

2013 August/September trip to Nepal - Summary Report

This recent 3 week trip was particularly intense, involving 14 days teaching at the 4th New Life Bible School in Kathmandu, a two day Church Leader's conference in the region of Pokhara, and visiting and following up the ongoing work at the newly founded "Little Feet Children's Home", in Kathmandu. I simply thank God that I was able to accomplish all that had to be done, in the midst of almost permanent chaos within and beyond the city of Kathmandu.



Bird flu hit the valley just after my arrival necessitating the slaughter of thousands of chickens every day. A little more disconcerting, a week after my arrival the Aviation Authorities of Nepal announced that due to the exceptionally heavy monsoon rains, the runway at the Tribhuvan International Airport was not safe and wide airway carriers were no longer allowed to land. (I did wonder whether I'd be able to get out of the country as the monsoon rains just continued to pour down nearly every day!) Even more disconcerting, towards the end of my stay, a 5 magnitude earth quake occurred in Kathmandu and gave what the news papers said was, "another chilling reminder to the inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley that they live on a serious fault line, raising concerns over the city's poor preparedness to deal with earth-quake disasters"...When the strong tremor jolted just before mid-night, followed by lesser density after-shocks, the majority of valley residents fled their homes to open spaces. (On that particular night, I happened to be out of the valley working in the Pokhara region, but the older children at the orphanage, back in Kathmandu, phoned us around midnight, very frightened and described the events to us. None of the children was harmed.)

All these things appear to hardly disturb the "rat-race" intensity of the city life in the Kathmandu valley. Daily power cuts and seasonal water shortages continue to be the norm. The dust, pollution and humidity in the city were exacerbated by road works everywhere. Entire roads are being ripped up leaving rubble and rubbish in heaps all over the place. (Apparently Japan and China have contracted to widen many of the main roads in and around the city.) A year ago this work was already underway, but this time the situation appears worse. Water pipes lie broken and electricity lines droop precariously, like strands of black spaghetti, from lop-sided poles on the road sides. Pedestrians,



many wearing pollution masks, have to pick their way around or over huge piles of rubble, broken bricks, cement and rubbish, watching out for pot holes and huge monsoon-filled puddles, soggy mounds of mud and sleeping dogs. All the while, traffic somehow streams by on what still remains of the roads, weaving around all the obstacles with amazing dexterity. ("The sacred cows", always having priority, stroll nonchalantly through the black exhaust fumes, winding their way in and out of the traffic jams.)

Getting from A to B in order to earn enough to get through the day is, for the majority of people, the most important priority. It seems extraordinary to me, that still many foreigners come to this city looking for the "dream escape." I find it hard to find anything exotic within such mayhem.

There seems to be little change in the political situation since I was last here. The Maoist rebels are still causing much fear and pressure in the rural communities. The Maoist/communist caretaking government still exists and no one has yet succeeded in writing a new constitution. There is constant in-fighting between the many rival parties (money and power). One of the local news papers summed it up like this, "Our unprincipled and corrupt political leaders agree to hold talks and preach about good governance... but these leaders only talk about consensus and never reach one." Suffice to say that because of all this, a pitiful trail of neglect, poverty, confusion and disorder is apparent at every street corner. An atmosphere of unrest prevails within the city and the political future of Nepal remains uncertain.

The Nepalese people live within this teaming chaos with stoic acceptance. Their lives are propelled along by a relentless rhythm of almost daily festival celebrations of one of the 30 million gods or goddesses worshipped in Nepal. Thousands of poor are constantly drained of the little hard-earned resources they have, as driven by fear and the desire to placate the gods, they spend far beyond their means, in order to keep up with the ever demanding religious rituals. (Huge sums of money go into decorations, materials, jewellery, clothing and food, all required to hold these idol-worshipping festivities.) It is well known that whole families are enslaved by debts incurred by these festivals and often these debts are handed on to the next generation.

The Hindu religious teaching and acceptance of “karma” seems to anesthetise people’s minds and emotions. The phrase, “Khe garne?” is said regularly by Nepalese when faced with challenges. It translates to, “What can we do?” They quietly accept that this is their “lot” in life and still say, “Every day – good day”. But sometimes, I have seen tears in their eyes.

All these things and so much more, make us realise just how important these trips are, and the ongoing work we are involved with in Nepal. The life changing light of the Gospel truly is a pathway to freedom in this very dark place.

The 4th New Life Mission School



There is a very remarkable group of 15 young people at the school this year. They have such a genuine hunger to draw near to God and to learn more from His Word and ardently desire to be witnesses for Him in their different regions and villages. It was a privilege to teach to them and I was hugely encouraged. Most of them have had to make costly decisions in accepting Christ, often being rejected from their families and villages.

This is the 4th school that Pastor Krishna has run. Don and I have had the privilege of helping to initiate, encourage and assist Pastor Krishna in each of these schools in various ways. The aim of these short-term intensive “Bible Training Schools” (4½-5 months duration with an outreach included) is to specifically help train and equip Nepalese “missionaries”. In particular, impoverished Christians, who have a heart and a call to reach others in their remote regions, are selected to attend this small school. Those, who otherwise could never afford to receive such a training, are primarily considered. It is our hope and prayer that these students will become the “Feet” of the Gospel of Peace to the unreached areas of Nepal. Today, there are still many regions to which transportation is unknown. People are used to walking 3 –10 days, often barefooted, from one village to another. Krishna and his team have the desire to eventually reach all the 75 districts of Nepal with the “Good News.”

The Bible School was situated on the outskirts of Kathmandu and we drove out to it each day. (About half an hour drive, depending on the traffic.) Classes, 6 days a week, start at 9am and run through to 5pm with an hour break for lunch. I chose to run a teaching program very similar to last year, focussing on teachings related to the Cross – so central and foundational to our Christian faith. We also explored many vital topics including the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, “spiritual growth”, “God’s love”, “understanding the vital necessity and power of receiving and giving forgiveness”, “humility and servant-hood”, “understanding God’s perfect timing and the inevitability of painful testings, persecutions and periods of pruning”.

In parallel with this teaching, as usual, I taught them what I call a “Visual Tools School” in which I demonstrate how, through the help of various visual tools, they can explain and share the salvation message. Over the years I have made several visual tools/aids to help illustrate the Word of God. These tools are particularly helpful when teaching in countries where there are language barriers, or a high level of illiteracy. (Besides the official language of Nepal there are 34 other dialects and today, about 50% of the population cannot read or write.)



Ganga



The Gospel is a simple message and communicating with simplicity is vital. During this “Visual Tools School” I present about 8 different teaching aids. Many focus on the central Gospel message, and others help illustrate kingdom truths. It is great fun teaching this school to the students. During the time we spent together, the students all made their own visual aids (and after my arrival, as usual, I organised the reproduction of other visual tools for them) and we had fun practising together the different ways of using them. As usual, it was a challenging and rich time. Amidst much laughter and encouragement, the students learnt to use the tools effectively through class demonstration practice times. They will continue to practise using them throughout

the rest of their time at the school and also on the outreach, organised at the close of the school. The days of teaching and sharing with the students were intense and long, but so rich.



Kabita shares on the Triune God

This training school is not only helping to equip these people to be powerful witness of the Gospel of Christ but it is also helping them to rise up out of the horrible slavery and bondage of the caste system which, although legally abolished in Nepal, is overwhelmingly prevalent. Becoming a Christian brings an extraordinary liberation to a Hindu person. Amid much persecution and rejection they are able to gradually embrace the fact that there is no partiality with God and they are empowered to leave behind this divisive and crippling archaic system.

For the first time, there were more women than men at the 2013 school. This was an interesting and encouraging thing to see as there is much gender inequality in Nepal, girls being considered as second class citizens.



Sikka and Seema, sisters from Kavre, shared about the humiliation of women within their rural culture and how they had to overcome much opposition in order to come to the Bible school. Both expressed an ardent desire to teach and preach the gospel in their home locality. They said that they had been much inspired by the fact that I was a woman, and that I was teaching in Nepal.

Kamala and Ganga, two older women from the remote area of Jajarkot (Western Nepal) had had very little possibility of schooling. They both carry remarkable testimonies of how they met the Lord. They both intend to run house churches with their husbands after the training. The opportunity of attending this small school, enabling them to get this Bible training and the visual tools, was something they could never have imagined being possible.

Copal, a young man from Dailekh, (West Nepal), shared how much he had been abused as he was growing up. What he was receiving at the Bible School was powerfully changing him and he intends, when he has finished the course, to return to his village to bring the Word to his Brahmin community.

Nisha, a beautiful young girl from Chitwan, (on the southern border of Nepal, north of India), shared how she had narrowly escaped being transported to India to work in a brothel. She has been profoundly touched by God's love and she desires to serve Him with all her heart wherever He places her.

Ramisha, from a Buddhist and Hindu family, shared that she will have to leave her home after finishing the school as she knows that her family will do everything to try to hinder her from doing what she knows the Lord is calling her to do, "To share the Gospel."

Geeta and Naryan Dhakal, a married couple, have suffered much persecution since they became Christians but against all odds they have decided that they will return to Naryan's village and begin a house church there. (Naryan is handicapped and cannot walk. When he was baptized he went down in the river, under the water, sitting in his wheel chair!)



Geeta and Naryan



The students gave me a gift of their footprints

I share with you only a tiny fraction of some of the stories that they shared during my time with them.

In Nepal there are no mass evangelizing crusades. The life saving Gospel is spread from house to house and from one family to another, by the faithful witnessing of born-again, faith-filled individuals such as these students. Please join with us as we continue to pray that each of them goes out from this school as "a shining light and salt" into the places that God leads them. May they be protected and empowered to carry out His will in the times ahead.

Church leader's conference- Pokhara

The day after I had completed my classes at the school we left Kathmandu for 3 days, to the region of Pokhara, to serve at a leader's conference. Gradually we drove westwards, up out of the Kathmandu valley, leaving behind the thick cloud of pollution and intensity of life in the valley. As we passed over the first range of hills, suddenly before us, stretched a panorama of jagged-edged, rich green mountains, splayed out, one after the other, like the folds of an accordion, ever increasing in height. The wealth of the vegetation and the fresh air was breathtaking and so refreshing after 17 days of being in the city. It seemed like we had entered another world. Bamboo, bananas, maize and rice lined the densely covered hill sides, interspersed with brilliant patches of exotic flowers. In some places every inch of available land was cultivated, with paddy-fields beautifully sculpted out of almost vertical hillsides. As we approached Pokhara it was possible to begin to appreciate the true and unique majesty of the Himalayan Mountains, although they remained mostly shrouded behind a canopy of thick clouds during the 3 days we stayed in the region.





80 to 90 leaders, men and women, came to attend the 2 day meeting, some travelling for up to two days, by foot and by bus, to get there. It was a time of rich encouragement for us all and during the 2 days I had the opportunity to meet up with some of the students of previous “New Life” Mission schools I had taught at. The feedback from them was very positive. One young man, Akoth, a farmer, told me that after the school, he had returned to join his wife and family in his village in the Gorkha region. Now his tiny house church has grown to 60 people. They have built a small stone church building beside their home to house the growing numbers.

Following the earthquake, it took us over 12 hours to drive back to Kathmandu from Pokhara. (A journey, which in normal conditions, should have taken about 5/6 hours.) But the delays were not so much due to the earthquake as to the fact that huge road works were being done to strengthen the crumbling surface. Before we encountered the road works, we had stopped to buy a big basket of freshly caught river fish to take back to the orphanages in Kathmandu. The basket was stored in the back of the small car under a blanket. As time went on, in the sweltering heat of the afternoon, little by little “the sweet aroma of fish” began to fill the car! There



was nothing we could do except keep all the windows open as hour after hour, we waited in the huge traffic jam, crawling up the steep, narrow, winding road leading back into the Kathmandu valley. It was a memorable trip to say the least (!) and it was a miracle that we encountered no accidents on the way as the roads and the driving, are treacherous. This road is one of the main routes into Kathmandu from northern India and it was jam-packed with heavy lorries and over-loaded buses. On our arrival, Krishna and Shiva had to work well into the night cleaning and washing all the fish! It was certainly a successful and “fishy” trip!

The “Little Feet Children’s Home”, Kathmandu-Nepal

It was with much pleasure and joy that I was able to visit and follow-up the ongoing work in the recently founded “Little Feet Children’s Home”.

During my trip last year, the seeds for this new home were sown in several different ways and with the participation of Pastor Krishna Pariyar, in Kathmandu, the “Little Feet Children’s Home” was founded in February 2013. With the help of funds specifically raised by New Dawn Association, the basic necessities for the new home were provided. Initially 3 children were taken in from impoverished remote areas of Nepal and now, in September 2013, there are 8 young children in the



home. Today, due to administration requirements, the home has been officially registered in the Jorpati, Kathmandu district, (having originally begun in the Lalitpur district.) There are 5 girls and 3 boys with ages ranging from 6 to 12 years. They are all enrolled and attending a good local school. It was lovely to meet and spend time with the children. They were happy and interested in all that was going on and because English is the language used in all the schools in Nepal, I was able to communicate with each child.



The orphanage is located in a rented building in a busy street of the Jorpati district of Kathmandu. It has ample space for all the children, however, it is hoped that in the future, another more suitable building may be found closer to their school.

I took with me and placed while I was there, monies that had been specially raised and donated for this work.

During my stay, I arranged to have wooden clothes lockers made for the girl's and the boy's rooms which were finished and installed while I was there. Also, clothes hanging stands and hangers were bought, enabling the children to hang up their school uniforms neatly, when they return to the home after classes. Also, with donated funds, a toy box was bought for the home and filled with some books, toys, colouring books and pens, and posters to put on the walls.

One afternoon, I had the pleasure of taking them all on a shopping expedition, during which each child had the opportunity to choose a new set of much-needed clothes and a pair of new shoes.



Labelling (above) and filling the new lockers



Trying on new shoes

This was a very exciting time for them and great fun. It was also possible, with donated funds, to buy good quality new school bags for each child and



fully equipped pencil cases. A lunchtime treat was also organised including a big, specially ordered cake, with cookies, bananas and sweet drinks. Needless to say, the children were delighted with all these activities and very grateful.

I also took the opportunity to visit the children's school, founded by an Australian Charity. Amazingly, this school happens to be a Christian school and this is quite a rare thing in Nepal. The curriculum is that of a

normal Nepalese school and is open to all local children but it is clear that Christian values are interwoven in the daily activities. In view of the fact that the Nepalese children spend a huge percentage of their time at school this fact alone is encouraging, for the children will be largely sheltered from much of the overwhelming religious Hindu practices. It appears to be an excellent school and remarkably well equipped with



Out shopping, "wearing the new school bags"

exceptional facilities, including a library, a fully equipped kinder-garden play room, a music room, a computer work room with 18 computers and a medical dispensary. All the children at the Little Feet Home attend different classes in this school. They have a 6 day week and a school bus collects them in the morning and brings them back to the home in the afternoon. (Unlike the Hindu schools, which have Saturdays as their weekly holiday, at this Christian school, Sunday has been preserved as the weekly holiday.)

The poverty in this country is truly shocking and the needs overwhelming both in the densely populated Kathmandu valley and the remote areas. We want to thank everyone who has helped or is still helping to regularly support this new home. It is truly dramatically changing the lives of 8 small children, some of whom would have most likely been engulfed in the huge "reseau" of clandestine child trafficking, (child slavery and prostitution) which exists between Nepal and India.

In October 2013, with the kind help of Charlotte Sullivan, we will be posting a new, up-dated page on the "Little Feet Children's Home" on the web-site.

If anyone would like any extra information about this work please contact us directly at donjennie@wanadoo.fr

Any further donations to support the on-going work in Nepal can be channelled through New Dawn Association Charity. Please see details on the web site: a-newdawn.org or contact us directly. (The web page concerning donations for the work in Nepal will be also up-dated in October, to embrace the expansion of this work.)



Solina, Ayuhma and Priskila with Jennie



Krishna and Pabitra

In closing, it is worth remembering that it has only been during the last 5 decades (and amidst great persecution) that the life-giving message of the Gospel has been penetrating this population of over 22 million people. Only since 1990, when a democratic government was established with a constitutional monarchy, has there been a certain amount of religious tolerance, but the law forbidding evangelising leading to conversion from Hinduism has not been abolished. (For reasons of discretion, none of the detailed summary reports about the ongoing work in Nepal are being posted on the web-site. However, all information is available, on request by contacting us at : donjennie@wanadoo.fr Of course, general information concerning the work in Nepal will continue to be posted.)

It is probable that I will return again to Nepal in April 2014, to teach at the 5th Mission Bible School and follow up the work at the orphanage. Don and I would like to thank all those who have helped support this trip, either by donating to the on-going work in Nepal and/or for prayer support.

It is a wonderful thing for us all to be able to be part of God's ongoing plan of mercy and grace throughout the world. We are seeing before our very eyes the fulfilment of Jesus' prophetic words spoken over 2000 years ago, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Matt.24:14)



"The harvest is truly plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest." (Matt.9:37,38)

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