



## **ASIA/INDIA - A former persecutor of Christians and Hindus in Orissa converts and becomes a preacher of the Gospel**

Bhubaneswar (Agenzia Fides) - The story recalls that of St. Paul: Niladri Kanhar, leader of a Hindu village in Orissa, known for his hatred towards Christians and who once persecuted and killed them, has converted to Christianity and, thanks to the testimony and evangelization, is helping the growth of the local Christian community. As Fides sources in the Christian community in Orissa report, Niladri Kanhar converted himself after the healing of his eldest daughter, all the doctors and witch doctors said she would die. The evangelical Pastor Pabitra Kata, led to a divine inspiration to the village, prayed to God for the girl who was "healed in Jesus' name." Since then Niladri Kanhar's family converted to Christianity, began to pray and read the Bible. The former Hindu leader had to deal with persecutions, as the inhabitants of his village beat him up, trying to "bring him back to the Hindu faith", but Kanhar did not give in. Indeed, he continued to pray, testify and preach the Gospel of Christ. The proclamation cost him even accusations of "conversions": Kata and Kanhar are currently in prison on false charges of proselytizing. The same that many times in the past, Niladri Kanhar had accused innocent Christians of. "To proclaim Christianity in some areas of the state of Orissa, crossed by radical Hindu movements, means persecution and violence," says a Fides source. In the state there is a high rate of anti-Christian violence: in 2008 there were mass killings of Christians in Kandhamal district. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 12/5/2012)