

Revival Exploding in Sri Lanka 2 Months After Horrific Easter Church Bombings

It has been over two months since ISIS suicide bombers in Sri Lanka devastated three churches and three hotels on Easter Sunday, killing over 250 people and injuring around 500. Since then, national leaders have responded with investigations and arrests.

But the Christian community is responding to extremist hate with something even more radical: love and forgiveness.

Raj is a Sri Lankan pastor and ministry facilitator with Global Disciples. The Easter service at Raj's church started as a joyous occasion. His church had just gone through a season of growth, doubling in size after weeks of repentance, fasting and prayer.

But as Raj's church worshipped the risen Christ, just two and a half hours away their fellow Christian brothers and sisters were martyred for their faith.

Wendy Nagle with Global Disciples says, "While [Raj] was preaching, they were receiving notices, and the police started to enter their building. He said, 'I don't quite know how we finished the service that day. But somehow we did, and realized at the end of the service that our building was surrounded by the police who had arrived to protect us.'

"They as a congregation, of course, began to pray for the brothers and sisters and friends that Raj had that were pastors in that area, including the pastor who lost 30 of his Sunday school children."

In the weeks and months following the bombings, Christians in

Sri Lanka are processing the worst attack ever to target their community. For Sri Lankan children younger than 10 years old, it's the first time they have lived through such tragedy since the nation's 30-year civil war.

The radical grace and love offered by Christians following the Easter massacre ring louder than the blast of a bomb ever could.

"As they offered forgiveness, their country just couldn't believe the response," Nagle says. "Buddhist leaders [and] Muslim leaders would come to them and say, 'If this happened in our community, we would be retaliating. We would be seeking revenge on the people who did this to us.' They were literally in awe of the forgiveness that was being offered by the Christian churches."

As Raj facilitates Global Disciples' discipleship training programs in churches around Sri Lanka, he has seen a recent shift in the cultural attitude towards Christians.

"In the past, it wasn't easy to hand out tracts or give out Christian information or literature in Sri Lanka. And it certainly wasn't easy to invite people into a church setting. It was far more acceptable to have a house church setting. But now they can meet in public, and they can speak in public because the country has had a positive response to Christians following the event.

"In the end, Raj responded that the people who died that day became seed for Sri Lanka," Nagle said. "What they see is the beginning of a period of revival in that country."

Nagle passes along some specific prayer requests from Raj for his country.

"Raj has specifically asked for people to really pray for the people of Sri Lanka that they will take advantage of a time like this, and that they will have the courage to share the

love of God.”

Please also pray for Global Disciples’ role in encouraging the Sri Lankan body of Christ.

“As Global Disciples reaches out with training, we don’t just *train* them on global outreach. We encourage them to *do* it. We have the outreach programs active so that they can learn and do at the same time.

“It’s very important in this setting for Raj and others to be able to model for this community what it looks like to share the love of Christ. ... As we’re looking at the future, Raj sees more potential for those training programs to multiply. So [be in] continued prayer from the people in this country—that those open doors will remain and that the passion and courage to share the love of Christ will continue.”

Editor’s Note: Names have been changed for security purposes.
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