



Christian Freedom[®]

International

SERVING PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

• **NOVEMBER 2019** •

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**Zion Church before and after the Easter bombing
Over thirty were killed, including fourteen children.**



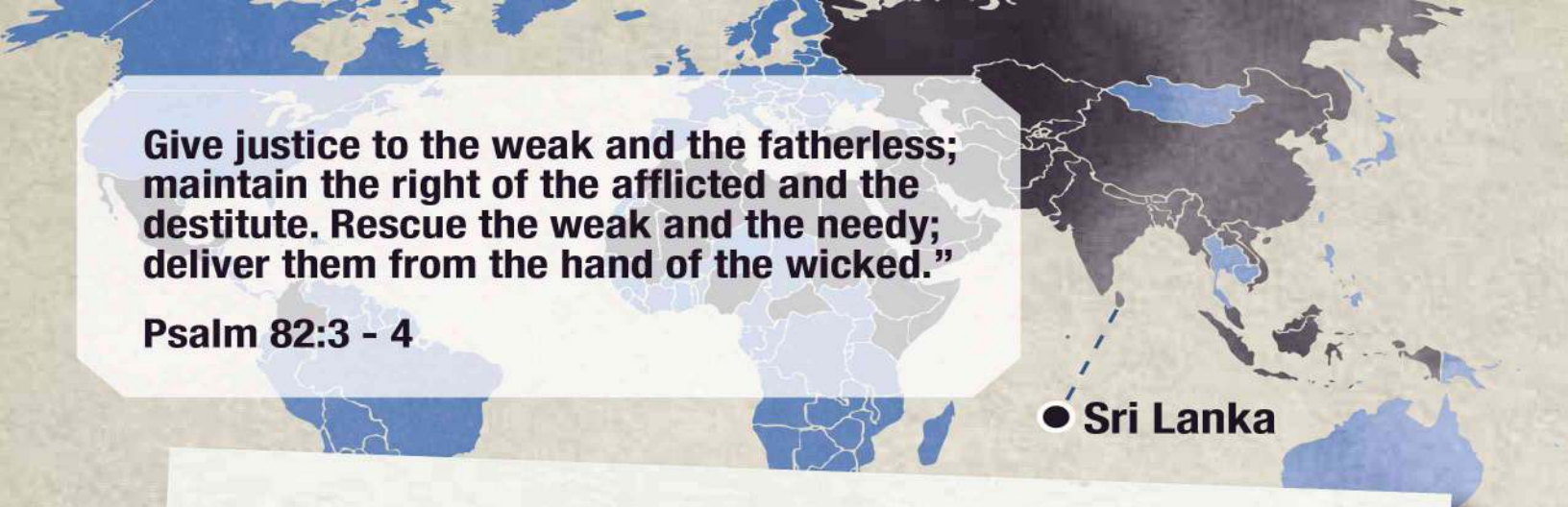
**St. Anthony Church
bombed on Easter
Sunday**

**Pictured right is a
former Buddhist
monk who tried to burn
churches. He is now a
pastor.**



**This Christian woman
survived a horrific
church bombing on
Easter Sunday.**

**CFI is helping with her
long-term medical care.**



**Give justice to the weak and the fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the
destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked."**

Psalm 82:3 - 4

● **Sri Lanka**

Dear Beloved,

I was made to know about you, the CFI Organization and your effort to help our churches with CCTV systems.

Our church is situated in a place where around 90% of the population is Buddhist and where two major temples are located. Direct threats and incidents occurred such as rioting around the church led by monks, stoning on the roof [rocks thrown to break thin roofs], forcefully entering the church premises, and blocking the gates of church entry.

Further, our churches are continuously monitored by government secret agencies to collect information to persecute us legally, claiming that we threaten the peace in the area.

For instance, I, as the pastor of the church, was beaten to severe injuries in public by monks, and several times our gatherings were invaded with huge riots.

Last week we prayed as a church for CCTV camera system. I was so pleased when I came to know that you are willing to help over the matter.

A letter from a pastor in Sri Lanka

This young girl survived the Easter Sunday bombing of Zion Church. Sharp metal sliced her neck in the blast that killed over thirty people, including fourteen children.



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PASS

**THIS NEWSLETTER TO
A FRIEND WHEN YOU
FINISH READING IT.**





Christian Freedom[®] International

November 2019

Dear Friend of the Persecuted Church,

Churches in Sri Lanka are asking for help – and we need your help to respond.

On Easter Sunday, three churches packed with joyous Christians and four hotels were blown up by Islamists. Over 250 people were killed, 500 injured. It shocked the world.

"This was not the first time Christians in Sri Lanka were attacked. Our pastors prepared us to respond like Jesus," one man told me.

Before the bombers were identified as Islamist extremists, some assumed the attackers were Buddhist. For years, Buddhist monks have invaded church services, destroyed church buildings, and beat up Christians. Government officials looked the other way (Buddhism is the official religion).

This is why Christian Freedom International is launching a new project in Sri Lanka.

In July, I met with pastors and bombing survivors, and visited churches. Years ago, I taught at a Bible school in Sri Lanka and remember Buddhist monks disrupting our meetings. Since then, it has gotten much worse.

Rather than arresting the attackers, police blame the Christians. At times, authorities have banned Evangelical churches – which are growing, especially in villages – from holding services. Christians quietly met in homes until they could return to their churches.

Buddhist monks tracked down a well-known pastor's home. They mistook the pastor's neighbor for him. They brutally murdered the neighbor and terrorized the wife and daughter.

But the Easter attacks in 2019 were unlike any other.

They were highly coordinated, simultaneous massacres inspired by Islamic State (IS).

Shockingly, government officials were warned ten days before that

jihadists would target churches. The authorities did nothing. **Some people believe officials ignored the warnings because they regularly ignore attacks on Christians.**

So how are Christians responding?

"Our spiritual lives were awakened," one Christian said.

"The government told churches not to hold services after the bombings," a pastor told me. "I planned to close our church the following week. But my congregation insisted we gather to worship."

Rumors spread that revenge would come on Friday (Muslims' prayer day). But Christians did not retaliate. One politician said Christians showed mercy like Jesus did. A Buddhist leader said if their temples were attacked, they would not respond like the Christians.

Zion Church lost 31 lives. When the suicide bomber arrived, he told the pastor's wife that he really wanted to attend church. A few minutes later, he blew himself up near children who had just finished their Sunday school class. Fourteen children died.

"We are weeping, but God is healing. Our faith has grown stronger," Pastor Roshan said.

At the service I attended, wounded children wore bandages and slings. Some people fear coming back to church.

One mother was still hospitalized with serious brain injuries. After multiple surgeries she is re-learning how to walk and talk. She has a long road of recovery ahead. Will you pray for her and other survivors?

Christian Freedom International's team prayed for her in the hospital. Thanks to our donors, we paid her final hospital bill. Her family is so grateful! We plan to keep helping with her long-term medical care for her injuries from the bombing.

In Sri Lanka, churches are growing in numbers. Christians are growing in faith.

There is one thing they asked for. When I told pastors the many ways Christian Freedom International helps persecuted Christians, they all lit up when I described one item.

Beyond our prayers, the one item on pastors' wish list is: Security cameras.

Let me ask you: Would you feel better going to a Sri Lankan church if it had security?

Even after years of attacks, none of the churches have any security. Every pastor I spoke with asked for cameras.

They say security cameras can prevent attacks. If persecutors know they may be caught on camera, they will be less likely to attack.

If attacks occur, cameras capture evidence to pursue justice. Authorities cannot as easily ignore violence when caught on video.

CCTV camera systems, depending on churches' situations, range from \$170 - \$650. Christian Freedom International is identifying the most vulnerable churches. Would you help save lives and sponsor security cameras for one or more churches?

Your donations to Christian Freedom International help persecuted Christians in many ways like:

- Food for needy Christians
- Schools for persecuted children and young adults
- Bible distributions - and smuggling Bibles into dangerous areas
- Medical care for injured or ill Christians desperately poor due to discrimination
- Jobs for Christian refugees to provide for their families
- Shelters for new Christian converts to hide from extremists trying to hunt them down
- Security for Christians and churches that are targeted by violent radicals.

Our brothers and sisters in Christ live in hostile countries. They endure discrimination, threats, beatings, and worse. Simply because they believe in Jesus.

Your prayers and gifts will encourage them.

Will you stand with them?

Will you help persecuted Christians and churches to survive - and thrive?

For Christ,



Wendy Wright
President

P.S. Christmas is coming up. Churches in Sri Lanka and other hostile places will be filled with believers. Please pray for God

to protect Christians and churches that are targeted by religious extremists.

Your donations will help provide security for vulnerable churches - and food, medicines, Bibles, and more for persecuted Christians.

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Here is one letter from a pastor in Sri Lanka to Christian Freedom International:

From Pastor Nelum:

We first began to hold services in a thatched wooden hut belonging to a Buddhist family where only the mother had heard the Gospel. Within 2 months, there was no room in this little place, the Lord miraculously enabled us to rent a small shop in town.

There were signs and miracles, and the new place too began to fill up. Then the persecution started, organized by one of the largest and most prominent Buddhist temples. We were repeatedly attacked by large mobs, my family threatened with death, and our home with destruction. The threats and persecution continued, but the church grew, glory to God! The attacks were so bad that the police could not handle it. They advised us to move; other Christian leaders advised us to move.

When I inquired from the Lord, He said: "If you move out, you cannot come in again."

I decided to stay with my family and face whatever happened. We now have about 250 believers in spite of all these persecutions. They were all Buddhists whom we have shared the Gospel with.

Two weeks ago, a man came on a motor bike and threatened me and the church. We would be very grateful for the CCTV cameras which is a great necessity at this time.

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Will you give to Christian Freedom International to help persecuted Christians in dangerous countries? Your donations provide food, Bibles, schooling, shelters, jobs, security cameras and much more!