

Pippa and Toby Vokuhl

मीठो हावा - MITO HAUA - SWEET BREEZE

June 2024



www.bmsworldmission.org/ptvokuhl

Sitting in my home office in Kathmandu I feel the gentle summer breeze (mito hua, in Nepali) waft in through the open window. Following much needed rainfall the air quality here, which had been record-breakingly bad for several months, has finally improved. I make the most of the pleasant morning temperatures, in the knowledge that soon it will be hot and sticky here with the arrival of the monsoon season. I also take in the news that the UK Met Office is predicting one of the wettest summers ever in the UK, and deliberate which might be the preferred 'evil' as far as the weather is concerned. In any case, our flights are booked, and we will spend June and July in the UK, whatever the weather.

Winds of change

During our last newsletter we alluded to upcoming changes in the shape of the conclusion of our BMS placement and INF secondment here in Nepal. In late April we had a wonderful farewell ceremony at Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara, with plenty of opportunities to reflect back on shared projects and objectives with Nepali colleagues, celebrating over six years of working together. It is amazing to think that our youngest daughter was three years old when we arrived in 2018, and that she just turned ten in March, having spent most of her childhood in Nepal. From my (Toby's) perspective, it was wonderful to hear from my line manager, INF Nepal's Executive Director Krishna Adhikari, that the physical structures created with my input, the masterplanning guidance provided, and the investment in INF staff, are expected to benefit the NGO for many years to come. I am not one for wearing the traditional Nepali 'Topi' (hat) on a regular basis, but when presented with this by the NGO's leadership, one had better comply! (photo below). I particularly loved hearing back from my Nepali Engineering Team colleagues Bishal and Suviksha, and have high hopes for good

quality outputs from that office going forward. Do continue to pray for them, for the ongoing infrastructure development at INF, and the current focus on improving Banke and Surkhet hospital sites.



Fast as the wind

Farewell events inevitably foster reflection, and it so happens that a number of wheelchair user linked events particularly stood out for us during the last year. The most recent event was the Bikash Shield National Wheelchair Basketball competition in Pokhara, which saw Nepali wheelchair users race across the pitch at quite staggering speeds, displaying incredible ball, as well as wheelchair control. It was wonderful to see nine mens teams and six womens teams from all seven provinces compete in the INF staff supported competition. The event was run by Sundar Dhoka Sathi Sewa, an organization wonderfully active in disability work and rehabilitation, and an NGO which Pippa is strengthening her links with.

Given INF's vision of enabling fullness of life for poor and marginalised people in Nepal, Green Pastures Hospital also hosted the 'Wheels for Nepal' project by Joni and Friends USA, and Sundar Dhoka Sathi Sewa, a while back in 2023. Not only was training and orientation provided to volunteers and church leaders, but over 150 mobility-impaired people were blessed with expertly fitted wheelchairs and assistive devices. What a difference that made to individuals who had suffered ill fitting and old equipment in a country where topography and infrastructure status pose daily challenges to mobility impaired persons. Praise God for the joy and delight fostered, and pray for a successful 2024 wheelchair camp.

collaborate well with local wards, and would international funding bodies align their objectives and funds with local initiatives.



People affected by the earthquake receiving their packages



Thermal convection

Tourism has returned to Pokhara after the Covid-19 lull, and hot air balloons now allow tourists in Pokhara to experience the valley and the nearby mountains from a unique vantage point. In Jajarkot however, only a few hundred kilometers away, hot air is not beneficial at all and the warming weather is causing problems in that post-earthquake setting. Thousands of families still live in very hot and uncomfortable corrugated sheet metal shelters, following the November 2023 earthquake there, which rendered thousands of houses uninhabitable. Awaiting reconstruction assistance from the state, many families continue to live in very unfavourable conditions, affecting health and wellbeing of vulnerable household members. Do pray for a speedy finalization and roll-out of a reconstruction grant system, for NGOs such as INF to put in place solid assistance programmes for the shelter and reconstruction phases. Would they

Jet stream

Before we know it we will find ourselves in a metal tube at high altitude and en-route to our deputation time in the UK (9th June). We are looking forward to an initial family holiday and are also really excited about connecting with many of our link churches whilst we are in the UK. If you are near any of these venues and would like to join us, we would love to see you there!

23rd June Watchet Baptist Church, Somerset, 10.30am (service held at Knights Templar School, TA23 0EX)

30th June Stratford Upon Avon Baptist Church, 10.30am

1st July evening, INF prayer meeting, Bristol

7th July Headington Baptist Church, Oxford, 10.30am

7th July Dagnall Street Baptist Church, St Albans, 4pm

14th July Basford Road Baptist Church, Nottingham, 10.30am

17th July Kay Street Baptist Church, Rossendale, evening

21st July Billingham Baptist church, Stockton-on-Tees, 10.30am

24th July Elmswell Baptist Church, Bury St Edmunds, 11.00am

28th July Abbey Baptist Church, Reading, 10.30am

We are really looking forward to connecting with a good number of our supporting churches and are sad that the short time we have in the UK (school term dates, and other factors apply) means that we cannot manage to visit all congregations who requested an in-person visit. Where the former is impossible we would still love to send a greeting or video message, so do let us know about your needs.

We really value prayer for this upcoming time, primarily to communicate well how we have seen God at work in Nepal, and also to celebrate our time of partnership with UK churches and individuals, based on a shared passion for seeing God's Kingdom come in Asia.

Do pray for all the logistics involved in planning and conducting our visits, and please pray for Jakey, Ella and Millie, as the deputation work contributes to transition and change for them.

As a family, we are delighted that following prayerful deliberation our Nepal journey is not coming to an end yet, and that there are further visa and work opportunities ahead for us in Nepal from August/September 2024. This is in partnership with Interserve GBI, and in support of a well established Nepali Anti-Human-Trafficking organisation, who urgently require new facilities to be

constructed (safe houses, school, vocational training centre), in order to serve survivors of human trafficking sustainably into the future. We invite your prayer into all aspects of transitioning, and into the commencement of new Kathmandu-based work after the summer.

Having celebrated Pentecost in our local church only very recently, I am reminded that the Spirit of God moved like the wind to empower feeble and regularly despairing disciples to speak boldly and to act boldly in their generation and in their area of influence. The Nepali term 'mito haua' in my mind fits very well here, a sweet and gentle breeze, appreciated by those who are touched by it.

Would that gentle Spirit also instruct and empower you and us to be all that God has called us to be, in the environment in which He has placed us, come rain, come shine, come monsoon, or come the wettest British summer in history.

See you soon in the UK.

Much love from Toby, Pippa, Jakey, Ella, and Millie

Image credits: All images courtesy of INF Nepal

If you would like to support Pippa and Toby Vokuhl by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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