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Sunday, December 24, 2017  
Did You Know?

## Christianity in Bihar, India

Bihar is one of the least-evangelized mega-populations in the world. While Christians make up 0.12% of the population, Hinduism (82%), Islam (17%), and other religions (0.88%) are experiencing continual growth.

The reality is that many people in Bihar are very resistant to the Gospel. Because Hinduism is closely associated with their nationalism, a Christian convert would face great discrimination and persecution from the Hindu majority. It is not surprising, then, that 9 out of 10 converts revert back to Hinduism.

As a result, it is still difficult to be a Christian in Bihar. There is a huge shortage of pastors to shepherd these souls. When churches are born, they remain weak and fragmented. There has been significant growth of Hindu extremist groups who are constantly threatening the lives of many Christians. In addition, the right-wing government party, *the Bharatiya Janata Party*, who are made up of largely Hindu nationalists, is working aggressively to make India a Hindu nation. "*The Indian Christian Persecution*" recently reported that over 12,000 Indian Christians experienced persecution including murder, detention, assault, rape and harassment in 2016 while the pro-Hindu federal government intentionally ignores the problem. The government also recently gave an ultimatum to the Dalit (untouchables) Christians, to either suffer in their hunger and poverty, or revert back to Hinduism for the promise of food and money. Millions of Dalits are left to decide between choosing to follow Jesus as their Lord and Savior, or receiving government benefits that have the ability to take their families out of poverty.

Bihar also presents many obstacles to evangelization for many missionaries. In the inhospitable environment, where malaria and disease are widespread, many Christian workers face real danger to their lives. As a result, for many years, Bihar has been known as **the graveyard of missions**.

Psalm 33:10-11 says,

*The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.*

Even though the situation seems dark, we don't lose hope because we know that our God is sovereign. Although the Gospel work seems almost impossible, we have no doubt that He will continue to work and His plans will come to fruition no matter what. We see this through faithful servants like Pastor Biju Thomas and Aby Mathew, and we get to be part of His great plan as CoaH adopts the people of Bihar. Until we see Bihar turn from the graveyard of missions to the vineyard of missions, I invite you to join me in praying for the people of Bihar – not only that the Gospel will reach the lost souls in Bihar, but that God would “consider their threats and enable [His] servants to speak [His] word with great boldness” (Acts 4:29)

*Pastor Woohyun Jung*