

India Believers Banished for Following Christ

Christian believers in two Indian states were expelled from their villages simply because they chose to follow Jesus, according to reports recently received by Gospel for Asia (GFA).

“Once again, we are seeing how our brothers and sisters in Christ are suffering persecution for His sake all across Asia,” notes GFA President K.P. Yohannan. “These two incidents clearly show the cost of discipleship in India and other South Asian countries.”

One incident took place in a high-caste Orissa village known to be a center of religious extremism.

There, in a place where followers of the traditional religion consider Christians to be low-caste, GFA-supported national missionary Galoknath Jena had established a regular prayer meeting in the home of Kanchan and Gayan Verma. Theirs was the first family in the village to follow Christ, and they were among just a handful of believers that formed the first Christian fellowship there.

Not suprisingly, the rest of the village was angered by the small group of believers in their midst, and when Kanchan, 65, suddenly died, they took advantage of the situation.

Immediately, village leaders began to verbally abuse and harass Gayan, her daughter Sachika, 38, and her two children. But when the believers silently braved their insults and prayed for God’s grace, the anti-Christian religious leaders became infuriated.

Finally, when it was clear that the harassment was not going to change Gayan’s family, the leaders forced them to leave the

village. Taking their few worldly possessions with them, the family took shelter in the home of a GFA leader in a village about 25 kilometers (15 miles) away.

“This dear family has lost everything and patiently endured persecution for the sake of Christ,” notes Dr. Yohannan. “Unfortunately, they are not the only ones. ?”Just the other day, we received another report of a man in Uttar Pradesh who received similar treatment. There, a young man named Kunai received Jesus as his Savior about six months ago, and now the local leaders have banned him from his village.

“And not only has this Christian brother been banned from his own home, his whole family has been excommunicated from their society.

“I want to ask all who read this report to take a moment right now and pray for these families who are suffering greatly simply because they have placed their faith in Christ. Pray that the Lord will continue to hold them up. And pray also for those who persecute them, that their eyes will be opened to the true love of the living God.”