

Believer's Burial Wishes Enrage Villagers

When Krishna Maya Pariyar died last week, her fellow believers tried to carry out her wish to be buried on her own land. But this caused major problems for the people in Krishna's village.

They adhere to their traditional religion, which mandates cremation as the only proper ritual. The people in this village were upset that Krishna had turned her back on their traditional gods to worship Jesus, in both her life and in her death.

The people believed that if they could cremate, rather than bury Krishna, she would once again receive favor from her gods. So they confronted the Christians who were planning Krishna's burial.

"They told us that if we tried to bury her, they would destroy the church," said Gospel for Asia-supported missionary Prem Rai Rangon. He was also Krishna's pastor.

So Prem and his congregation left Krishna's body in her home for three days while he and other GFA-supported pastors tried to work out a peaceable agreement to the conflict.

Finally, the police intervened and told Prem that Krishna could be buried, but not on her land. Instead they told the Christians to bury their departed sister near a river, which was a two-hour walk from their village.

Finally, five days after she died, Krishna's body was laid to rest in this alternate spot. But the trouble is not over for Prem and his congregation.

The villagers are still angry at the Christians. They blame

the believers for causing a disruption in the harmony of their community. Some of the more vocal anti-Christians in the village again confronted Prem and told him he had one week to get his congregation out of their village. The extremists threatened to tear down the church building if the Christians continue meeting.

The church meets in a rented house, and the landlord is worried his property will be demolished. He told Prem and the other believers they could no longer use the house for worship.

Prem is asking for prayer that God will give them wisdom and strength to encourage the affected believers and to continue being a bold witness in the area.