

March 08 Nepal

I have just returned from my seventeenth visit to Nepal. My old passport was so filled with Nepali visas that I was once asked by the immigrations officer why I didn't just move there. Since my new passport was issued just after my last visit and this trip's visa would be the first one, I thought that I would avoid some of the usual questions about why I was coming back so often. Instead, the officer asked me the same old question with a new slant, "Is this the first time you have been in Nepal this year?" I guess that they have become so accustomed to admitting me to the country that they are expecting me to show up all the time.

Over the years that I have been visiting the country, I have seen some remarkable changes. I've watched the country go through political upheaval with the assassination of the entire royal family and the Maoist-led civil insurgency. I've seen environmental issues addressed with the removal of the heavily polluting auto-rickshaws, which were once the mainstay of transportation in Kathmandu. I've observed the economic advancement of the people from year to year, evidenced in the changes in the way they are able to dress. I've watched a younger, more educated generation move into leadership, obvious from the greater percentage of folks who can communicate in English and the fact that almost everyone now takes notes in the teaching sessions--something that was unheard of when I first began my missions in their country. I've seen the church prosper and flourish with large, beautiful, new buildings--most of them with sound systems and other modern equipment. With the recent removal of the monarchy and implementation of a democratic secular government, I have seen abolition of Nepal's recognition as the world's only Hindu kingdom.

This past December, the nation of Nepal passed two significant milestones in its attempt to enter the twenty-first century with recognition of human rights and freedoms--one good, and one not so good. This past Christmas was the first in the history of Nepal which was recognized as a legal holiday; however, just days before the Christian celebration another group of Nepali was celebrating another legalization, the decimalization of homosexuality. In fact, the Supreme Court went so far as to rule in favor of recognizing an additional category so that individuals who do not wish to identify themselves as male or female can classify themselves as "third gender."

On April 10, Nepal will take what should be another giant step forward toward becoming a functional democracy as they hold a long-awaited free election. Please pray that the nation will go through this

vote peacefully. When I was in the country on previous election days, I witnessed the country under martial law with all vehicles ordered off the road in order to deter violence. Let's also agree that the right men with the right motives will get into the right positions. As evidenced by the two decisions which were made last December, it is possible for the attempts at democratic rule to have both positive and negative impact.

The primary purpose for this most recent visit to Nepal was to attend a meeting with the Every Home for Christ leadership from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. It was an excellent opportunity to get to know some of these leaders on a more personal level and to discuss how Teach All Nations can be involved in their countries. It appears that I will be returning to Sri Lanka and India before the end of the summer and that several of my teaching manuals will soon be translated and made available in these countries. Following the close of the conference, I taught a two-day seminar for pastors and leaders. On the first day, approximately, a hundred and twenty delegates were present. On the following day, about thirty additional students from a local Bible college joined the class. When the call was given for those who had not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, at least forty leaders and students responded and came forward for prayer. One pastor--in fact, the young man who interpreted for me in one of the sessions--later emailed me to say that this conference had been a life-changing experience for him. He had come to the meetings with real questions in his heart as to what his calling and purpose were to be. During the time of prayer after the meetings, he received a clear vision of his ministry and is now ready to fulfill it. I can imagine that that same testimony would be multiplied many times over if the other delegates at the conference were only able to communicate with me. My last ministry before returning to the States was to preach at the large "mother church" in Kathmandu where a minimum of 1,500 celebrated the Lord's Day and participated in the Lord's Supper. My friend Minister Potatohead, who had such a good experience on our recent trip to Haiti and the Dominican Republic, shared with the precious folks in the service from Matthew 13:15-16, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear." He taught them that they must have their eyes and ears attuned to the Word of God because what we hear and see goes directly to their hearts to influence your spiritual condition.

More and more doors are opening for TAN publications to be translated into the languages of the nations where we are working. We presently have requests for our teachings to be translated and published in Burma, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Niger as well as for additional materials to be made available in Nepal. We are, of course more than willing to share any and all our teachings with the world--that is our calling. However, the needs far exceed our physical resources--but not our heavenly reserve. As I always love to say, "If it's His will, it's His bill." We would request that you pray with us for wisdom as we make the decisions of what materials to translate and publish in each language and as we allocate funding for the various projects. We would also welcome your gifts if you would like to be part of helping us make these materials available to the pastors and leaders around the world.