



## **ASIA/NEPAL - Christians contest the census of the government**

Kathmandu (Agenzia Fides) - Christians in Nepal have rejected the latest figures released by the Government of Nepal on the religious composition of the population in the Himalayan country. The 2011 Census Report, published in past days by the government, says that Christians in Nepal are 300 thousand, ie 1,4% of the total population.

As reported in a note sent to Fides Agency, the " National Federation of Nepal-Christians," FNCN contest those figures, saying that the number of faithful is approximately 2.5 million.

According to the Secretary General of the Federation, C.B. Gahatraj, the Central Bureau of Statistics "deliberately counted a lower number, since there are only 300 thousand faithful in the Kathmandu valley." Ghataraj remarked that in the country "there are more than 8,500 Christian communities, with therefore more than 2.5 million members." The FNCN, continued the Secretary, is able to provide the government with "precise data and identity of every Christian Nepali, if necessary," announcing protests "if the government does not accept the Christians request, making a necessary correction." The Federation also took the opportunity to invite to implement the six-point agreement reached in May between the government and Christian communities.

Bikash Bista, Deputy Secretary General of the Statistical Office, said that the form delivered to the citizens "left to the respondents the task of writing their own religion." The Report of the census, he said, "is simply the analysis of the data we received." (PA) (Agenzia Fides 14/12/2012)