

# PRAYER FOCUS

Published by Ethnos Asia Ministries (EAM) as a Prayer Guide on Access-Restricted Nations in Asia (ARNA).

## HIMALAYAS

### A PREPARED CHURCH

The Himalayan region is home to the highest mountains in the world and old but beautiful architecture. India is famous for its heritage and culture. Nepal is an excellent place for adventures with its Himalayan trekking. Bhutan offers high-value, low-impact tourism with its untouched nature. Although these countries are popular for tourism, the state-sponsored restriction on Christianity is overlooked and under-reported, which is very sad.

Persecution has increased in India since Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) took power in 2014. The BJP is the political arm of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an all-male Hindu nationalist volunteer group described as a paramilitary organization formed in the 1920s. The RSS ideology is Hindu nationalism associated with right-wing extremism and fascism with intolerance of minorities. The BJP supports a national anti-conversion law where it is illegal for an Indian to convert to any religion except Hinduism. Eight out of twenty-nine states have implemented anti-conversion laws.

Our EAM Country Working Team (CWT) reported that persecution of Christians is ongoing in Odisha State. Hindu leaders imprisoned some co-workers for three days for sharing the Gospel among the tribes. Yet, they continued to preach in

prison, and two inmates accepted the Lord. Now that they are out of prison, they continue to preach the Gospel. Chhattisgarh State is currently the most dangerous place for Christians to practice their faith in Jesus. Prayers are requested for six recently converted families from Kanker and Bastar districts. Hindu extremists attacked them and drove them out of their villages, threatening to kill the new believers if they returned to their homes. Last November, Hindu villagers attacked a Catholic church during a Sunday service injuring the priest and four congregants. The church reported the attack to the local police, who did nothing.

Our EAM team member reported that the number of Christians is growing and the Church baptizes hundreds of new believers every week. Even with restrictions during the pandemic, they dedicated more churches and conducted discipleship training. The churches are working hard among the unreached. The team member concluded, "there are still challenges; please pray for us."

The Nepalese constitution prohibits converting a person from one religion to



*Hindu extremists attacking a Catholic church in Chhattisgarh Sta*

another. BBC World News reported last January that, despite this, the Christian population has possibly increased by 68 percent in Nepal in less than a decade. Our Nepal CWT said, "As we become active in the ministry, the enemy is engaged in disturbing our work but new believers have been persecuted. Many of our single believers have experienced physical torture by their families, who disown them; making it hard to continue their studies."

In Bhutan, Christians are forbidden, by federal law, to have a church building and proselytizing is prohibited. Those who openly follow Christ can be stripped of their citizenship. Nevertheless, the church thrives. Recent evangelism efforts have yielded positive responses.

Let us remember our co-workers in the Himalayan region. May they remain resilient as they face complex challenges in practicing and propagating their faith. Pray also for new converts to stand firm in their newfound faith.

**Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." Luke 10:2 (NKJV)**

# Prayer Calendar March 2023

**1 (WED) HIMALAYAS** Pray for our Himalayan country teams to operate in wisdom and safety as they do the work of the ministry.

**2 (THU) HIMALAYAS** Pray for a fruitful year in the Himalayan region as we implement Church Empowerment Programs planned for 2023.

**3 (FRI) BHUTAN** There have been positive responses to the evangelism efforts of our team. Pray that these people will decide to receive Christ as Lord.

**4/5 (SAT/SUN) BHUTAN** Pray for the elders and deacons appointed to care for two new cell churches in Central Bhutan.

**6 (MON) CAMBODIA** Pray that Prime Minister Hun Sen will come to know the Savior as he acknowledges the Christian community's positive impacts.

**7 (TUE) CAMBODIA** Pray that our Functional English Center (FEC) will be allowed to operate at its present location this year.

**8 (WED) CAMBODIA** Pray that our FEC teachers will develop good relationship with their community to win more families to Christ.

**9 (THU) MYANMAR** Myanmar is the world's second largest opium producer. It has nearly doubled its production since the military coup. Pray that the authorities will realize the harm done by this plant.

**10 (FRI) MYANMAR** Martial Law has been imposed on 37 townships. Pray that the citizens will be protected from false accusations and abuse of power.

**11/12 (SAT/SUN) MYANMAR** Let us join the Global Day of Prayer for Burma on this day (12 March); that peace will finally come upon this nation.

**13 (MON) KAREN BORDER COMMUNITIES** Pray for the Internally Displaced People (IDP) to return to their lands safely.

**14 (TUE) KAREN BORDER COMMUNITIES** Pray for the young generation of refugees along the border to encounter Christ.

**15 (WED) LAOS** Pray against persecution, especially in rural areas. The Provincial Home Affairs department in Attapeu Province recently ordered the church to stop gathering and remove the cross and signages of churches.

**16 (THU) LAOS** Pray for all the students (unbelievers) in our China and Beyond (CAB) Language Center. May they encounter Christ during their studies.

**17 (FRI) LAOS** A new believer who received the Lord in 2021 led 58 people from the Ka Tonglueng tribe last year. Pray for his safety as he continues to share the love of Christ to the lost.

**18/19 (SAT/SUN) PAKISTAN** Pray for Muslim background believers who have received copies of the Holy Bible from our team. May they be established in the Word.

**20 (MON) PAKISTAN** Pakistani ministers voted to strengthen the country's controversial blasphemy laws, raising concerns among religious minorities, including Christians. Pray that this law will not be indiscriminately used against Christians.

**21 (TUE) BANGLADESH** Pray for protection for our brethren in the Chittagong Hill Tracts affected by the ongoing conflict. Many villagers have

crossed to India and Myanmar because of fear.

**22 (WED) BANGLADESH** According to human rights organizations, the Armed Police Battalion (APBn), an elite Bangladeshi police unit, is engaging in "rampant" extortion, harassment, and wrongful arrests of Rohingya refugees. Pray that this police unit will realize the harm they are causing and refrain from such acts.

**23 (THU) NEPAL** Pray for boldness for ostracized Hindu converts who desire to win their families to Christ.

**24 (FRI) NEPAL** Pray as our country team continues to spread the Gospel despite the risk of violating the anti-conversion law.

**25/26 (SAT/SUN) NEPAL** Pray as Himalayan church leaders come together for the Himalayan Prayer Conference, starting tomorrow until 30 March.

**27 (MON) CHINA** Pray for guidance upon Chinese believers who look beyond their challenges and restrictions to pursue their call for foreign missions.

**28 (TUE) CHINA** Pray God's blessings upon our Chinese brethren who faithfully give financial assistance to our poor tribal brethren in Laos.

**29 (WED) NORTH KOREA** Pray that the underground church will remain hopeful and strong as they wait for the country to open.

**30 (THU) VIETNAM** Pray for unity among church leaders in north Vietnam as they plan to move the church forward in training and discipleship.