

MULTI-LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS

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55

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The Seventh

NEPALI WORKSHOP

by Carol Hartman



Another workshop to train Christian leaders was held last month in Dhangadhi, Nepal. This was the seventh trip to Nepal for my husband, Paul Hartman, who coordinates Multi-Language Publications and directs theological education for the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nepal. But it was a new experience for both Prof. Allen Sorum from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and me.



During the first eight days 140 people studied the Gospel of John, using a simplified version of the *People's Bible* commentary in Nepali. Prof. Sorum and Pastor Hartman introduced each section of the Gospel. Then everyone divided into small groups to read that segment from the Gospel and the commentary and to answer fact questions. Finally we met together for discussion questions, review activities and English word study. I enjoyed working with the 45 women, who went upstairs for their own breakout groups. We answered the questions in both Nepali and English.



Everyone was eager to learn. One afternoon the students hadn't quite finished a review by tea time. Most worked right through tea break! The study center was so crowded that the students sat (on the floor) in the side rooms, on the front porch and on the back stairs as well as in the main room. Lunch was cooked in big pots over fires in the back yard, always rice with seasoned sauce, and vegetables, chicken or fish. The singing was great, accompanied by clapping, drums, a tambourine and flute. One of the girls wrote out the words to two Nepali worship songs in English letters, so I could sing with them.



The participants who came from a distance slept at the center, men downstairs and women upstairs. Twenty people slept under a tarp on the roof. Thankfully, the seasonal rains held off until the last night.

We walked about a kilometer from our cottage-motel to the Scripture Learning Center - with many other people, dogs, cows, ox carts, bicycles, bicycle-pulled rickshaws, motorcycles and a few larger vehicles. You avoid the animal droppings and move slightly to the side when honking vehicles come up behind you. The first day a long, black snake slithered across the road in front of Paul and me. But everything in Nepal seemed so different that I didn't think much of it. Later we learned the snake was a venomous black king cobra!

I taught elementary school for many years and often sat on the floor with my young students. But I think this was my first experience teaching barefoot!

Why so

TATTERED?

by Paul Hartman

A suitcase of *Bible Teachings Series* books from Nepal was dropped off at the shipping department of Northwestern Publishing House. The books were somewhat tattered, the shipping department noted. A very appropriate concern, for which we have an equally compelling answer! The answer illustrates the challenges of moving publications between developing countries and the United States...

Fourteen titles carried in the MLP Catalog have now been published in the Nepali language, and nearly 40,000 copies of those titles have been distributed in the Bible Correspondence Program this year. The program is even drawing interest in the United States, where a Christian congregation in the Boston area has been using some of the books for outreach. Because the quantities needed are small and because the books have to be printed in Nepal, we carried them back to Milwaukee by suitcase.

That is, Professor Allen Sorum from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary graciously agreed to carry them for us. The books had an interesting journey. First we went by motorcycle to buy a suitcase. The books weighed more than the simple scale at the Scripture Learning Center had indicated, so the plastic wheels on the suitcase broke off immediately once the books were loaded inside. That meant the athletic and very strong seminary professor would have to carry the case. Except for the trip from the center to the hotel. A bicycle driven rickshaw carried Professor Sorum and the suitcase. A taxi ride in a jeep brought us to the airport. A pushcart moved the books to the Buddha Airlines plane. Another cart moved them to pickup counter at the domestic airport in Kathmandu. Another taxi, a stay in a hotel, and another ride back to the hotel got the books on Thai Airways to Bangkok. Now the



Prof. Sorum and suitcase in Kathmandu

books were moving in style! But United Airlines did not open its counter at the Thailand airport until early the next morning—something Professor Sorum and I learned after we had moved the books and other luggage around the airport up and down rolling escalators on another cart. Finally, the books made it to the United plane—only to be transferred to other planes in Tokyo and Minneapolis. Finally, Professor Sorum was able to deliver the books to NPH.



Retrieving Luggage from Buddha Airline.

These are rare books in the United States, and we feel confident that the congregation will be happy to use them, even though they arrived a bit tattered! Our thanks to the missionaries and professors of the WELS who often do more than teach and witness as they travel across the globe!

*More Books for the***ASIA LUTHERAN SEMINARY LIBRARY***by Carmen Tomfohrde*

Over the past months, Asia Lutheran Seminary in Hong Kong has been working hard to transform its multi-lingual collection of books, essays, maps, and other resources into a fully functioning library. The learning resources team has entered more than 3,000 books into an online system, and most of these items are now barcoded for circulation. The library database has a bi-lingual interface, and books are catalogued in English as well as in their original languages.

Ours is a library in motion. While continuing to catalog new items, the library team is adding Library of Congress call numbers to the books and organizing them by this system. Plastic library cards are in the hands of library users, and books are moving off the shelves and into the hands of students and staff members at Asia Lutheran Seminary.

The library is also quickly growing. Asia Lutheran Seminary recently welcomed a new Vice President, Dr. Steven Witte. As part of Dr. Witte's relocation, a shipping container will soon move across the ocean from the USA to Hong Kong. The Asia Lutheran Seminary Library seized the opportunity to reduce shipping costs by sharing this container with Dr. Witte, and mobilized a gift offering to purchase more than 200 titles from Northwestern Publishing House and Multi-Language Publications.

MLP donated its materials while NPH provided their books at a generous discount and worked quickly to process the order in time for shipping to Hong Kong.

As the library continues to grow, Asia Lutheran Seminary plans to acquire "twins"—books that exist in both Chinese and English. The collection of bilingual materials will enhance the ability of English-speaking professors to communicate with Chinese students, and increased access to Chinese materials will increase student confidence and facilitate research.

The Chinese publishing effort also benefits greatly from the work of the learning resources team. As they keep a finger on the pulse of students and staff members, identifying needed materials and adding them to a "wish list", their research helps the Translation Working Group identify existing materials and determine what kind of materials still need development. Finally, as the Translation Working Group produces new items, the materials will be added to the library.

(Carmen is the learning resources coordinator and is supported by Kingdom Workers.)



Revising Bible Stories.

More pictures from the workshop in Nepal.



Ladies enjoy a review game.



Planning for a Bible Institute.



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Brothers and Sisters IN ASIA

by Carol Hartman

Cynthia told me that she had just been at the hospital with her sister, who had cancer. Now, was that her sister in her family or her sister in her congregation? In this case she was referring to a fellow church member. In Hong Kong those who share your faith are called your brothers and sisters. In some cases young people have been disowned by their families when they become Christians. They become very close with their brothers and sisters in Christ.

That is what I thought of last week, as I prepared an English lesson based on the Gospel of Mark for Christians in Nepal.

It was the end of the Dashain Festival. According to an article in the *Nepal Traveller* magazine: "Like Christmas, it is the holiday when families unite to exchange blessings and gifts, to spread goodwill and to forget feuds and quarrels. Everyone wears new clothes, feasts are spread, and businesses and government functions come to a pleasant halt as one and all make festive visits to their relatives' homes." Yet ten Christian leaders spent the festival with three Americans and their fellow Nepalese Christians at the Scripture Learning Center, planning and working for their church.

During the mornings they worked with Dr. Allen Sorum from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary to plan the next step in their ministry—a Bible Institute. The afternoons were divided between translation work and English lessons. Three teams looked at drafts that had already been translated and made improvements. Others entered the corrections in the Nepali manuscript. Nepali word processing is much more complicated than English. On a bulletin board is a list of 18 special characters and how to make them, that's besides the characters that the letters on the keyboard stand for. Pastor Hartman, coordinator for Multi-Language Publications, and I divided the group into two classes for lessons in Biblical English, which will help them with future training and translation work.

Jesus "looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother'" (Mark 3:34). Yes, we have many brothers and sisters in Asia!