

News and Current Events :: Persecution, Anti-Conversion Bills Plague Christians in Indian States

Persecution, Anti-Conversion Bills Plague Christians in Indian States - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/8/9 21:17

Persecution, Anti-Conversion Bills Plague Christians in Indian States

So-called "Religious Freedom" bills have been passed in the Indian states of Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh with the expressed intent of stopping people from receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Gospel for Asia regional leader M.A. Lalachan said the bills in the two states were passed to "make conversion tougher, targeting Christian missionaries and their activities."

The Chhattisgarh government, run by the fundamentalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), pushed for the bill "penalizing those who change their faith without informing the authorities."

In fact, national BJP chief Rajnath Singh ordered all state governments where his party has a majority to bring in "legislation forcefully punishing conversions." He even admitted that the purpose of the anti-conversion laws was "to destroy the plans of Christian missionaries."

According to the bill, people wishing to change religion must inform the district collector one month in advance. The penalty for those violating the law, including those who convert people forcibly, could be a 20,000 rupee (US\$430) fine and imprisonment for up to three years.

Under the law, the district collector will have the discretion to reject applications for conversion, while those "returning to their ancestors' religion or original religion will not be treated as conversion." So applications by non-Christians to become Christians can be rejected, but anyone turning from Christianity to Hinduism or other traditional religions would be free to do so without government interference.

Anyone converting to Christianity and failing to report it to government authorities faces imprisonment up to a year and a fine of 10,000 rupees (\$215).

Although freedom of religion has been enshrined in the Indian Constitution, the Chhattisgarh government contends that the law "is not against the provisions laid down in the Constitution."

In Madhya Pradesh, the new legislation states that a person wishing to convert and the church leader conducting the baptism will have to inform the authorities in advance. The prior law on religious conversions passed in 1968 did not require that the authorities be notified.

"Conversion is a major political issue in the state," a BBC article reported, "with the right-winged Hindu political parties accusing Christian missionaries of converting tribal people and low-caste Hindus through 'force and allurements.'"

While seven Indian states have anti-conversion laws, the governor of Rajasthan recently sent a similar bill back to the State Assembly without signing it, and the new government of Tamil Nadu recently repealed its anti-conversion law.

Lalachan has asked Christians around the world to pray for believers in these states as they face increased persecution.

"Please pray for God's grace and protection for our 660 missionaries and 224 churches in Chhattisgarh, that they may stand firm in their faith and work," Lalachan said. "Pray also for the 224 students studying in Bible college there."

At the same time, he asked for prayer for the state governments, that they will "do justice and grant constitutional rights to all in the state."

more info: <http://www.gfa.org>

Re: Persecution, Anti-Conversion Bills Plague Christians in Indian States - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2006/8/9 21:1

Brothers and sisters we need to pray desperatly that God will change this and not allow this to happen. This is just happening in 2 states in india but due to the population that is like 2 countries having these rules being placed upon them. God is doing a amazing work through Gospel for Asia in India this definetly is the working of the forces of the kingdom of darkness.