

The Good (Christian) News You Didn't Hear from India

The recent elections brought bad news for Christians, and you probably heard about that. But there's some wonderful news for the Christians of India as well. Prepare to be encouraged.

First, however, let's look at the bad news.

The BJP, the current ruling party in India, led by Prime Minister Modi, won the national elections handily. This is bad news for millions of Christians in India.

The BJP is not just a Hindu party. It is a militantly Hindu party. It wants India to be a Hindu nation, meaning, exclusively Hindu. Prime Minister Modi has even spoken of his desire to see Christianity eradicated from India within the next few years.

These are frightening, sobering sentiments. We cannot take them lightly.

And while the BJP may not be physically persecuting Christians, militant Hindus throughout the nation have been given a free hand. This has resulted in many Christians being beaten and others being killed. (I know this firsthand through my direct contact with Christian leaders in India.)

As pointed out by Rob Schwarzwald, "Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been reelected. By a huge margin. That's 'an absolute tragedy.' That's what Dean Curry, head of the anti-persecution ministry Open Doors, calls it. Modi is a Hindu nationalist deeply hostile to Christianity and to Christians.

"Since he came to power in 2014, India has become the 10th worst country in the world for following Jesus. It was 28th on Open Doors' World Watch List back then. What countries are

worse? Iran's ninth. India's only slightly better than the Iranian theocracy. Pakistan's fifth. Afghanistan's second and North Korea's first."

Indeed, "Modi's government so dislikes Christianity that it will hurt its own people to keep Christians away. It has been getting rid of Christian ministries that have for many years served India's many needy people. In 2017, Compassion International was forced to close '589 Indian-staffed development centers caring for more than 145,000 children.' Why? Because "India's Ministry of Home Affairs put it on a list of organizations needing prior approval before transferring funds into the country" –but wouldn't approve the grant."

The list of concerns goes on and on.

We need to pray for a change of heart in the Indian government, and we need to petition President Trump to speak out against Modi's aggressive, anti-Christian actions.

My Indian friends truly believe that one strong word from the White House would put a major stop to Modi's hostile designs.

But there is good news from India as well. Really good news.

First, the gospel continues to spread powerfully in that vast nation of more than 1.3 billion souls. As reported by Dr. Ralph Wilson, "the percentage of Christians has increased substantially from 2.5% a decade ago to about 5.8% today. That represents a huge increase in the growth rate. Something is happening!"

And in some states, the growth is much greater, with Christians representing as much as 10-15% of the total population.

This is truly unprecedented.

Second, this surge in Christian population was in evidence in

the election results in the state of Andhra (that is, Andhra Pradesh, a state I have visited annually since 1993).

Back in 2009, the chief minister of Andhra, Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, died in a helicopter accident. Reddy was a compassionate and committed Christian, and I remember my friends in Andhra being shocked at how many Christians came forward to mourn his death. They had no idea there were so many believers in Andhra.

My friends were also amazed to see how greatly loved Reddy was by millions of Hindus who lived in Andhra.

Now, his son, Jagan Mohan Reddy, also a committed Christian, has been elected to be Andhra's new chief minister. And the party he founded, founded, the YSR Congress Party, won by a landslide. And I mean landslide.

As reported on Wikipedia, "In the 2019 National and State election held in April-May 2019, YSJR won 151 of the total 175 assembly seats and 22 of the 25 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh."

This is absolutely remarkable, and it is certainly a cause for rejoicing, especially when each state in India has so much autonomy.

This, then, is incredible news for the Christians in Andhra Pradesh. And it is important news for the Christians of India as a whole, since Mr. Reddy wields considerable influence as the chief minister of a major state, while his party has become a significant party.

Let's pray for his safety (he is being sworn May 30, so perhaps as you read this article) and for the safety of Christians throughout the country.

God has great plans to bless the nation of India!