

Persecution Watch

100 Chinese Church Leaders Released

One hundred Chinese house-church leaders were released from police custody after being arrested June 11, Asia Harvest reported July 2. The leaders were gathered in the central city of Wuhan for a retreat organized by the China Gospel Fellowship, one of the largest house-church networks in China. The arrests were believed to confirm a crackdown on China's underground Christian movement. Upon their release, the church leaders were told to return to their hometowns and villages, where they are required to stay. They must also report regularly to local authorities, Asia Harvest said. The advocacy group noted that the action is an attempt to control their movements, as many of those arrested are evangelists who minister throughout China.

Anti-Conversion Law Approved in Sri Lanka

The Sri Lankan Cabinet gave initial approval June 18 for a draft bill that would make religious conversion illegal in the predominantly Buddhist nation. The Parliament was to give the bill further consideration July 20, Window International Network (WIN) reported. At press time, the Act for the Protection of Religious Freedom was to be revised by the government's draftsman before being made law, Compass Direct reported. Under the Sri Lankan Constitution, after Parliament has passed a law, it cannot be considered for judicial review. If the bill becomes law, Christians would not be able to share their faith without being accused of "inducement" and possibly facing fines or imprisonment, WIN said. Churches and missionaries also could be charged with forcible conversion,

WIN said.

Pakistan Drafts Bill To Revise Blasphemy Laws

In July the Pakistani government announced that it would introduce a bill to revise the Hudood Ordinances and blasphemy laws that religious-liberty activists say have been used to persecute Christians in the Muslim-dominated region, Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) reported. The draft bill would also criminalize “honor” killings. Mervyn Thomas, chief executive of CSW, welcomed the draft bill but said ultimately the “unjust” blasphemy laws needed to be repealed.

How to Find Peace With God

Perhaps in reading this issue of Charisma you realized that you have never made a Christian commitment. Don't delay that decision! We encourage you to embrace God's love today and receive the salvation that only Jesus Christ gives. Here are five simple steps you can take to find assurance of salvation:

1. Recognize your need. The Bible tells us that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23, NASB). All of us are sinners, and we must admit our need for a Savior.

2. Repent of your sins. Our sins create a wall that separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them, you will find forgiveness. The Bible promises: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

3. Believe in Jesus. God wrought a miracle when He sent His only Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. Put your faith in Him and believe in His power to save you. The Bible says, “‘For God so loved the world, that He gave His only

4. Receive His salvation. God has given us a great gift in His Son, but we must receive His gift. Thank Him for loving and forgiving you, and ask Him to live in your heart. His promise to us is clear: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

5. Confess your faith. The Bible assures us: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom. 10:9). You have been born again and are now part of God’s family. Tell someone else what Jesus has done in your life!