whom you minister, responding to hatred with love and to violence with peace, and denying victory to those who through such acts seek to create conflict among Muslims and Christians.

For the human race to truly become a human family, there is no alternative to continued and deepened dialogue among religions. With the images of horror still fresh in your and our recollections, churches and mosques - in Pakistan and around the world - must all the more determinedly promote mutual respect among the religious communities as a means of preventing the distortion of our respective faith traditions by those whose purpose is division and violence. And we must resolutely reject all efforts to portray current events in Afghanistan, irrespective of whether we view them as just or unjust, as a religious war.

I pray that with the Muslim brothers and sisters who have joined the Christian communities of Pakistan in denouncing the terrible attack in Bahawalpur and mourning its victims, you will continue to be steadfast prophets for peace and justice, and against the abhorrent creed of violence.

Yours in Christ,

Ishmael Noko
General Secretary

