

WAVELENGTH

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In This Issue:

- Earthquake Response
- Church Planting
in Nepal
- Singing the Scriptures
- Baptism in India



WORDS
OF
HOPE

Good News.
No Boundaries.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

I first met Words of Hope's Nepali Director Arbin Pokharel several years ago at a hotel in New Delhi, India. He had come down from Nepal at my invitation so we could explore the possibility of partnering in media outreach in



Nepal. I had heard about Arbin's ministry and knew something of his personal story. When he was a young teenager growing up in Kathmandu, Arbin happened to meet an American Christian—a member of the Christian Reformed Church from Celeryville, Ohio—who was visiting Nepal. This man took a liking to Arbin, and offered to support his education in the United States. Arbin moved to Celeryville to finish high school, then on to Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa and later Reformed Bible College (now Kuyper College) in Grand Rapids, Michigan. After college Arbin went to Calvin Theological Seminary, where he met a young woman from Nepal who was also preparing for Christian service. They were married in 2001 and returned to Kathmandu, where they now live with their two children and serve the kingdom in a number of significant ways.

From our very first meeting Arbin and I were excited about how Words of Hope could help him and Cross-Way Church expand their witness to the Nepali people through media. Now that is happening in ways we never imagined back then. From a small beginning great things can grow, when God is involved.

David Bast

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WAVELENGTH is published quarterly by Words of Hope to raise awareness of the work being done around the world by our ministry partners.

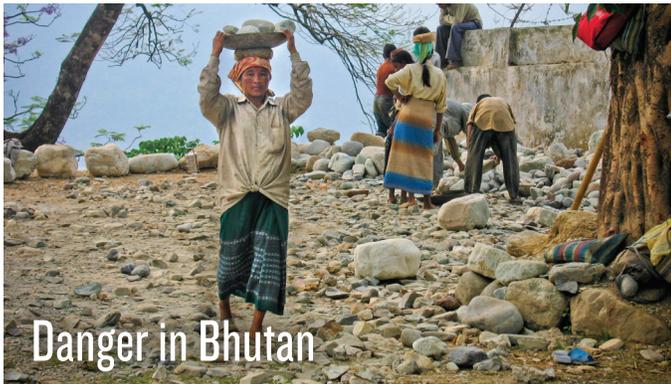
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We give thanks for our Dzongkha program producer in Bhutan who is very concerned for the people of his nation and does everything he can to share the message of salvation with them. He has brought together a support group made up of people who have come to know and trust the Lord through the radio programs. These people visit new listeners and help them better understand the message of the Bible that they have heard on the radio. Sadly though, our producer shares: “Village authorities are complaining to their superiors about religious conversions, making it difficult to gather people in listener cell groups. They can torture Christians. Prayer is the only source of courage, especially in times of trouble and depression, when we are in the ministry field.” Please continue to pray for our producer, his family, and those who listen to the broadcasts.



After many weeks of work by our teams, an upgrade to the Words of Hope supported Arabic online radio site (Dardasha7.com) debuted with a new look and a new grid of radio segments. The site was already receiving over 7,000 new visitors a month. The attractive new format is drawing a surge of interest—over 500 new visitors per day! Most people viewing the site are from the Middle East and North Africa. Countries with the largest number of visitors are Iraq, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, and Yemen. Arabic speakers living outside the region are also happy to now be able to listen to the radio programs online in their own time zone. A significant number of Muslim immigrants tune in from North America, Europe, and Brazil. Please pray that the Christian content on this website would bring many to Christ.



Words of Hope’s Advancement Associate, Bryan Boersma, recently had the opportunity to teach at a Bible conference for Iranians. Upon returning to the states, he shared these thoughts: “On Sunday I was standing in church singing one of the great hymns of our faith. An irritated feeling welled up in me as I began to wish that the organist would play faster. As the song slowly moved along, I remembered being in a Middle-Eastern country just two weeks earlier where I was singing with a group of Iranians at a Words of Hope sponsored conference. There, a young Iranian woman was weeping because it was the first time in four years that she was able to sing with other Christians. To her, it didn’t matter if it was a praise song or a hymn; if it was accompanied by an organ or guitar. In her home country, Christians may not worship freely for fear of persecution.” Please pray for the Iranians who attended the conference, that their faith and witness would be strengthened as a result.

We felt the **POWER** of **GOD** and we were **SPARED**

7.8-magnitude
April 25, 2015

7.3-magnitude
May 12, 2015

Words of Hope's Nepali Director Arbin Pokharel recounts his first-hand experience of the earthquake in Nepal and explains the implications it will have for church outreach.

The Church Shook

"The earthquake moment was a sacramental moment," Arbin says. "We felt God, and yet we were spared. We are alive, but not so that we can live for ourselves. We live life with death in view, knowing that life is short. We must count our days and make proper use of this gift God has given to us."

Arbin is the pastor at Cross-Way Church in Kathmandu, Nepal. The church meets for services on Saturdays, so the whole congregation was gathered in the sanctuary the morning the earthquake struck.

First the lights went off inside the church building with a loud bang. Then, within seconds, the whole structure started to shake. "I was on the stage, and the platform felt like it was floating on a lake," says Arbin. The room erupted in praying, shouting, crying, and screaming. Those who could make it to a door ran outside; those stuck inside held hands and prayed while the shaking continued for 45 seconds.



◀ *What's left of a Cross-Way church plant building in Dhading District.*

Following the April 25, 2015 quake, over 8,500 deaths and 21,000 injuries have been reported.

Open to the Community

In the days following the earthquake, many church members and neighbors stayed in tents set up on the lawn outside Cross-Way Church. During the earthquake, the brick walls surrounding the church property fell outward. Arbin feels there is an almost spiritual significance to this, as more and more the church is becoming a haven for the surrounding community.

Arbin explains that people may be more open to hearing the message of the gospel following this tragedy. Many Nepali citizens have, over the years, refused to pay taxes and have instead hoarded their money. For many Nepalis, their house symbolizes their security, even their retirement insurance.

Since the earthquake has now destroyed so many homes, people are coming to the realization that they need to support one another. They need to work together for safety. And the church is helping.

Caring in Crisis

Relief efforts orchestrated by churches like Cross-Way have been the most effective forms of aid within the country so far. Government aid workers have unfortunately adopted a method of “dump and run” when it comes to distributing relief supplies. Since they have no personal interest in the people or communities, they only want to complete the job.

As Arbin and members from his church travel around to distribute aid supplies, however, the scenario looks quite different. “Christians actually bring the supplies and hand them to people. We care for the people and are willing to listen to them. Everyone gets an equal amount, and the supplies can be shared.”



▲ *The Cross-Way relief team distributing goods in Sindhupalchok.*

So far Cross-Way Church members have driven trucks to the villages to bring rice, oil, salt, and a nutritional curry called nutrela to those hardest hit by the quake. They are also delivering clean water and tents.

The next step for Cross-Way will be to narrow their focus to three villages where they will carry on the work of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Arbin and his team will work to provide counseling, medical hygiene packages, soap, shampoo, and water filters. After that, the goal will be to help citizens rebuild their fallen houses with earthquake-resistant materials.

Psychological Impact

For many years, Words of Hope has supported Cross-Way Church’s media ministry efforts, which include radio, video, and contemporary Christian music recordings.

Arbin says that during the aftermath of the earthquake, radio and social media are taking on special significance. “People are glued to their radios now—for the news, for the updates, for everything.”

“We live in this new reality, and I think people are more in a position to listen,” Arbin continues. He sees correlations between the current experiences of his church family and how the first disciples lived together after Pentecost. “They met daily in the temple courts—breaking bread, sharing everything they had, proclaiming the good news wherever they went.” Cross-Way church is doing the same.

Building the Church

Cross-Way has already planted 12 daughter churches in Nepal. Their goal is to see a congregation planted in each of the 75 districts of Nepal. The radio programs produced at Cross-Way are aired on eight different radio stations across the country, and CDs of Arbin’s messages are shared among the church plants for supplemental teaching.

Arbin has received more education than many of his Nepali pastoral counterparts, having graduated from Calvin Theological Seminary in Michigan. His recorded teachings provide spiritual and theological grounding and ongoing training in the church plants where most of the pastors have no more than three months of biblical training.

Arbin sees Cross-Way as a resource church. “Through Words of Hope we are blessed,” he explains, “and so we can give and begin to flourish. That is our philosophy of ministry. Our lives have been spared so we can go and serve, so we can help others, especially now in this time of need.”



▲ *Cross-Way members worship under tarps on the church lawn.*

Singing the Scriptures

One special aspect of Cross-Way Church's ministry outreach is the writing and recording of contemporary worship songs in the



Nepali language. These songs have been put together into a CD called "Well of Grace." The title comes from Cross-Way Church's mission statement: "Cross-Way is a well of grace, from where we'll draw to plant

Christ-centered churches in the 75 districts of Nepal." The songs are used in the church plants, as well as played on the radio.

Words of Hope donors helped to provide Cross-Way Church with a recording studio and software to create the CDs. The songs and programs recorded in the studio are already being used in many Nepali churches.

Adrian Dewan is the musician who writes and sings the songs. He currently serves as Cross-Way's youth leader and worship pastor.

Adrian says that radio is very important in Nepal, because many remote areas of the country are difficult to travel to in person. Radio can bring the message of the gospel to many people quickly.

"In the last ten years there has been a rapid growth of the church in Nepal," says Adrian. "I believe that radio and media has been a very helpful tool in spreading the gospel so fast."

"It is my belief that God has allowed music to be at the forefront of modern missions," Adrian continues. "God has blessed music to reach the people of this generation. I want to speak out the truth of the gospel in the songs that I write and sing."

Cross-Way Church's pastor, Arbin Pokharel, says the young people at the church who work on the music recordings are very gifted. He sees that the future of ministry is deeply connected to music and art, since young people find these things so attractive. He tells them they can explore these gifts at Cross-Way, because the church is a vibrant place to be. It is a well of grace.





Church Planting in Nepal

Cross-Way Church in Kathmandu, Nepal, is about to celebrate its 10th anniversary. In those 10 short years, the church has already planted 12 daughter churches across the country.

Pastor Arbin says, “Everyone asks, ‘how do you plant a church?’”

In Nepal, it looks something like this.

Motilal worked in a bank as a night guard. During the lonely evening hours, his radio kept him company. One night while listening to the radio, he heard one of Arbin’s sermons. The sermons at Cross-Way Church are recorded, and through the help of Words of Hope, songs are added and the recordings are edited to fit a half-hour radio program format.

As Motilal listened to the radio, he was very impressed with what he heard. He called Cross-Way Church, and spoke with the program producer. He was invited to attend a church service in person.

Motilal committed his life to Christ, and over the next six months of church attendance, he became one of the most zealous disciples at Cross-Way.

Motilal has now joined Cross-Way Church’s Leadership Training Institute. This institute was started for Christians who cannot afford to go to Bible College, and who have had little previous training. The certification program takes three years to complete. Leaders in training receive instruction for one month, then go to a church to intern for three months, then come back for another month of training, and so on.

Motilal is currently in the midst of this leadership training process. He brings friends from his home village to visit the church in Kathmandu, and he looks forward to the time when he will become the leader who can plant a church in his own home village.



Motilal in his guard uniform.

This pattern repeats itself in Nepal. Pastors are trained, then sent out to start a church. Many churches start in shanties or tents. Some of the church plants can only be reached after an 8-hour hike on foot. But in the hard place of Nepal, we praise God that the church is growing with astonishing speed.

Baptism in India

One day Rinku was listening to his radio when he came across Words of Hope's Dogri program. He heard a message regarding salvation through Jesus Christ. After listening, Rinku wondered if Jesus could help him. He wanted to make changes in his life, wanted to be freed from his bad habits and addictions, but he pushed thoughts of Jesus out of his mind and went on with his life.



Rinku's family began to experience many hardships. Rinku felt helpless, and went to a self-professed magician who claimed to have power that would solve all of Rinku's problems. The magician asked repeatedly for large sums of money, saying that he needed the money to appease the evil forces that were afflicting Rinku's family. But after several months, the family was worse off than before visiting the magician, largely because their savings had been depleted.

Finally Rinku remembered the Christian radio program he had listened to months before. He traveled to a local church to talk to the pastor. The pastor helped Rinku better understand the gospel and prayed for him. Then he introduced Rinku to Words of Hope's Dogri programming team.

Rinku made the decision to accept Jesus as his Lord and Savior and took baptism, testifying to his faith.

Please pray for Rinku and his family as they enjoy fellowship with Jesus and seek to share their testimony in the community. Pray that the Lord will help them as they work to get their finances back in order.

Many Believe

In the state of Uttarakhand in India, twenty-six Garhwalis recently took the sacrament of baptism. Several of these converts came to know Jesus through Words of Hope's Garhwali radio programs.

Please pray for these newly baptized believers. Pray that they may be able to hold strong to their faith in the hard place of India, where they may face disapproval and persecution because of their decision for Jesus. Pray that they may stand strong in their faith and that many more will be saved through their witness.

