

Prayer Letter

July 2009

Greetings from a hot and humid Kathmandu. It is now 20 June and the monsoon should have started ten days ago but is still on its way northward so we continue to swelter. There was an extremely heavy shower yesterday afternoon so the air is a little clearer today.



The three months since I last wrote have been ones of change in UMN. We have a new Executive Director, Mark Galpin, who is from the UK and was previously with INF (International Nepal Fellowship) so he has a good understanding of the culture and speaks Nepali well. He and his family are settling in quickly. They were able to attend the General Assembly in May where most of our supporting missions send representatives. Margaret Gibbs from BMS World Mission was here and was able to visit or meet up with most of the BMS workers in Nepal. We were grateful that although the Prime Minister resigned at the beginning of the week everything remained peaceful and meetings and visits to clusters were able to take place. Three of our most senior UMN colleagues have ended their terms here and several experienced Nepali colleagues have left to continue their education overseas or to obtain promotion with other organisations in Nepal.

We are working hard to keep up with the work. Alan especially continues to work long hours but the financial situation is improving. UMN has recently found two new donors. The Australian Baptist World Aid (BWAA) is supporting one of our partners who are improving health and hygiene in one of the villages where they work. BWAA is also holding a conference in Kathmandu to launch their new children's programme in Asia and Alan will be meeting with them as their programme aimed at helping poor and marginalised children is similar to one of UMN's and



so he is exploring whether there is opportunity to work together. UMN is also close to signing a large agreement to start a new newborn and maternal health programme in two or the poorest districts in the Far West high hills and mountain region.

We did manage to get away for a night to the edge of the valley where the air is clean. No mountains visible but it was great to be up in the clouds and able to marvel at creation and escape the polluted city.

Jennie Collins our previous ED finished her term here immediately after the General Assembly. A farewell was held in the UMN garden with many representatives from other organisations attending. All the different UMN teams gave a presentation with singing, poetry etc. Alan led his team of him and four young ladies in a very funny skit including the song Goodbye. The facilities team gave her two doves to release to signify peace in Nepal. As you can see from the photo they decided to stay for the rest of the programme. Jennie handed on to Mark the special Bible that has all the passages about caring



for the poor and underprivileged marked with coloured ribbon. There are a lot of them.

UMN marked Environment Day at the beginning of June by giving everyone a plant for his or her windowsill or garden. Many schools marked the day by marching through the two cities



Environment Day

carrying placards about energy saving, deforestation etc. Education on such issues is beginning to make a difference. Young people are learning about caring for themselves and their country and passing on the message to their communities. We pray that they will see a change for the good as they move into the workplace and the political arena.

Anne visited a small Christian-run school this week where another BMS friend is helping out. It is serving a working class community on the edge of Kathmandu. She was very impressed with the way that it was run and the level of attainment of the children. Although the children arrive speaking only Nepali or perhaps Newari as well, it is an English medium school where all lessons are in English. In order to get a good job here it is essential that you are proficient in English. The school is called the Good Shepherd School and takes children from aged three. The eldest at the moment are in class nine and aged up to 15.



Good Shepherd School

There are just three girls in this class who were in a maths lesson when Anne visited making an excellent job of solving simultaneous quadratic equations!

The country is very unsettled at the moment with the Maoists now in opposition. There is disagreement over the two armies; the official one and the People's Army who are now in United Nations ratified camps. It is difficult to see humanly speaking how the situation will be resolved peacefully. There are an increasing number of strikes when roads, shops and schools are closed and an increase too in lawlessness, kidnappings and robberies. A small extremist

group wants the country to return to being a Hindu state and a bomb was set off at the Saturday morning service at the large Catholic church killing three people and badly injuring at least 20 more. All churches are now taking extra security precautions.

Still, as we continually say, we wouldn't want to be anywhere else at present. We will miss our friends, especially those from BMS, who are returning to the UK but thanks to the prayer support of the 'home team' we continue to marvel that we can make a contribution to the work here.

Thank you for your support

Anne and Alan

Give thanks for

- ◆ The provision of a new Executive Director
- ◆ The improvement in the financial situation
- ◆ New opportunities for work with women's and children's health

Please pray for

- ◆ Preparations being made for a new Strategy Plan and subsequent new agreement with the Government
- ◆ Political parties being able to work together for the good of the country
- ◆ A good monsoon so that the rice crop will be sufficient to feed the people

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