

AGRICULTURAL EVANGELISM

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor"



Update on Nepal • April 2005

Bangladesh • Guatemala • Haiti • India • Moldova • Nepal • Niger • Philippines • Rwanda • Senegal • Thailand • Vietnam

Nepal at a Crossroads!

Rocked by strikes, demonstrations, and an ongoing communist insurgency, Nepal faces difficult choices to ensure its future. Home of majestic Mount Everest, this tiny Hindu kingdom is struggling for its very survival. In recent decades, many attempts to

establish a democratic multiparty government have failed, or have been short lived. In 1991, the Nepali Congress Party

won the first democratic elections. This new government survived only until 1994, when new elections led to a communist government. In 1995, it too was dissolved and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) began an armed insurrection aimed at abolishing the monarchy and establishing a people's communist republic.

Political instability followed and by 2000, nine governments had come and gone. In April of 2001, a general strike was called by the Maoist rebels that brought the country to a virtual standstill. Then, on June 1, nearly the entire royal family was killed in a shooting spree by the drunken Crown Prince Dipendra,



The Late Crown Prince Dipendra

who also shot himself. In the confusion, the apparent new heir to the

throne, Crown Prince Dipendra, the king's son, was immediately crowned only to die of self-inflicted shooting wounds a day later. On June 4, 2001, Prince Gyanendra, the King's brother, was crowned King of Nepal. He continues to serve as king.



King Gyanendra

King Gyanendra, in response to violent attacks by the Maoists in 2002 that killed hundreds, dissolved the parliament and called for new elections. In January 2003, the government and rebels declared a ceasefire, but by August, the rebels pulled out of the peace talks and declared another general strike.



Prime Minister Deuba

Various prime ministers have served, but again in February 2005, King Gyanendra dismissed Prime Minister Deuba and his government and declared a state of emergency, assuming direct power. His stated need for doing so was to defeat the Maoist rebels.

Present situation:

This April, former Prime Ministers Deuba and Koirala were released from arrest along with 258 other activists. The US had given an April 8, ultimatum to the King to release all remaining political prisoners, but as of this writing this has not hap-



Prime Minister Koirala

pened. Presently, major encounters with the rebels have resulted in large numbers of rebel casualties. The US ambassador to Nepal said recently, *"The Maoists have made it clear that they are not interested in talking."*

History of the Christian church in Nepal:

Operation World reports: No Christian was officially allowed to live in Nepal before 1960. By 1990, there was a measure of religious freedom to worship, but not to proselytize. [Yet the church has shown thrilling growth.] The first group was formed in 1959 with 29 Christians. By 1985, there were about 50,000 believers. At the climax of persecution in 1990, there were 200,000. By 2000, there were 400,000; some estimate even 500,000 in 3,000 or more congregations! **The secret:**

prayer, willingness to suffer for Jesus, dynamic Nepali initiative in evangelism and church planting, and God's miracle-working power.

Persecution of Christians is severe:

The believers in Nepal face harassment and persecution from several sectors. Even though the constitution allows some religious

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Nepal countryside



Nepal's future

(Update on Nepal – continued)

freedom, Hindu and Buddhist extremists have made life very difficult for Christians **by destroying churches and property.** Hindu extremists have declared, " ...*(we) will shed blood to protect Hinduism in Nepal*". On top of all that, Maoists have been a primal ideological foe of Christians and have made life very dangerous for believers, especially in rural areas. General strikes have made travel and assembly extremely difficult. Yet, Christians are bravely counting the costs and evangelism and training are on going.

The work of FARMS in Nepal:

FARMS began three loan programs in Nepal in 2003. Because of the political instability and the ongoing insurgency, even our work there has been difficult. In fact, one of our programs has had its implementation delayed due to rebel activity. Yet, two of our programs are fully operational. However, even these face difficulty because of restrictions on assembly and travel.

For its own long-term survival and health, the Nepalese church needs to be self-supported. Well-intentioned church aid poured into this tiny country as the doors of religious freedom

opened. This influx of aid from the "West" has had good as well as bad affects. For instance, a recent survey of pastors indicated that only a few churches, out of the estimated 3,000, support their pastors. Pastors there routinely look for outside support, which in the long run is devastating! Sadly, outside aid has created dependency in many churches.



Carpentry is always a good business



Shoe making is a good business. This man paid his first loan and is using a second to expand his business.



Straw art talent is used by this family in a Bible craft business.

Even though Nepal is one of the poorest countries in Asia, we and our partners believe our program will become a vivid example of God's provision for his church through local stewardship.

Even amidst the many difficulties facing the country and the church, many families have been



These women are new borrowers. They are doing hand weaving of fabric to be used for scarves, saris, and for local dressmaking. One customer is an exporter.



helped with loans for income generation projects. The tithing from these project holders has already helped their churches. Pray with us for an expansion of these programs in the near future.

Recent notes from two of our committees in Nepal:

Dear Joe,

Greetings in the name of the Lord from***** Nepal. We have twenty recipients of FARMS loans ranging from 6000 NC to 40,000/-NC. Most of them are doing fine, and only few of them are finding difficult to pay back in installment. Most of them have taken [loans] for buffalo and goat rearing projects and they are doing fine. The giving in the church is better than before. A recent visit to project holders was postponed, because of the travel



The couple in the center now employ three other tailors in their business.

blockades in our country, Nepal. Rest is fine, we are planning to support more of our believers in a month or two with the money we have in Bank.

Please pray for the loan recipients and their return of money. Please remember also our committee members. Thanks.

Yours in Christ,
NT



Dear brother Joe,

God bless you. How are you doing? You may have heard what is going on in Nepal. Nepal is going from bad to worse. Yes, we are able to email you now. It was shut down for a while and phones, and internet, cable, cell phones, banks and even the airport was shut down. Cell phones still don't operate. The king has taken over and announced emergency that means the people now have no rights.

On the other hand the Maoist rebels are still committing horrible murders and extortion and terror. Now our second church has been shut down. Our preachers were told not to come again in ***** village. They went any way next week to have services but went another route. If they had gone the same route, they would have been kidnapped by the rebels. They were waiting with guns. So, from that week we are not able to go to that village. They (Maoists) are digging trenches and holes in the village.

Please continue to pray for Nepal.

Love in Christ,
A T

Prayer requests:

Yes, do pray for peace to come to Nepal. Pray that a political settlement will be forthcoming. Pray for strength of these many new believers and for a cessation of open hostility. Pray that the church in Nepal will learn to be self-supporting. Pray for success and growth of the FARMS loan programs.

Meet the FARMS Board of Trustees

FARMS is served by a wonderful Board of Trustees. This board gives direction and oversight to the ministry of FARMS. Each member is a committed Christian and comes with various ministry, professional and academic backgrounds.

Dr. Bryan Duncan, President, has been on the FARMS Board of Trustees since 1993. He had been a supporter of FARMS since the late 1970s. When his good friend Joe Richter was asked by the board of trustees to consider becoming executive director of FARMS, Bryan was invited to join the board.

Since that time Bryan and Joe have worked together. They have had the privilege of

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Olga, Bryan & Isa

Free FARMS DVD

If you did not receive a free DVD from FARMS, please call or e-mail us. This is a great way for you to see the work of FARMS (live on-site footage) and to share it with friends and your church. If you know of others that would like to receive a free copy, please send us that information.

Note: We want to thank all of you that have shared the names of your mission minded friends with us so that we could introduce FARMS to them. If you have not done this as yet, please take this opportunity to do so. Your friends will receive a no obligation information packet about the self-help ministry of FARMS. This is a very cost effective way to help the poor of God's kingdom.





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***Doing good
that is good!***

(Board of Trustees – continued)

participating with others, including generous and faithful donors, board members and staff, in the growth and development of FARMS, that has remained true to the vision of Gareth Miller, FARMS' founder.

Bryan is professor of aquatic resources at Auburn University in Alabama, and is director of Auburn's International Center for Aquaculture and Aquatic Environments. He has had work assignments in more than 40 countries, and lived in Southeast Asia (Indonesia and the Philippines) for more than seven years.

He and his wife Judith, who was from the Philippines, have 3 children, all of whom have families (seven grandchildren plus one coming!) and are practicing their chosen professions (doctorates in medicine, physics and clinical pharmacy). Judith passed away several years ago. Recently Bryan has remarried (Olga from Brazil) and now has a fourth child, Isadora, age eleven. The Lord willing, Bryan hopes to retire from fulltime work in the near future and devote more time to his interests, especially the ministry of FARMS.

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