

AUGUST 2017



**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again:
Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The
Lord is near.
[Ephesians 4:4-6]**

Dear Friends

When we're going through a difficult or challenging time, the last thing we want to be told is to rejoice. My instinctive response has often been, "do I have to?" But Paul is persistent. He repeats himself. We might be tempted to say, "if you knew what I was going through you wouldn't expect me to rejoice." We can't use that argument with Paul though, because he's been through the mill -imprisoned, flogged, stoned, shipwrecked, sleep deprived, hungry, sick and persecuted. If such a man thinks we should be rejoicing through our trials we should pay heed to what he has to say.

The Lord is Near

This little phrase which almost seems to creep into the passage unremarked is actually the core issue. The very fact that the Lord is near gives us cause to rejoice. Whatever is going on we have not been abandoned by Him. He is present with us. Sometimes we find that hard to believe. That is precisely when we should rejoice because the Lord is enthroned on the praises of His people [Psalm 22:3]. When we rejoice we become more aware of His presence.

With love,

Lynda Scotson

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Reg. Charity No. 1047178

HEALTH AGREEMENT SIGNED

In order to continue our vital health work, INF has to have a Health Agreement with the Nepali government. This has to be renegotiated and signed every five years. After considerable delays, the latest agreement was signed on 13 June.

INF has always worked in agreement with the government. This has enabled INF to bring experienced and specialist medical personnel into the country. Patients have received excellent treatment and care, and local medical staff have been given opportunities to learn new skills.

We are grateful to God for the signing of the agreement, and for the opportunities it will bring to demonstrate God's love to Nepali people.

Please pray:

- that visas will be granted quickly under this agreement
- that Green Pastures will be able to register as a Hospital

CHANGING WOMEN'S LIVES

Chinchali is nearly 60 and lives in Rolpa district, a remote hilly part of Nepal. She married at 14 and gave birth to her first baby without any problem, a little boy who brought her great happiness.

Three years later the birth of her second child was very different. After six days of strong pains she was not able to deliver the baby and it was stillborn. The difficult birth had damaged her so that her urine started to leak uncontrollably. Family life changed. Chinchali's husband left for a second wife, taking Chinchali's son with them.

Then, one day, while listening to the radio, Chinchali heard about the fistula camp organised by INF at the Mid-Western Regional Hospital in Surkhet. Her niece went with her and Chinchali found herself in a ward full of women suffering in the same way she was. Six days later she had surgery to close the fistula.

INF's Shirley Heywood is the surgeon who treats women like Chinchali. Her vision of a specialist Fistula Centre where women can get help all year round is becoming a reality.

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Recently the roof was put on and it is hoped the centre will open by the end of the year. Kripa, Dil, and Gyan are members of Shirley's team. Gyan has just joined and will be visiting communities and schools to increase awareness of fistula.

We are grateful to God that women are receiving the treatment they need in order to have their lives restored.

Please pray:

- for the safety of workers at the building site in Surkhet
- for the timely completion of the fistula centre
- for Shirley to know God's presence with her at work and in times of relaxation
- for the fistula team, especially for Gyan who is learning a new role

MONSOON

August sees the height of the monsoon season with about 13 inches of rain falling in Kathmandu during the month. Temperatures can rise as high as 28 degrees Celsius. Humidity levels are high making the climate quite uncomfortable both during the day and at night. Mosquitos abound.

In hilly regions rain-soaked hillsides slip, especially in areas affected by the 2015 earthquakes, and where there has been deforestation. Every year people die in landslides and homes are devastated.

But monsoon is a blessing to Nepali agriculture. Without it rice, Nepal's staple food, would not grow. As pre-monsoon showers fall, farmers plough the fields and dig irrigation channels for the rice paddies. When the monsoon rains come in force, they begin to plant their rice seedlings, ready for harvest in the autumn. Each year the average Nepali consumes 78kg of rice, so about half of all agricultural production is dedicated to growing this crop and about three quarters of the population are involved in some way.

We are grateful to God for the life-giving rains of the monsoon season.

Please pray:

- that there will be a fruitful harvest in the autumn

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- that farmers will be able to profit from their labour
- that landslides will not devastate communities
- that transport will not be adversely affected by the heavy rains
- that villagers will give thanks to the true God of creation rather than false Nepali gods

LANDSLIDES IN POKHARA

Heavy and persistent rain caused several landslides in Pokhara on 2 July. Four people lost their lives and hundreds of others, including Christians, have been made homeless. Neighbours and local churches are offering shelter and relief.

Landslides are common during monsoon, but have begun early this year putting many communities at risk in the coming weeks. The temporary shelters of 11 families from Dhading, who had sought refuge after the 2015 earthquake, were significantly damaged. Many were sound asleep in their beds when the landslide hit and had to be pulled from the mud.

INF/UK's partner, Asal Chhimekee Nepal, have been providing blankets and safe places to sleep at night along with food and gas for cooking. There is also a need to help communities repair and stabilise roads and bridges which have been damaged by landslides or floods as a result of the torrential rains.

One of the landslides affected the farm at Green Pastures Hospital. About 700 square yards of pasture collapsed into the Seti River. No staff or patients were affected but large cracks in the land pose a serious ongoing concern.

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

John Reynolds [CEO, INF/UK] recently visited the victims of the landslide. One woman showed John how the landslide had hit the rear wall of a bedroom where her son was asleep when the disaster struck. It was the dead of night and pitch black as it was raining hard. Mud flooded in and covered them quickly.

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Sadly, her 15 year-old boy couldn't be rescued in time. The woman's sister was found up to her waist in mud but was brought to safety and survived. John said, "*The mud splattered bed of the lad was standing outside - very poignant and sad - the lady looked so sad and forlorn, it was her only child.... Some of the donations from our supporters will replace the chickens she lost [her only source of income]. Some of the church youth will help clear the house of mud and repair the chicken house.*"

None of the family are Christians but the sister chose to go to church last weekend and said she found a sense of peace through it. As John and Raju were leaving the lady who had lost her son gave a cucumber to Raju and the other ACN worker to say "thank you".

We are grateful to God that ACN has responded so quickly to provide help for the families affected.

Please pray:

- for God's comfort for those who have lost loved ones or homes
- for satisfactory temporary shelter for those who need it
- for wisdom for those responsible for assessing the damage at Green Pastures and deciding on any action that needs to be taken to protect lives in the future
- for preventative measures to reduce the risks of future landslides

NEPALIS IN THE UK AND EUROPE

The world is changing around us, it seems, it is happening faster than we think. In the same way doing mission is also changing. In the past people were familiar with missionaries going mostly from the west to East and African countries. In those days people didn't migrate to other countries.

Nowadays, a significant amount of people from Asian, Africa and other places moved to Europe to settle down, for one reason or another. In the same way we see a lot Nepali people living here in the UK or in neighbouring countries.

Many people who left Nepal were looking for a better future for their family. But often

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they find themselves in very vulnerable positions and at risk of exploitation or poor working conditions. They need help and support to settle into a new way of life and a foreign culture.

INF is committed to come alongside Nepali people, no matter where they live. Abraham, a Nepali pastor from Northern Ireland, has been working with INF for many years. His ministry is growing rapidly, reaching as far as Scandinavia and the Middle East.

His work involves evangelism, supporting independent Nepali fellowships, encouraging the establishment of new Nepali fellowships, and providing pastoral care and mentoring. Nepali Churches and fellowships in the UK and other European countries continue to grow, with new ones being regularly established. Abraham works with 30 Nepali fellowships and Churches in the UK, and seven groups outside the UK. They are growing in maturity as well as numbers.

Richard and Joyce Odell have been an invaluable support to this ministry for many years, but have recently decided to retire as facilitators of the UK Nepal Network. They will be greatly missed.

We are grateful to God for the growth of the Nepali church in the UK and Europe, and for Pastor Abraham and his skills

Please pray:

- that Abraham will have wisdom as he helps Nepali church leaders pastor their congregations
- that Nepali Christians will be able to reach out to those in their community who have not yet come to faith

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