

January 7, 2009

Dear friends and prayer partners in the Lord's work in India,

I am so glad to be home with Terri and the boys. Thank you so much for your concern for India and for your prayers. It was very hard for me to leave India this time because of a lot of unrest and violence against the Christians going on, especially at the Christmas holidays. Although there was no direct persecution to our churches many of our Pastors have friends or relatives in our neighboring state of Orissa.

Serve India has been working along the border of Orissa for many years. We are so grateful that with the help of one of our SERVE India Pastors, we were able to rescue several Pastors and their families. Along with them around 50 families were taken in at our training center.

I talked with them about their experiences and wanted to share some with you so we can understand better and continue to pray for this difficult situation

This started last August when an important Hindu leader was killed. Three radical Hindu groups blamed the Christians, although it was not them who did it. An angry mob of Hindu radicals, Bhajrangdhall, and RSS groups conducted a rally against the Christians. Thousands of them gathered for weeks with sticks and machetes and chanted death threats to the Christians. A mob entered into Balliguda village of Kandhamal District, Orissa. They attacked, restraining the men they began burning their homes, beating the women and children and ripping Christian materials apart. They destroyed churches and the properties of the Christian people.

On the day of the attack they wanted to kill one of the Pastors, Pastor M., but he was not there. Instead they got a hold of his brother, Christodas, a Bible school student who was visiting him at the time. The Hindu radicals dragged him out and began to beat him, wanting to know the whereabouts of his brother. While they were doing this Pastor M.'s children and wife were able to escape. The radicals poured kerosene on Christodas, set him on fire and burned him to death. They went into the neighborhood, entered into the Christians' homes, destroyed their property, and burned their belongings. They also raped 2 young Christian girls. They shouted demands that they should renounce Christ and tried to force them to reconvert back to their old Hindu beliefs. The Christians continued to cling to Christ. The mob warned that no Christians would be allowed back into this village and if any came they would kill them in same way.

Similar persecution broke out in other villages throughout the district. Story after story revealed mothers lost their children, husbands could not find their wives, families have been scattered.

We are so thankful that the Lord allowed us to help some of these brothers and sisters. Pastor M. and his family and about 50 other families moved to the Training Center the week before I returned to the States. I am amazed of their faith and confidence in Christ. These people lost everything and cannot go back to their homes any time soon. Except for their faith everything in their lives has been disturbed.

Please pray for Pastor M.'s family and all other ***families who have lost loved ones, that they would be comforted***, that they would ***remain faithful*** to God in the midst of this persecution. Please pray for the ***recovery of those who were wounded***, physically and emotionally, and ***that their testimony would be a glory to God***. Please pray for the hearts of the ***many children who are living in fear*** that someone might hurt them, that they would ***feel secure, loved and be happy***. Please pray for the ***wisdom and guidance for the overseers of the training center***. Please pray for the ***Hindu militant groups*** that opposing the Gospel that they ***would come to know the good news of Jesus***. Please pray ***for me as I will be traveling back to India next week***. Please pray for ***the team (including Terri) that will be coming*** at the end of Jan. for an ***effective outreach and service***. Pray as ***the Lord uses this for good, for His faithfulness to be seen so clearly***, and for ***many unbelievers to see the Lord and come to Him*** through this.

I am so grateful that we are all taking part in helping these believers. Thank you for supporting with your prayer and your gifts what SERVE India is doing at this time. We will have a time at ***NOON this Sunday, Jan. 11, at Faith Community Church***, (777 Carmichael Rd, Hudson, WI) to ***show some video*** that I have brought back showing some of this story and ***to answer questions and talk more*** about this situation, and pray. Please join us if you can. May the Lord encourage us all.

In His Service, John Nanda

(If you would like to give towards this need specifically, just write 'Orissa Project' on the memo of your check to SERVE India...see details below)

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution for the ministries of SERVE India (support for pastors, children, widows, training center, special projects) make a note in the memo, write and send the check to:
SERVE India, 777 Carmichael Road, Hudson, WI 54016

If you would like to make a tax-deductible contribution for our personal support (support for our family's living expenses, including our travel to India), it comes from your contributions to
International Gospel Outreach (IGO).

Your gifts are tax-deductible if made payable to International Gospel Outreach only.

Please write "IM" (India Mission) on the check memo line. Do not put Nanda's name on the check.
Contributions are solicited with the understanding that IGO has complete discretion and control over the use of all donated funds.
IGO Address: PO Box 1932, Maple Grove MN 55311-6932 (Telephone: 763-416-4159)

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