

VOICE

OF THE CHRISTIANS

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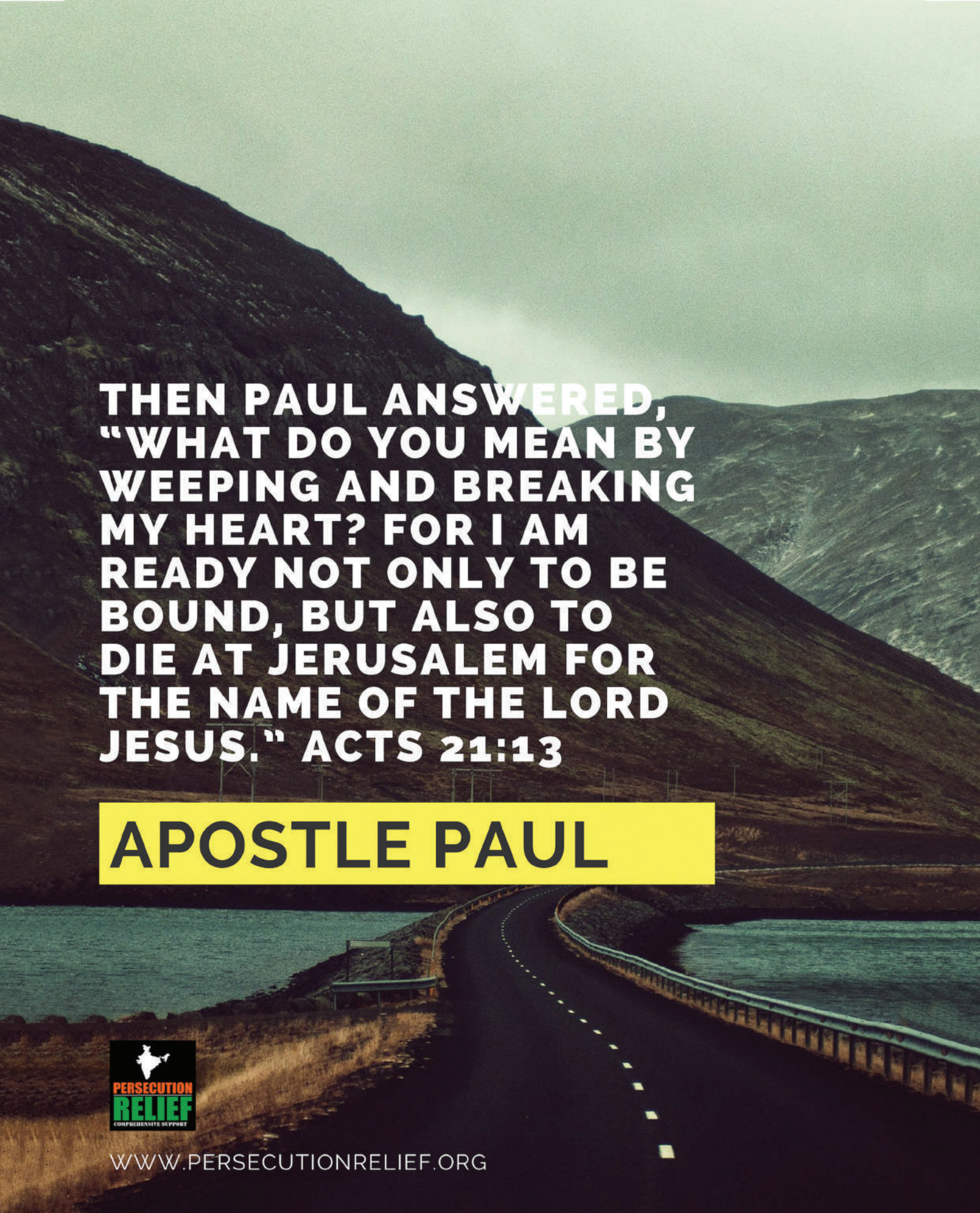
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in PM Modi's
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Varanasi, vandalized.
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Bro. Mohan C. Lazarus
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A Persecution Relief Initiative

For Private Circulation within the Church only



**THEN PAUL ANSWERED,
“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY
WEEPING AND BREAKING
MY HEART? FOR I AM
READY NOT ONLY TO BE
BOUND, BUT ALSO TO
DIE AT JERUSALEM FOR
THE NAME OF THE LORD
JESUS.” ACTS 21:13**

APOSTLE PAUL



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VOICE

OF THE CHRISTIANS

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CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE

For all of us, Brothers and Sisters in the Church of Jesus Christ, the longing of our hearts should be to seek out the many lost sheep around us today – to be shepherds after God's own heart.

Lost Sheep

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine[a] just persons who need no repentance".

It was not a goat that the shepherd went seeking. It was a sheep - a believer who had once been in the fold but had backslidden. But I would dare to venture that this parable could also be used in the context of believers who are persecuted and prevented from attending Church services or prayer meetings. This could perhaps be because the ostracization and social discrimination, proved too much for them and their family, that they have "back-slidden".

Many sheep are lost on an overcast day – on days when the witch hunt by Police and religious radicals is over-whelming – the shame of public beating, the pressure of discrimination and restrictions on their worship, the daily trials and the abject sadness to have to deny the One who redeemed them, made them whole, healed them and gave them an identity – all this may prove to be too much for them.

What can the shepherd do?

In the past few weeks, I had been speaking to a multitude of Pastors, specially from the District of Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, struggling against an antagonistic and militant majority culture and religion, deeply troubled and sad for their sheep. It has been the longing of these Pastors – to truly be shepherds after God's own heart – to seek out the many wandering and lost sheep and bring them back to the fold.

It is the 4th week running, of state-sponsored persecution, where believers are strong-armed and compelled to return to their home. Police have demanded the Pastors to halt all future religious activity or face criminal charges. The access roads to the Churches are blocked and all of this is in connivance and collusion of the Police. Pastors feel that if this situation is not remedied quickly, all the sheep may be lost.

As the gospel message of Jesus Christ was proclaimed - accompanying the proclamation has been miraculous healings and signs.

This phenomenon has drawn scores to Jesus Christ. They have only believed in Jesus Christ and been baptized. They have not yet been disciplined in the teachings of Jesus Christ or built into the body of Christ. Most of the village believers are not strong in the word as the Pastors are.

These new believers, largely from other faiths, are deeply distressed by the spurt of attacks on Christians. The present climate of anti-Christian sentiment and arbitrary attacks, has severely dented their faith. Like the Bible says, these believers are not yet strong in the Word of God, but “tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine”. Shallow and not deep rooted, they are defenseless and isolated, outside the confines of a mature Church community, making them vulnerable to be easily plucked out.

Pastors have not been trained or equipped to manage these ‘mega churches. If Pastors are to be fathers and shepherds, it will cost dearly – it will cost heart-pain, genuine burden and battling in prayer against the wolves and the roaring adversaries. And most people don’t want to pay such a price to serve the Lord or to build the church. Most people try to build the church cheaply.

One such example is Pastor Ageshwar from Chhattisgarh, who started a Church and in 8 months, over 4000 believers used to congregate, primarily because of their faith in Jesus Christ. However, the Administration was totally against him and the Collector, enforced Section 144 in the area. His nephew, his older brother’s son, who used to escort him around since he was physically challenged, was mysteriously

murdered. Pastor himself was jailed. After serving his time, Pastor is back to proclaiming the gospel, but hardly 100 persons attend.

For all of us, Brothers and Sisters in the Church of Jesus Christ, the longing of our hearts should be to seek out the many lost sheep around us today – to be shepherds after God’s own heart.

What is the ‘free Church’s reaction?

Why is the world silent while Christians are being persecuted in India?

Are they not concerned about the lost sheep? Is it not our responsibility to reach out to these brethren?

This is the Lord’s indictment to the irresponsible shepherds:

“And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through

all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them."

Jesus Christ is our example. What did Jesus do? Jesus left the 99 to go after the 1 lost sheep.

One of the charges that the Lord made against the shepherds of Israel, 600 years before the birth of Christ was this: The Lord says that He will seek for such sheep and bring them back. How does He seek for them? He seeks for them through "shepherds after His own heart".

The Lord says that He will seek for such sheep and bring them back. He seeks for them through "shepherds after His own heart" (Jer. 3:15).

Here are some practical ways that the Church can step in and help out:

- Church Leaders need to re-group and officially meet with the authorities of the State and Central Administration, highlighting the blatant disregard of the Constitution with regard to Freedom of religion and belief
- Church Leaders should prioritize and arrange a training session to equip the Pastors, educating them on the government laws
- Pastors need to be able to work freely for the Kingdom expansion, as many have left the field and their sheep, owing to the huge pressure of persecution. Pastors themselves need encouragement as they are weak and disheartened because of the harassment they are facing from every front - the Police Administration, the family, the community, the believers, financial constraints etc.

- Church Leaders need to help Pastors register their Churches and make it an official organisation.
- Church must assist the Pastors financially in securing land and help build permanent structures, so that they do not have to rent commercial places or gather in residential areas.
- Church Leaders must make an effort and connect with Pastors who are discouraged and scared after Persecution, to encourage and lift up their moral spirits, showing concern and care as part of one body the body of Christ (please write to us at persecutionrelief@gmail.com for more information.)

Even with Church attacks coming in almost every day, Indian Christians are not losing hope, as is often the case among persecuted minorities.

The common slogan that I hear over and over again from a faithful remnant is - "We want to be the salt and light of the world".

They fervently believe that with prayer and fasting, persecution could be reversed.

To God be all the glory.



Shibu Thomas

Police oppression and house arrest of Pastor Uttar Pradesh



Media and Police, at the behest of religious fundamentalist groups, were continuing their unabated witch-hunt against Christians, in Uttar Pradesh.

On September 23, a mob accompanied by the local police went around the village shouting slogans. They then entered the church, disrupting the Sunday service. Pastor Ashok Rajbhar, his father and three more Church members were taken into custody.

Speaking to Persecution Relief, Pastor Ashok Rajbhar briefed about the ordeal he is currently facing, with the Police officials of Newrania Police Station, Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Pastor Ashok leads prayers in his house on

Sundays since the families in the village, do not have the means to travel into town for worship. Around 600 people gather to worship at his residence, at Sarai, Block Rampur, District Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh.

However, for the last 3 Sundays, from 16th Sep to 30th September, every Sunday, Police men stand guard, outside and inside the Church – “Prabhu Yesu Mandir Sarbar”.

In an attempt to intimidate and terrorize the believers, the Police trespass into this private property, not permitting anybody to enter the church. They stop them on the way, blocking access to the Church, asking the worshippers to go back home.

“The Policemen have conspired together and are not allowing the villagers to come for the worship service”.

“ON SUNDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, MY FATHER AND I WERE ARRESTED AND KEPT IN NEWRANIA POLICE STATION FOR ONE WHOLE DAY, FROM MORNING TO EVENING. **POLICE RELEASED MY FATHER, LALCHAND RAJBHAR LATE THAT NIGHT. I WAS HELD UNTIL I COULD SECURE BAIL AND BE RELEASED”.**

“How will they survive without hearing God’s word or being nourished spiritually?”

“I have been ministering here for the past 10 years but have never faced a situation like this - it’s so scary. Their whole attitude is very harsh, abusive and threatening”, he added.

Pastor was deeply sad about the turn of events:

“It has been 3 Sundays and all our believers are depressed and disappointed, that they can’t come and worship together on the Lords day, Sunday”.

“On Sunday, 23rd September, my father and I were arrested and kept in Newrania Police Station for one whole day, from morning to evening. Police released my father, Lalchand Rajbhar late that night. I was held until I could secure bail and be released”.

“Please pray for us and our family of 10 members, as we are going thru difficult times. Pray that we will continue to hold on to Jesus Christ.”

Church, please pray for Jaunpur and scores of Pastors who are facing similar situations.

RELIEF PROVIDED

“PRABHU YESHU MASIH DARBAR CHURCH HAD BEEN FACING A LOT OF PROBLEMS OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO PERSECUTION RELIEF FOR THEIR COUNSEL AND TIMELY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR OUR FAMILY OF 10 MEMBERS, AS WE WERE STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET. WITH THE POLICE CRACKDOWN & LEGAL CASES ON THE CHURCH, WE WERE CONFRONTED WITH SEVERAL HUGE FINANCIAL PAYMENTS. GOD BLESS YOU 100-FOLD”.

- PASTOR SHIVPAL YADAV

8 arrested on false charges of conversion, Jharkhand

On 28th September, 2018, Pastor Sikander Rabidas and his family members - father Binod Rabidas, brother Mahabir Rabidas, Ajay Rabidas, Lakhi Devi, Hedera Lal Shaw, Moti Lal Shaw and Robert Edward arrested under 298 IPC 4/15, 'Jharkhand Dharma Swatantra Adhiniyam', 2017.

'JHARKHAND DHARMA SWATANTRA ADHINIYAM', 2017:

This Bill, prohibits conversion from one religion to another, by use of force or allurement or by fraudulent means and for matters incidental.

Punishment for contravention of the provision of section 3:

"Any person contravening the provision contained in section 3, shall without prejudice to any civil liability, be punishable under imprisonment, which may extend to 3 years or with a fine which may extent to fifty thousand rupees or with both; provided that in case the offense is committed in respect of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to the Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes, the punishment shall be imprisoned to the extent of four years and fine up to one hundred thousand rupees (one lakh rupees)".

THE BAIL APPLICATION NO: 3504/18, LODGED AT SDM COURT WAS REJECTED. **THE FAMILY HAS NOW APPEALED FOR BAIL AT THE HIGHER CIVIL COURT.**



The Bail Application No: 3504/18, lodged at SDM Court was rejected. The family has now appealed for bail at the higher Civil Court.

Pastor Sikander Rabidas is affiliated with Sower Mission Church. The Church is built on his own land, that was owned by his grandfather, at Pipradih village, Chandrapur Block, Bokaro district in Jharkhand State.

A false complaint was lodged by Manir Das, the main persecutor, who claimed that Pastor and his family were alluring Dalits and converting them to Christianity. He also mentioned in his complaint, that the land where the Church has been built is government land.

Speaking to Persecution Relief, Pastor Manoj Rabidas who lives around 10 kms away, and involved with the same mission work, said that the Village Head, Sudershan Das, has been harassing Pastor Sikander, without any reason.

Many false and baseless allegations were made, and the Police, without verifying the veracity of the statements, have arrested the Christians, who are now locked up in jail.

It is alleged that Police are under pressure from the religious fundamentalists and the government, and are unable to do their duty, without bias or prejudice against castes and religions.



RELIEF PROVIDED

“THANK YOU, PERSECUTION RELIEF TEAM, FOR THE RESPONSE GIVEN WHEN WE CALLED ON YOUR TOLL-FREE NUMBER: 1800-1234-461. THANK YOU FOR THE JUDICIAL HELP PROVIDED AND ALSO TALKING TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS REGARDING THE CASE OF PASTOR SIKANDER RABIDAS AND TEAM. PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR US”.
- PASTOR VIKRAM & PASTOR MANOJ RABIDAS

Police dismiss charges of financial inducement to convert to Christianity, Bihar



Evangelist (Evg.) Jiji Joseph and three others - one of them a Senior Citizen, were seriously injured after being brutally attacked by religious fundamentalists, over false allegations of conversion, in Gurshanola Village in Bettiah Block of West Champaran district in Bihar.

Evg. Jiji Joseph [India Mission] along with Pastor Mathew Thomas, Pastor Aji George Kottarakkara & Bro. Samson, had hailed an Auto from Evg. Jiji's home. They walked around 5 kms and reached Gurshan Tola Village in Bettiah Block of West Champaran district in Bihar.

It is alleged that the mob frenzy started after Evangelist Jiji, known to a couple of

villagers, was seen talking to them. Soon, a large crowd gathered and began to verbally assault and manhandle them for attempted conversion. The villagers and local religious fundamentalists ganged up against the group and brutally beat them up. Evangelist Jiji was singled out and received the brunt of the attack.

After nearly 4 hours, the Village Headman was alerted, who in turn informed the Sirsia Police station. They rushed to the spot and rescued the believers.

Persecution Relief team was informed about the incident by Pastor Vinod and our team spoke to SP Jaykant who assured that he would look into the matter immediately,

SPEAKING TO PERSECUTION RELIEF, DR. ABY MATHEW, HEAD OF INDIA MISSION, EXPRESSED GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION FOR THE TIMELY INTERVENTION OF **PERSECUTION RELIEF, IN SPEAKING TO SP JAYKANT, SIRSIA POLICE STATION, WHO WAS VERY POLITE, HUMBLE AND SUPPORTIVE OF THE CHRISTIANS.**

The religious fundamentalists claimed that inducement of Rs. 25,000/- was allegedly paid to seduce people to convert to Christianity. Based on this statement, the Sirsia Police investigated the charges and found them to be totally fabricated and baseless. Police have filed a FIR against the perpetrators of this hateful crime.

The Christians were released later the same evening.

Speaking to Persecution Relief, Dr. Aby Mathew, Head of India Mission, expressed gratitude and appreciation for the timely intervention of Persecution Relief, in speaking to SP Jaykant, Sirsia Police Station, who was very polite, humble and supportive of the Christians.

Dr. Aby added that in the last few months, several workers were beaten up and arrested. However, all of them were strong in their faith and believed that it was indeed a privilege to be beaten for Christ sake.

Church, continue to lift up in prayer Evg. Jiji Joseph, Pastor Mathew Thomas, Pastor Aji George Kottarakkara & Bro. Samson, and pray for the protection of Christians in Bihar especially all the workers of India Mission.



RELIEF PROVIDED

“PERSECUTION RELIEF TEAM HAS ALWAYS BEEN OF GREAT HELP TO US, WHENEVER WE FACE PERSECUTION YOU ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE 24X7. THANKS FOR SPEAKING TO SP MR JAYKANT AND HELPING US TO BE RELEASED”.

- EVANGELIST JIJI JOSEPH

*If you don't want to
be persecuted,*
**STAY AWAY FROM
SHARING THE
GOSPEL.**

FOUNDER - PERSECUTION RELIEF

www.persecutionrelief.org

St. Thomas Church, in PM Modi's Constituency, Varanasi, vandalized



St. Thomas Church in Godowlia, Girja Ghar Crossing, Godowlia, Varanasi

In the heart of the City of Banares, the center of Hindu pilgrimage, lies the St. Thomas Church in Godowlia, Girja Ghar Crossing, Godowlia, Varanasi. The church is a protestant church and comes under Churches of North India (CNI), Diocese of Lucknow.

In a city which has been an epitome of different cultures, St. Thomas Church, almost

200 years old, was a milestone that reflected the diversity of the city.

However, the evil of communal polarization, has raised its head again, as a mob of over 100 religious fundamentalists, attacked the Church in the evening of 02nd October, in a “premeditated and planned” vandalism attack. According to eye witness report, the attackers were waving saffron flags and armed with sticks.

“

PARALLELLELY, THE ALLEGED MASTERMIND OF THE WHOLE ATTACK **“YOGI ALOKNATH” HAS POSTED THE ENTIRE EPISODE ON HIS FACEBOOK PAGE AND GIVEN ALL GLORY TO GOD SRI RAM FOR THE ILLEGAL ATTACK ON THE CHURCH.**

Rev. N Stevens, Presbyterian In-charge of St. Thomas Church, received a phone call informing him that the Church was surrounded by religious fundamentalists. By the time he could reach the spot, he found that the Church was broken into. The main gate, the main door and side door locks were broken and the mob had entered the Church.

The miscreants had also vandalized the interior of the Church, breaking the main gate and the wooden doors. The interior of the Church was also damaged and the sanctity of the Church desecrated, with little thought about wounding the religious sentiments of the Christians.

A complaint was lodged at Dashashwamedh Police Station, and the Police who have assured of immediate action.

Parallellly, the alleged mastermind of the whole attack “Yogi Aloknath” has posted the entire episode on his Facebook Page and given all glory to god sri ram for the illegal attack on the Church.

It states – (translated from Hindi) “Friends today, every door of the church has been broken by the grace of lord sri ram and I will make sure in 4 days, the game of conversion will be closed completely “he said in the post.

Church, please pray for peace to return to the city of Varanasi and the State of Uttar Pradesh, has been witnessing a ‘religious cleansing’ of Christians and Christian institutions.



Yogi Aloknath who took credit for the vandalism and brazenly posted the entire episode on his Facebook page

Prayer meeting disrupted, Evangelists thrashed in Khagaria, Bihar

Religious fundamentalists barged into a Prayer Meeting and ordered the Christians to stop their prayers. The incident took place at Sonbarsa, a small Village in Chautham Block in Khagaria District of Bihar State, India.

At the request of Bro. Prem Kumar, the Brethren Church had started a prayer meeting at his residence, every Monday morning. It was just over a month that this meeting had started where around 30 persons, living in and around the area, would gather. The meeting was a blessing as families could come together and pray.

It was reported that on Monday, 15th October, around 12 noon, a mob of more than 50 youths, barged into the prayer meeting at the house-church, verbally abused the Evangelists and the congregation, urging them to stop their meeting or face dire consequences.

The House Owner allegedly tried to calm the extremists by telling them that the Christians were only conducting prayer service and not involved in any illegal activity. In spite of his pleas, the mob were unrelenting. The house owner, sensing danger, locked the door of the house from the inside.



Enraged by this, the mob tried to break open the door. Eventually, fearing a worse outcome, the house owner was forced to open the door. The mob of fanatics got into the house, dragged out the Evangelists Nitish, Bro. Ajeet, Bro. Deepul and Bro. Prem, the house owner's son, and mercilessly beat them



all with lathis, slippers, kicking, punching and slapping them.

The angry mob dragged the Evangelists to the local Durga temple with the intention of forcing the Christians to perform Hindu rituals and eat the ‘Prasadam’ (food offered to the idols). As they reached the temple, since it was occupied and ‘puja’ in progress, they were forced to wait.

During this time, an elderly man along with a few women, came as a saviour and rescued them from the temple ordeal. The fanatics then took the Evangelists, back to Bro. Prem’s house and locked them up in a room.

A Television Crew were called to cover the whole incident, who showed only one side of the story, portraying Christians in a negative manner, injecting religious prejudice and intolerance into the community. They even

called them anti-nationals.

The police reached the spot and escorted the Evangelists to the Chautham Police Station, where they were detained for over 6 hours.

Evangelist Samson called Persecution Relief and briefed about the whole incident. In speaking to the SP, Meenu Kumari who was very cooperative, Persecution Relief Team were able to assist secure their release.

Bro. Ajeet, a B.Th. graduate, speaking to Persecution Relief after his release, proudly stated that he and his team mates were indeed privileged to be persecuted for the name of Jesus Christ.

Church, continue to pray for these Evangelists and several others who continue to minister, sacrificially, in the hard terrains of India.

Several house churches have been prevented

SEVERAL HOUSE CHURCHES HAVE BEEN PREVENTED FROM HOLDING PRAYER GATHERINGS, WHICH IS PART OF AN EVER-WIDENING NATIONWIDE OPERATION TARGETING UNOFFICIAL **“HOUSE CHURCHES” ACROSS INDIA. ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS ARE OFTEN USED BY RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISTS AND POLICE AS AMMUNITION TO LAUNCH CRIMINAL COMPLAINTS AGAINST CHRISTIAN LEADERS. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN INDIA CONTINUE TO SUFFER FOR THE SAKE OF THEIR SERVICE AND WITNESS TO JESUS CHRIST.**

from holding prayer gatherings, which is part of an ever-widening nationwide operation targeting unofficial “house churches” across India. Anti-Conversion Laws are often used by religious fundamentalists and Police as ammunition to launch criminal complaints against Christian leaders. The Christian community in India continue to suffer for the sake of their service and witness to Jesus Christ.

Freedom of religion in India is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 25-28 of the Constitution of India. Every citizen of India has a right to practice and promote their religion peacefully

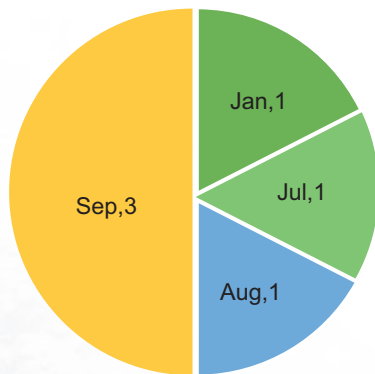
RELIEF PROVIDED

“WE ARE GRATEFUL TO PERSECUTION RELIEF FOR STEPPING IN AND PROVIDING MUCH NEEDED SUPPORT AND RELIEF BY SPEAKING TO THE SP, MEENU KUMARI WHO WAS VERY COOPERATIVE. IF NOT FOR YOUR INTERVENTION, CONSISTENT FOLLOW-UPS AND TIMELY UPDATES, I COULD NOT HAVE MANAGED SINGLE HANDEDLY. YOUR TEAMWORK, INITIATIVE AND DETERMINATION HELPED US SECURED THE RELEASE OF OUR BROTHERS TODAY. GOD RICHLY BLESS YOU FOR ALL YOUR EFFORTS.”

- EVANGELIST SAMSON

PRAY FOR PEACE AND UNITY IN JAMMU & KASHMIR

Incidents recorded in Jammu & Kashmir
January to September 2018 (6 nos)



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep



SUMMARY:

- Jammu & Kashmir recorded **6 incidents** of attacks on Christians in the last **9 months**.
- Governor's rule was imposed in Jammu and Kashmir from June 2018
- After the attack on Sehal Christ Church, early January this year, nearly 45 Christian families of this village and neighbouring ones in Rajouri district of Jammu were forcibly converted to Hinduism — in a process called “ghar wapsi”.
- There has been a sudden spike in incidents of intolerance, harassment, and attacks by religious fanatics
- False accusations of conversion continue to be used to harass and tarnish the image of Christians by religious fanatics



The Sehal Christ Church was attacked on January 16. A mob of around 300 fanatics assaulted and burned a Pentecostal church and several Christian-owned shops in Jammu and Kashmir. Religious fanatics wanted to "avenge" the alleged murder of a woman "forcibly converted."

The lady, who converted from Hinduism two years ago, died of complications of a disease contracted years earlier. But the family, which had never accepted her conversion to Christianity, spread rumours of murder and forced conversion, which triggered the violent reaction of the extremists. The body of the deceased Sister was burned by the fanatics.



Pastor Bijoy Varghese along with Pastor Packiyaraj were attacked and abducted by religious fundamentalists, while evangelizing and distributing Bible tracts at Agor village, Jammu District, Jammu & Kashmir. Alleging that they were indulging in conversion activities, they were brutally beaten, and eventually taken to the Police Station.



Pray for Pastor Thomas Anthony, who was running a Children's Home at Kathua, Jammu and Kashmir, was falsely accused of sexually molesting the girl children. He has been arrested on POCSO charges.

PRAYER POINTS:

- Pray that the communal mindset in the State of Jammu & Kashmir, would be crushed in Jesus' name.
- Pray that with God's grace and Spirit, all Christians would be able to bless those who persecute us – to bless and not to curse
- Pray that God would motivate the Governor and all of his administration to strive for integrity and wisdom in all the choices and decisions they make
- Pray that those that are entrusted as judges and lawmakers, act in righteousness, impartiality and integrity, as they work for the benefit of all people and to the honour of is Holy Name.

“O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You?” – 2 Chron. 20:6



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Pastor illegally arrested while visiting family in Police Station, Chhattisgarh

Both Sis. Pramila Bai Bhargav and her son Umesh Bhargav are part of Pastor Dinesh Maddad's fellowship. They were at home after Sunday worship service, when religious fundamentalists called out to them and brutally beat them up for their faith in Jesus. They were subsequently forcibly taken to the Police Station where they were remanded to custody.

The day after this incident, Pastor Dinesh Maddad had gone to the Koni Police station to help secure their release. However, the Police arrested him and released the mother and son.

Pastor Dinesh Maddad basically from Kurmi tribe, was born and brought up in Hindu faith. Growing up as a child, from a very young age, he had a big swelling at the back of his head, the size of a balloon. His parents took him to many temples and hospitals but he was not healed.

Somebody suggested that Dinesh be taken to Church, to pray to Jesus Christ, for healing. In a matter of a few days, the swelling from the back of his head disappeared and he was



completely healed. However, when he chose to be baptized, his parents strongly objected to this.

His father beat him and even tried to kill him; the villagers gathered and tried to convince Pastor asking him not to leave the god of his parents and go after a foreign God. They tried to convince him as best as they could.

“You have a temple at home and god always visits us through your mother”!



Pastor was adamant to follow Jesus Christ. As the situation became very unpleasant and finding no option, Pastor had to leave home.

By the grace of God, he managed to secure a job with the Police force and eventually was called by God to start the ministry in 2011, in Lokhandi and other villages. Pastor's life and testimony has impacted several who have come to the saving grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Pastor was detained in the Police Station and charged under IPC 151 and sent to Central Jail. Later, he was released on bail.

"I am so happy that God gave me an opportunity as a shepherd, to be of service to my sheep", Pastor added.

Many Christians who go to the Police Station, to help fellow Christians are falsely charged and arrested. This is discouraging them to visit them. Church, please continue to pray against the injustice and bias of the administration against Christians.

Pray for the safety and protection of Pastor Dinesh, his family and the congregation.

Pray that men and women of God may stand strong and continue to go boldly, to show support and solidarity to their brothers and sisters, without fearing arrest.

BY THE GRACE OF GOD, HE MANAGED TO SECURE A JOB WITH THE POLICE FORCE AND EVENTUALLY WAS CALLED BY GOD TO START THE MINISTRY IN 2011, **IN LOKHANDI AND OTHER VILLAGES. PASTOR'S LIFE AND TESTIMONY HAS IMPACTED SEVERAL WHO HAVE COME TO THE SAVING GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**

RELIEF PROVIDED

"I HAD NEVER HEARD OF PERSECUTION RELIEF, SO I JUST RECORDED THE NUMBER WHEN I GOT IT. WHEN WE FACED THE ISSUE WITH SIS. PRAMILA AND HER SON, I CALLED THE FOUNDER DIRECTLY AND HE IMMEDIATELY PROVIDE ALL THE NECESSARY JUDICIAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT.

- PR DINESH MADDAD,
DISCIPLES OF CHRIST CHURCH

This is the personal story of a Sikh who hated Christians – a Saul who was transformed, much against his wishes, to a Paul.

Pastor Anugrah Amardeep Singh was born into an orthodox Sikh priestly family, in Bhadra village, Hanumangarh, Rajasthan, to Ashish Singh Bedi and Rita Bedi.

His entire family belonged to the Khatri, who are the direct descendants of Guru Nanak. It is alleged that the family were trained directly under Guru Nanak on rites and rituals to be performed at the gurudwara.

In 1983, his father Ashish Singh Bedi first came to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. His devout grandparents - Sardar Wiryam Singh Bedi and his grandmother Bimla Bedi, were deeply offended, annoyed and angry. The family and the Sikh community were dead-against their conversion. In the days that followed, Ashish Singh was evicted from the home and excommunicated from their community.



Parents Ashish Singh Bedi and Rita Bedi

Devastated by their family's response, as the situation worsened every day, they moved away to an adjacent district, where they were actively involved in the ministry.

A few years later, Anugrah Amardeep Singh was born. He was the apple of his parents' eyes. However, their joy was short-lived when Anugrah's grandparents got to hear of his birth and arranged to take him forcibly. He was abducted and all custodial rights were taken away from his birth parents, based on false allegations. In such an emotional and challenging environment, the parents sacrificially withdrew from pursuing custody rights, to ensure that the child was protected and grew up in a stable environment.

In the meantime, Anugrah's devout grandparents introduced him to the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, educated him in the prayers and recitation of the hymns of the sacred scriptures. Anugrah accompanied his grandfather to the Gurdwara, the Sikh temple, and was raised in the faith of the almighty. His grandparents instilled in him, the love for God and a sense of service



to the community. He was brought up in all Sikh religious manner, studying the Sikhs holy book of “Shri Guru Granth Sahib” along with his secular studies.

Anugrah lived with his grandparents and his Uncle, his father’s brother’s family. All of them were involved in looking after him during his growing up days. At no time, was he allowed to meet his parents.

He was also constantly told about Christians and that Christianity was a false religion. They did all in their power to poison his young and tender mind. Young Anugrah, immersed himself in serving at the gurudwara and praying.

In 2001, his grandmother, suffering from kidney failure, passed away. The following year, his grandfather too passed away. Grieving the death of his grandparents caused him intense pain and heartache – his first experience with loss. The loss created a huge vacuum in his life, which raised in him questions about the meaning of life and death.

Life was never the same again. Living with his Uncle and Aunt was never the same either. Soon, things got bitter as they began to harass Anugrah

Lonely, bitter, afraid, frustrated and days filled with torment, 16-year old Anugrah ran away from home to Delhi with his cousin brother.

Late at night, while looking for a gurudwara to spend the night, they located a lone building. Assuming that to be an Ashram, they were shocked to find out that it was a Church – TPM Church where 1000's were worshipping inside.

As soon as he realized they were Christians, the old familiar lies that were engraved in his mind resurfaced. But since it was late at night and they had no other place, he and his cousin decided to spend the night.

After they found a quiet place to rest, he could not shut his ears to the sermon being preached. The Topic of the sermon was on Sin and Hell". He was shocked at what he heard! He believed that all his good works would take him to heaven. But the preacher was saying that the only way to God is Jesus Christ!! Fear gripped his heart!

God supernaturally caused him to stay back in the church for another 2 days. All his fears, anger and bitterness against Christians, that he had nurtured for so many years, overflowed out of his mouth. The local Pastor Aby, responded patiently to all the questions that plagued his mind – how to abstain from sin, how to be sure that your past sins are forgiven – breaking it down for the young teenager Anugrah.

Suddenly, he found himself bitterly weeping and tears rolling down his cheeks. He began to remember all the sins that he had committed in his past life. On the 3rd day, he surrendered his life to Jesus Christ, raising both his hands during the altar call, as he felt the supernatural

and mighty presence of God fill his being.

After this life changing experience, his heart's desire was to re-establish links with his Christian parents. Picking up the courage, he knocked on the door, not sure what to expect. Standing in his presence was his mother and he greeted her saying "Praise the Lord!". Laying her eyes on him for the first time in 16 years, her joy knew no bounds to realize that it was her son - the boy she last saw when he was just 1 month old, was now a man!

He stayed with his parents, and was freely able to worship Jesus Christ as a family, enjoying their sweet fellowship. He continued serving at the TPM Church for 2 more years, being discipled in God's commands. Finding his faith in Jesus Christ has been a process, beginning with skepticism and now growing into the experience of a changed life.

God connected him to Sis. Monica Bedi who became his wife and the mother of his 2 beautiful daughters Angel and Arpita. However, God continued to draw his heart towards sharing the good news with the people of his community.

God gave him a vision to come to go to Jammu and serve His people of a particular community there. In obedience, Bro. Anugrah Amardeep Singh left his family, and is currently service at Bantalab 8 kms from Jammu. His deep burden is to take the gospel to the unreached, winning them to Jesus Christ.

Praise God for such an amazing transformed life.

Bro. Mohan C. Lazarus, Jesus Redeems Ministries

Bro. Mohan C. Lazarus is the Founder and Managing Trustee, of Jesus Redeems Ministries, which has its genesis as a small Prayer Group, in a very interior hamlet – Nalumavadi, Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu, on 2nd October 1978.

Bro. Mohan has been targeted by various religious fanatic groups over the past few months. Bro. Daniel from Jesus Redeems Ministries, informed Persecution Relief that more than 30 Police complaints have been lodged by individuals, religious fanatic organizations and Political Parties across the Tamil Nadu State.

Three cases on charges of ‘Hate Speech’, at three different police stations, have been registered. This was based on a video clipping which shows him allegedly saying that “Tamil Nadu was in the clasp of satan, referring to the large number of places of worship, of a particular religion”.

In the first instance, BJP functionary R Jaihind Murugesan, 43, of Uthupalayam near Arasur, lodged a complaint against the preacher with



the Sular police. Based on the complaint, Sular police inspector Thangaraj registered a first information report (FIR) against Mohan C Lazarus under Sections 153 (A) (1) (a) (b) and 295 (A) of the Indian Penal Code.

Likewise, the Karumathampatti police registered a case against the Christian preacher under Sections 153 (A) and 295 (A) of the Indian Penal Code based on a complaint lodged by another BJP functionary, whose identity couldn't be ascertained.

In another instance, VHP district deputy secretary R Manoshankar, 35, of Pollachi, lodged a complaint against Mohan Lazarus with the Pollachi west police, who registered a case.

Bro. Mohan clarified with the Founder Persecution Relief Shibu Thomas that he did not intend to hurt anyone's religious sentiments. He also mentioned that the "statement" was taken out of context. as it was made in response to a question from an Evangelist, in 2016, at a private Pastors' meet in Chennai.

One of the cases filed against Bro. Mohan, where he has been booked under Section 153 (A) and 295 (A), recently came up for hearing at the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court. The opposition party comprising of government officials, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh

(RSS) cadre, filled the court room.

At first, the presiding Judge strongly condemned the statement allegedly made by Bro. Mohan. Advocates representing him, clarified that this alleged hate statement was made at a closed event, at an indoor venue for a group of pastors. While the opposition argued that the date of the alleged meeting was September 2018, Bro. Mohan's Advocates were able to furnish evidence that he was out of India during that period.

The meeting in question happened in 2016 March at a private indoor venue.

The Judge summarized and adjourned the proceedings to 24th October, stating insufficient details to ascertain the facts of the event or to file a case under Section 290A.

Br Moses, Trustee said, the hearing on October 24th, was not listed for hearing and it has been postponed further.

Bro. Mohan reiterated that he had faith in the Judiciary system of India. He also mentioned that God had pre-warned him about persecution and thanked the Church for praying for him.

A prolific speaker, who travels extensively, sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, Bro. Mohan has been serving the Lord in India for over 35 years. He lives with his wife Sis. Joyce Lazarus.

Read the miraculous account and personal testimony of Brother Mohan C Lazarus – a transformed life, called by God to serve His people.



I was 14 years old – I had a ‘swollen heart’ and my right leg was paralyzed. I was in my death bed. My parents took me to various doctors in Chennai city. Yet, doctors gave up on me. They said, “It’s not possible for doctors to cure him.”

Lying in my bed, on the brink of death, I felt abandoned, and the only person who came in search of me was Jesus Christ. He touched me. He supernaturally and miraculously healed me. I desire that you too should know about this miraculous man.

Nalumavadi, is a beautiful village in Tuticorin district. Here I was born in the year 1954 to a God-fearing family. From my childhood days I was brought up, in the fear of God.

When I was a small boy, my grandmother would tell me stories daily from Ramayana

and Mahabharata. Hence, I had a desire from my childhood days to see this God and speak with this God.

I would worship at my home every morning and evening in the pooja room.

When my father moved to Chennai because of his business, the rest of the family also came to Padi, and stayed together as a family. My reverence to God did not decrease even after we came to Chennai. I would go school every day only with a sandal bindi after my morning devotion. In school one teacher used to call me, “sandal bindi.”

During this time, some told me about Jesus. I used to argue with them, “Jesus Christ is not a God at all.” I used to argue, “He was a man like Gandhi, Nehru. He came, did some good things and He die. That is all.”

If they further speak to me about Jesus, I would speak ill of Jesus Christ and mock about Him. I spoke and mocked at Him much beyond what can be written in this book. I had within me that much of faith in God and religious stubbornness.

I was then 14 years old and studying in Class 9 in Singaram Pillai High School in Chennai, Villivakkam area. Suddenly, a mysterious sickness afflicted me, which affected my heart condition and paralyzed my right leg.

My parents took me a multitude of doctors. No one could determine or diagnose my condition. I was prescribed different

medicines and tablets but got no respite from the disease. It only increased.

Because of the severity of the disease, I lost a lot of weight and was quickly reduced to skin and bone. From outside of my body, you could see my swollen-up heart. That was the scale of disease that affected my heart.

While disheartened, my relatives sent word to my parents, “There is a doctor who is in the city. He has studied abroad and very experienced. Let us consult with him too.”

My parents would gladly grasp on to every little straw of hope. They immediately took me to him for a prognosis.

The doctor was at Ayanavaram in Chennai and he checked me very lovingly. Along with him there were many more doctors who tested on me for many hours. They had a conference meeting also.

They said, “Your son's heart is affected completely. It is not possible to cure him through medicine” so saying they sent us away.

Every possible treatment that medical science could offer was finally terminated. Now my parents began to look to the spiritual world for my recovery. They would offer promises and offertories to any God, when anyone speaks about them.

However, no God heard our cry. At this juncture I was bedridden as the sickness increased. I could not move my right leg at

all. I had to be supported to sit up and lie down in bed. I was terribly weak.

I could not consume food or drink water though I was very hungry and thirsty. Everything tasted so bitter.

Friends and relatives used to come and see me. They would say, “Will he ever be able to walk in the future! Will this be his condition even to his dying day? How is he going to survive! Will he live long with this condition!”

It was in such a hopeless, pathetic, doomed and terribly sad situation, that one person came in search of me. His name is Jesus. The very same Jesus Christ whom I had ridiculed and said is not God, came in search of me. That very same Jesus Christ, whom I mocked, came in search of me. I did not go searching for Jesus. But, He came in search of me.

A Christian friend came to see me when he heard that I was sick. He was our family friend; he came to enquire about me.

My mother asked that brother tearfully, “Everyone has given up on my son. Will you pray to your Jesus for my son?”

The brother who saw the tears of my mother said, “I will plead for your son with Jesus”, so saying he knelt down near my bed. My parents, along with my three brothers knelt down along with him.

That brother began to pray for me. I did not believe that Jesus is God even at that moment. I did not call out to Him. I was very



skeptical and watching with ridicule, the way he was praying for me. I hated Jesus to that magnitude.

As Brother fervently prayed, suddenly, the presence of God began to fill that room. I began to feel the power of God entering that room. I could feel someone coming near my bed.

I could not see anyone with my human eyes. But, I could feel the power of God in my body. I could feel the power of God enter my body like electricity. That power of God passed through my paralyzed right leg.

Then, within me, there arose a new strange fear of God. Without my knowledge, tears began to roll down from my eyes. My paralyzed leg through which that power entered began to feel strong and function.

Unaware of my reaction or whatever I was experiencing, this Brother continued to pray for me. I would find new strength flowing through my body as I got up from my bed and sat on it. I could not understand how my legs could support me as I could not even move my legs earlier.

Joyful tears began to roll down from my eyes as, “My legs are functioning! I am cured! Jesus has cured me!

At that moment, I believed, “Jesus Christ is the true God.”

The visiting Brother had completed praying. I began to walk after I got off from my bed. Yes! Jesus made a lame person like me to walk. He cured me in such a way that there was absolutely no difference between my right and left leg at all.

Not only did He heal my legs but he also healed my heart which was swollen, at that very moment. In one instant, I experienced two miracles!!

After that divine healing, my parents never took me to any doctor for check-ups. Now, thirty years have passed by. I have never had the need to take an ECG to check my heart, as my heart has been functioning perfectly, without any problem for the last thirty years.

Who is the reason? Jesus Christ! He has given me a new heart. He has removed the diseased, old hardened heart and has given me a new healthy heart. In one second, Jesus did a heart

transplant for me - without using a knife and without shedding a drop of blood.

I owe my life to Jesus and the reason I live is because of Jesus Christ. If Jesus had not come in search of me, only my tomb would be there on this earth.

I shed tears of gratitude whenever I think of His great love; when I think that He came in search of me and did this miracle. I am still unable to understand this wonderful love of His.

Instead of punishing me for all the humiliating and ridiculing speeches of mine, He came in search of me, so lovingly and removed me from my death bed. What a remarkable and amazing love is this love!

This loving Lord Jesus Christ has come in search of you today. Here, through this magazine, He is meeting you. He will do a miracle for you personally.

Today you require a miracle. You require a miracle from your disease, problems, your needs to be met and your fears to leave.

Jesus has come in search of you to do the miracle for you. Do not be worried. Jesus loves you. Even if you hate Him, He loves you.

Believe in this love of His. Believe in His power. Look upon Him with faith. You will also receive miracles from Jesus.

A PERSONAL NOTE - BRO. MOHAN C LAZARUS THANKING EVERYONE WHO STOOD WITH HIM

“Thank you, Church, for praying for me during this time of persecution and opposition. It is only because of your prayers that the Lord gave me victory in this matter. I am so happy and continuing to serve the Lord and doing his ministry with a joyful heart – thank you for your prayer support.

I am not disappointed because the Lord already told me that I will face persecution. The Lord encouraged me before this persecution came. I therefore rejoice in the Lord and face this persecution. I rejoice in the Lord.

Every one facing persecution, must rejoice in the Lord. We are facing this problem because of the name of Jesus Christ. We have no choice but to pass through this - it is only for a little time. The Lord will change the whole atmosphere in India. So, don't be afraid, be happy; we will rejoice together, we will pray together, we will work for the Lord together and you will see the changes in India”.

Amen.

BLESSING TODAY, COCHIN, KERALA



FOUNDER ADDRESSING YOUTH OF BLESSING TODAY



BETHEL SHARON FASTING PRAYER MEETING, FOUNDER WAS THE SPEAKER



FOUNDER ADDRESSING THE PASTORS OF COCHIN DURING PASTORS BREAKFAST MEETING AT EXODUS CHURCH



FOUNDER ADDRESSING LIFE FELLOWSHIP, TRIVANDRUM, WITH SENIOR PASTOR SAM VARGHESE – BOTH AT ENGLISH & MALAYALAM SERVICE



LEADERS MET UNDER BODY OF CHRIST [BOC], CHENNAI, TAMIL NADU



BRUNSON FREED, PERMITTED TO LEAVE COUNTRY



Andrew and Norine Brunson in their Alsancak home in Izmir, Turkey, on 12 October, 2018, moments before they were escorted to the airport by US Embassy officials to fly back to the United States. Photo/World Watch Monitor

Andrew Brunson, the American-born pastor who was charged with espionage against Turkey and held in custody for two years, has been released and is free to leave the country.

A Turkish court on Friday, 12 October, convicted the Evangelical Presbyterian pastor on terrorism and espionage charges related to the failed 2016 coup against Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Facing up to 35 years in prison if convicted, Brunson flatly denied all charges. The court sentenced Brunson to more than three years of prison time, but released him on account of Brunson's time already served in detention and good behavior.

1,000 DAYS SINCE KIDNAP OF 84-YEAR-OLD DOCTOR IN BURKINA FASO, FAMILY PLEA FOR FREEDOM



Dubbed 'the Doctor of the Poor', Dr. Elliott was providing free treatment at his hospital in Djibo, saving patients significant amounts of money. (Picture: Djibou soutient Dr. Ken Elliot / Facebook)

It's over a thousand days now since an Australian doctor, Ken Elliott, was kidnapped in Djibo, Burkina Faso, on

15 January, 2016. His abduction was claimed by the 'Emirate of the Sahara', a branch of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Dr. Elliott, with his wife, had run a 120-bed clinic in Djibo for over 40 years until their abduction. Jocelyn Elliott was released in February 2016. She said at the time that she would not leave Burkina Faso, but their clinic is no longer operating.

Dubbed ‘the Doctor of the Poor’, Dr. Elliott was providing free treatment, saving patients significant amounts of money. Since the closure of his clinic, people travel via poor transport links hundreds of miles to the capital, Ouagadougou, for medical care. They lack financial resources for travel, accommodation and the treatment itself. This is affecting children and the elderly in particular.

Doctor Elliott’s son, David, asked the kidnappers to release his father.

SUPREME COURT RESERVES VERDICT ON ASIA BIBI'S FINAL APPEAL AGAINST EXECUTION



Asia Bibi, a Christian woman, accused of blasphemy in June 2009 and sentenced to death a year later. — Reuters/File

A special three-member bench of the Supreme Court on Monday reserved its judgement on the final appeal against the execution of Asia Bibi, a Christian woman sentenced to death for blasphemy.

Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, Justice Asif Saeed Khosa and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhel were hearing Bibi’s 2014 appeal against the capital punishment handed to her.

While reserving its verdict on the appeal, the chief justice warned media against commenting on or discussing the case until the apex court’s detailed judgement has been issued.

No date has been announced by the court for when the verdict will be announced.

Non-violence is the only way!

Fr. Cedric Prakash

We live in violent times! Society today is becoming more and more violent. This violence is augmented by the fact that those who are in power bless this violence and are even directly involved in it. The perpetrators of heinous deeds shroud themselves in cloaks of immunity and impunity. In a so-called civilized and modern world, violence has become the new normal, with an aura of sanctity and legitimacy. Facing the scourge of this violence are ordinary citizens: the poor, the marginalized, the excluded and other vulnerable people.

Attacking protesting farmers is violence! As India and the world observed the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2 October, thousands of protesting farmers from Uttar Pradesh began arriving at outskirts of Delhi. There could not have been an uglier scene: police brutally attacking and tear gassing the farmers who were demanding their legitimate rights. Ironically, it was also the 'International Day of Non-violence'.

Farmers committing suicide is violence! Sadly, they have no choice! In the three-month period (March to May 2018), 639 farmers have committed suicide in Maharashtra. These are official statistics of just one State. On 10 September, a successful 'Bharat Bandh' was called by the Opposition parties

to highlight the woes of the common persons of India including the plight of farmers. That day also happened to be 'World Suicide Prevention Day'; at least in one city, a group of 'high society' people mainly women held a rally to create 'awareness' about suicides. Little did they realize that joining the 'bandh' and highlighting the suicide of farmers would have given some credibility to their concern!

Arresting and intimidating human rights defenders is violence! On 28 August, the Pune police raided the homes of several frontline activists like Vernon Gonsalves, Arun Ferreira, Gautam Navlakha, Sudha Bharadwaj, Jesuit Fr. Stan Swamy, Varavara Rao and his family members, Kranti Tekula and Naseem, Anand Teltumbde. Five of them Gonsalves, Ferreira, Navlakha, Rao and Bharadwaj were later arrested. Several other human rights defenders, like Teesta Setalvad, continue to be harassed and have false cases foisted on them. The 'powers' really feel threatened by those who uphold the rights enshrined in the Constitutions.

The Bhima Koregaon attack on Dalits is violence! The facts (including video evidence) is out there in the public domain. The police at once stage even filed cases against Hindutva leaders like Milind Ekbote (head of the Hindu Ekta Manch) and Sambhaji Bhide for instigating the violence on Dalits. However, Ekbote was released on bail soon

after being arrested in March. Bhide has not yet been arrested; this inspite of a Supreme Court order demanding his arrest. Bhide, a hardcore 'hindutvadi', is close to several of the RSS leaders including PM Modi.

Rising prices is violence! Prior to 2014, the BJP was shouting hoarse about the 'price rise'. In just about four years the cost essential commodities have sky-rocketed: petrol has gone up from Rs 62 to Rs 84; diesel from Rs 44 to Rs 63; cooking gas cylinder from Rs 382 to Rs 800; a Railway platform ticket from Rs 3 to Rs 20; milk from Rs 38 to Rs 52 a liter; and the indispensable 'dal' from Rs 55 to Rs 170 a kilo. The exchange for a US dollar has breached Rs 74- which is simply unbelievable. The purchasing power of the rupee has reached an all -time low! Whilst most citizens are affected, the poor suffer the most

Demonetization is violence! It is because its effects are being felt even today. It was a sham on the Indian economy. It hit the common person the hardest and without doubt helped the BJP and their ilk to launder their 'black money'. The case on the son of Amit Shah and his 'overnight' wealth through fraud companies has still to see the light of the day! Official data and reports from the Reserve Bank of India clearly indicate that the so-called 'demonetization' has in no way helped the Indian economy. Gita Gopinath,

the Harvard Professor, who has just been appointed the Chief Economist of the IMF, has also been vocal in her criticism for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's controversial note ban announcement in November 2016. In several interviews in December 2017, Gopinath had said that the Modi government's demonetization plan was not macro economically sound.

Crony capitalism is violence! The rich have become richer in India and the poor poorer. A recent OXFAM Report clearly indicates that just one percent of India today owns 73% of the country's wealth. It is indeed a poor commentary of a country, which is supposed to be wedded to the principles of socialism and equity. The Government is clearly on the side of the rich and vested interests like the Ambanis and the Adanis, the Modis and the Shahs, those who have looted the country and milked the poor of what is rightfully theirs; besides, there are those who have escaped the country with full connivance of the Government. They have all also stashed their ill-gotten gains in banks abroad!

Corruption is violence! Blatant acts of corruption are mainstreamed as never before. One experiences it everywhere! The poor person has no choice but to 'pay' in order to get things done! Nevertheless, corruption has reached a new level of sophistication as seen in the 'Rafale' scam. It is clearly an 'abuse

in authority' a key clause in the Prevention of Corruption Act. The Government from the Prime Minister to the then Defence Minister has thrown all propriety to the wind to favour their rich friends.

Buying and stock-piling arms and ammunition is violence! The Russians are here selling their weapons of violence; we have bought from the Americans, the French and from elsewhere! India today is the world's largest importer of weapons with 14% of the world's imports. In the past three years, India has imported arms worth US \$ 14 billion. Against whom will these weapons be used? The Pakistanis or the Chinese? Or perhaps against the protestors at home! Instead of increasing the outlay to alleviate poverty, precious resources are being utilized for greater violence.

Sexually assaulting another is violence! The victims are women and children! From the apparent sanctity of Churches to the apparent safety of one's home, they are at the receiving end of evil deeds committed on them! Some of these crimes are becoming known! However, lecherous, lustful men in a highly patriarchal society, which hardly respects the rights and dignity of women, stop at nothing: from attacking women in public places to molesting them in crowded buses and trains. Some of those in authority then conveniently blame the women!

Divisiveness is violence! People today are divided so easily in the name of religion and caste! Recently, three police personnel have been suspended after a video of them abusing and resorting to physical violence on a Hindu woman for being friends with a Muslim man, went viral in Uttar Pradesh's Meerut. The 'love jihadis' take great pride in stopping people of different religious backgrounds from falling in love with each other!

Killing is violence! There is no doubt about that! So much has been happening all over! The lynchings because what another eats! The fake encounter killings: everyone is aware of who presided over these 'fake encounters' in Gujarat! The lynchpins of the Gujarat Carnage of 2002 still roam scot-free and are today in positions of power!

The list of violent deeds is endless! Violence has permeated into key areas of Indian society! It is a scourge. This is evident from the actions and the attitudes that are on display. If we truly want to live up to the legacy of 'ahimsa' given to us, we must eschew violence and ensure that the perpetrators of violence are made to realize that ultimately no good will ever come from any act of violence! Gandhi reminds us that, "non-violence is not to be used ever as the shield of the coward; it is the weapon of the brave!" Non-violence is the only way!

*(Fr. Cedric Prakash SJ is a human rights activist. Contact: cedricprakash@gmail.com)

INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED – ICDPP

A RECAP, 2018

Persecution Relief, had appealed to all the believers and the Christian community across India, to observe a one-day prayer meeting on October 1, 2018, to dedicate this day, with the singular, explicit purpose of praying for the Persecuted Church.

Christian men and women across all denominations, despite persecution and discouraging circumstances in India, are joyfully and faithfully serving Jesus Christ. Prayer that is in accordance with God's plan and purposes always changes things.

Participation from several Churches, Bible Colleges, Christian Institutions, various prayer groups including UCPI, small-group meetings, exceeded expectations, to make this

day memorable and a milestone. God's Spirit opened 100's of doors of Churches, breaking denominational barriers across India.

We wish to thank all Churches, Leaders and members of Churches, volunteers and sponsors, for sparing the time, for your overwhelming support and contribution on "Indian Christian Day of Prayer for the Persecuted" (ICDPP).

We would like to share a few of those precious moments of the event, to memorialize the commitment and faithfulness of God's people.

01 October, "Indian Christian Day of Prayer for the Persecuted" (ICDPP), will be an Annual Event.

Thank you for being our ministry Partner.



INDIAN CHRISTIAN DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE PERSECUTED ICDPP-2018

*Thank you church for praying
for the persecutedpersecution relief*



BLESSING TODAY CHURCH, COCHIN



LIFE FELLOWSHIP, TRIVANDRUM



COCHIN PASTOR'S BREAKFAST MEETING



TRUE HOPE CHURCH, UTTAR PRADESH



BETHEL SHARON, KERALA



YOUTH GROUP, KERALA



LOGOS CHURCH, MAHARASHTRA



BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, ANDHRA PRADESH



GOOD NEWS CHURCH, BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH



Adopt a persecuted family



Prayerline24.com

- Daily 6 to 6.45 pm (New York time)
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Sunday 9 to 11 pm - Oklahoma time
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Be Bold like Anita!

In the Gospel of Mark, women occupy a central place in the mission and message of Jesus Christ, as examples of model disciples. They exhibit sacrifice in being willing to give up all of their possessions for others.

"Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. So, He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.'" Mark 12:41-44

One such woman who was worthy of Jesus's mention, was widow woman and her sacrificial giving:

Therefore, the widow, by giving all that she had, demonstrates the epitome of the true disciple of Jesus – one who forsakes all to follow Christ – who gives not the leftovers, but the best and all one has.

Sister Anita Vinod, is one such witness, who gave up everything for the sake of the gospel in India. After finishing off her house hold work, she left with a team member, to the streets of Uttar Pradesh, to proclaim the gospel. Her husband, Bro. Vinod Venkataraman, was also away from home, ministering in another town.

Sister Anita and her team member,



Bro. Amarnath Emmanuel, selected a popular street, a Commercial Belt called Alpha, teeming with crowds of people. She hailed the Auto Rickshaw to stop, unloaded the cartons of Bibles, unpacked a few in

her hand and began distributing the Holy Bibles.

With great zeal and passion, oblivious to the teeming crowd of pedestrians around her, especially curious men, she stood on the side of the road, distributing the Bibles – briefly sharing the plan of salvation.

Sister Anita did not hesitate. Some women stopped to talk to her and collected the Holy Bible that she handed them. Some completely avoided and did not even have eye contact. Not wanting to offend her, some people took the Bible and threw it away by the road-side. People looked very serious as they just moved on. Yet nothing could dilute her enthusiasm or her heavenly minded outlook.

Sister Anita had only one fleeting moment to engage the stranger, gauge his interest, and offer him the Bible – as she might never meet him again. She chose the opening to strike a quick conversation, introduce Jesus Christ the Saviour, handed over the Bible, and encouraged him to read it.

One such interaction with a man, drew his anger as he accused her of indulging in

conversion activities. Furious, he called a mob of religious fanatics, who surrounded and started abusing them, shouting anti-Christian slogans. Sister Anita and Bro. Emmanuel tried to hail an autorickshaw and flee but the fanatics overpowered and dragged them out. Soon a crew of journalists and a battery of cameras converged, all seeking to interview, humiliate and shame them.

The fanatics, around 70-80 persons, overwhelmed them with questions on why they were distributing the Holy Bibles and what they were telling the people. God gave Sister Anita the courage she needed for that hour. Filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, she spoke courageously saying that she was conveying to every person who was receiving the Holy Bible, that “Jesus Christ is THE living God. He died but rose again on the 3rd day. He is alive!”

Infuriated by her response, they began shouting “Jai Sri Ram, Jai Sri Ram”.

Sister Anita Vinod had to suffer humiliation and insults as they outraged her modesty and mishandled her Holy Bible. The Carton of Bibles were also confiscated by them.

Police arrived on the scene and both were taken to Kasna Police Station, Beta II, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The rabid mob followed them to the Police Station, with the media crew. The situation outside the Police Station was hostile, as the religious fundamentalists had virtually created a siege around the place, raising slogans.

By the grace of God, both Sister Anita Vinod and Bro. Amarnath Emmanuel, were released

from Police custody, very late in the night without any charges being levelled against them.

Women have always played a major role in the propagation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

You might think that you are incapable of such a task! Questions may plague your mind and discourage you.

“I am not qualified! I don’t know what to say! I am scared! What will people think! Do I need to do it? Is it my job?”

May the example of the Samaritan woman, who was the first Christian Evangelist recorded in the New Testament inspire us. Once she had an encounter with the Living God, everything changed in her life, in a flash! She found enormous courage and flair to bring the entire city of Samaria to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. She was empowered by the Holy Spirit’s power, that gave her the courage to tell her true story, in spirit and in truth. The Samaritan woman ran into the village calling “Come and see; come and see Jesus!”

May the story of Sis. Anita Vinod and the Samaritan woman serve as a great encouragement and galvanize sisters reading this story, to go out into the streets, into your workplace, into your neighborhoods, and proclaim:

“Come and hear; come and hear about Jesus Christ!”

We never know where, how or when a simple Bible may be used of God to bring another sinner to the foot of the cross!



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భారత దేశములో హింసింపబడుచున్న
క్రైస్తవుల సహాయముకై టోల్ ఫ్రీ హెల్ప్ లైన్ నెంబరు

ఓరంతరియె పీఠితరాయ
ఎల్లొ క్రిస్త్యానికలకుం
వేణ్ణి డోలె ధ్రీ నన్బర

भारत में सताए हुए ईसाइयों के लिए
टोल फ्री हेल्पलाइन नंबर

இந்தியாவில் கிறித்தவர்களுக்கு
எதிரான வன்முறை ஏற்பட்டால் தொடர்பு
கொள்ள வேண்டிய கட்டணம் இல்லாத
இலவச தொலைபேசி எண்



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