



Persecution & Prayer Alert

The Voice of the Martyrs Canada
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*"You don't really know
Jesus is all you need, until
Jesus is all you have."*

~ Tim Keller

INDIA: Christian Couple Beaten and Threatened

Sources: Christian Solidarity Worldwide, The Wire

A Christian couple in Uppaladinni, Karnataka, was recently beaten for their faith and threatened with death if they continued to practise Christianity. The attack on Vijayalakshmi Chavhan and her husband Ashok happened on January 10th, the day after Vijayalakshmi was accused by several media organizations of conducting forced religious conversions.

Vijayalakshmi is a registered healthcare worker who goes door to door raising awareness of basic medical needs. Some villagers, however, objected to a Christian being allowed to enter their homes. Her opponents threatened to get her fired and conveyed warnings of violence.

After the conversion allegations circulated, Christians in the area intervened on Vijayalakshmi's behalf, filing a complaint with the police. However, when the Christian woman, her husband and some of the villagers met with police to resolve the situation, a mob of around 300 people arrived and attacked the married couple. While police officers attempted to intervene, sources report that they did not do enough to prevent the attack.

A police investigation has since been launched, with six men named as perpetrators of the incident. However, harassment continues for this couple, as well as the members of their church. For instance, three Christian families recently had their utilities disconnected for four days on the instruction of the community chief. These believers have also received threats and warnings to stop following Jesus. For other reports addressing the persecution encountered by Christians in India, go to www.vomcanada.com/india.htm.

Pray for the protection of Vijayalakshmi, Ashok and other believers living in this community who are presently facing intimidation and threats because of their faith in Christ. May those responsible for this attack not only be held accountable for their violent actions, but may they also come to realize the error of their ways. Ultimately, pray that God would radically transform the hearts of those throughout India who are opposing the Gospel message, leading multitudes more to faith in the Lord for their eternal salvation and the provision of their numerous other needs.

CHINA: Patriotic Education Law Takes Effect

Sources: International Christian Concern, Bitter Winter, Reuters, Voice of America

In recent years, efforts by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to control all areas of society has increased exponentially. On October 24th, the national legislature passed a "Patriotic Education Law" which took effect on January 1st. The purpose of this law is clear: to ensure that the philosophies and principles of the CCP permeate every facet of society.

After implementing the law, CCP officials met with leaders of the country's five authorized state religions to explain how to adhere to the new policies. The guidelines given to these religious leaders state that China's "religious circles must learn, think and practise 'Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics.'" Of critical importance is the statement that "the state is greater than religion, and the state law is greater than religious rules." The intention is for education on all levels to be affected, including that of schools, religious centres, company training programs, and every other area of society. The policies further emphasize that the law applies to all Chinese people, whether they are living in mainland China, Taiwan, or anywhere else in the world.

The effect that this law will have on churches in China is not yet fully known, but increased persecution is anticipated. Within the state church, pressure to promote socialist ideologies over Biblical principles will undoubtedly increase. The law may also be used as a tool to further persecute unregistered churches throughout the country. To learn more about the persecution of Christians in China, go to www.vomcanada.com/china.htm.

Please remember all Chinese Christians in your prayers, even those residing in other countries, as they face increasing pressures to centre their lives around the beliefs of President Xi Jinping. Pray that these believers will receive wisdom as they determine the best way to stand firm in their faith while dealing with governmental indoctrination, which so strongly opposes the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Pray that President Xi, and other leaders within the Chinese Communist Party, would come to terms with the truth of God's Word so they too will reach the point of humble repentance and salvation.

SRI LANKA: Church Ordered to Find New Location

Source: NCEASL

On the morning of December 3rd, police entered the Assembly of God church in the town of Makola, which is located near the Sri Lankan capital of Colombo. The officer in charge questioned whether the service was being conducted legally. Since the believers were in the middle of a worship service, the pastor agreed to report to the police station the next morning.

The next day, police questioned the pastor and his landlord. Although the church leader was told to stop holding church services in his rental home, he refused to comply. One of the officers then stated that the place of worship needed to be registered with the government in order to continue operating. The police also ordered the landlord to no longer allow the pastor to use the house for hosting Christian gatherings.

The pastor has been given six months to vacate the premises. He also signed a police statement asserting that he will continue hosting worship services during that time. The church is having difficulties finding another location for a couple reasons: 1) since there are more than 100 people regularly attending the services, they will need a sizeable space, and 2) some landlords in the area are not willing to let the believers use their facilities as a meeting place for the church. More reports on the challenges facing our Christian brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka are available at www.vomcanada.com/srilanka.htm.

Pray that the members of this church will be able to find a suitable meeting facility where they can worship together peacefully without any further opposition. In the meantime, may their Godly lives and daily interactions with those around them serve as testimonies of God's love, grace and peace. As the Holy Spirit works in and through the situation – and within the hearts of the opposing authorities – may all the barriers that have been raised in this South Asian nation be removed, so these Christians and many others can faithfully and freely spread the hope of the Gospel.

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