

release

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Militant organisations such as the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*) are promoting *Hindutva* (Hindu nationalism) – and increasingly attacking churches and individual Christians. Photo: Reuters/Amit Dave.

March of the militants

Christians in India are facing increasing pressure from militant Hindus who are using mob violence and anti-conversion laws to attack the church. A Release Development Manager reports on a recent visit to encourage Christians on the frontline of faith.

It began with a kindly visit to the home of a sick woman. It ended with a 30-strong mob insulting, punching, kicking ... and warning him not to bring the name of Jesus into their community.

Pastor Krupanandam was returning home from visiting a new believer's home when a large group of men attacked him, beat him, and stamped on him. His spinal cord was damaged, and he was left

with fractured ribs and severe bruising. His injuries were so bad that he had to be transferred from a local community hospital to a larger hospital in the city of Hyderabad.

'They warned me about preaching about Jesus,' he said. 'They said they would "finish me off" because I preach to people about Jesus.'

Pastor Krupanandam's story is not

unusual: it is part of a sinister and growing trend being seen in many parts of India.

The stability of what has often been called 'the world's largest democracy' is under threat from a powerful and organised Hindu nationalism ... with grave consequences for the Christian church.

Time and again Release's partners in India tell of pastors being attacked, beaten – and then dragged to the local police

station to be accused of 'forcibly converting'. And time and again the attacks are now described as organised, rather than sporadic or spontaneous.

Militant organisations such as the RSS (*Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*) are promoting *Hindutva* (Hindu nationalism) – and wherever the church is reaching out with the gospel and growing it is a prime target for attack.

'India in particular is facing growing hostility to both the gospel, and gospel message-carriers,' says the author Ram Gidoomal, a former Hindu, and founder of the South Asia Forum of the UK's Evangelical Alliance. 'India's Constitution guarantees freedom to preach, practise, and propagate one's faith. Despite this there are incidents of persecution in different parts of the country.'

'As a result, the cost of discipleship in India can be very high,' says Ram. 'These persecuted Christians in India are true heroes of the faith. They follow the Lord day by day, fully aware that they could be opposed for their faith.'

'The RSS has even produced a 20-point guideline on how to attack Christians'

Militant organisations 'have a clear agenda, and it is to stop the church,' said Dr Joseph D'souza, President of Release's partner the All India Christian Council (AICC).

His colleague, Dr Sam Paul, agrees. 'We are a very diverse nation, but India's strength has been its democracy. This is now being threatened by fundamentalism. There is a clear hate campaign. The RSS has even produced a 20-point guideline on how to attack Christians,' he said. 'They are doing it to gain political supremacy.'



Dr Sam Paul,
All India Christian
Council.

In the past few years the AICC has received, on average, a report every other day of a Christian or a church coming under attack. Many, it is claimed, are with the connivance of the local police.

'Karnataka is the new battle-ground, because of the [fundamentalists'] desire to get a stronghold in the south,' said Dr D'souza. 'We sense that we are now entering



Dr Joseph D'souza,
All India Christian
Council.

another phase. The next couple of years are going to be very tough.'

The AICC believes that these nationalist, fundamentalist groups have infiltrated both the police and judiciary – and are even in positions to lobby the UK and US governments to their advantage.

Rev Anand Kumar, AICC Co-ordinator for Karnataka, follows up many of the reports of persecution. He described the common strategy of observation by local 'spies', threats, attack – and then deliberate involvement of the media and police in order to blame the Christians for the disturbance! And, of course, there is always the accusation that Christians are, in various ways, enticing people to convert to Christianity.

In one impoverished village near Bangalore we visited Pastor 'Timothy' (not his real name), who lives in a dark, gloomy, single-roomed house with his wife, four children and his mother. Part of the outside wall is missing on one side, and mattresses are stacked upright in a corner during the daytime.

Timothy is a former RSS leader who himself once attacked Christians, both verbally and physically. Then he heard the gospel from a pastor who works in the region. 'I repented and received Jesus Christ as my personal saviour. Then I began to do ministry around the local villages,' he said.

'Now these things are happening to me. Some people have come to me and beaten me and threatened me. They see me as the

enemy. But we are strengthened by the promise of 2 Timothy 3:12 ['Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted'], and I praise God.'

However, it was while speaking with Timothy that our AICC guides – calmly, but clearly – advised us that it was time to get back into our van and to leave, cutting short our plans to do some filming.

Local RSS 'spies' had been watching us, and an RSS leader was approaching.

In the face of growing opposition, the AICC is seeking to be proactive, by equipping pastors to face persecution (see page 5) and by attempting to have the country's Supreme Court overturn anti-conversion laws, which have now been passed in seven of India's states, and implemented in five of these (see map below). •

CHILDREN'S WORKER ATTACKED

Mani is a former Hindu who has a passion to reach children with the gospel. In August, while running an outdoor programme for youngsters, he was approached by two men who began attacking him with wooden sticks. They threatened him, and threatened to burn his vehicle and the local church.

But, looking back on the attack, he added: 'We felt the presence of the Lord that day. It was by God's grace that I was hit on the arms. If it had been on the head I would probably be dead. And by God's grace they didn't burn the building down.'



ANTI-CONVERSION LAWS IN INDIA

Map showing states which have passed anti-conversion laws, with date of introduction

¹ Introduced but not implemented

² Introduced but pending ratification

Source: Christian Solidarity Worldwide



GRACE ABOUND

While Indian Christians report increasing levels of violence and suffering, they also testify to God's grace and strength to help them in their time of need.



Pastor Shiju Kuriakose is still recovering after militants beat him with steel rods.

BEATEN WITH STEEL RODS

For three months the pastor has been recovering on his bed. His kneecap may be fractured – but his heart is far from broken.

Pastor Shiju Kuriakose runs a church in what is known as Electronic City in Bangalore, capital of the southern state of Karnataka. He suffered an horrific attack this summer, but also saw an amazing deliverance by God.

He had been out in his vehicle, sharing the gospel when, from nowhere, two people pounced on him. 'I don't know how they knew we were there,' he said. 'They took my Bibles and books from the jeep and then, without saying anything, began beating me.'

'I asked them, "Who are you?" and they just said, "We will demolish you!"'

Pastor Shiju is tall and well-built, but one of the men was noticeably heavier than him. For 20 minutes they beat him with steel rods. 'I thought, my life will end here,' he said.

He began crying out to the Lord. On hearing his prayer the attackers began taunting him. 'Let your Jesus come down!' they mocked ... at which point there was a sudden, violent and torrential downpour! It began raining so heavily that the two attackers ran away! 'I think I experienced God's grace at that moment,' Shiju said.

As he lay on the roadside, unable to stand, he lapsed into unconsciousness. Eventually an ambulance was called. The attack left him in plaster with a fractured knee, and with heavy bruising all over his body.

Shiju has worked in the area for seven years. The congregation he has established initially met in rented accommodation. They have now built a wonderful permanent building, a beacon for gospel ministry. 'This is a very dangerous area,' he said. 'But God's work must go on. I am not afraid.'

Although this particular attack was very brutal, it conforms to the trend of opposition being seen in a number of states at this time. Sustained attacks in the state of Orissa two years ago made international news. Dr Sam Paul, National Secretary of the All India Christian Council, says that about 400 villages were 'ethnically cleansed' at that time by Hindu fundamentalists. Around 8,000 homes were destroyed, more than 100 people were murdered and many more are still missing. 'Two years later we are still awaiting justice,' he said. •

PASTOR HEMA

Pastor Hema Naik runs an orphanage for 55 children in Chitradurga, about 100 miles north-west of Bangalore.

In August 2010 he was leading Sunday morning worship when two members of the BJP (the nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, the political wing of the RSS) came in. They began beating him.

'I asked them why. They told me, "you are forcing conversion on these children and their families". They said, "you are kidnapping children, training them, and selling them to the West".'

The two men also threatened the children. 'They told them, "you have to go back to Hinduism." But the children said, "No, we believe in Jesus"', said the pastor.

Eventually Pastor Hema was taken to the local police station, where more fundamentalists appeared. He was beaten again in a cloakroom. The BJP members started a demonstration outside the police station, demanding that the pastor be



Pastor Hema

arrested, while a local Hindu priest made accusations against him.

Fortunately, a number of local Christian pastors had heard what was happening and contacted the All India Christian Council. AICC staff called a senior police officer and eventually Pastor Hema was released. 'When I got back the children got very emotional and began hugging me. The children were very scared, but now they are strong in the faith,' he said. Two weeks later, more than 2,000 Christians mounted a peaceful public act of protest at the way he had been treated.

God is giving grace and strength to those going through these difficult times. Sunitha is the wife of Pastor Stephen, himself a former Hindu who used to show contempt for Christianity. This summer he was leading worship in Girmapuram, north of Hyderabad in Andhra Pradesh, when about 50 Hindu fundamentalists came in to the service and attacked him. They hit him and were abusive to his wife.

'[Jail] was a very good experience'

Pastor Ravi Pataguntji

Yet she continues to be encouraged in her faith. 'I pray for the salvation of the people who are persecuting our church,' she said. 'And I pray that other pastors won't suffer like this.'

Pastors Ravi Pataguntji and S.R. Sathisha were leading a Sunday afternoon prayer meeting in Mysore (about 100 miles south-west of Bangalore) this summer when three men came in to the meeting and asked them what they were doing. 'They said, "there are many gods in India. Why don't you worship them?";' said Ravi.

Mob violence

The visitors made a mobile phone call and, a short while later, a larger mob turned up. The two men were beaten – and then the local media arrived. The Rev Anand Kumar, AICC's Co-ordinator for the state of Karnataka, said: 'This is one of their tactics: to call in the press and to accuse the Christians.'

The pastors were taken to the local police station, and – amid considerable confusion – ended up spending three days in jail! 'It was a very good experience!' said Ravi, for during their time in prison the two men had the opportunity to share the gospel with about 15 prisoners – several of whom made professions of faith. •



One of the conferences held by AICC

STRENGTHENING PASTORS

Persecutors know that the best way to cripple the church is to attack its leaders. Pastors are on the front-line, and are usually the first to suffer threats and beatings.

Therefore, one of the best ways to support and strengthen the church is to equip pastors.

Release's partner, the All India Christian Council, runs one-day conferences for pastors to prepare them for persecution.

The programme includes teaching on the biblical understanding of persecution; how to present the gospel in a non-threatening way; and media awareness.

The response is overwhelming. Each conference draws, on average, 300 pastors – and the AICC has had as many as 1,000 leaders at an event.

'There is a huge demand,' said Moses Vattapalli, AICC's Administrator in Hyderabad. 'We choose strategically where to have them. We identify places where we know there is persecution in the local area.'

'For the pastors it provides valuable fellowship and encouragement as well as teaching.'

This year the AICC has planned eight conferences. It would love to run many more. The only limiting factor is the funding. The pastors who attend have to pay their travel fees, but refreshments, materials and staff time are provided without charge. The AICC has considered asking pastors to contribute more, but many are not in a position to do so.

Release sponsors these conferences, which cost, on average, about £1,000 each. We would love to be able to sponsor more of these, knowing what a vital, strategic role they play in equipping the Indian church, in the face of persecution.

If you would like to contribute specifically to the running of these conferences you can do so by using the coupon on the back of this magazine. Please mark it: Indian Pastors' Conferences. •

PLEASE PRAY

- Thank God for the courage and perseverance of Christian leaders in India who are suffering for the gospel. Ask God to continue to give them His grace to remain faithful when they face opposition. Pray that the Lord will continue to grow His church in that land.
- Pray for the families of those who have been beaten, and for their congregations, that they will continue to be encouraged by the goodness and grace of God.
- Pray for our partner, the All India Christian Council. Ask God to give the staff wisdom as they follow up reports of persecution, and to guide them as they seek to respond, both locally and nationally. Pray for the Pastors' Conferences AICC runs – that these will continue to equip pastors in the face of persecution.

PLEASE GIVE

Release supports persecuted Christians in India by:

- Organising conferences to encourage and support persecuted pastors and church leaders
- Providing Bibles in different Indian languages
- Helping to support persecuted Christians from the Dalit community with a micro-enterprise project

To support Christians who face persecution because of their active faith in Christ, please use the back-page coupon of this magazine.



INDIA

Population: **1.1 billion**
Government: **Federal republic**
Religion: **Hindu 73.9 per cent; Muslim 12.2 per cent; Christian 6.2 per cent; Sikh 2.2 per cent**



Release partners distribute food aid to Christians suffering as a result of flooding. Photo: SLMP

Pakistan

Let justice flow

Thank you to everyone who has been collecting signatures to help 'Let justice flow' for persecuted Christians in Pakistan. Well over 30,000 have signed our petition – a marvellous effort. If you haven't, it's not too late to add your support.

Thank you for the fantastic response to Release's Day of Prayer for Pakistan's Christians on October 3. Churches all around the UK and Ireland raised their voices in prayer on behalf of those who are suffering for their faith – and also for the whole nation of Pakistan which is still reeling from the effects of the floods.

'We're thankful that so many Christians in the UK and Ireland took part in the Day of Prayer,' said Release's CEO Andy Dipper. 'Please keep on praying, there is still much to be done.'

Release is working through its partners to bring vital relief and supplies to Christian communities suffering in what the UN has called the worst humanitarian crisis in Pakistan's history.

Please continue to pray for the victims of the flooding, especially that aid will reach the most vulnerable. Pray too for justice and for a fairer society. Our hope is that from this tragedy will emerge a new beginning



Release CEO Andy Dipper delivered 20,000 names to the Pakistan High Commission in London in September. The full petition will be presented at the end of the year.

for Pakistan, that the nation will seize the opportunity to create a better future for its children, with means fairer laws.

PERSECUTION

Christians continue to face organised attacks by militants, as at Gojra and Korian in Punjab Province in 2009, when 100 homes were destroyed and eight Christians killed. In July masked gunmen believed to be connected to an Islamic extremist group murdered five Christians as they came out of their church building in Sukkur in Sindh Province.

But Pakistan's Christian minority face persecution in a number of other areas too: being detained for lengthy periods pending trial, particularly in relation to the abuse of the blasphemy laws; the rape and abuse of Christian girls working as housemaids, and the kidnap and forced conversion of Christian women. •

SIGN THE PETITION

At the time of writing more than 30,000 people had signed Release's petition calling on the Pakistani Government to restore justice to the vulnerable Christian minority and to protect its human rights and religious freedom. Thank you so much for your support. Please continue to collect signatures – **the more names, the greater the impact.**

To help you we've included with this edition of *Release* a further petition form. Please photocopy this as many times as you need, or request more forms from our office (telephone 01689 823491). You may also download it from our website www.releaseinternational.org/current.

Please add your name to the petition if you haven't already done so and encourage family, friends and church members to do so as well.

In September we handed in 20,000 names to the Pakistani High Commission in London as we believe the situation for Christians in Pakistan is one that needs urgent attention by the authorities. The final version with all names will be presented at the year end. Please return petition forms to the Release office by **December 10.**

Release patron Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali believes the petition can make a real impact on the Pakistan authorities. He said: 'I would strongly encourage Christians to sign the petition and to raise the issue of Christian persecution in Pakistan with their local MP. Be assured, it really can influence the Pakistan Government.'

Please add your name to the petition if you haven't already done so and encourage family, friends and church members to do so as well.

NEW PRAYER CARDS

As part of Release's *Let Justice Flow* campaign to bring about justice for Pakistan's persecuted Christians, we are launching a new prayer initiative for Christian prisoners in Pakistan.

We have produced a set of 12 cards, each outlining the situation of an individual Christian who has been unjustly imprisoned, containing their photograph, and including prayer suggestions on the reverse so you can pray for them and their family. The cards will also invite you to send a personal message of support and encouragement to the prisoners and/or their family on a postcard, either directly, if appropriate, or via a personal visit by one of our partners.

To take part, simply email info@releaseinternational.org with 'Prayer for Pakistan Prisoners' in the subject line and your postal address in the email, or call our Supporter Relations Team on **01689 823491**. Please tell us how many cards you would like. (If you do not want the full set now, you may request further cards at a later stage.)

There is **no charge** for the prayer cards but, if you are able to make a donation towards our costs, that would be appreciated.

Thank you so much for taking part in this initiative: our brothers and sisters in Pakistan really appreciate your support.





BRIGHTER FUTURES

Support our Christmas project and help vulnerable Christian children in Pakistan to get an education for life

Kiran was just nine when family hardship forced her to leave school, and to work as a domestic servant for a Muslim family.

When visited by Release's partner SLMP (Sharing Life Ministry Pakistan) she was depressed. 'My owners are very unkind to me,' she said. 'They always abuse me and put pressure on me.'

Life was no easier for her brother Irfan, aged just eight. He too had to work, making embroidery in a small shop to earn a few rupees a day. 'I do a lot of work, but the owner pays me very little,' he told our partner.

With support from Release, SLMP helped both children to get back to school.

Kiran was delighted to see her friends again. 'I'm very happy to rejoin school,' she said. 'I'm going to work hard.' Irfan too is going to school regularly, and is doing well.

Even at the best of times, Christian families in Pakistan are dogged by discrimination and abuse – as our *Let Justice Flow* campaign has highlighted throughout 2010 (see page six).

Often illiterate and barely educated, the poorest Christians are victimised both at work and in the legal system. With few rights, and little recourse to justice, they are easy targets – whether for Islamic militants, or to be exploited commercially.

When families lose their breadwinner – perhaps as a direct result of their Christian

faith – it is often the children who suffer most.

To help to support their families, many are forced to take up exploitative employment, even at the early age of eight or nine, or end up scavenging on the streets for anything that could be sold to generate an income.

PURPOSE

'We want to give these children a purpose in life,' says SLMP's Chief Co-ordinator Sohail Johnson. 'It's a long-term process, to get an education, to get a reasonable job, and to live confidently in society, rather than just to survive doing menial jobs.'



Something to smile about: your support will help provide the gift of education to needy Christian children in Pakistan.

Release's partner Professor Kaleem Dean agrees: 'In Pakistan the Christian community is persecuted, illiterate and poverty-ridden.'

Determined to make a difference, Professor Dean, who works full-time as a teacher, set up Community Action Programme (CAP) Ministries in 2000, situated in a poor urban area that is home to more than 100,000 Christians.

'Without education, Christians are easily targeted'

Professor Kaleem Dean, CAP Ministries

CAP started by providing a basic education for local children who couldn't



afford to pay even the minimal fees charged by state schools. He sees literacy as a key.

'A literate person can face the challenges of Islam much more easily,' he says. 'They can stand up for their rights. Without education, Christians are easily targeted. It is very easy to trap our Christian community.'

After ten years of faithful ministry, CAP is a beacon of hope for needy Christian families. It has not been easy, but today, through six schools, the organisation provides an education for more than 1,000 primary and secondary-level pupils, including the physically handicapped.

The schools are well-run and efficient, and clearly the children are delighted to be there.

In our January appeal this year we asked you to contribute towards the running costs of the girls high school due to the increased costs of remaining a government-registered school. We are very grateful for the response which has allowed us to support this school during 2010. We are especially grateful for those who committed to supporting the school by standing order, which will allow us to continue with partial support into 2011.

However, unfortunately during 2010 a major UK donor reduced their support for CAP and will stop funding them in 2011 – leaving them with an additional financial shortfall.

With your help, we'd like to make good that deficit, so CAP can continue to reach out with the love of Jesus to needy children. We also want to keep on supporting the inspiring work of SLMP.

Pupils are delighted to get a chance to go to school.

You'd be surprised what your money can achieve:

- £10 will buy shoes, uniform and books for one child
- £20 will pay school fees for a needy Christian child for one year
- £50 will enable CAP to provide basic schooling for one Christian boy or girl for one year
- £100 will pay the salary of a qualified teacher for six weeks

By UK standards, these costs are modest indeed. Yet even the smaller gifts can help to unlock brighter futures for Pakistan's Christian children.

GIVE NOW

There are four ways you can give to our Christmas Project:

- 1 Use the back-page coupon of this magazine
- 2 Call our Supporter Relations Team on 01689 823491
- 3 Give securely online at www.releaseinternational.org/donate (specifying Christmas Project)
- 4 You can support educational projects like this on a regular basis. To request a Standing Order form use the back-page coupon. Please specify Pakistan Education on the form.

Thank you

Escape to freedom

South Korean missionary Choi risked his life to help North Korean refugees escape through China, and then find true freedom - in Christ



South Korean missionary Choi was imprisoned by the Chinese authorities for nearly four years for helping North Korean refugees in China. He was routinely tortured.

release
PRISONERS

'God answered my prayers. Several times He appeared to me in a vision and He strengthened me.'

God first brought me into contact with North Korean defectors in 1997 while I was working underground alongside Chinese Christians. After listening to these defectors sharing their experiences I realised that North Koreans were enduring severe persecution and God put a burden in my heart for my Korean brothers and sisters.

In 1998 we built a number of small shelters for defecting North Koreans in three provinces of north-east China. We then began the process of building more shelters across China and established a route to help North Koreans escape through China to South Korea.

Initially it was encouraging to see many North Koreans embrace Christianity. Even though a number of them faltered in their new-found faith, God's passion for North Korean ministry continued to grip my heart.

Over the next two years, I focused on discipleship, spending time training individuals, rather than a group. In no time, I began to see amazing changes and real spiritual growth in the people we were working with.

During this time I became acutely aware that the Chinese secret police were searching for me. My name was on their wanted list and I knew that one day I would be imprisoned for sure. If this was God's will then I would be ready.

ARRESTED

It was 2003 when the Chinese authorities arrested me. During the interrogations a Chinese security officer asked me whether or not I was a Christian. At first, I hesitated. I wanted to protect my North Korean brothers and sisters who had also been arrested. I knew they would be executed if they were sent back to North Korea.'

Like Nehemiah I breathed a quick prayer. Almost immediately I felt a boldness and replied 'Yes, I am a Christian. I believe in only one God and as His servant, I serve Him alone. According to His Word, I have done a righteous work.'

It was no surprise when the officers put me into a small cell and continued to

interrogate me violently every day for three months. By God's grace, I was able to share the gospel with several prisoners during this time.

Following my trial I was sentenced to five years in prison and transferred to a detention house, where I shared a cell with ten others. Again, I was thankful for the opportunity to share the gospel with my fellow prisoners. Praise the Lord they accepted Christ as their Saviour and a church was born right there in that prison.

On July 18, 2006, we were worshipping together when ten guards raided the meeting. They brought us to the prison hospital where we were forced face-down on the beds; they restrained us in this position while they injected drugs into our bodies. Then, they proceeded to beat us repeatedly. Daily we were beaten until we passed out.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

There were times when it was so painful I believed it would be better simply to end my life and go to be with Christ. I broke a window and tried to use the broken glass to kill myself. However, the guards discovered what I was doing and beat me even more severely.'

'I longed to be free and prayed often that God would make a way'

It was unbearable when the guards injected the drugs into my body. I felt my muscles stiffen from my feet to my lower chest. I remember the pain vividly. Each time I cried out to God to help me and to show me that He was there with me.

God answered my prayers. Several times He appeared to me in a vision and He strengthened me. The injections and beatings continued but God gave me the strength to overcome.

I longed to be free and prayed often that God would make a way. His answer surprised even me. Because I would often laugh and talk to myself during isolation, the guards and doctors thought I was crazy; they diagnosed me as a psychopath. I had also lost my recent memory; I could not recognise my family in photos.

On the morning of November 29, 2006, after spending 3 years and 11 months in prison, I was released.

When I landed at the airport in South Korea, it was fantastic to see almost 200

people who came to meet me. They were shocked to see me in such poor condition. I had weighed about 189 pounds when I left; I was returning 86 pounds lighter.

COMPLETELY HEALED

The doctors diagnosed me with schizophrenia, paranoia, cognitive malfunction, social atrophy, and severe panic attacks. My friends who were trying to help even suggested I go to an isolated mental hospital to receive treatment.

I said to my wife and two daughters, 'I don't need to go to the hospital because God will take care of me. I will soon get over this condition.'

I proceeded to spend my days in prayer and in Bible reading. After only one month in South Korea, I was able to join a construction company as the director. After two months the doctors re-examined me and gave me a clean bill of health. My family and friends were astonished.

It was a joy to join the staff of Release's partner Voice of the Martyrs Korea in 2009. As assistant director I oversee a number of vital projects that serve and support North Koreans.

I continue to pray for those people who persecuted me because I believe that one day they will encounter God and become my brothers and sisters in Christ.

I believe that God always knows what we need, He always goes before us and stands with us in the face of persecution. When I reflect on my life, I am thankful that God has used me as His tool.



North Korea has consistently topped the world's human rights watch lists as being the most repressive and closed nation on earth. This totalitarian regime follows an ideology known as *Juche*, a mixture of Stalinism and cultic adulation of the late 'Eternal Leader' Kim Il Sung, and his son, the ruling 'Dear Leader' Kim Jong Il.

Christianity is a political crime in North Korea because it recognises an authority greater than Kim, and advocates the worship of Someone other than Kim. In North Korea Christians can be killed simply for owning a Bible.

Estimates suggest that many thousands of North Koreans may be languishing in prison camps, many of whom are believed to be Christians.

Religious prisoners are often subjected to harsher treatment, and given the most dangerous tasks, all in an effort to force them to renounce their faith. When they refuse, they are often tortured to death. Those caught praying are beaten and tortured.

In May 2010 we received reports that three leaders of an underground house church in North Korea were executed and 20 of their Christian associates imprisoned.

North Korean police raided a house in Kuwal-dong, Pyongan province, and arrested all 23 believers who had gathered for a 'religious function'. The leaders were tried, sentenced, and executed soon afterwards, with the remaining 20 believers reportedly sent to prison camp No. 15 in Yodok.

HEAR CHOI FIRST HAND AT OUR NATIONAL CONFERENCE



Choi Young Hun is speaking at Release's National Conference on Saturday, November 6, in London, along with a North Korean

defector, 'Brother John'. Don't miss this fantastic opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of the underground church in North Korea. Why not bring a friend, or group from your church? See page 15 for further details.

Release:prisoners ministers to hundreds of Christian Prisoners of Faith around the world by informing churches, encouraging prayer, supporting prisoners' families, advocating on their behalf and implementing a strategy for pastoral care. To find out more, please visit www.releaseinternational.org/prisoners.



Celebrate Valentine's Day with a difference – and support persecuted Christian women at the same time

Are you looking for a creative event that could increase your church's awareness of persecuted Christians?

Release: women would like to invite you to arrange a 'Love, St Valentine' meal for your home group, women's group or even your whole church in February 2011.

What's the connection with Valentine's Day and persecuted Christians?

It is believed that around the year AD269 Valentinus, a church leader, was martyred for defying an order given by Emperor Claudius II that outlawed marriage.

Claudius realised that recruitment to the Roman army was in decline, due to the fact that men did not want to leave their loved ones for up to 25 years of armed service!

So Claudius simply banned marriage in order to increase the size of his army. Valentinus refused to obey – and secretly married couples at night.

When his nocturnal activities were discovered, he was sent to Rome, and it is believed that he shared the gospel with Claudius before his death. One traditional story tells of the way Valentinus was befriended by the jailer's daughter, and on the eve of his death he wrote a last letter to her, signing it, 'From your Valentine'.

Two centuries later, the martyrdom of Valentinus was marked by the dedication of February 14 in honour of his life and sacrifice.

Release: women would like to mark the sacrifice of Valentinus and his commitment to godly marriage as part of our new 'Love, St Valentine' event – and we'd love you to join in.

release
women

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a difference and...



PRAY for marriages living under the strain of separation and difficulty. We'll give you information from wives of imprisoned pastors in Vietnam, who are supported by Release.



RAISE the profile of young single Christian women being forced into marriage with Muslim men, such as those in Pakistan and Egypt.



PRAY for Eritrean women often living lonely and vulnerable lives in refugee camps in northern Ethiopia.



RAISE funds to help persecuted Christian women.

We'll provide you with a 'Love, St Valentine' **starter pack** which includes invitation cards, posters, recipes and decorations – everything you need to hold your own Valentine's Day celebration with a difference! While there is no charge for the starter pack, we invite donations of £10 to cover the cost of the materials and postage.

You can also use our new Release: women DVD *Break Our Hearts* (see above).

All funds raised will be used to develop the work of Release: women, both in the UK and internationally. We would especially like to raise funds for a proposed Eritrean women's conference.

Let's join together to remind our persecuted family how much we love them.

Register your 'Love, St Valentine' event by contacting the Release Office on 01689 823491 or emailing valentine@releaseinternational.org with your name and address, and we'll send you the starter pack when it is available in December.

NEW DVD BREAK OUR HEARTS

Break Our Hearts (10 minutes) has been produced for supporters who specifically want to support women who suffer for being known as followers of Jesus.

Both men and women will find that the DVD gives a helpful and poignant insight into the lives of Christian women in Eritrea, Nigeria and Pakistan. The DVD ends with a rich and thoughtful presentation using Vicky Beeching's moving song *Break Our Hearts*.

The DVD includes requests for prayer, and is an essential tool for you and your fellowship. It is ideal for use at a 'Love, St Valentine' event (see left), to inspire a home group or to contribute to a prayer time during a church service. Available from November 8 for a suggested donation of £10 including postage.



HEART2HEART WOMEN'S CONFERENCES



Join us for a special time of fellowship and prayer, and hearing first hand from sisters who have faced persecution.

November 13 10am-3.30pm

Hear author and former Prisoner of Faith Helen Berhane

St Nicholas' Church,
79 Maid Marian Way, Nottingham NG1 6AE
Tickets cost £7 (concessions £5)

Call our Supporter Relations Team on 01689 823491.

February 12, 2011 10am-3.30pm

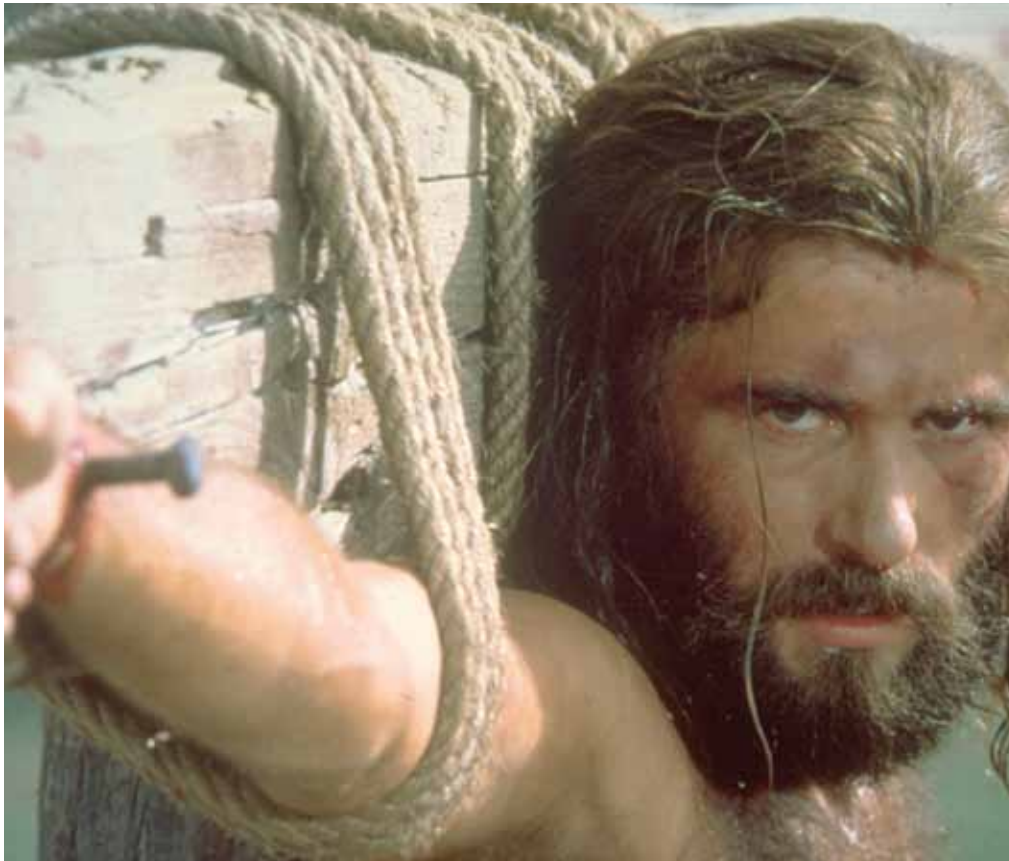
The People's Church, Newtownabbey,
64 Mallusk Road, Mallusk, Newtownabbey
BT36 4QE

Tickets cost £5

Contact: 028 9334 0014

Email fmccloy@releaseinternational.org





Release's support enabled 54,000 copies of the *Jesus* film to be distributed in 44 Iranian cities. Photo used by permission of the Jesus Film Project.

IRAN Distribution of the *Jesus* film

£11,000

This provided for the production and distribution of 54,000 copies of the *Jesus* film in 44 Iranian cities. We received the following testimony about the impact of just one of these DVDs.

One day, in one of these cities, a Christian woman was visiting a hospital. As she walked through the main hall, she heard a doctor talking on the phone saying: 'Nothing makes me happy any more, I don't want to live.'

After overhearing this, the woman prayed that God would open a way for her to share the gospel with the doctor. She then went up to him and said: 'Excuse me, I'm a Christian and I would like to pray for people needing help.'

The doctor was angry and asked: 'What type of help can you provide? Do you think by sharing

about Christianity, you can bring a change?' The woman replied: 'I believe that as people enter into a relationship with the living God, their lives will be changed.' The doctor did not appreciate this answer and told the woman: 'You know how to deceive people. What you share is not true.'

'Even though you don't like God, He loves you and He is willing to change your life,' she said.

In the middle of this conversation the doctor was called to visit a patient. As he was in a hurry to go, the woman gave him a copy of the gospel, an evangelistic CD and a copy of the *Jesus* film on DVD. The doctor took them reluctantly and went off.

One evening, a few weeks later, the doctor was very sad and depressed. He had been drinking, but even that could not calm him. During the evening, however, the gospel and the DVD the woman had given to him caught his attention. He took the gospel and randomly opened a passage. He came across the verse: 'if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

'What is this new life?', he thought. He then played the DVD and watched the whole of the *Jesus* film. At the end, he fell on his knees and prayed: 'Jesus I don't know You. I just remember that the Christian woman told me that You are alive and that You are able to change the lives of the people. If this is true, please change my life and give me a new life.'

He prayed wholeheartedly, and felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted from his shoulders.

The following morning, when he went to the hospital, he smiled and greeted everyone. All the hospital staff knew what type of person he was, and were amazed at the way he approached them. His wife had left him because of his bad behaviour.

He then shared with all the hospital staff telling them that *Jesus* had changed his life. In fact he was so zealous in sharing his faith in *Jesus*, that he eventually lost his job. He then opened a private clinic. Not only was he able to evangelise a few of his patients, but he was subsequently reunited with his wife.

IRAN

Support of persecuted families

£5,000

Release has provided our partners with a fund that allows them to support believers on a short-term basis in emergency situations. Below are two examples of how this fund has been used to help our persecuted brothers and sisters.

The first person is a devoted Christian woman. When her husband found out about her Christian faith, he asked her to leave home, as he considered her to be unclean. Along with her baby, she had to live with her mother, who was herself in financial difficulty. This woman's house church leader requested some funds to support her living costs for six months. We thank God that she was able to find a job.

The second is a Christian man who worked in a print shop, producing evangelistic tracts and Christian books, which he distributed to various Christian contacts. He was caught by the authorities, and imprisoned for three months, during which time no one was allowed to visit him. His printing shop was closed down.

The man's church leader requested some support for his family who needed to pay rent for their house and some living expenses. He has now been released from prison, and is waiting to appear at court.

**'Even though you
don't like God,
He loves you and
He is willing to
change your life.'**

Read news about persecuted Christians on our website
www.releaseinternational.org/news
 Follow us on [twitter](#) @ReleaseInt
www.twitter.com/releaseint



Hocine Hocin, an Algerian Christian, smiles as he is greeted by a friend outside a court in the Berber town of Ain El Hamam. Hocini and fellow Christian Salem Fellah, on trial for eating during daylight in the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, were acquitted on October 5, a verdict their supporters said was a triumph for religious freedom.
 Photo: Reuters/Zohra Bensemra.

PAKISTAN

Christian family and lawyer murdered by extremists

A Christian lawyer, his wife and five children are believed to have been murdered by Islamic extremists after he dared to challenge a Muslim loan shark.

Edwin and Ruby Paul were shot dead at their home in Haripur in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, north-west Pakistan, along with their five children aged between six and 17, on September 28. A Muslim neighbour told Compass Direct news agency that the lawyer had been warned to leave the area by armed men the previous day.

Edwin had taken up the case of a Christian taxi driver who had taken out a loan of 150,000 rupees (just over £2,000) from an influential local Muslim to buy a taxi, only to find that the interest rate had been raised to 500 per cent without his consent. When the Christian failed to pay the lender, a man with alleged links to extremists, his home and taxi were seized.

Edwin had only moved into the area with his family in February. When he registered a case against the loan shark with police, he was reportedly beaten and received death threats from the man's associates. Edwin had appealed for help

in letters to the provincial government, Christian organisations and churches – but no one was prepared to intervene for fear of extremist reprisals, according to a local church leader.

In another incident, about 40 extremists wielding firearms, axes and clubs rampaged through the streets of Mohalla Kalupura, in Punjab's Gujarat District, firing at people and houses and beating some Christians so severely that they were 'left for dead', according to Compass Direct news agency. Several residents were 'critically injured' in the raid on September 23.

Among those seriously injured was Tariq Gill, a man against whom blasphemy charges were dropped in September 2009. Tariq's parents were also badly hurt; his mother was stripped naked and dragged through the streets. The attack on Gill, who was cleared after Christian leaders and Muslim elders intervened in his case, proves that even an acquittal is no guarantee of safety for those accused of blasphemy in Pakistan.

Read about our campaign for Pakistan *Let Justice Flow* on page six.

Read more about Pakistan on our website www.releaseinternational.org/pakistan.

• **Pray for God's peace and protection over Christians living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Mohalla Kalupura. Ask God to grant His wisdom to church leaders.**

CHINA

Pastor 'Bike' writes to the president

Pastor Zhang 'Bike' Mingxuan wrote his fifth open letter to President Hu Jintao on China's National Day (October 1), urging the head of state to turn his heart towards the suffering of Christians in his vast, populous nation.

In his letter, the well-known pastor shares his burdens for those oppressed in his country. He speaks of daily struggles, court battles, beatings and robberies that house church Christians have endured.

Even though Pastor Bike has been arrested 49 times because of his faith in Jesus Christ, he exudes a cheerful and respectful spirit, something evident in his extensive letter.

'I beg God to soften your heart and that you may not be irritated so you can listen to admonitions and truth from an ordinary person,' writes Pastor Bike. 'Only this way can your country prosper and your position be firm and stable.'

You can read the full letter at www.releaseinternational.org/china

• **Pray that God will soften the heart of President Hu Jintao and his attitude to the Chinese house churches.**

THIS CHRISTMAS, WHY NOT SPEND AND GIVE?

Have you bought all your Christmas presents yet? Probably not is the answer for most of us!

Did you know that if you purchase your gifts online, you could help to raise funds for persecuted Christians at no extra cost to yourself?

By shopping online via www.spendandgive.com/release you can raise funds as you purchase from a great range of retailers including Amazon, Dell, Marks & Spencer, PC World, New Look, The Body Shop, Screwfix, play.com, ELC, Mothercare, Halfords, and many more.

So far the site has raised more than £1,200 for Release. This Christmas you can help us raise even more.

Release National Conference 2010

STRONG TOGETHER

10am-4pm Saturday, November 6, 2010
Central London



Join us for an inspirational day of worship, prayer and testimony direct from the persecuted church, hosted by Release CEO Andy Dipper.

Our guest speakers are:



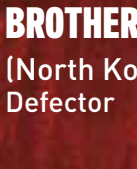
MARTIN GOLDSMITH (UK)
Release patron,
author and lecturer



CHOI YOUNG HUN
(South Korea)
Former missionary
to China (see p10)



SELAM KIDANE
(Eritrea)
Co-ordinator,
Release-Eritrea



BROTHER 'JOHN'
(North Korea)
Defector



GODFREY YOGARAJAH (Sri Lanka)
Release partner and Executive Director of the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission

Don't miss this unique opportunity to be informed and inspired Why not bring a Christian friend who'd like to find out more about persecuted Christians?

REGISTER now by calling 01689 823491 or email conference@releaseinternational.org
Places are limited.

There is no charge for the conference, but an offering will be taken during the day.

There is a small coffee shop at the venue but attendees will need to bring their own lunch on the day or buy locally.

IN BRIEF

ALGERIA: At least 50 Algerian Christians have protested against the criminal charges filed by Salafist jihadists against four church leaders. Pastor Mahmoud and three elders of a newly established evangelical church in Larbaa Nath Irathen, Kabylie, were prevented from continuing worship services when Salafist jihadists accused the church of conducting 'illegal' Christian activity.

CHINA: Nearly 200 police officers and other personnel demolished the prayer room of Taishan Christian Church in Qinggang, Zhejiang province, on September 21, saying that it violated building regulations. It is the second time that the prayer room has been destroyed in 2010.

INDIA: Police detained evangelist V.K. Williams and seven other Christians after Hindu extremists disrupted their evangelistic meeting on September 29 in Theni, Tamil Nadu, according to the Global Council of Indian Christians. The extremists then filed a complaint against the Christians of 'forceful conversion'.

INDONESIA: The elder of a West Java church is in a critical condition after being attacked. Hasian Sihombing was on his way to the Batak Christian Protestant Church in Bekasi city when he was stabbed in the chest and stomach by a motorcyclist, according to the Compass Direct news agency. The culprits are believed to have taken part in recent protests against the church.

IRAN: A young Iranian believer from a Muslim background has died of injuries sustained when he was severely beaten by a relative, who took exception to his Christian faith, reports Release's partner Elam Ministries. He leaves a wife and two young children.

NEPAL: A legislative panel has proposed retaining a ban on converting others in Nepal's new constitution. Christian leaders say they fear it is likely to be approved, given that the largest political party, led by former Maoist rebels, sympathises with the deposed king's wishes for such a ban. The country is forging a new constitution as part of its transition from a Hindu monarchy to a democracy.

release:potential hits the

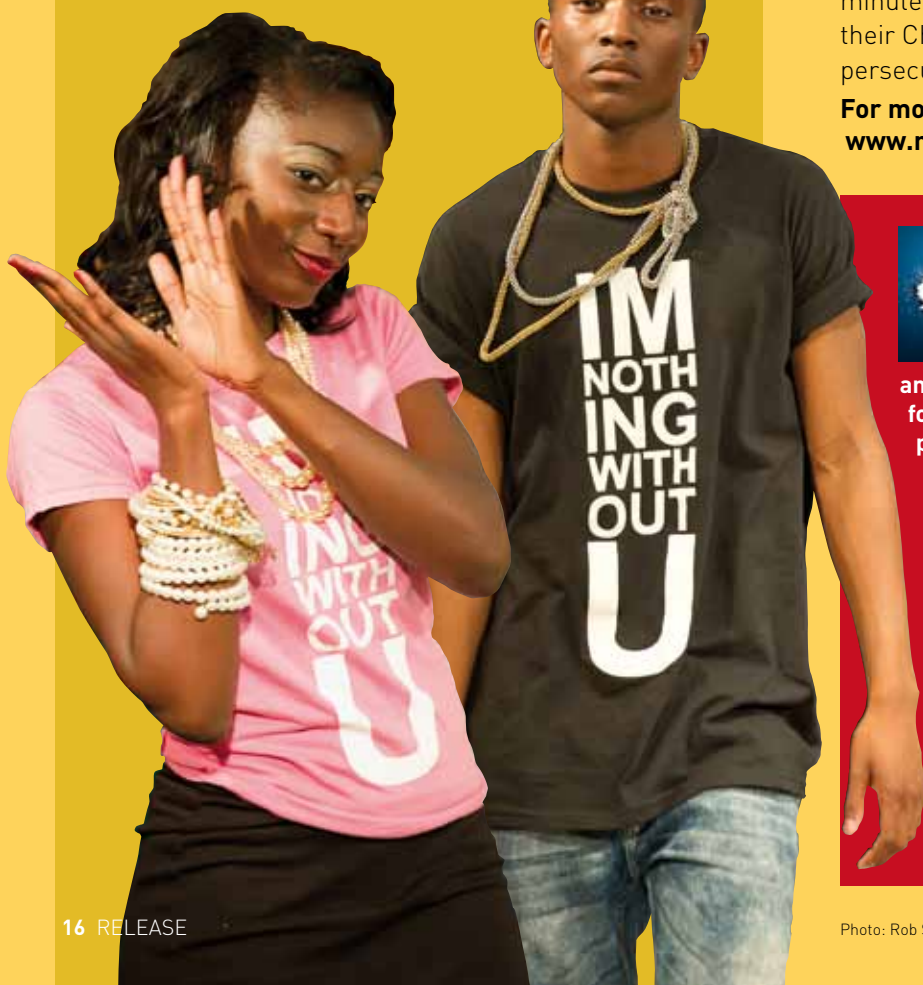
fashion, scene!

On September 11, tucked away in a little venue off Brick Lane in the East End of London, Akemi Creative hosted *Fashion Live 2*, an evening showcasing the talents of Christian women, not only in terms of fashion design and jewellery, but also in music, song, poetry and the spoken word.

More than 200 people crowded into the Rag Factory to spend the evening cooing over the season's must-haves, laughing along with comedy songs by Michaela the Poet and strutting their stuff on the open catwalk – all in aid of raising money for Release:potential!

It was an awesome night celebrating women's freedom of expression, coupled with the opportunity to honour Christians around the world who are unable to express their faith in Jesus openly and without fear.

Huge thanks go to the team at Akemi Creative who helped us raise £200! If you would like to suggest creative and engaging ways to tell our family's story and raise money for our work – please get in touch!



The Gift

How much time do you spend each Christmas wondering what to get for your friends and family?

How would you feel if we told you there was a sure-fire, well-received gift that we know about?

Well, we **do** know of a gift that would be gratefully received by thousands of people; a gift that is top of many people's Christmas lists. And, it's totally free to give!

Many Christians around the world are suffering for their faith in Jesus, and as part of their family we are all called to come alongside them in support. This Christmas Release:potential would like you to join us in giving the gift of prayer to our family members who are being persecuted.

We did this last year, and your response was so fantastic we're repeating the idea this year.

We are going to divide Christmas Day 2010 into 144 separate five-minute prayer slots (from 9am till 9pm) so that people can claim a five-minute slot each and take some time out of their Christmas Day to remember and pray for persecuted Christians.

For more info visit:

www.releasepotential.org/gift

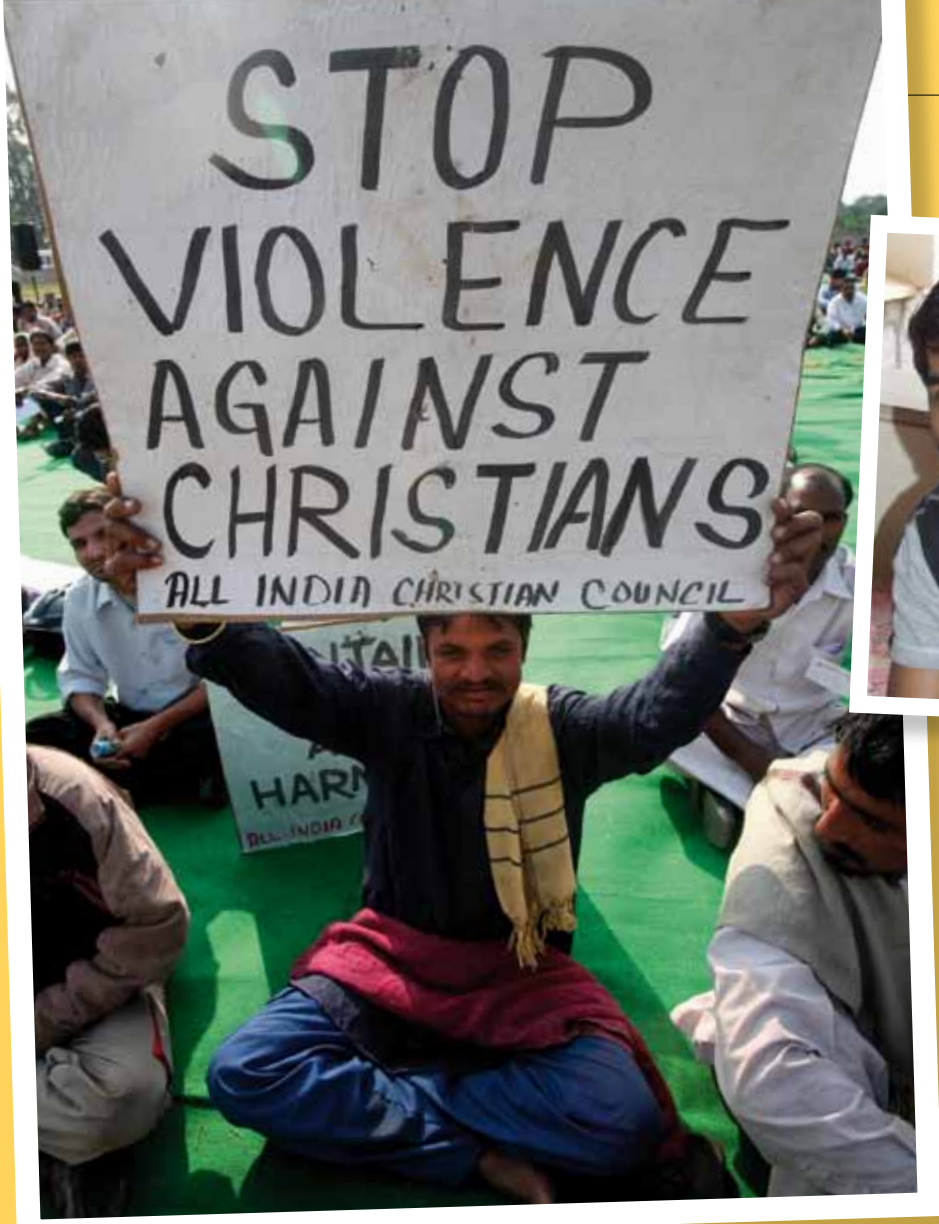


On November 7
Release:potential will be hosting our first ever PLATFORM event. PLATFORM is

an afternoon of creative arts workshops for young people, enabling them to put together a showcase of talent and expression, telling the story of persecution.

In the evening they will take part in a showcase celebrating the perseverance and endurance of the Christian faith. If you are aged between 14-19 or know someone who is, and can get to Croydon on November 7, go to www.releasepotential.org/platform and book your place now!

You can also find out all the relevant info there - including the details for the evening showcase which is open to all.



Christians staged protests after anti-Christian violence in 2008 forced more than 50,000 Christians to flee their homes. Photo: Reuters/Ajay Verma.
Evangelist Prabhu (left) was attacked by militants in India.

Prabhu's story...

Have you ever been picked on, or insulted, for being a Christian? If so, how did you feel about it? And how did you react?

Around the world today there are many young Christians who face all sorts of threats and violence, simply for being followers of Jesus, and for wanting to tell others about Him. But, time and again, they tell of the way God sustains them.

One such young man is Prabhu. He is now in his early 20s, and has been working as an evangelist in India since he was in his teens.

Like many Christians in India today, he has experienced first hand the growing, organised opposition of Hindu fundamentalists.

On one occasion he was leading a team of young Christians, in a town in Karnataka state. They had gone there to show the *Jesus* video to a group of people. 'The fundamentalists are very strong in that area,' said Prabhu.

'A group of between 35 and 50 people suddenly turned up. They attacked three of us.' The mob were all members of the RSS, he added, a militant Hindu group frequently behind attacks on Christians and churches.

The mob dragged Prabhu and his friends towards the local Hindu priest's house. 'They were beating us and wanting us to be Hindus,' Prabhu said. 'If not, they said they would burn us.' The mob also took all their equipment.

'It is because of God that I am alive today'

However, on the way to the priest's house, the police intervened. Prabhu and his friends were arrested and taken to the local police station.

At the station Prabhu was able to make a phone call to Release's partner, the All India Christian Council. Eventually he was released.

Although one of the tactics of the fundamentalists is to accuse Christians of trying 'forcibly to convert' people, on this occasion the intervention of the police spared Prabhu and his friends further suffering. Prabhu believes God was at work that day.

'It is because of God that I am alive today,' he said. 'I believe God keeps me safe. God was with us throughout that time.'

But when Prabhu asks for prayer, the work of the gospel is his first thought. 'Pray that we will have strength to continue doing God's work. We are to tell people about Jesus,' he said.

Please pray for Prabhu, and others like him, who face such dangers and threats for being followers of Jesus. And pray that God will give you courage, too, when you have the opportunity to tell someone why you are a Christian.

release
:potential

release
international
voice of persecuted christians

Our ministry involves:

Showing God's compassion

providing for the needs of the families of martyrs and prisoners

Serving God's church

enabling them to survive persecution and its effects

Sharing God's love

helping the persecuted church bring to Christ those who are opposed to the gospel

Spreading God's Word

supplying Bibles and literature to meet the need for growth and evangelism

Speaking as God's advocates

being the voice of the martyrs and the oppressed

RELEASE SPEAKERS

Why not invite one of Release's team of development managers to speak in your church or small group?

North and Central England, Wales
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South of England Tel 01689 823491

Ireland Tel 028 9334 0014

Scotland Tel 01294 602674

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DEEPER FAITH

This summer Alex Baxter and Pauline Botting joined a Release ministry team to Pakistan – and were inspired by the faith of Christians they met from all walks of life.



Alex (centre) plays games with children during his ministry team visit to Pakistan.

I am an ordinand in the Church of England and begin training for the priesthood next year. I knew going to Pakistan would be a real eye-opener, and it was! We met and ministered to groups of people suffering from persecution: people who had been imprisoned under false blasphemy charges, people who had to leave their homes and possessions and flee, who feared for their safety and their lives. All this and the floods to contend with too!

It opened my eyes to frontline New Testament Christianity where people are choosing to walk with Jesus in often very difficult and hostile circumstances. Christians are persecuted and discriminated against in ways that seem unimaginable to us in the West. We visited families working in brick kilns and Christians who had recently left Muslim backgrounds and were in hiding. We worshipped together, ate together and shared experiences of our lives in prayer.

What made the trip so inspiring to me was seeing people building up the body of Christ through love, fellowship and faith.'

Alex Baxter is a member of St Margaret's Church, West Hoathly, West Sussex.

I was a little apprehensive about going to Pakistan. I needn't have been. We were met by our hosts and greeted with love and kindness, which was showered upon us throughout our stay.

Pauline: 'people were overjoyed because we had come from England.'



We visited and prayed with families, churches, schools, lawyers, the brick kiln workers, converts from other faiths and pupils at sewing centres. Great, deep faith shone out from everyone. It is a deeper faith than I have seen before – we in the West have so many distractions.

We were treated like royalty and I didn't think this was deserved. I was told that the people were overjoyed and greatly encouraged because we had come all the way from England to visit them in their difficult situation.

Surrounded by such faith, God enabled me to do something I have never done before: I talked to a congregation of 500 people, bringing a message for them which had come into my head during our prayer time.'

Pauline Botting is a member of Emmanuel Church, Morden, Surrey

Life: making the most of every opportunity



'Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you

may know how to answer ...everyone.'
Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

The Apostle Paul, in his concluding words to the early church in Colosse, had a remarkably positive attitude towards personal evangelism, given that he was writing from the confines of a prison cell. It is like a burst of fresh, cool air rushing through a desert place, bringing life and energy.

In other words: life is a series of never-to-be-repeated opportunities.

This is a thrilling way to look at our own lives, and how we engage with those around us, even when we are busy, tired and burdened.

In the past weeks especially I have been struck by the struggles of Christian friends in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. And yet, despite the pressures on them, they are even more intent on being salty in their conversations, adding flavour and spiritual taste, living grace-filled lives.

They really need our prayers also, of course, because it is far from easy to live as Christians in these cultures.

Questions

When Christians live like this, it will inevitably prompt questions from those around them, whether articulated or not. What motivates these Christians to live

like this, in the midst of such pressure? Why are they prepared to pay such a high cost to honour their faith in Jesus?

The lives of those who choose detention, torture and even death – rather than deny Jesus – are proof that they have discovered something of inestimable value that is far beyond the ordinary comforts of life.

In Paul's words, they count everything else 'a loss' (or 'rubbish') 'compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord' (Philippians 3:8).

Oh that our often too-comfortable faith would spill out with such passion!

For me, life can get really busy speaking out for persecuted Christians, travelling to many different countries, as well as being a family man, a church member and a neighbour.

In the context of Colossians and my friends in Afghanistan I see life in a new light, not burdened with the busy-ness of life, nor crushed by tiredness after trips and meetings.

It's all about making the most of every opportunity in life, to be like Jesus in every conversation and action.

We live in a world where those around us need Jesus more than ever. This week, let the voices of persecuted Christians throughout history and around the world challenge us afresh to live salty, grace-filled lives, such that our passion for Jesus overflows to those around us!

Andy Dipper CEO

NOT ASHAMED

'We call on government, employers and other leaders in our country to protect the freedom of Christians to participate in public life without compromising biblical teaching and to promote in our society the values that are revealed through Jesus Christ and that have so shaped our nation, for the good of all.'

This statement is at the heart of the 'Not Ashamed' initiative that has just been launched by Christian Concern For Our Nation (CCFON).

In our increasingly secular society Christianity is under attack from the extreme elements of a variety of minority groups. Within the media Christianity is frequently sidelined or ridiculed via soap opera or TV comedy.

Too often voices that shout the loudest appear to be the only ones that are heard. But the peace and humility that are hallmarks of the Christian do not mean that we are to remain silent.

HUGE CHALLENGE

With the huge challenge that Release faces in supporting Christians around the world who face severe persecution, our primary focus is outside the UK. However, we are engaged with other organisations in the UK, who are concerned at the rising discrimination that is creeping into our own society.

It is important to be aware of what is happening around us, and we are grateful for organisations that exist primarily to inform society and support individual Christians who face discrimination because of their faith.

Visit www.notashamed.org.uk to find out more about this initiative or www.ccfon.org to find out more about the work of CCFON. Each of us has a responsibility to determine for ourselves how we will make it known that we are not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ.



FOUNDATIONS

'Christianity has become dramatic with us. When Christians in free countries win a soul for Christ, the new believer may become a member of a quietly living church. But when those in captive nations win someone, we know that he may have to go to prison and that his children may become orphans.'

Pastor Richard Wurmbbrand, founder of Release, writing in *Tortured for Christ*.

'Let the little children come to me'

Luke 18:16

When Christians suffer persecution and discrimination because of their faith, often the whole family suffers – especially the children.

Where families have lost their breadwinner, through injury or imprisonment, they are often unable to afford to send their children to school.

Release supports persecuted Christian families by providing practical and medical aid; pastoral care; and help to set up small businesses, to give families a sustainable income.

Your financial support will enable us to continue sharing the love of Jesus with persecuted Christians in need around the world.

Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.



YES I want to support the persecuted church around the world. Please send me regular information.

Here is my gift of £_____ to be used where most needed (please make cheques payable to Release International)

Christmas project: here is my gift of £_____ to support needy Christian children in Pakistan
Any gifts surplus to current needs will be used for other international projects

I am a UK tax payer and would like you to recover tax on my giving

Please send me a standing order form so that I can give regularly

giftaid it

I want to receive your regular email Prayer Alert (please give email address below)

A fortnightly postal summary is available for supporters without access to email at a suggested donation of £10 pa – please call our office

Please arrange for a speaker to visit my church

Please send me information about working as a church representative for Release

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