

AN URGENT CALL FOR GLOBAL PRAYER FOR THE INDIAN CHURCH

December 15, 2008

Dear friends,

Please pray for the Orissa Situation: On November 14th 2008, 100,000 Hindu fundamentalists gathered outside Eastern India's Orissa State parliament to protest against the killing of revered Swami Laxamananda Saraswati in his ashram on August 23, 2008. Though Maoist guerrillas have since claimed responsibility for this gruesome murder where four Hindu religious associates were also slain, the wrath of the extreme Hindu community - the *VHP and RSS*, were focussed on the Christians, whom they have now branded as "Christian Maoists." The violence between Christians and extreme Hindu fanatics since August have left 50,000 Homeless, 4300 houses burnt, 57 killed and 18,000 injured.

At the November 14th rally, an ultimatum was served by fanatic Hindu sects that if the murders of the Swami were not apprehended by December 15th, then they would take the law in their hands and order a *bandh* (closure) of all institutions in the state on December 25th 2008. Some may recall that last year also there was tension which prevailed in Kandhamad District of Orissa where this year's murder took place.

Christians are therefore concerned. Thousands have fled Orissa to safer regions of the country. Others fear that on December 25th, uncontrollable violence could be unleashed on Christians all over the country. In recent weeks, dozens of churches in places outside Orissa have been torched and dozens of others injured in communal violence against Christians.

Several forces are simultaneously at work to quench a further riotous situation. International governments are seeking protection for the Christians of the state. A delegation of EU diplomats were in the state last week meeting Government and Christian leaders. Hundreds of law suits have been filed against the perpetrators of the post August violence against Christians. Prayer walks have commenced. The Church is seeking and continues to seek a peaceful end to this aggressive war against her faithful.

There is a possibility that further violation of constitutional rights of the Christians in Orissa this month, could encourage outright attacks against the Church in several parts of India. The response from the government has been weak and in the light of outright blame-games being played, not much progress in reaching an amicable solution has been reached.

As the Transform World Movement firmly believes in *Nation Building*, we recognize the efforts of Indian Christians towards the building up of their nation over the centuries. Adapted from Stephen McDowell, *Liberating Nations* essential principles towards the progress of a society and nation also include the following:

- A Christian nation/a transformed nation is a nation built upon the principles of God's word and infused with the presence of God.
- For a nation to be great it needs the spirit of God and the law of God
- The Bible teaches and history confirms that, to the degree to which nations have applied the principles of the Bible in all spheres of society is the degree to which they have prospered, been free and acted justly.

I urge Christians globally to fast and pray that Orissa is rendered safe and peaceful from henceforth. Pray that efforts towards reconciliation and harmony would succeed. Pray that the Prince of Peace would truly bring His peace to the wounded, to the injured, to the fearful and also to the rulers of the land. God bless India. God bless Orissa.

Yours for a *New India*,

Luis Bush