



# Voice <sup>of the</sup> Martyrs

## NEPAL: CONQUERING FAITH



Serving the Persecuted Church for More Than 50 Years | August 2024

# WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN NEPAL?

By Floyd A. Brobbel  
CEO for Voice of the Martyrs Canada



There exists a small, visible Christian community in Nepal, representing about 2.8 percent of the country's population. Despite facing false accusations, harassment and beatings from family members and neighbours, these brothers and sisters in Christ stand firm in their faith. The persecution they encounter is rooted in the rise of Hindu nationalism, a political ideology that promotes Hindu culture and values, often at the expense of religious minorities. In particular, converts to Christianity are frequently pressured to reconvert, as the government and society at large consider their conversions a threat to the ideology of the dominant Hindu population.

For instance, Pastor Keshav Raj Acharya's case, which was highlighted in one of VOMC's previously

posted *Persecution & Prayer Alert* emails, sheds light on the pervasive pressures Christians face in Nepal.

"In November 2021, Keshav Raj Acharya, the pastor of the Abundant Harvest Church in Pokhara, Nepal, was convicted of proselytizing and, as a result, sentenced to two years in prison. Even though his sentence was reduced to one year upon appeal, Pastor Keshav subsequently appealed to the Supreme Court of Nepal.

"Regrettably, the Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision, affirming Pastor Keshav's one-year sentence. Responding to the ruling, the pastor's lawyer, Indra Aryal,



expressed concern that the decision curtails the principles of religious liberty and freedom of expression, particularly for the country's religious minorities. Pastor Keshav conveyed his deep sadness about the judgment, reiterating that his actions were driven by faith and a desire to spread God's love and blessings."

As Romans 12:12 reminds us, we are called to "*rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation*" and "*be constant in prayer.*" These are not just suggestions, but responsibilities for us to take seriously. When hearing of the incidents in which our fellow Christians are experiencing persecution, we have the privilege to intercede for them through prayer. Our prayers can make a powerful difference in their lives! To learn more about how you can pray for persecuted Christians, please consider signing up to receive our weekly *Persecution & Prayer Alert* reports by visiting the "Sign Up for Our Emails" section on the ministry's website at [www.vomcanada.com/subscribe](http://www.vomcanada.com/subscribe).

As you read these stories, I hope they inspire you and draw you closer to God's heart. May these testimonies of faith and confidence also ignite a fire within you to actively remember and support the persecuted church. Together, let us hold onto the hope of glory and eagerly await Christ's ultimate return – the appointed time for Him to joyfully receive His faithful bride.

Grace and peace,



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**Clarification: The sidebar on page 12 of this year's Annual Report issue should read:**

"And for the over 100 million people living in one of the country's 60,000 villages, extreme poverty is usually experienced."

### The goals of VOMC are expressed in our "Ministry Purposes" as follows:

1. To encourage and empower persecuted Christians to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).
2. To give practical relief and spiritual support to the families of Christian martyrs (Matthew 25:36).
3. To equip persecuted Christians to love and win to Christ those opposed to the Gospel (Romans 12:14).
4. To help believers rebuild their lives and Christian witness in countries where they have formerly suffered oppression (Nehemiah 1:3; 2:5).
5. To promote the fellowship of all believers by informing the world of the faith and courage of persecuted Christians, thereby inspiring believers to a deeper level of commitment to Christ and involvement in His Great Commission (Hebrews 13:3; Galatians 6:2).

Spending of funds is confined to board-approved programs and projects. Each restricted contribution designated towards a board-approved program or project will be used as designated with the understanding that when the need for such a program or project has been met, or cannot be completed for any reason determined by the board, the remaining restricted contributions designated for such program or project will be used where needed most. Gifts from individual donors of \$10 and more are acknowledged and received with an official receipt for income tax purposes.



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## BLESSING THOSE WHO CURSE

*Smiti placed her faith in Christ after she received prayer from a group of Christians and was subsequently healed of a serious illness. Now she works to advance God's Kingdom in remote areas of Nepal.*

For 26-year-old Smiti, the journey to faith in Christ began seven years ago during her desperate search for healing from a serious illness. Like many Nepalis seeking help with their health, her first stop was at the location of a local witch doctor – but he couldn't do anything for her. Then someone suggested that a nearby Christian church might be able to help.

When Smiti's family took her to the church, she was deliriously ill to the point of hardly being coherent. When the Christians prayed for her, she experienced God's miraculous healing. "Before that, my Christian friends used to talk about Jesus," she says. "But I did not feel that Jesus was for me. That [belief] was for somebody else. After I experienced the sickness and went to church, from that point...I needed Jesus for myself."

### **Growth Amid Opposition**

Smiti had studied agriculture in school and was passionate about learning more about this subject. So when she heard about a discipleship training program that focussed on teaching agricultural techniques as an

opportunity to share the Gospel, she was very interested. Smiti joined the program as an intern in 2019, and a year later she received additional discipleship training.

"Before, I wanted to share the Gospel, but I did not have the practical skills," she explains. "But once I joined the program, I had to go out and share more. This training really helped me...and I became more [spiritually] mature as I shared."

After completing the program, Smiti began training others in the areas of evangelism and discipleship. "Giving to others [as a teacher] brings me joy!" she adds. When Smiti teaches, she uses the same simple discipleship principles that she was taught. While working to share the Gospel and make new disciples, she enthusiastically teaches the next generation of disciple-makers the importance of following in Christ's footsteps.

As a ministry worker in remote areas of Nepal, Smiti has faced many challenges. In some villages, local Hindu leaders have barred her from evangelizing, and



Smiti is part of a discipleship program that uses agricultural education as a springboard for evangelism.



Smiti finds joy in training others for evangelism and discipleship.

others opposing her ministry work have tried to cast curses against her. Some Nepalis reject the Gospel for fear that their gods or spirits will be offended and thus abandon them. And those who do come to faith in Jesus are often subjected to harassment and violent attacks from Hindu nationalists striving to make Nepal a “pure” Hindu nation. In fact, laws were passed within the past decade that have resulted in increased risks for anyone wanting to follow the teachings of Christ and fulfill His Great Commission.

Another thing that scares many people away from the Christian faith, Smiti says, is the stigma of being a non-Hindu resident in Nepal: “When someone comes to faith [in Christ], automatically their social status will become very low, their reputation is lost, and their honour in the village will be gone.... Christians are considered of low caste in society.”

When speaking with someone who fears this kind of social pressure, Smiti gently reminds them that there is no discrimination in God’s Kingdom. “I urge them to not be discouraged.... Whatever persecution and difficulties I have seen, I also see that God is actually working.... This makes me so excited!”

### Empowered to Witness

*Simple* and *practical* are key words in Smiti’s ministry. Upon initially arriving at the village where she previously served in ministry, the young female evangelist quickly realized the need to learn the minority language that was being used locally. “When I first came there, I used to talk to people in Nepali,” she says. “When I would ask, ‘Do you understand?’ the people said, ‘I don’t know what you are talking about.’

So then I knew there was no point for me to share in Nepali.” Determined to tell them about the ‘Good News of Jesus Christ,’ she learned the Maithili language within just five months.

Through faithfully proclaiming the Gospel, Smiti has seen many Nepalis come to faith in Christ and grow in their faith. Her work has been especially effective among women, who are not accustomed to seeing other females in a teaching role. “When we started this training, we encouraged them to spend time in the Word, and then go back to share their faith,” Smiti explains. “The women used to think [they] couldn’t do anything because society tells them that they are useless. But when they learn and share with others, they become more active and their voices are heard, [resulting in] others coming to the faith.”

### Looking Ahead

At first, family members pressured Smiti to leave her ministry work. But they have since become more supportive after seeing the joy it brings. Being unmarried at 26 years of age in a culture where most girls marry by 14, Smiti dreams of one day having a husband who shares her heart to reach the people of Nepal with the Gospel. In the meantime, she continues to seek new opportunities to make Christ known while training and leading others to do the same. She concludes by saying, “Please pray that whatever God has asked me to do, His will would be realized in my life.” 🙏

*Some of the translated quotes included in this testimonial article have been altered slightly so they will be in keeping with Canadian English spelling, grammar usage and style.*

Impacting Numerous Lives in Nepal...

# ONE BIBLE AT A TIME!

*One of VOMC's Ministry Partners, who facilitates our Bible distribution project in Nepal, testifies of how God's Word has powerfully saved his life - both spiritually and physically! In the following article, this fine man of God shares his inspiring salvation testimony....*

Having been born into an orthodox Hindu family, both of my grandfathers were priests of Hinduism and very dedicated to their traditions, rituals and faith. In fact, if anybody decided to give their life to Jesus, it was not acceptable to the members of my family nor my community.

When I was young, I was erroneously taught that if people read the Bible, they would become mentally ill. Christians were also not allowed to enter a Hindu person's house. According to the religious rules of Hinduism in my childhood neighbourhood, such offenders would encounter a lot of consequences. And if someone even dared to read the Bible, they could be ostracized by the members of their community and risk losing close-knit familial relationships.

My dad passed away in 1994 when I was a child, and my mom married another man when she was just 25 years of age. After experiencing the tragedy of my father's passing, and the rejection of my stepfather, I was left homeless and parentless at seven years old. Extended relatives allowed me to stay in their home.

My personal life as a young child was not easy. I was rejected by my friends at school, and I never felt loved or properly cared for by my family. Because of my seemingly hopeless situation, I started thinking that there was no reason to live, and so I tried to kill myself several times. Once I took several sleeping tablets, hoping I would never wake up again. Fortunately, I did wake up. However, my behaviour became very erratic. In my broken state, I began running around the community and screaming uncontrollably.

Thankfully, there was a very kind lady who prayed for me. During her compassionate prayer, the presence of God touched my entire being and I got healed. This dear lady, who now lives in Australia, gave me a Bible and told me that I could read it to receive peace. At the time, I was not familiar with the

Bible. I only remembered being previously warned by my family that if I touched it or read through the pages, I could become mentally ill. It's been 21 years since then, and I am still reading the Bible. I am completely fine, healed, and doing perfectly well!

During those childhood years, however, my uncle found the Bible that I had initially received and destroyed it. For a very long time, I had no Bible to read – until I was eventually able to obtain another one. Then when I decided to give my life to Jesus in 2005, I was kicked out of my extended family's home and community. In the midst of this turbulent time, the love of God wonderfully sustained me, and the reading of His Word provided me needed peace – just as the praying lady had promised.

The Word of God has the power to transform people's lives. It has changed mine from the inside out. That's why I believe it's one of the best gifts we can give to others. Whenever I give a Bible to someone, I share my testimony of how the Lord had delivered me after I began reading His Word. I also encourage them to read it for themselves so they will know God in a better way and stop believing in the devil's lies. The Word of God is truly one of the most meaningful gifts we could ever offer.

I want to express my gratitude to the faithful supporters of VOMC's International Ministry projects who, through their donations, have also contributed to our Bible distribution project in Nepal. As a result, we were able to distribute 576 Bibles thus far in 2024 – 500 to each of the refugees in Nepal who would otherwise not have the opportunity to obtain their own Bible, and 76 study Bibles to our theology students. Thank you so much for partnering with us. As I know from personal experience, the Word of God has the power to change people's lives for His glory! 🌍



# Table Talk NEPAL

## Mountain Mystery!

**How to Play:** Using the numbered clues, fill in the missing words about Nepal on the blank lines inside the mountain. The first word is already completed. Afterwards, use as many words as possible to construct a sentence related to Nepal. An answer key and printables are available at: [vomcanada.com/TableTalkNepal](http://vomcanada.com/TableTalkNepal)

1. COW

2. \_ S \_ \_

3. \_ \_ \_ I \_

4. \_ E \_ \_ L \_

5. \_ \_ E E \_ \_

6. \_ \_ L \_ \_ I \_ \_

7. K \_ \_ H \_ \_ \_ D \_

8. \_ \_ R \_ \_ \_ U \_ K \_

### Clues:

1. The national animal of Nepal.
2. Nepal is part of this continent.
3. Nepal's southern neighbour.
4. A common place of worship in Nepal.
5. The highest mountain in the world.
6. Nepal has diverse \_\_\_\_\_, including many endangered animals.
7. Nepal's capital city.
8. A natural disaster caused by tectonic activity.

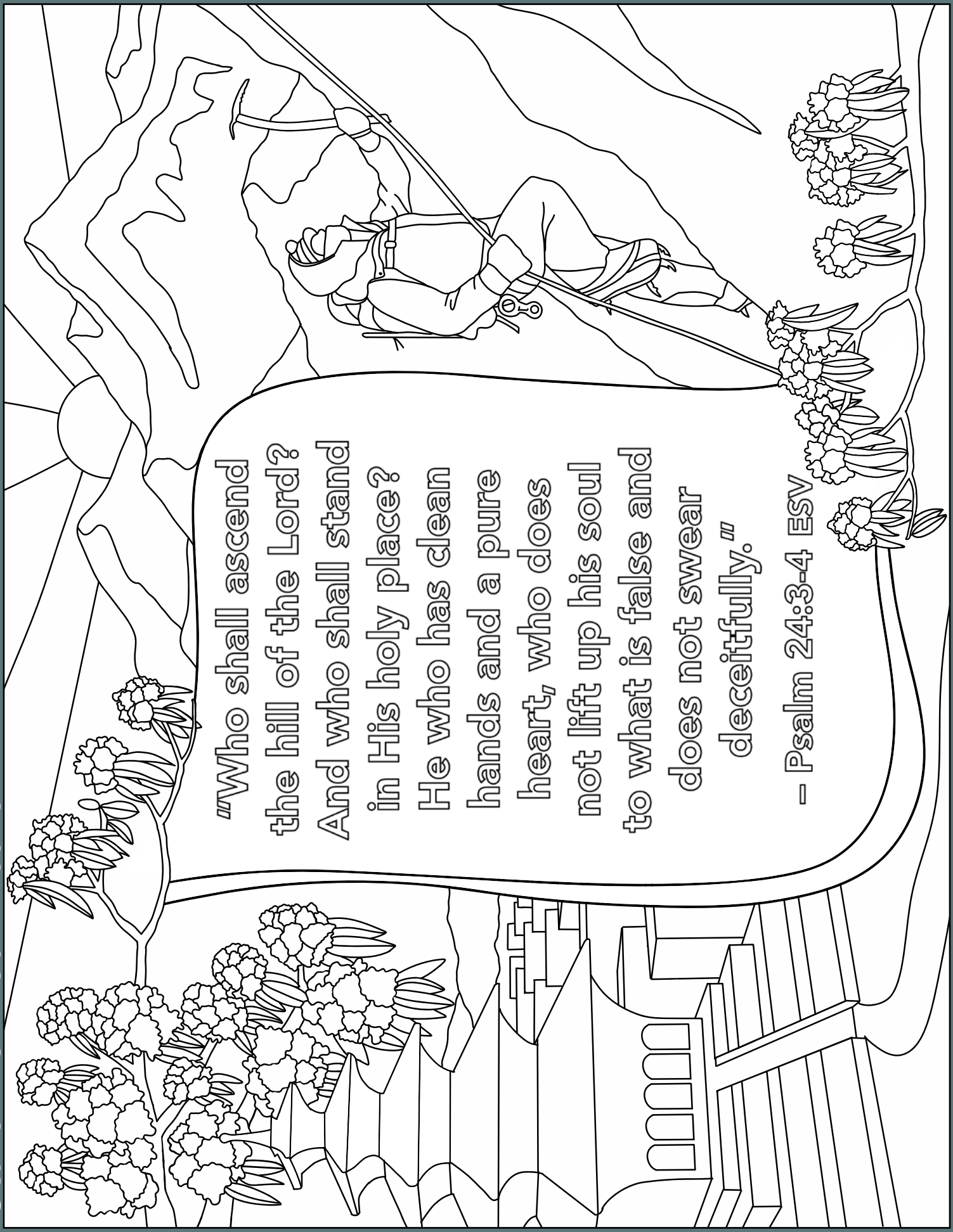
### Construct a sentence with the words:

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“Who shall ascend  
the hill of the Lord?  
And who shall stand  
in His holy place?  
He who has clean  
hands and a pure  
heart, who does  
not lift up his soul  
to what is false and  
does not swear  
deceitfully.”

- Psalm 24:3-4 ESV



# August 2024

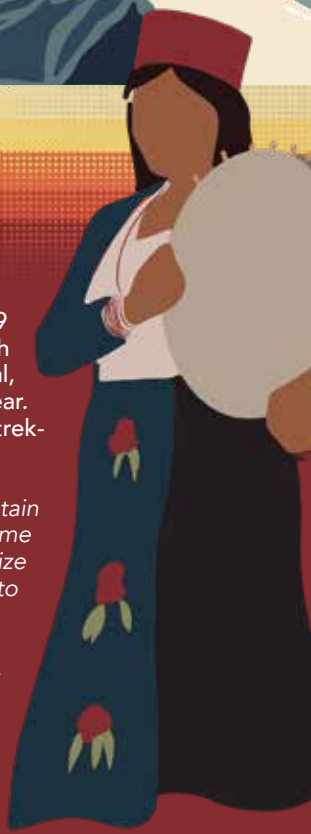
**His Way** "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully." – Psalm 24:3-4 ESV

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>4</b> <b>LAOS</b> Pray that new Christians will remain steadfast in Christ, even if they are accused of choosing a "foreign religion."	<b>5</b> <b>SOMALIA</b> Pray for Somali Christians who risk being actively pursued and killed if their faith in Christ is discovered.	<b>6</b> <b>KUWAIT</b> Pray that followers of Jesus who flee Kuwait will find refuge among believers in other countries.	<b>7</b> <b>OMAN</b> Pray that Christian converts from Islam will not be discouraged when facing legal challenges due to their conversion.	<b>8</b> <b>BENIN</b> Pray that new Christians will have access to God's Word, especially in rural areas.	<b>9</b> <b>QATAR</b> Pray for the small number of Qatari Christians who gather covertly for teaching and worship.	<b>10</b> <b>SYRIA</b> Pray for the protection of those distributing Bibles in Syria, asking the Lord to bless and multiply their efforts.
<b>11</b> <b>ALGERIA</b> Pray for safe and successful Bible distributions, which otherwise could be risky for the distributors involved.	<b>12</b> <b>TURKMENISTAN</b> Pray that Turkmen Christians will be able to obtain Bibles in their own language.	<b>13</b> <b>UZBEKISTAN</b> Pray that Atamarat, Zamira and their sons will have many opportunities to share the Gospel.	<b>14</b> <b>ETHIOPIA</b> Praise God that Biblical churches continue to plant new places of worship and send missionaries!	<b>15</b> <b>CAMEROON</b> Pray for the comfort and healing of Christians who have been traumatized by Boko Haram attacks.	<b>16</b> <b>JORDAN</b> Pray that churches in need of new facilities will find favour with the government.	<b>17</b> <b>TANZANIA</b> Pray for the Lord's provision and strength on behalf of persecuted Christians living near the Ugandan border.
<b>18</b> <b>COMOROS</b> Pray for Bible translators who are working to make God's Word available in native languages.	<b>19</b> <b>VIETNAM</b> Pray for Hmong Christians who experience some of the most violent and harshest forms of persecution.	<b>20</b> <b>SRI LANKA</b> Pray for Christian ministry workers like Malaramma who are boldly leading many to faith in Christ.	<b>21</b> <b>MALAYSIA</b> Pray for Christians who have been tortured in reeducation camps for refusing to return to Islam.	<b>22</b> <b>SAUDI ARABIA</b> Pray that followers of Jesus who worship together secretly without church buildings will receive wisdom and hope.	<b>23</b> <b>MALI</b> Pray for Christian converts from Islam who face harassment from their opposing families and/or communities.	<b>24</b> <b>KYRGYZSTAN</b> Pray that believers will "shine as lights" by living with integrity amid widespread corruption (Philippians 2:14-16).
<b>25</b> <b>SUDAN</b> Pray for Christian ministry workers who are responding to crisis situations in conflict areas.	<b>26</b> <b>BHUTAN</b> Pray that those who've lost their livelihoods for following the Lord will experience His miraculous provisions.	<b>27</b> <b>TAJIKISTAN</b> Pray that God's Word, which is available only in some cities, will become widely accessible in innovative ways.	<b>28</b> <b>COLOMBIA</b> Pray that ministry workers distributing Bibles in the country's "red zones" will be undetected by rebel groups.	<b>29</b> <b>NIGER</b> Pray for the healing of believers who have been attacked by militant Islamists from neighbouring countries.	<b>30</b> <b>INDONESIA</b> Pray for the successful distribution of Bibles, especially in areas of heavy persecution.	<b>31</b> <b>ERITREA</b> Pray for the salvation of the country's leader, Isaias Afewerki, who studied military tactics in Communist China.



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Digital Calendar

# Navigating the Facts – Nepal



## One Way

The goal of Hinduism is achieving *moksha*, the release from the cycle of reincarnation and *karma*. Hindus believe that this release allows them to return to their deity, like how a river empties into an ocean. A person can achieve *moksha* by choosing one of three paths. The first path involves performing selfless acts of service to others. The second requires uniting oneself with Brahman (the ultimate god) through meditation and intellectual study of man and the universe. The final path encompasses a person's complete devotion to their chosen Hindu deity. At the end of the worshiper's life, however, there is no assurance that their efforts were enough to achieve *moksha*.

The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only way to eternal life (John 14:6). Salvation is not earned through accomplishing good works nor acquiring a vast knowledge of God, but rather through faith and obedience to the saving work of Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christians are assured of their heavenly home the moment Jesus enters their hearts, giving them freedom and peace as they follow Him.

## Way Out • • • • •

It's essential for believers in Nepal to receive discipleship. The challenge is that most Christians are isolated in rural villages where there is minimal access to Biblical resources that can help them grow in their faith. VOMC's *Equipping the Saints Fund* supports projects in Nepal that help meet the strategic educational needs of believers as they develop in their understanding and application of God's Word.

This month, challenge yourself to read at least one chapter of your Bible each day. After reading the day's chapter, tell somebody a key point that you learned, and then pray accordingly for Nepali Christians.

### Recommended Reads:

- Hearts of Fire* by Voice of the Martyrs. (Teen/Adult)
- Something Needs to Change: A Call to Make Your Life Count in a World of Urgent Need* by David Platt. (Teen/Adult)
- Everest: The Remarkable Story of Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay* by Alexandra Stewart. (8-12 years old)

### Sources:

- <https://www.britannica.com/place/Nepal>
- <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/mount-everest/>
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Country Update: Nepal.
- <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/research-reports/country-dossiers/WWL-2024-Nepal-Full-Country-Dossier.pdf>
- <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/cults-and-other-religions/what-should-christians-know-about-hinduism-5-essential-factors.html>
- <https://www.patheos.com/library/hinduism/beliefs/afterlife-and-salvation>

## Weigh In

**1.** Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, towers at a staggering 8,849 metres high. As part of the Himalayas, which extend along the northern border of Nepal, it's climbed by thousands of people every year. Climbers face numerous challenges when trekking to the summit.

*Thin air in the upper elevation requires mountain climbers to use oxygen tanks. Brainstorm some other challenges climbers may face and theorize how they can safely prepare for the journey to the summit of Mount Everest.*

**2.** Agriculture in Nepal relies on rainwater, since most farmland is not irrigated. Lack of rainfall can cause severe food shortages, especially in the mountains. The roads are severely underdeveloped, making it nearly impossible to supply food from outside sources to starving people in these communities.

*Food shortages are a significant issue for those living in the mountainous communities of Nepal. In theory, creating better roads could help improve food accessibility in the country's remote regions. Think about additional ways to prevent food shortages from occurring and create a plan to implement your solution.*

**3.** Children from Hindu families are often instructed by their parents to not associate with Christian children in their classes or communities. Thus, young believers are often bullied and excluded from social activities.

*Have you ever been bullied or unjustly excluded from an activity? Remembering your own experiences and emotions, consider how children in Nepal might feel when they are rejected by their peers. How would you respond if you were in their situation? Does your response align with what the Bible teaches?*

**4.** The anti-conversion law in Nepal prevents people from switching religions or persuading others to join a particular faith. For Christians, this means that sharing the Gospel is illegal and could result in large fines or even imprisonment.

*Nepal claims to be a secular state, meaning that each citizen is allowed to practise and profess their religion according to their conviction. However, due to the anti-conversion law, Christians are unable to legally practise the Great Commission. Do you think this law contradicts freedom of religion? Why or why not?*



Answers:

# BLESSING NEPALI COMMUNITIES THROUGH VOMC'S "Stay and Grow" Youth Project



In collaboration with our ministry partners, International Nepal Fellowship, VOMC's "Stay and Grow" Youth Project is strengthening Nepali youth through innovative training and development programs, self-help groups, and partnerships with entrepreneurs and start-up businesses that are seeking to inspire young people to remain in Nepal instead of migrating elsewhere.

The project's targeted recipients are young pastors, leaders and youth who are willing to work in their communities to bring about social harmony and peace. As a result of the program, which was launched in June 2024 and is scheduled to run until the end of this calendar year, Nepal's youth pastors, leaders and church members are currently being equipped to more effectively fulfill God's plans for their lives and future ministry.

In addition, the family members of these young believers are able to benefit indirectly from the program. After receiving Biblical teaching and development training from supervising pastors and church leaders, each project recipient will be in a position to share their acquired knowledge and skills with the members of their family, church and community – bringing about positive change from family to church, and from church to society as a whole.

The project is also presently assisting 16 students from impoverished families by providing educational scholarships. Along with this, the members of various self-help groups – which consist of both believers in Christ and non-Christian people – have been given opportunities to participate in the "Stay and Grow" Youth Project. This aspect of the program makes it possible for self-help groups to identify, analyze and address the common issues of their communities (such as gender-based violence) by preparing and implementing action plans through the use of local resources, as well as resources from the government and other NGOs. Moreover, it encourages the creation of entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises by equipping these self-help groups with helpful technical skills and business start-up support.



On May 28<sup>th</sup>, the Inception and Coordination Meeting for the "Stay and Grow" Youth Project was held in a Nepali municipality. The meeting started with prayer, and the program's facilitators – including three pastors and two youth leaders – were presented with the project goal, objectives and major activities. The meeting also informed them of the project's implementation modality, process and program period.

The attending Christian leaders collectively agreed to form the Project Management and Coordination Committee to ensure the proper implementation and quality assurance of the project in close coordination with local stakeholders. The committee then decided to launch this project in a couple locations of the municipality, and thus establish two self-help groups in different communities.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the first self-help group was formed with 25 members. Among them, ten members are local Hindus, and the remaining participants are Christians. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the second self-help group was formed – this time with 25 members – consisting of 11 Hindu participants and 14 Christians. Both groups hold their meetings on a monthly basis.

Please pray for God's provision as VOMC's ministry partners and co-labourers of the Gospel faithfully serve young people in Nepal through the "Stay and Grow" Youth Project. May members of the Hindu community also be wonderfully impacted and blessed, and thus respond with open hearts to the "Good News" of Jesus by acknowledging Him as their Saviour and Lord. Furthermore, as our persecuted Nepali family in Christ receive practical development training through this project, may they be better equipped spiritually to serve as "salt" and "light" among those in need of the Lord's mighty intervention and salvation. 🙏

*If you would like to contribute to this project, you may do so through VOMC's "Equipping the Saints Fund" ([www.vomcanada.com/donate](http://www.vomcanada.com/donate)).*

# CONQUERING FAITH

All Report Photos: VOM International

Bindu (left) with her children.



## Abandoned Wife and Children Remain Faithful to Christ

Six years ago, Bindu and her three children placed their faith in Christ,

becoming the first Christians in their village. Bindu's husband, Hari, who is strongly Hindu, actively tried to stop them from going to church. On Christmas Day in 2021, while Bindu and the children were preparing to attend a Christmas celebration, he began to beat them, knocking one of his daughters to unconsciousness and later chasing them out of the home.

When Bindu and her daughters returned home, the persecution and abuse continued. Her husband Hari tried many times to open a case for divorce and finally left the village. For the past two years, he has not contacted his family nor provided any support for them. Bindu and her daughters are still active members of the church and share their faith boldly, even though they do not receive Hari's support and still face persecution from others in their community.

## Pastor Ministers Amid Opposition

Pastor Bhim, 63, was visiting a new believer in Christ and sharing the Word of God with him on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, when a group of Hindu radicals burst into the home. They hit Pastor Bhim, broke his hearing aid, burned his Bible, and warned him to stop preaching. Police officers arrived to protect the

Christian leader and his colleagues, but the radicals pushed through and forcibly smeared black paint on Pastor Bhim's face. The police believed that, due to the aggressiveness of the radicals, Pastor Bhim and his colleagues would not be safe at the local station, so they took the targeted Christians to the district headquarters. Pastor Bhim's son reported that the Hindu radicals were well organized and ready to escalate the attack if any other Christians had stepped in. Pastor Bhim, who has been imprisoned for his Christian faith in the past, stated that he was glad about the incident because he becomes more courageous during seasons of persecution.



Hindu radicals attacked Pastor Bhim with black paint.

## Believer Seeks Reconciliation

Jitendra, who is the only Christian in his family, earns daily wages as a driver. When his parents, who are wealthy, divided their property among their children, they did not give him anything because of his decision to follow Christ. He asks for prayer that his parents' minds and hearts would be changed so they will come to know Jesus Christ as their Saviour and restoration of their family relationships can take place.



Jitendra earns his living as a driver-for-hire.



### Healing Brings Family to Faith

When her husband became a follower of Christ, Manju and their children were very opposed to his faith and berated him in hopes that he would abandon it. But in May 2023, a pastor asked her to watch a film about Jesus. He installed a memory card with several videos on her phone. The family began to watch these films, calling the pastor to explain the parts they did not understand.

Manju invited the pastor to her house one day. While he was there, her 14-year-old daughter was watching one of the videos by herself when she all of a sudden experienced a demonic attack. After the pastor prayed for her, the attack ended. These attacks happened several more times, but each time the demonic manifestation ceased when the pastor prayed. Thankfully, the teen is now completely healed and delivered. Manju and her children placed their trust in Christ after witnessing God's power at work. Since then, other relatives have also placed their faith in Christ.

### Bride's Steadfast Faith Encourages Husband

Ashish and Anisha, who married in 2023, went to a local church in search of healing from demonic spirits that harassed Ashish. Church members prayed for them, and Ashish was healed. The newlyweds began to read the Bible they had received at the church and soon wanted to place their faith in Jesus Christ. When Ashish's parents found the Bible, they insisted

that the young couple renounce Christ and stop going to church. Ashish agreed, but his wife Anisha did not. The young bride was then forced to leave the home without money for food or shelter, so the local church helped her with basic needs. Soon, Ashish decided to join his wife again. Now Anisha asks us to pray for the strengthening of her husband's faith and that they would together stand firm and be steadfast witnesses for Christ to their families. At the time of compiling this report, they were considering attending a training program to help them grow in their understanding of the Bible.



Anisha had to rent a small unfurnished room after her eviction.

### Bibles Lead to Multiple Salvations

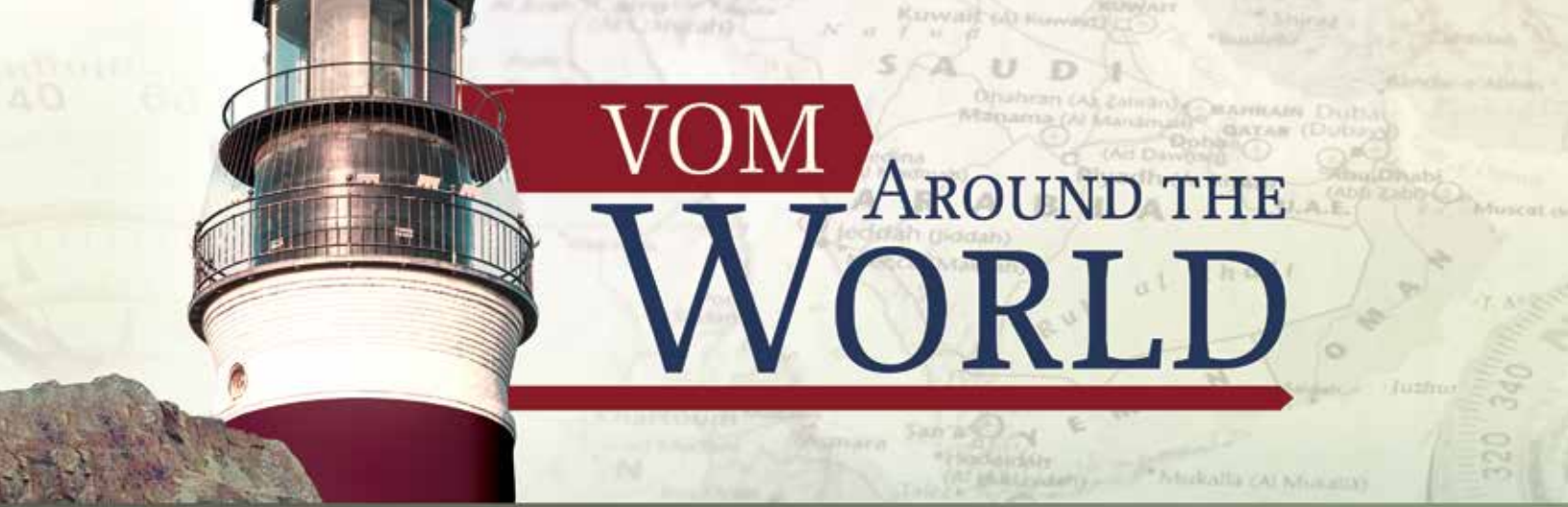
Bishwas, a ten-year-old boy who has been regularly attending a children's fellowship for the past year, received a children's Bible during one of VOM's distribution events. His mother, Kamala, was attracted



Bishwas learned about Christ through the children's Bible he received.

by the edition's colourful pictures and began to read the Bible herself. As a result, both this mother and her son came to know Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They, along with three other children in the neighbourhood who also received Bibles, publicly committed their lives to the Lord on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023. 🌍





# VOM AROUND THE WORLD

## SIERRA LEONE: Transformed by the Word of God

Pastor Osman was once a practitioner of witchcraft. “I have killed many people,” he grievously admits when speaking of the horrific sins he committed before surrendering his life to Jesus Christ. One day, a pastor visited his village and shared the Gospel, and the message of the Lord’s forgiveness greatly resonated with Osman. “The pastor said that whatever you have done, God will forgive you,” he recalls. “This message sounded good to me.” That’s when the former occult leader realized that only the power of God could completely set him free from the evil practices he was so heavily entrenched in.

After receiving an audio Bible, Osman continued to be transformed by God’s Word. “I would listen to it secretly,” he says. “What really caught my attention was [the verse in] Matthew, where Jesus said we should love our fellow man as God has loved us.

This really touched my heart.”

When others in Osman’s community heard that he had left his occult activities, they surrounded his house and conspired to kill him. Osman prayed and amazingly escaped. He now continues to use the audio Bible he received from VOM International to help him memorize Scripture.



Photo: VOM International



Photo: VOM International

## BHUTAN: Gospel Workers Persevere Despite Pressures

Due to geographical isolation and the hostility of the government towards Christianity, Christians in Bhutan face pressures from many directions. Despite this, VOM’s International Ministry workers in this South Asian nation are faithfully continuing to live out their faith in Christ and reach out with the Gospel.

One ministry worker asked for prayer that their youth and women’s programs, as well as their training programs for Sunday school teachers, will be adequately resourced. Another church in central Bhutan is looking for a way to move from their cramped meeting space in a private home to a more accommodating larger facility for corporate worship. We also received a prayer request for leaders who are engaged in evangelism within the country’s remote border areas. Thank you for joining us by praying on behalf of these needs.

The following message has been taken from VOM Canada's devotional book, "From Under the Altar." See [www.vomcanada.com/store](http://www.vomcanada.com/store) for more information.

# A "Philippians 4:8" Christian

By Jim Penner  
Prayer Alert Researcher and Writer  
for Voice of the Martyrs Canada

"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

~ Philippians 4:8 ESV

For almost two decades, I have written over 3,000 reports on persecution. People have said they don't want to hear such bad news. My wife recalls the words of a woman who, while visiting a VOMC booth, simply claimed, "I'm a 'Philippians 4:8' Christian!"

Perhaps to this conference attendee that meant only thinking happy thoughts. But I wonder if there's more to Philippians 4:8 than that. When meeting persecuted followers of Christ, you'll often see the joy of the Lord in their lives. Let's walk through Philippians 4:8 and look for them:

**"Whatever is true"** - The truth is that the Christian faith and suffering go hand in hand; those who want to live Godly lives will be persecuted (2 Timothy 3:12).

**"Whatever is honourable"** - What is more honourable than remaining faithful to Christ in the midst of persecution?

**"Whatever is just"** - There's nothing just about being arrested for sharing your faith or imprisoned for believing in Christ. Each week, VOMC calls upon people worldwide to stand up for justice through intercessory prayer.

**"Whatever is pure"** - There's beautiful purity in the faith of those who stay true to Christ in the face of persecution.

**"Whatever is lovely"** - "How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news" (Isaiah 52:7 NASB). This applies even when it may cost believers their freedoms, families or lives. What is lovelier than such sacrificial love?

**"Whatever is commendable"** - I am humbled to hear about the way my brothers and sisters in Christ stand firm in the fires of tribulation. Their testimonies of faithful service to Christ are truly admirable and commendable.

**"Any excellence"** - Those who suffer for their faith aren't perfect. They may struggle and fail, and sometimes falter in their trust of God, just like the rest of us. But their willingness to stand up for Christ is something of excellence.

**"Anything worthy of praise"** - "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:10). Those who suffer for the sake of Christ don't perceive themselves as being special, but God doesn't agree. He says they are blessed and honoured.

**"Think about these things"** - This is a command. I believe the Apostle Paul would tell us to think about the testimonies of our persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ around the world because they demonstrate what is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent and praiseworthy.

Yes, there is often sadness when reading their stories, and rightly so. No one can rejoice in the pain and suffering of others. But look deeper, and you will see the 'light of Christ' shining through their testimonies, as a light set on a hill (Matthew 5:14).

My challenge for you today is to be a "Philippians 4:8" Christian! Stand up for the persecuted members of Christ's family. That's one way to set your mind on the things of God. 🙏



VOMC

# RESOURCES

Photo: Shutterstock/Photo Focus Photography



## Hearts of Fire 2

\$15

This newly released follow-up to *Hearts of Fire* brings you the true stories of 12 courageous women. From the Colombian evangelist who was on the run for witnessing to guerilla fighters – to the American woman who publicly forgave the Islamic extremists who gunned down her husband on the streets of

Benghazi, Libya – these women’s lives were turned upside down when they obeyed the words of Christ. However, each of them embraced the hope that’s found only in the unshakeable eternal Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In addition to these 12 stories, you will also read the testimonies of 11 other women who share how God’s strength and provision were made available to them when their earthly kingdom was shaken while serving His eternal one. These role models of faith, obedience and perseverance will inspire you to likewise pursue Christ with your heart aflame, no matter the cost! Paperback, 384 pages



## God’s Global Grace Movement

*Hope Rising from an Awakening in India*

\$9

*God’s Global Grace Movement* is the story of how the vision to plant 100,000 churches in unreached villages is transforming the spiritual

landscape of India, South Asia, and now expanding to other restricted regions of the world. Meet the leaders who spearheaded the movement and hear their powerful stories – including an array of inspiring testimonies that represent hundreds of thousands of transformed lives.

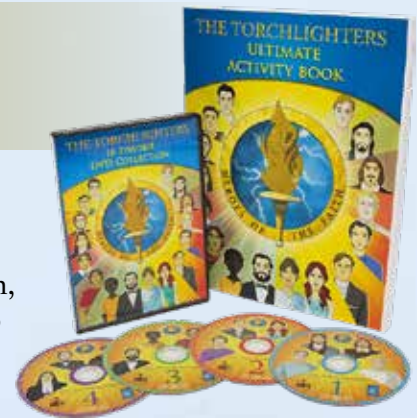
Author David Witt, the founder of Spirit Martyrdom International, has personally visited persecuted leaders in over 50 nations. His leadership training has proven to be extremely effective in multiplying key leaders, even within harsh and restricted areas of the globe. Paperback, 134 pages

## The Torchlighters DVD Set

(with “Ultimate Activity Book”)

\$40 for complete set

Young and old alike will be greatly encouraged by the inspiring testimonies of these ‘heroes of the faith’ whose obedience to the call of God on their lives has touched the hearts of so many around the world – including those who openly opposed them and their faith. Each animated story is about 30 minutes in length, plus there’s an added bonus documentary for parents, educators, and others who are interested in learning more about these exemplary lives. The accompanying 144-page, full-colour activity book contains historical facts about each hero, devotionals, fun activities, plus additional colouring pages.



*The heroes featured in the award-winning DVD series include: Amy Carmichael, Corrie ten Boom, Eric Liddell, Gladys Aylward, Jim Elliot, John Bunyan, Perpetua, Richard Wurmbrand, Robert Jermain Thomas, Samuel Morris, St. Augustine, William Booth, William Tyndale, and more....*

For information on the ministry’s other helpful resources,

visit: [www.vomcanada.com/store](http://www.vomcanada.com/store)