



May 1, 2017

Dear Ministry Prayer Partner,

My prayer for you today from the prayers of Paul—Ephesians 1:15–19, in *The Message*:

“That’s why, when I heard of the solid trust you have in the Master Jesus and your outpouring of love to all the followers of Jesus, I couldn’t stop thanking God for you—every time I prayed, I’d think of you and give thanks.

But I do more than thank. I ask—ask the God of our Master, Jesus Christ, the God of glory—

to make you **intelligent** and **discerning** in **knowing** him personally,
your eyes **focused** and **clear**, so that you can **see** exactly what it is he is calling you
to do,

grasp the **immensity** of this glorious way of life he has for his followers,

oh, the utter **extravagance** of his work in us who trust him—
endless **energy**, boundless **strength!**”

Boy! Do we need to focus our *spiritual frame of mind* more than ever!

Persecution is on—and it is beginning to be suffocating!

I just got back from India, and things are definitely tense. When a major leader of the Prime Minister’s party announced that he wanted India to be entirely Hindu by 2020, it sounded more like propaganda for drawing sympathy from the parties that got the Prime Minister elected. After all, the right to preach the Gospel is guaranteed by India’s constitution!

But anti-Christian persecution still occurs.

The Christian evangelist Umashankar, who is also a public office holder, has been struggling with the system for years. He was told not to preach the Gospel—“not to indulge in preaching and propagating activities ... which are likely to cause communal disharmony and disturbance to public order.”

Umashankar canceled meetings but insisted that the order was not consistent with the constitution, which declares that “public servants [like Umashankar] are entitled to profess, practice, or propagate any religion freely in their private lives.”



Ultimately, Umashankar was removed from office. In the subsequent months, he has suffered intense scrutiny of everything he does in his private life, with the threat of further legal actions against him.

As his oppressors attempt to derail his life, Umashankar has even declared that he is a Christian when it comes to *faith*, but *legally* he is a Hindu. (India's people carry documents certifying which caste they belong to.) Now Umashankar's enemies are trying to discredit his caste certificate as illegitimate!

The persecution of this evangelist is by no means the only example of attacks on Christians. Since his travails began in 2015, we've seen an avalanche of similar cases. Even Compassion International, once the largest Christian charity in India, has been shut down.

Christianity Today reports that the organization's 589 centers, serving 145,000 children, were shut down in March. Efforts to prevent the eviction went to the highest levels of government in both India and the United States, but in the end, the shutdown couldn't be averted.

What are we to do? What is being done?

As I write these words, just last night 10,000 Christians gathered in Umashankar's region of India and spent ALL NIGHT in prayer! This is the fourth all-night prayer meeting this year. They're meeting once a month to pray *all night* in response to growing persecution. People are praying more than ever before and in more locations than ever before.

One of these prayer meetings, in a northern region of India, was canceled due to allegations that it could produce "conversions." The police had to get involved because Hindu groups filed complaints claiming that the church was offering cash gifts to people if they would convert! (The police reported that they found no evidence about the claims.)

India's Christians are seeing the need to embrace their faith more fully than ever before. They're also evangelizing more fervently than ever before.

I see it in my interactions with young church planters. We ask them to commit to planting an average of three churches each. In two different teaching sessions last week, workers approached me to say that the government's hostile attitude is spurring them to do even more—to accelerate their church-planting efforts.



Instead of planting three churches apiece, they're aiming at 30 churches each. They're taking aim not at one village or town, but at an entire region.

One individual has mapped out plans to plant “only” 11 new churches. A few months ago, such a number would have sounded heroic. Today, it seems like this brother might be “burying his talent in the ground.”

One young evangelist in the southern part of the country is aiming to have 100 church plants up and running by year's end!

We're no longer telling our partners in India to “start a church”—now we're saying, “Start your movement!”

It is a thrill to be in the midst of such a brave group of brothers and sisters in Christ! There's an amazing feeling, like the battle just called our number. There is a phenomenal enthusiasm. There is a willingness even to suffer if necessary. ...

You've heard the phrase “Reality has set in”—usually it means the initial bubble of enthusiasm has burst. But in India today, the new “reality” is a realization that *now is the time*—and *God is in this!* Enthusiasm hasn't been replaced; it's growing! God is in it—and we are in it with God!

This is a spiritual *reality*—with special emphasis on “real.” This is not a fad, not simply a passing popular concept. This is a spiritual phenomenon.

But we need support, in prayer and in giving, to be victorious.

The enemy's strategies are cruel.

Compassion International was channeling \$45 million per year into India for the care of those children.

Now the government has blocked the inflow of those funds to the churches that were receiving them, choking off supply lines.

The churches of India are scrambling to keep helping the children, even though there are no funds available.

Choking off supply lines seems to be a favorite tactic of the enemy.



He wants to cut off our supply lines, too.

In the same way that the Indian churches are trying now to find their true identity in Christ by obediently praying, evangelizing, and sharing more than ever, we must take heed and do the same.

I can't help but think of the well-known poem by the German pastor Martin Niemöller:

“First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Trade Unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—
Because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Persecution in China, in India, in Vietnam may seem so far away from us. But the battle affects all of us, and it seems to come closer to the United States as more and more events occur that used to seem “outrageous” and “unlikely” just a few years ago. Secularism fills the vacuum of the silence left by the Silent Majority!

We need to stand together and speak for those who are being denied. We need to pray more than ever before, and we need to press into the vacuum where the needs arise.

As heaven will witness, our newest field, and one that promises to make Cuba look like our training ground, is India. It is explosive and exciting.

But our supply lines are affected. As I write, we have a deficit in India of \$36,000.

The spiritual fight is never easy. But we know that God is more than able. He can, and He is willing to, do wonders.

Somehow He always delights to find in the crowd those who are willing to sacrifice.

He delights in those who are willing to share their loaves and fishes, so that the partnering heroes of the faith may also get their share in the bounty of the victory.



Obviously the Lord produced thousands of times more than what that young boy sacrificed.

It must have been puzzling to that mother to see her son showing up at home at the end of the day with more bread and fishes than he left with!

He showed up not only with a full stomach but also with a spiritual legacy to bless all of Christendom, through his example and his testimony!

We have the immense privilege of being the counterparts to heroic people who are going forth in defiance of orders not to proclaim the message of the Gospel. It reminds me of Acts 4:18 when the “spiritual leaders” command the apostles not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answer, “We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

Please help us close the gap of support for India. God looks for those who will be partners—partners in the victory and the bounty! Your prayers are needed more than ever. Your giving is needed more than ever. Your service to the Lord is needed more than ever. Please stand with us in battle; let us hear from you right away. May God bless you for it!

Rejoicing in the Soul Harvest,

Dr. Manny Fernandez

P.S. You know I don't very often push my friends to give. But the situation in India is truly serious. We need \$36,000 immediately to keep the work going there. What part can you play? Maybe you can give \$36, or \$360, or even \$3,600. Or any other amount—whatever the Lord lays on your heart, please send it today. Thank you for understanding the urgency of the situation and responding from a heart of compassion for the lost!