

Nepal News Alert- October 2017

Much prayer is needed concerning the future of Christian work and the Mission Schools in Nepal.

For a long while, Christianity has been favoured with a window of 'relative' freedom in Nepal. 'It was only after the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1990, and the relaxation of restrictions on conversion, that the Nepali church began to grow rapidly.' The 2007 designation of the country as a secular state, was a victory, but nonetheless, intensified controversies surrounding Christianity. (The 7 Feet Ministries Mission Schools, in which we have been intricately involved, have been held during this 'window-period' of relative freedom, through 2010-2016), however, we have always been aware that it may not last. It was encouraging when the constitution of 2015 re-affirmed secularism, but also still prohibited proselytism and 'disturbing the religion of other people'.

Now, in 2017, Nepal's parliament has passed a bill which prohibits 'hurting the religious sentiment of any caste, ethnic community or class by writing, through voice/talk or by a shape or symbol or in any other such manner'.

Certainly, things will become tougher, and perhaps they will resemble the days back in the fifties when the first Christians in Nepal suffered greatly. (Many Christians were automatically imprisoned for their faith during that time- (Over the years, I have had the privilege of meeting and speaking with some of these veterans of the faith, in Nepal.)

Nepal Criminalizes Christian Conversion and Evangelism

President approves new sanctions targeting non-Hindus and foreign missionaries.

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Last week, Nepal enacted a law to curb evangelism by criminalizing religious conversion, joining neighboring countries like India and Pakistan, where the region's small-but-growing Christian minority faces government threats to their faith.

The "Nepali government [has] taken a regressive step as this law severely restricts our freedom of expression and our freedom of religion or belief," said Tanka Subedi, chair of the national Religious Liberty Forum, to Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW). The pastor is 1 of an estimated 375,000 Christians living in the former Hindu kingdom.

The criminal code bill, which the parliament approved in August and President Bidhya Devi Bhandari signed last Monday, establishes further constitutional protections for Hinduism (which 80% of the population practices) by restricting religious conversion and "hurting of religious sentiment," or blasphemy.

According to a [Nepali Christian site](#), a section of the new law reads:

No one should involve or encourage in conversion of religion.

No one should convert a person from one religion to another religion or profess their own religion and belief with similar intention by using or not using any means of attraction and by disturbing religion or belief of any ethnic groups or community that being practiced since ancient times.

If found guilty; there will be punishment of five years of imprisonment and penalty of fifty thousand rupees [approximately \$770 USD]. If foreigners are found guilty; they will have to be deported within seven days after completing the imprisonment in third clause.

Krishna has already expressed his concern that the next Mission School may not be able to be held in the Bible School building as it is situated in a highly populated Brahmin locality, and it could be considered as 'a criminal disturbance'. (We already know that there were complaints from the locals about the singing in the morning and evening prayer and worship times.)

We will see. I'll keep you up-dated.

But I know that the gospel will continue to be spread in Nepal, because the true believers **know** that it is the only source of life and hope, and for this reason, are willing to sacrifice their lives to share it. No doubt, this situation will also cause division within the visible church in Nepal, between the true and the hypocritical Christians- between those who are prepared to stand on the Word, obey Christ, and sacrifice their lives, and those who choose to compromise their faith, fearing man rather than God, and become men-pleasers.

(Krishna, lost all to serve Christ. I know that he won't stop serving the Lord until either the Lord comes, or he is called home.)

Yes, prayer and prayer.