



# PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

## Pray for the Persecuted Christians in INDIA

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



### India

Total Population: 1,380,004,385

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 6% – **Evangelical Witness: 1%**

Largest Religion: Hinduism - 74%

Death Rate: 7.25/1000 per year: Just today: 27,411

## The Church Under Fire in India

By Matias Pertula

09/16/2021 Washington D.C. (International Christian Concern) - "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that." The words of Martin Luther King Jr. echo the words Jesus spoke when He said, "I am the Light of the world." As darkness tries to take over the Church in India, the Light continues to shine to the farthest corners of the country.

Since Prime Minister Modi took power, the Church in India became more of a growing target for Hindu extremist violence. Modi's radical agenda to make India a Hindu-only country only fuels the already growing persecution of Christians.

Several factors historically drive persecution against the Church in India. But the strongest force driving anti-Christian hatred in the country is the spiritual impact and warfare.

One of the greatest driving forces for persecution comes from Hindutva, an ideology that deems all other religions (other than Hinduism) as foreign religions. Because of this, all other religions are seen as a threat to Hindutva's core notion of making India a Hindu-only country. This ideology manifests in many forms: persecution in politics, culture, and economy. Ultimately, it manifests spiritually in directly targeting Christians.

Upper caste Hindus adhering to Hindutva worry about lower caste Hindus converting to Christianity, diminishing Hinduism's political stronghold-Hindus would become a minority in India.

### Political Climate

Hindu extremists see the rapid growth of Christianity as a direct national security threat. Hindu nationalists use fake stories of mass conversions of Hindus to Christianity to perpetuate fear across India. These false stories often undergird and strengthen the passage of state-level anti-conversion laws-now on the books in nine states across India's 29 states.

### Casting Hope

Indicators show that Christian communities do better in terms of literacy, education, and medical access as a result of missionaries starting schools and medical clinics. The empowerment of Christianity brought with it a new sense of identity and life for the people of India.

With a Christian worldview on the potential of every individual, people have experienced a new sense of self-worth and began to break away from the bondage of the caste system.

### Breaking Cultural Norms

Christianity is the antithesis of traditional Hindu norms. Culturally, Christianity disrupts the Hindu nationalist way of life in terms of the caste system. Painting it as a "foreign religion," Hindu nationalists perpetuate how Christianity draws people away from what it truly means to be Indian - a practicing Hindu. Converting from Hinduism is not acceptable.

### Setting the Captives Free

As Christianity spreads throughout India, it is a direct threat to the kingdom of darkness that seeks to keep people in bondage to false gods and to a way of life that offers no hope of salvation. Jesus' message in the Gospel is to set the captives free from spiritual bondage.

The ultimate challenge in India is the devil as he pushes back against the Gospel and Kingdom of God.

However, as persecution intensifies and the powers of darkness push against the Church, the more the Church will grow. Though Christianity is the antithesis of traditional Hindu norms, persecution has produced a stronger Church time and time again.

Liberation from spiritual bondage through the Gospel of Jesus was brought to India by St. Thomas the Apostle in the first century, and ever since then, the devil has been hard at work to stop its spread in India.