

Church Land Faces Demolition

Two churches served by Gospel for Asia-supported missionaries are in danger of being demolished due to confusion over who owns the land.

The churches are both in northwest India. The church buildings, along with hundreds of homes and medical clinics, are involved in a confusing legal quagmire.

The residents of the homes, businesses and churches in this area were reported to have been served with eviction notices stating they had to move out of their homes in April. The residents, business owners and congregations were told that their homes and church buildings were built on land that really belongs to the government. Most of the people have lived in this area for 30 years.

In one of the affected areas, the residents facing eviction are mostly poor day laborers, along with a few government employees. The second affected area is home to a more middle class neighborhood inhabited by teachers, medical professionals, engineers and businessmen.

Residents of both neighborhoods contend that they legally purchased the land on which their homes reside. The land is reported to originally belong to a tribal group that sold portions of it off to the people who went on to build homes and businesses. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the majority of the land purchases and building construction occurred before the state was created.

The agency serving the eviction notices insists the current residents encroached on the property, and they must now leave so it can be used for public purposes.

A similar situation recently occurred in another area of this state, which resulted in the demolition of several homes and a

church building.

Two GFA-supported missionaries serving in the area, Pavita Sushan and Ravendra Joh, have combined congregations of about 75 people. Their ministries have been extremely fruitful, and many have chosen to follow Christ.