

Christians 'On Top of the World' Facing Persecution

Nepal is known for being on top of the world. It's also a country where Hinduism and Maoism struggle for dominance.

Christians face widespread **persecution** but God is on the move. Their numbers have grown from 29 people when the first church was planted in Nepal 60 years ago, to nearly 1 million today. Most of those coming to Christ in Nepal today are former Hindus.

One young woman named Sharada said she grew up in a Hindu family.

"Before I came to Christ my life was in darkness and I didn't know God," she said.

Sharada, however, faced **persecution** from her own family when she left Hinduism for Christianity.

"When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior the persecution started to come into my life," she explained. "My mother asked me, 'Do you love your religion more than your parents?' I told her, I love both. She hated me for following Christ and she used to say bad words to me."

Physical attacks soon followed. Sharada said her mother threatened to kill her with a sickle and blind her with a nail.

"My mother told me, 'If you are blind you'll stop going to church.' She took the nail, pushed me to the ground and tried to stick the nail into my eyes. I moved and the nail hit my ear," she said.

Sharada escaped to the jungle where she now lives with a friend.

Churches under Fire

Christians in Nepal not only come under attack from co-workers and family members, but churches are also under fire from Maoists and Hindu militants.

One case in point is a church CBN News visited in a remote region of southwestern Nepal. Pastor Damboo Bishoo Karma explained what happened when militant Hindus attacked members of his church.

"Non-believers came to our church and demanded that we join their festivals and worship idols," Pastor Karma recalled. "We told them that we don't worship like this."

The Christians refused to help fund the Hindu festivals.

"When we didn't pay the money they came and attacked us and took our livestock," Karma said.

One church member named Mr. Choudary (NAME?) faced a raging mob outside his home.

"Two-hundred thirty villagers with sticks came here and took the two oxen that I kept," he said.

Pastor Karma said the suffering of village Christians comes of no surprise to them.

"Matthew 5:12 says in my name you will be persecuted and you will be hated," he said.

Nepali Christians are also disrespected in death. Hindus usually cremate a deceased loved one, but what happens to Christians when they die?

CBN News visited a cemetery in Kathmandu, the only one where Christians could bury their dead.

But no longer. Rarely are Christians given a place for burial. **Religious extremists** believe non-Hindu bodies desecrate the

land.

Christians report militants often force them to dig up the buried remains of loved ones. One Christian woman reportedly kept her deceased husband's decaying body in her home because she was prevented from burying him.

Another woman helped hide church members in her house. A rampaging mob attacked them for burying a deceased Christian on village property.

Standing Firm

So what does the future hold for Nepali Christians? Pastor Karma said his church will stand firm.

"We want to keep the witness of God in this place and improve the church. Our main purpose is to influence all of the villagers," he said.

And God is working in Mr. Choudary's heart. He lost his oxen in attacks on his home.

"We are sons and daughters of God," he said. "Whatever the villagers took from us belonged to Him. We should be satisfied with His Word."

And what about Sharada? She and her aunt led Sharada's cousin, Huma, to Christ.

Sharada explained, "I told her if you find God then you will know how wonderful He is and you will know God's plan for your life."

Now, Huma said she wants to share the good news.

"After I finish my education, I want to share Jesus with those who do not know Him. I will walk with Him and share the Gospel," she said.

"Sharada says even though people offer many animals for

sacrifice, they will not be forgiven," she continued. "Only Christ's blood can bring forgiveness of our sins. I now know death is not the end. God has brought me from darkness to light."

Sharada and Huma are two young, Nepali women who have found eternal hope and vision at the top of the world.