



Dear friends in Jesus Christ

Greetings to you in Jesus name !

I am very happy to bring out this first news letter for God's glory alone. This news letter is dedicated to the persecuted Christians in the state of Orissa. Orissa Flame – the name itself carries the right message of the news letter. Churches in Orissa have been under fire since daces. Orissa has become the only state on India where permission has to be granted from the governor to change one's religious faith.

Fire represents *God's presence*. Bible says that God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28 – 29). He is the holy fire which burns up all our unrighteousness.

Fire represents the *God's Spirit*. On the Day of Pentecost (Acts.2) we read Holy Sprit descended on the disciples of Jesus Christ and a fire rested on each of them and they were empowered to witness the Gospel unto the world. That fire began from Jerusalem and continued till Europe and still on whole over the world today.

Fire is a picture of *God's Word* (Jeremiah 23: 29 – 32). Jeremiah said to the people of Judea that God's word is like fire and hammer. Now, put the two together--the fire and the hammer--and you will see how God makes His servants who are to be instruments for His use. He puts us into the fire of the Word; He melts, He softens, He subdues. Then He takes us out of the fire, and hammers us together into a single, compact whole, with strokes that only He can give, till He has made us fit instruments for His use; and He goes forward to His sacred work of conquering the multitudes, having in His hands the polished instrument that He has forged with the fire and the hammer of His Word.

Fire is type of the sufferings and persecutions of *God's people* - in History. Moses was called out by God to deliver Israel out of Egypt through a vision of God in the burning bush. Scholars have interpreted this picture in several ways. One of the interpretations is that the burning bush a picture of Israel nation in the persecution. Though Israel has been under persecution and sufferings through out the history she has not been consumed just as was the bush in the fire.

Similarly the *church* has been under the attack of since its inception. This war will continue till the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Till then the gates of the hell will against the church yet never prevail against it. No fire can destroy the faith of the church. (Matthew 18: 16).

Churches in the state of *Orissa* have much in experiences of this kind of fire. The fire of persecution is still on against Christianity. For example years back Australian missionary and his two sons were burnt alive in a jeep while showing a Jesus movie in a village. Many pastor, evangelists and churches are burnt to death. Nurses were raped.

This is the on going story of the *Orissa Flame*. Please continue to receive our news letter and learnt about God's own Orissa church in fire.

In Him



Pastor .G. Prasad Rao



BLAMES ON BLAMELESS IN CHRIST

Once again Evangelicals and Catholics in the Kandhamal District of Orissa State have come under attack. The motivation is unclear, but a group of burgeoning communist insurgents is suspected of attacking and killing Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leader, Swami Laksmanananda Saraswati and four of his associates on Saturday, August 23, 2008.

Various Hindu nationalist groups are trying to blame local Christians for these outrageous acts. They claim this must have been in retaliation for the "Black Christmas" persecution that began December 24, 2007. At that time 90 churches were destroyed and 700 homes burned - acts instigated by the now deceased VHP leader, Swami Laksmanananda Saraswati.

But a Christian ministry in India contacted Christian Aid, advising that Christians have gone on record with a public announcement which denounces these acts of hate and destruction. This ministry leader has also solicited action from all concerned individuals to make appeals to the Prime Minister of India and other notable officials to stop the violence. He is making an appeal to the Christian community in India and abroad for prayer for the protection of believers in Kandhamal and other parts of Orissa.

In the meantime, riots continue to erupt all over Orissa by Hindu extremists believing the lie. Christians are once again being forced to flee into the jungles as their homes are being looted, demolished and burned. Please pray for the safety of our brethren during this crisis.

Pray that the truth will prevail - politically and spiritually. Pray with us against the powers of wickedness and rulers of darkness wreaking havoc and causing confusion among these people. It is our prayer that eyes of those who have been resistant will finally be opened to the gospel message. Pray for the safety of indigenous Christian ministries in the area.

We received a report from a ministry in Orissa. The following is quoted in full from their News bulletin:

AFTERMATH OF SWAMI'S KILLING : THE CHRISTIAN VICTIMS LIST

- 1) NUN BURNT ALIVE: A nun was burnt to death on 25th, Monday, after an orphanage was torched in at Phutpali in Bargarh district in Orissa during a bandh called by Hindu nationalist parties. Twenty children, who were at the orphanage, managed to escape but a priest suffered serious burn injuries in the attack.
- 2) RASANANDA PRADHAN TORCHED ALIVE: Another person, Rasananda Pradhan, was burnt to death when his house was set ablaze at Rupa village in Kandhamal district.
- 3) INFLAMMATORY SPEECHES TARGET CHRISTIANS: During the bandh inflammatory speeches spreading hatred against the Christian workers and the community were given by the VHP leaders. To gain the mass support, the activists have also carried the body of Swamiji throughout the town.
- 4) CHURCHES BURNT ALL ACROSS ORISSA STATE: Churches were attacked in Khurda, Bargarh, Sundergarh, Sambalpur, Koraput, Boudh, Mayurbhanj, Jagatsinghpur and Kandhamal districts as also in the state capital, police sources said, adding 40 houses were set ablaze in Phulbani town.
- 5) BUSES AND VEHICLES TORCHED: Mr. Mishra Digal was beaten up, while the motorcycles of Mr. R. K. Digal and Jitendra were burnt. Several buses at Gee Udaigiri in Baliguda were burnt.
- 6) PULBANI CHURCH RANSACKED: The Church at Phulbani, and several other churches at Phiringia were attacked and ransacked. Pastor D. Tatson's house was vandalized and his property burnt.
- 7) KAKRIGUMA CHURCHES VANDALISED: Churches in Kakriguma have been targeted by the mob that reportedly damaged the Assembly Of God Church and the Philadelphia Church.



- 8) **WORLD VISION STAFF FLED FOR SAFETY:** World Vision India office ransacked and the Staff has also fled to jungle for protection.
- 9) **CHRISTIANS TAKE SHELTER IN FOREST FOR PROTECTION:** A police camp at Barakhama was also attacked by the Hindu fundamentalists. With several houses being burnt down and people being made homeless, many Christians, particularly from Nua Sahi, Munda Sahi and Suna Tonga have fled into forests for their lives.
- 10) **NUN RAPED:** A young Catholic Nun of the Cuttack Bhubaneswar diocese working Jan Vikas Kendra, the Social Service Centre at Nuagaon in Kandhamal was reportedly gang raped on 24th August 2008 by groups of Hindutva extremists before the building itself was destroyed.
- 11) **SENIOR PRIEST AND NUN INJURED:** Fr Thomas, director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Kanjimendi, less than a kilometer away from the Social Service Centre, and another Nun were injured when the centre was attacked. They were taken to the police station in a disheveled state as the armed mob bayed for their blood. The Pastoral centre was then set afire.
- 12) **BALLIGUDA CHURCH BUILDINGS DESTROYED AGAIN:** On 24th August 2008 evening lynch mobs at the block headquarters of Balliguda, in the very heart of Kandhamal district, which had seen much violence between 24th and 26th December 2007, attacked and destroyed a Presbytery, convent and hostel damaging the properties.
- 13) **CHRISTIAN BOYS HEADS TONSURED:** The mobs in Balliguda caught hold of two boys of the Catholic hostel and tonsured their heads.
- 14) **PHULBANI CHURCH DAMAGED:** On 25th August 2008 morning followers of the late Lakshmanananda Saraswati damaged the Catholic Church in Phulbani, the district headquarter town.
- 15) **MOTHER TERESA BROTHERS ASHRAM ATTACKED:** Mobs attacked the Mother Teresa Brothers' residence and hospital in Srasanada, destroyed once before and rebuilt two months ago, and beat up the patients.
- 16) **BHUBANESWAR BISHOP'S HOUSE ATTACKED:** On the morning of 25th August 2008, violent mobs made several attempts to enter the compounds of Catholic Church and Archbishop's house in the heart of the Capital of the State of Orissa. They could not enter because of the police presence. They threw stones at the guesthouse of Archbishop's House, damaging windows.
- 17) **DUBURI PARISH:** Another group of fundamentalists entered presbytery in Duburi parish, managed by the SVDs and destroyed and damaged property. Two priests of the parish are missing.
- 18) Mr. Jamaj Pariccha, Director of Gramya Pragati, is attacked and his property damaged, vehicle looted and burnt.
- 19) A Baptist Church in Akamra Jila in Bhubaneswar is also damaged.
- 20) Christian institutions like St. Arnold's School (Kalinga Bihar) and NISWASS report some damage.
- 21) **BOUDH DISTRICT [Adjoining Kandhamal]:** Fundamentalists enter the Catholic parish church and destroy property. People are fleeing to safer places. But nothing seems safe.
- 22) **MUNIGUDA:** Muniguda Catholic Fathers and Nuns' residence have been damaged.
- 23) **SAMBALPUR:** HM Sister's residence (Ainthapalli) has suffered damage.
- 24) **PADANPUR:** One priest is attacked and admitted to a hospital. Hostel boys and the in charge have moved away from the place.



- 25) MADHUPUR: Madhupur Catholic Church currently under attack.
- 26) SMALL CHURCHES: Attempted violence on small churches in various districts, including Padampur, Sambalpur near GM College, Talsera, Dangsoroda, Narayanipatara, Muniguda, Tummiibandh, Tangrapada, Phulbani, Balliguda, Kalingia, Chakapad, Srasanranda.
- 27) VILLAGE CHRISTIAN HOUSES ATTACKED: Houses attacked on forest hamlets of Balliguda, Kanjamandi Nuaguam (K.Nuaguam), Tiangia (G.Udayagiri), Padangiri, Tikabali.
- 28) KALAHANDI DISTRICT: Houses burnt even though the district is more than 300 kilometers from the place where Swami Lakshmanananda was killed.
- 29) PASTORS' HOUSE BURNT: Pastor Sikandar Singh of the Pentecostal Mission beaten up and his house burnt in Bhawanipatna.
- 30) KHARIHAR: 3 Christian shops were looted and burnt. Pastor Alok Das and Pastor I M Senapati beaten up.
- 31) AAMPANI: Pastor David Diamond Pahar, Pastor Pravin Ship, Pastor Pradhan and Pastor Barik beaten up and chased away with their families.
- 32) NAKTIKANI: Mob surrounds village to attack Christians.

The government has sent forces, it is reported. A delegation of Christian leaders under the leadership of Archbishop Vincent Concessao, the President of National United Christian Forum of CBCI, NCCI and EFI, met the Home Minister Shri Shiv Raj Patil and submitted a memorandum. The Home Minister assured the delegation all necessary steps have been taken to maintain peace and harmony and protect the innocent. He also expressed his helplessness by stating that police protection cannot be given in all villages.

They request prayers at this time so that peace and harmony may prevail.

A VIEW OF A NEW CHURCH PLANTING MISSION IN ORISSA :

- 8 villages are adopted for the mission
- Tribal in life style
- No bus goes there.
- No school
- No electricity

BUT Gospel reached there and now

- Tribal are praising Jesus
- There is leader in each village to train the new born Christian community.
- There is light of the gospel shining

For more information please contact :-

Hope of Bridge : Tribal Transformation Ministries

Pastor. Mr. Somesh Rao Ganayak,

Lingaraj Nagar, Jeypore, Koraput District, Orissa, India.

Ph. 06854-251507, 09437784418, 09986491557, grao_imf@yahoo.com ; hobarissa33@yahoo.com

www.hobindia.weebly.com