

INDIA



// Advent Christian churches in India truly are a city set on a hill drawing more and more lost people to faith in Jesus Christ. //

A City on a Hill
PENNY CRUSADE 2024

I N D I A

With nearly 1.5 billion people, India is now the most populous country in the world. Nearly 80 percent of the population is Hindu. **Most of the nation is lost in the darkness of idolatry and superstition.** Just over two percent of Indians are Christians.

The apostle Thomas took seriously Christ's command to preach the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world and became the first missionary to the Hindu people around 52 A.D. He traveled to what today is the state of Tamil Nadu in southern India where he was martyred by a Hindu priest in 72 A.D.

Thomas died in modern-day Chennai on the coast of the Indian Ocean. Today, Chennai is a growing metropolis of more than 12 million people. And for more than 150 years, it has been the cornerstone of Advent Christian work in India. **Currently there are 107 Advent Christian ministries stretching from Chennai in the south to Bihar in the north.**

Churches continue to be planted and ministries established in what is difficult and dangerous soil. India's government is run by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which backs Hindu extremists. The BJP have endorsed laws and policies that have enabled Hindu extremists to harass Christians without consequence.

One-third of India's 28 states have passed laws that "limit or prohibit religious conversion to protect the dominant religion from perceived threats from religious minorities." Violating anti-conversion laws is punishable with fines and up to 10 years in prison.

Hindu extremists, known as the RSS, often use mob violence to intimidate and harass Christians. **In 2023 Hindu extremists burned more than 300 Christian churches in India.**

Currently there are no anti-conversion laws in the southern states where most Advent Christian work is located. But the Hindu-Nationalist sentiments of the BJP are increasing for churches and pastors in those areas. Advent Christian pastors have reported being threatened, beaten and spit on by RSS members.

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