

**THE HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF
PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE NEPALI DIASPORA**

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SECTION 3

NORTH, NORTH WEST AND URBAN INDIA

CHAPTER 10 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN THE NORTH INDIA PLAINS

NEPALI MIGRATION INTO NORTH BIHAR AND THE UP PLAINS

The first swarm of emigrants out of Nepal southwards into India were mainly refugees, dethroned or exiled rulers and their entourages fleeing the advance of Prithvi Narayan Shah in the 1760s.¹ Political refugees mainly sought asylum in Benares (now called Varanasi) and Bettiah, including King Ranjit Malla of Bhaktapur and the wife of King Jaya Prakash of Kathmandu; this continued during the Rana era and into the 20th century. Oldfield notes that the Nepal government's dealings with the British were from Benares until the first British Resident was placed in Nepal from 1816,² although there were also Nepal government officials in Calcutta which was the capital of British India until 1911. Varanasi is exceptional in India as the one place where Nepali have been held in high respect and not looked down on, because most of those who have settled there are high-caste Hindus of the ruling class, intellectuals and literary personages, who have made significant contributions to local society. Even today the largest number of Nepali permanent migrants in the Gangetic basin are in Varanasi.³

From ancient times others also crossed the border for trade, or on pilgrimage to annual Hindu melas at various points, such as Titalya in Purnea District (Bihar) and Tulsipur in Basti District (UP). The greatest number of Nepali migrants have been into the border districts, a combined plains to plains and hills to plains movement, and the result of three distinct pulls: 1) for recruitment into the British Indian Army from the late 1800s; 2) as migrant labourers; and 3) an increasing marriage migration. The latter has been a part of

the natural north-south movement within the plains of the Gangetic basin, which the Nepal terai forms the northern edge of.

There was no centralised system for recruiting Gurkhas until 1886.⁴ The first and largest official recruitment depot was set up in Gorakhpur.⁵ Within five years over 7,500 new recruits were supplied by the Darbar, almost exclusively Magar and Gurung from Western Nepal, who were preferred by the British. An outpost was added at Nautanwa in 1894, just north of Gorakhpur on the border of Nepal, and Gurkha pension camps were established at both places.⁶ By the mid-1960s there were an estimated 3-4,000 resident Nepali around Gorakhpur; it is still the main Indian Army Recruiting Depot today.

In order to assist recruiting from East Nepal (mostly Rai, Limbu, Sunawar and Tamang for service in Assam and Burma), depots were established at three locations in Bihar in succession from the 1890s until the end of the Second World War: at Purnea, Darbhanga, and finally Laheria Sarai.⁷ Thus distinct ethnic groups from within Nepal were drawn out to the Indian plains to the south: mostly Western Nepal tribals into the UP, and Eastern Nepal tribals into Bihar. Retired Gurkhas were also referred on from the depots to other jobs in India, and the 1915 Handbook for the Indian Army noted a demand for the services of ex-Gurkhas by Bihar planters as chowkidars.⁸ Around each of the depots at least temporary Nepali settlements could be found, as others followed in the Gurkhas' wake. In addition to the above, a special military force was started at Ranchi which became the "Gorkha Military Force" in 1905, then was renamed the Bihar Military Force following Independence.⁹ This force was mainly recruited from India-domiciled Nepali. In 1967 WEC missionaries in Ranchi reported "lots of Nepalis," including two camps for both police and military, and "family quarters in a big block outside the camps with many women and children," as well as others employed around the town.¹⁰

Nepali labourers going into the border districts to the south have traditionally been seasonal migrants. In 1881 E.B. Alexander noted a steady

influx of labourers from Nepal into the Gorakhpur area to till the land of the local gentry.¹¹ About the same time, Eastwick reported "The Nipalese (in Bengal Presidency) are mostly in Champaran, and are Parbatiyas and Thapas, working as labourers. A few are Gurkhas, in the police, and a few Damai or tailors; the rest are Limbus."¹² Nearly fifty years later, so many casual farm labourers were coming into the border districts of Bihar and UP during the harvest season that it was causing concern on the part of British officials at the rapid growth of the Nepali population.¹³ As the 20th century progressed, the stream of labourers descending into the plains became more diversified, working at road building and other construction or public works projects, in restaurants, coal-mining in Bihar, and as coolies. In 1950 in Purnea District of Bihar it was observed, "There are now hundreds of Nepalis working in the area, both on public works and as wood cutters, etc."¹⁴ The exposure to new areas and employment opportunities in Gurkha recruitment areas often paved the way for further Nepali migration, although those who followed as labourers have been largely involved in a circular migration pattern.

The cause of the largest influx of permanent immigrants from Nepal, in a growing trend from the early 1900s, has been marriage migration. The 1911 Census of India recorded 35,944 people in Bihar who were born in Nepal, but by 1961 that figure had escalated to 108,971, with about 100,000 of those in the border districts, mostly in rural areas.¹⁵ An overwhelming four-fifths of these were females. Weiner estimates that about 3,000 women from Nepal cross into Bihar every year to marry Indians.¹⁶ Similarly, in the UP plains 53,000 Nepal-born people were reported in 1961, mostly in the border districts, and Kansakar points out a female preponderance among them as evidence of marriage migration there as well.¹⁷ According to Dor Bah. Bista, "For marriage and other socio-economic relations the border is ignored. Social and kinship ties are much more important to them than political boundaries."¹⁸

The question might be asked, "What proportion of those 'born in Nepal'

and involved in marriage migration to the Indian border districts south of Nepal have been either plains tribals or earlier Indian immigrant settlers involved in a reverse migration rather than hill Nepalis?" The difference in the India Census returns for Bihar between those who were born in Nepal and those who speak Nepali as their mother tongue (MT) is telling: in 1911 the ratio was 35,944 Nepal-born to only 2,623 Nepali MT speakers, and there were more than double the number of females to males born in Nepal, versus an almost equal number of male and female Nepali MT speakers.¹⁹ In 1961 the comparison is even more extreme: 108,971 Nepal-born, with 84,046 (77 percent) of them females; and only 29,747 Nepali MT speakers, with 12,516 (42 percent) of them females.²⁰ These figures clearly indicate that a preponderance of those born in Nepal were females engaged in marriage migration to Bihar, who did not speak Nepali as their mother tongue. Elder points out that even in the terai border districts of Nepal, Nepali is not the mother tongue for the majority of the population; rather, Indian languages and dialects such as Bhojpuri, Maithili, Bengali and Awadhi are spoken, and there is more cultural continuity with India than with other parts of Nepal.²¹

This cultural continuity is accounted for by the historic connection between the Nepal terai and the North India plains where territory changed hands back and forth between Nepal and India according to the political vagaries of the times. The terai border districts of present-day Nepal were annexed by Nepal during her expansionist days, ceded to the East India Company by the Treaty of Segauli in 1816, then returned to Nepal in 1857 following Nepal's heroic assistance to the British during the Indian Mutiny.²² Thus some plains tribals of North India, such as the Rajbansi and Santal, became part of Nepal; and the indigenous Tharu came to live on both sides of the border, with natural population movement back and forth and little cognisance of the rulers of the day.²³ Bahun-Chhetri and the occupational castes of North India, distinct from those in the Nepal hills and following a stricter form of orthodox Hinduism, also

immigrated into the Nepal terai.²⁴ The Nepal government actively encouraged Indian immigration from the late 1700s in order to develop the terai and defray the costs of territorial expansion, because the hill Nepali were not willing to move down there to live. This immigration included both caste Hindus and Indian tribals. In a reverse of this, some of the permanent or semi-permanent emigrants from Nepal in the North India border districts are those who have been brought by the plains tribals to live among them: usually Brahmans as priests, and low-castes in service occupations such as blacksmiths.²⁵ Therefore the eminent Nepali historian M.C. Regmi writes:

...[there are] religious, cultural and ethnic affinities between the inhabitants of the Tarai region...and their counterparts across the border. The Tarai region has, therefore, remained practically an extension of the Indian society and economy through the centuries...²⁶

With this in mind it is little wonder that the early Nepal-oriented missionaries located in the North India plains did not consider these people, although born in Nepal, as "true" Nepali. Nor were they probably identifiable to the missionaries as being from Nepal, because they were not Nepali/Khas-kura speakers.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE PLAINS

The two earliest Protestant missions in India had eyes for Nepal. About the same time that the Serampore group in Bengal began a translation of the New Testament in "Nepala," the Church Missionary Society became the first Protestant mission with an evident concern for Nepal to establish a station in the plains along Nepal's southern border. During the short-lived Titalya Mission (1815-1822), Mr. Schroeter had opportunity to tour the south-eastern border of Nepal while hoping to make his way to Tibet.²⁷ Then in 1824 the "Gorakhpur Mission" was founded by R.M. Bird, described by Long as "the frontier English station towards Nipal," providing the facility to study the "Nipalese" language.²⁸

Although this was stated as one of the purposes for the founding of the mission, as it developed no further mention is made of its strategic position in relation to Nepal or of any ministry among Nepali.²⁹ Rather, a Christian village and farm was started on a grant of 2,000 bighas of land, designed as a refuge for "persecuted natives." In this connection it is interesting to note that Long makes reference to 150 Christian families in nearby Bettiah who were connected with the "Romish Church," and how 30 of them formed the foundation for a native Anglican church of the CMS Gorakhpur Mission which housed and employed them in agricultural labour.³⁰ Although Long never mentions the ethnicity of these families, this must have been the group which harboured the Newar Catholics who were exiled from the Kathmandu Valley some 50 years earlier.³¹ If so, the first Protestant church including Nepali Christians in India was built on a nucleus of former Roman Catholics converted inside Nepal.

The only other early contact of a missionary with Nepali in this area was when the Anglican clergyman, Rev. W. Start, passed through Purnea District on his way to and from Darjeeling during the 1840s. He purposely sought out Nepali who were on pilgrimage in order to distribute tracts to them, especially at the Titalya mela.³² These early Anglican missions and missionaries were the forerunners of things to come.

It was not until the beginning of the next century, about 80 years later, that Christian ministries among Nepali in the border districts to the south of Nepal began to spread. Three key factors in this were: 1) the emergence of a growing Nepali-Lepcha church in the Darjeeling-Kalimpong area from the 1870s, which brought Nepali ministry into the missions spotlight and began to produce the first Nepali evangelists; 2) the establishment of Gurkha recruiting depots in the North Indian plains, along with increased Nepali labour migration from the late 1880s, as seen above, which gave a focus for Nepali ministry; and 3) a multiplication of small inter-denominational and independent mission societies and individuals working in the barren plains of North India from the early 1900s who began to

come into contact with Nepali and were drawn to the "closed land" of the Himalayas beyond.

What of the Nepali who emigrated into the plains south of the border, and their response to the missionary message? Those who settled in Varanasi were in the midst of the holy city of the Hindus, the seat of Sanskrit learning, which is largely unpenetrated by Christianity even today. Although the oldest Nepali settlement in India, the author has found no account of either mission activity among Nepali in Varanasi, or of a single Nepali Christian convert from there. The women involved in marriage migration, who made up a large portion of the Nepali population movement into the border districts of Bihar and UP, were quickly assimilated into their receptor communities. Most of them did not even speak Nepali as their mother-tongue, and thus were not targeted by the missionaries interested in Nepal. The only record found of a Zenana group reaching out specifically to women from Nepal is not among this group, but rather when the Zenana Bible and Medical Mission (ZBMM, later BMMF) received permission in 1914 to visit the women at the Darbhanga recruiting station for Gurkhas.³³ Another group, the Nepali traders and labourers, were like flotsam in a sea of humanity, barely recognisable to the undiscerning eye, and usually washed back to Nepal with the tide in a reversible migration.

Nevertheless, some of the above Nepali were briefly contacted by missionaries who began to position themselves along the border of Nepal in an effort to contact the "closed land," giving out tracts and scripture portions, setting up little medical clinics and schools, and preaching to any who would listen.³⁴ These missionaries were most interested in Nepal itself and the Nepali who would carry the Gospel back inside the country. Thus their focus was on the hill Nepali who would again penetrate the hills, those they considered to be "true" Nepali. The Nepali who flocked across the border to attend religious festivals in the plains below were also briefly contacted by these missionaries. But it was the Nepali around the Gurkha recruitment depots and pension camps who attracted

the most mission attention, along with those around the border-crossing towns. These were strategically located along the trade and transport routes in and out of Nepal and often at the district centres, where mission centres also tended to be established.

MISSIONS ALONG THE BORDER BEFORE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

In 1891 the ZBMM's first European missionaries reached Gorakhpur, and by the turn of the century they also had a station at Darbhanga. The mission's hope that these two stations were "destined to play a very important part in carrying the Gospel into the closed Kingdom of Nepal" was expressed in their 1913 Annual Report; but Darbhanga was closed in 1920. However, Gorakhpur's strategic location also attracted other new missions which have had at least peripheral involvement in Nepali ministry, including: the Gorakhpur Nurseries, started by a ZBMM missionary who first arrived in 1908, which conducted evangelistic tours along Nepal's border, had regular contact with Gurkhas at the recruiting depot, and rescued Nepali girls; the Swedish Baptists who established their headquarters there in 1910, then established a beachhead right on the border of Nepal at Arandnagar in 1926; the Australian Nepalese Mission who sent their first missionaries to Gorashan, near Gorakhpur, in 1917 with a vision of starting six stations among Nepali along the border, but had less than five Nepali converts by the time they amalgamated with RBMU in 1948; and the short-lived Nepali Bible School started in 1951 by a retired missionary of the Ceylon and Indian General Mission (CIGM). Yet despite the high hopes, dreams, and sporadic evangelistic attempts, over the years there have been very few Nepali Christian conversions in Gorakhpur, and no Nepali-language fellowship has been established. In 1991 a Nepali Christian based in Gorakhpur with Operation Mobilisation wrote,

There are quite a few Nepalis in Gorakhpur, most of whom are here in connection with recruitment into the Gorkha Rifles... We have

been there a number of occasions for sharing the gospel through literature distribution, but every time we were there the Military Police told us that we cannot evangelize inside the Army compound. There is no Christian Fellowship as such among Nepalis in Gorakhpur... We have not met a single Nepali Christian in Gorakhpur.³⁵

Although the preponderance of Nepali connected with the Gurkha camps were an attraction to the missionaries, they were generally out-of-bounds to evangelism.

In the meantime the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU) opened its first station in 1900 at Motihari, the capital of Champaran. This was the first Protestant mission in the district. Within 30 years they established at least seven stations in Champaran and Saran Districts of Bihar, all of which occasionally reported contacts with Nepali.³⁶ One of their objectives alongside the local work in Bihar was to get into Nepal, "that some day soon the doors of that long-closed land will open wide to the heralds of the Cross."³⁷

The RBMU believed that the "key to Nepal" was Raxaul, the railhead and main route to Kathmandu, and as early as 1906 J.Z. Hodge wrote urging that it should be occupied.³⁸ In relationship with the Scottish Mission in Darjeeling, the services of EHM's Head Clerk, "Babu" Ratandhoj Rai, and his wife were secured to establish a beachhead for evangelism of Nepali at Raxaul from 1919.³⁹ Unfortunately his dear wife Roda Victoria Kilgour Pradhan died the following year, only 30 years old, and this initiative was cut short.⁴⁰ However, the connection with Darjeeling was made, and during the 1920s Nepali evangelists continued to make the long trek down to spend the winter months in Raxaul.⁴¹

In 1926 Dr. Cecil Duncan, the son of the Scottish Darjeeling Mission head, Rev. H.C. Duncan, started the Raxaul Medical Mission (RMM) in affiliation with RBMU. Cecil had accompanied his father on more than one occasion to Raxaul in earlier years, where they knelt in a mango grove just across the river from Nepal to pray, and a vision to touch that land was born in Cecil's

heart. Part of the RMM's building programme included "a house for a permanent Nepali Evangelist and a rest house for Nepali travellers."⁴² This desire for a permanent evangelist was finally fulfilled in 1930 with the arrival of David Mukhia, a young school teacher-cum-preacher, another Scottish Mission convert. But with the advent of the Second World War, Dr. Duncan was called up for military service and "Duncan Hospital" had to be closed. It was only reopened eight years later by Drs. Strong of RBMU. In the meantime, David Mukhia and his wife Premi had joined the NEB, based further along the border at Nautanwa.⁴³

There was very little in the way of a resident Nepali population in Raxaul aside from the hospital employees, although there was a heavy stream of humanity criss-crossing the border. The hospital attracted patients all the way from Kathmandu and beyond. But the main impact from Raxaul has been on the growth of the church inside of Nepal, rather than among the immigrant Nepali community in North India. Although there was regular evangelism within the hospital from the time it first opened, and meetings among the Christian staff and interested patients, a church only took form after the hospital was reopened following the War. The Bengali compounder, Pushpa Mullick, who had a strong evangelistic concern for Nepal, was appointed as Pastor and served until 1980, while a simple church building was erected in 1960.

Despite the myriad of mission activities which touched the Nepali in these North India border districts, this is the only church known to include a significant proportion of Nepali speakers. Yet its membership has been made up of either Nepali Christian hospital employees, mostly from Darjeeling-Kalimpong in the early days, or those with primary relationship to Nepal. For this latter group Raxaul Church is essentially an extension of the church in Nepal. Rishi Raj Acharya, a Brahman from Nepal who came to Raxaul in 1962, was converted and baptised through Duncan Hospital the following year. He became a full-time evangelist within a few years. He claims that in the nearly 25 years following his

baptism, about 150 people have been baptised through Raxaul Church, and all but four of them were residents of Nepal.⁴⁴

Due to Raxaul's easy accessibility, it has played several roles in the life of the churches in Nepal. As manager of the Christian Literature Centre, Rishi organised several one-month Bible courses during the 1970s for Christians from Nepal. Raxaul has been a convenient place for occasional baptisms, Nepal Christian Fellowship and other conferences, or the Nepal Bible Ashram classes when things got too "hot" inside Nepal due to intermittent persecution. However, these roles have diminished in recent years, and there are now at least two Nepali churches on the Nepal side of the border in Birganj, while Raxaul Church continues to serve mostly the Nepali personnel in the hospital.

As stated above, Nautanwa was an out-post recruiting depot-cum-pensioners' settlement right on the border of Nepal, leading down to Gorakhpur. Through the vision of Dr. Katherine "Kitty" Harbord, a ZBMM missionary, it became another base in the North Indian plains for outreach to Nepali who streamed across the border. She petitioned her mission in 1926 for permission to move alone to Nautanwa and start a medical clinic.⁴⁵ About ten years later, when she had to return to England for an operation for cancer, she importuned Dr. W.H. Morris of WEC to take over her house and dispensary work in the Nepal quarter. He carried on Harbord's work, including the distribution of Nepali literature to Gurkha families and pensioners, and was joined by two new WEC recruits until they all left for the Kumaon Hills of UP in 1937.

Shortly before Morris' departure, the two NEB pioneers, Dr. Patricia O'Hanlon and Hilda Steele, arrived in Nautanwa. Both of them had also been inspired by Dr. Harbord to engage in Nepali work. Their eyes were turned towards "that closed land to which God had called and commissioned them to give the Gospel."⁴⁶ They opened a dispensary, started a school for Nepali boys and classes for girls in the evenings, held Sunday School meetings in their home, and slowly added Nepali colleagues to their Band, several of whom were their

own converts. Pastor David and Premi Mukhia became the mainstay of the Nepali side of the NEB from the time of their transfer from Duncan Hospital in 1940. They met the train every day to distribute tracts to Nepali travellers, held Gospel lantern talks in the evenings, did open-air preaching in the bazaar, and visited Nepali throughout the surrounding area. However, there was little continuity due to the constant comings and goings of both the missionaries and their Nepali colleagues. This was especially true after a second NEB station was opened in the far-away hills of Shillong. During the NEB's 15 years of work before Nepal finally opened up there were occasional converts, and some local Nepali attended Sunday services, but a regularly functioning church was never established in Nautanwa. After the NEB triumphantly trekked into Pokhara in 1952 following the "opening" of Nepal, leaving only an agent behind in Nautanwa to secure their supplies, the mission work there slowly died away.

The same basic story was repeated further along the border at Rupaidhia, Bahraich District, another major gateway into Western Nepal. The Methodist Episcopalians from America, one of the oldest missions in the UP, had established a station with a mission house and a school in Bahraich from 1886. This was taken over in 1909 by a Pentecostal lady, Mrs. L. Denney, and later affiliated with the Assemblies of God Mission, USA. The work soon expanded from the town of Nanpara right up to the border of Nepal at Rupaidhia (Nepalganj Road) where land was bought and a mission house constructed in 1913.⁴⁷ This became the spearhead for ministry across the border into Nepalganj in later years, and culminated in the establishment of the first Nepali church in Mid-western Nepal. In the meantime AG stations spread across the plains of UP, and into Bihar.⁴⁸ Mission records show that throughout their wide range of mission work -- schools, orphanages, dispensaries, a leper colony and widows' home, and widespread preaching and evangelism -- AG missionaries had numerous contacts with Nepali. But the most intensive involvement was in Bahraich District.

Christian and Agnes (Thelle) Beckdahl had both arrived in Bahraich by

1910. Agnes had a strong sense of personal calling towards Nepal, writing in her diary in 1911 that she had had a vision confirming that "I am to work here on the borders of Nepal."⁴⁹ After their marriage in 1915, then ordination as AG missionaries, the Beckdahls were stationed alone at Nanpara, less than 20 miles from the Nepal border, and evangelised tirelessly throughout Bahraich District. After Lindell's extensive study of mission work leading up to the opening of Nepal, he evaluated their ministry as follows:

From this base (Nanpara) the Beckdahls itinerated on preaching tours far and wide in the area and for long stretches along the Nepal border. This was their main work for 40 years. Perhaps no one worked with such continuing and widespread preaching as this couple did. They lived in village huts or in tents, moving their gear on bullock carts, stopping a day or a few days in village after village... On and on they went, for weeks and months, year after year. Along the border they met Nepalese and witnessed to them and prayed for them. On some occasions they were able to get permission and crossed into Nepal for short times.⁵⁰

Agnes Beckdahl's diary contains accounts of occasional conversions and baptisms of Nepali during these years, and forays across the border into Nepal by themselves and their Indian workers. Their itinerant ministry in Bahraich District, one of the three most heavily Nepali populated areas of the UP plains at that time, probably brought them into more contact with scattered Nepali labourers, female marriage immigrants, and other Nepali who were mixed into the general populace, than any other missionaries on the plains.

While the Beckdahls were busy in this evangelistic work, Rev. and Mrs. Frank Nicodem were building up the mission centre in Rupaithia, including a boarding school, carpentry school, boys' industrial school, boys' orphanage, and girls' sewing classes, as well as building a hall and chapel in the bazaar.⁵¹ The various school classes and the orphanage attracted children from Nepal, and in 1944 a hope was noted that three of the Nepali orphan boys could be sent for training in Christian ministry.⁵² In addition, a rough shelter was built and firewood provided for Nepali travellers coming down from the hills. This proved

an ideal place for Barnabas Rai, the AG's first Nepali evangelist (who came from Darjeeling to join the team in the 1930s), to make contact with Nepali as they passed through.⁵³ None of the AG's other stations had a Nepali evangelist, making Rupaidhia the centre of their Nepali ministry. But the focus was on Nepal itself -- Rupaidhia was but a gateway. As the way opened to Nepal, Barnabas and his recently baptised colleague, John Singh, marched in, and the role of the missionaries across the border in India became mainly one of support and encouragement. It was no longer necessary to go looking for Nepali on the India side to evangelise; now evangelism could be carried out directly within Nepal.

The main continuing AG involvement in Nepali ministry was through their schools and orphanages, particularly John Harvey Memorial School in Nawabganj, Bettiah Girls' School, and the Bible school at Hardoi. Since at least the 1940s there were baptisms of Nepali students and their families connected with each of these schools, and from the 1950s there are reports of the neo-converts active witnessing to their new faith back in Nepal. According to the former Principal of the boys' school in Nawabganj, since the 1980s about 50 percent of the boys in the hostel have been from Nepal, mostly the sons of Gurkha soldiers from West Nepal, but also Brahmans from Sindapulchowk area east of Kathmandu.⁵⁴ They have become favourites in the school, leaders academically, in sports and debating, and often are chosen by the other boys to be in-charge of the hostel. Many have become Christians and been baptised while at the school, Magar, Gurung and Brahman alike, usually with the parents' written consent. They take leadership roles in local Youth for Christ meetings, and have become keen Christian witnesses back in their home villages in Nepal, which is their main sphere of influence.

The AG Bible school at Hardoi, North India Bible Institute (NIBI), has also had a significant influence among Nepali Christians by providing training for ministry, albeit in the Hindi language. Of all the missions working in the plains

of North India, the AG sent the most Nepali workers or converts for Bible training. The NEB did not send any of their team of evangelists to Bible school before entering Nepal. This was partly due to the generally low educational level of their converts who mostly came straight out of the hills of Nepal. Also, there was no training available in the Nepali language at that time. In contrast, during the 1960s RBMU missionaries in Gorakhpur and Raxaul recommended eight students to Darjeeling Hills Bible School, but they never sent any to Hardoi. This was probably due to their wariness of the Pentecostal theology at NIBI, their closer connection with Darjeeling, and the fact that DHBS had been specifically set up for Nepali students in their own language.

As early as 1948 Nepali students were reported at Hardoi, converts from the AG work in the plains. Grace Walther, an AG missionary who ended up in Kalimpong, also sent five Nepali women from there to NIBI in Hardoi in the mid-1950s. There was a continuing trend for Pentecostal Bible students from the Darjeeling-Sikkim area to travel all the way to Hardoi for Bible training, rather than to attend DHBS which was on their doorstep.⁵⁵ In 1960 two Nepali couples who graduated from NIBI spent time on a preaching tour of the border with Sam Beckdahl before returning to Nepal. This was the beginning of a new phase of NIBI influence in training Nepali for ministry directly in Nepal. In 1975 twelve of the current fifty students were from Nepal.⁵⁶

The AG was the only denomination in India with officially affiliated churches among Nepali inside Nepal.⁵⁷ When their first church was established in Nepalganj through the efforts of Barnabas Rai, it came under the North India District Council of the AG.⁵⁸ This affiliation lasted about twenty years. Two reports in 1975, from Jimmy Roane, the AG missionary in Nepal working with the United Mission to Nepal, and from the AG's licensed Indian worker in Nepal, Ezekiel Joshua, indicated that eight or nine small Pentecostal house fellowships were expressing a desire to be officially affiliated with the AG.⁵⁹ An agreement was negotiated, and the following year the church in Nepalganj became the first

officially recognized AG Church in Nepal, although the Assemblies of God in Nepal was not formally organised until 1981. By then the involvement of the Assemblies of God in North India in Nepali ministry was practically extinct.

MISSION RESULTS AMONG NEPALI

Although the above represents the most concentrated Nepali ministry in the plains of UP and in Bihar -- RBMU in Champaran and Saran Districts, especially Raxaul; various missions in Gorakhpur; Dr. Harbord followed by WEC and NEB in Nautanwa; and the AG, especially in Bahraich District -- missions were also established in almost all the other border districts to the south of Nepal. Sixteen such missions have been identified by the author, all of which had at least occasional ministry contacts with Nepali.⁶⁰ Thirteen of these were represented in the Nepal Border Fellowship, a loose-knit fellowship to promote cooperation between those working on the border of Nepal and for prayer together towards the common goal of the opening of Nepal to missions. In addition to the main places detailed above where Christian outreach to Nepali took place, CIGM stations in Basti and Gonda Districts of UP also had significant Nepali involvement. This was the only other mission in the plains known to have secured the services of a Nepali evangelist. Goman "James" Singh and his wife, converts of the NEB in Shillong, were "loaned" to CIGM in 1949, soon after they were both baptised.⁶¹ They were then sent to the Oriental Missionary Society's Bible School in Allahabad, and returned to serve many years with the CIGM. James was their Nepali evangelist. There were also Nepali boys included among orphans taken in by CIGM; a Nepali Sunday School was reported in Gonda in 1947; there were frequent contacts with Nepali at religious melas, particularly after the Hentons established a station at Tulsipur in 1952; and CIGM helped to run the Nepali Bible School in Gorakhpur for about a year after the death of Rev. Al Garrison. Yet despite all this activity of the various missions -- expansive Gospel seed-scattering, with occasional Nepali conversions

and baptisms -- no enduring Nepali work was established in this whole vast area, with the exception of the small church at Raxaul.

In the aftermath of Indian Independence, followed by Nepal's own bid for democracy and the opening up of the country to Christian missions for medical and educational development, the missions with a primary interest in Nepal swept up into the country, taking their Nepali evangelists with them. This left the Nepali ethnic community of the N. Indian plains almost totally bereft of further Christian witness.

In terms of Christian expansion, the main importance of the Christian outreach among Nepali of the N. India plains to this point had lain in the preparation stage to Nepal's opening. There was widespread evangelism and distribution of Nepali Christian literature, among both the transient and the resident Nepali population. Nepali were contacted through the medium of dispensaries, orphanages and schools, and itinerant evangelism was carried out, both at border crossings and around Gurkha recruitment depot areas. But ironically, in the only places where there are permanent or semi-permanent Nepali settlements very little was accomplished, and there are no known Nepali Christians living in those places today. No outreach has been attempted among Nepali in Varanasi; the Gurkha cantonment near Gorakhpur is sealed to evangelism; and the other Gurkha recruitment depots were only open for a few years each before Indian Independence. Concentrations of Nepali cultivators or herdsmen are not as commonly found in the villages of this area as they are in the Eastern Himalayas and throughout North East India. The trend of Nepali migration today is more into urban areas, passing through the rural plains, in search of more abundant jobs and better wages, and made easier by improved transport and communications facilities throughout India.

But the lack of results in Nepali ministry within this area is not only a consequence of the missions' preoccupation with Nepal itself, or of the patterns of Nepali immigration and settlement. It is also a consequence of the local

context. Bihar and UP are the two most populous states in India, both having a high percentage of Hindu population: 81.5 percent in Bihar, and 79.8 percent in UP. Christians make up only 1.06 percent of the population in Bihar, with 75 percent of them being southern tribals, and in UP the Christians are a tiny minority of only 0.12 percent.⁶² It is not surprising that in North Bihar, known to many as the graveyard of missions, and in the plains of UP, evangelism of Nepali in the midst of this stronghold of resurgent Hinduism has never prospered.

CHRISTIAN OUTREACH TO PLAINS TRIBALS

Although Nepali ministry in the North Indian border districts with Nepal was primarily carried out by missionaries whose ultimate target was the hills of Nepal, there were also some early efforts to reach plains tribals whose settlement patterns spanned the border. The Tharu, indigenous to the terai of Nepal, were the focus of outreaches by the Methodist Episcopal Church (USA) from Lucknow in UP, and by the RBMU through one of its earliest outposts at Harnatar in Bihar. Jonathan Lindell found evidence that around 1900 the Methodist Episcopal Church in Lucknow sent two Indian evangelists to preach among the Tharu, but they died within a year from a severe form of malaria.⁶³ Then a second and a third pair of evangelists were sent in succession, but they also died of the same dread disease.

A few years later, by 1916, the RBMU opened their northernmost station at Harnatar, just eighteen miles from the border of Nepal, and staffed it for several years with Indian evangelists as an outpost among the Tharu. Then from 1922 through the end of the Second World War foreign missionaries were also resident there, most notably the Peter Wynd and George McCabe families, along with an Indian doctor for the medical work. The Tharu round about were described as the farmers of the region, "a quiet people not Indians, nor Nepalis, though closely akin to the latter, very peaceful, and reticent, independent and free."⁶⁴ There were said to be 26,000 of them in Champaran District, and many

others across the border in Nepal, and that they spoke a corrupted form of Bhojpuri mixed with some Nepali words. A hospital and two village schools were provided for them. Also a thirty acre farm was run to provide employment, and an old building was reconstructed as a church on the mission compound in Harnatar. This was an effort to spread the Gospel from plains to plains through the people's natural movements and kinship relationships; as described by Dr. Keith Sanders, in later years it was "a jumping off place for reaching Tharus in Nepal."⁶⁵ It was a time of extensive seed-sowing and preaching village to village, particularly at the annual Tribeni mela and during winter campaigns in the Don, a dense jungle area on the border populated by 20-30 villages of Tharu. But in spite of the missionaries high hopes of a mass movement of the Tharu to Christ, as had been seen among other tribal groups in India, there were actually very few converts during almost thirty years of evangelism. Then from 1946 the station was vacated.

Even though Harnatar station was vacated, the Tharu in the Don, said to have lived there in isolation for generations after migrating from Nepal over a century earlier, were not forgotten.⁶⁶ After Andrew McCabe's return to India he spent several winters during the 1950s back at the place of his upbringing, doing evangelistic camping in the Don. He also introduced new RBMU colleagues at Raxaul to the Don, and occasional Tharu patients made their way to Duncan Hospital at Raxaul. The breakthrough came in 1962 when the first two Tharu from the Don were baptised, Tika and Jokhu, and Tika became the leader of the first church among the Tharu.⁶⁷ The preceding winter an intensive three-month evangelistic campaign was held. Duncan Hospital released one of its three doctors, Keith Sanders, one of its three sisters, Julia Patten, and an Indian Christian for the duration of the campaign. Others went for shorter periods. They introduced a different method of evangelism than that of their predecessors, which seemed to produce more lasting results. They stayed ten days in each place they went, systematically teaching a set of basic Bible lessons

and songs to the men, women and children alike. Bijuli Masih, a Bihari convert from Hinduism, felt called to work full-time among the Tharu, and Raxaul Church took on the responsibility of his support for one year from 1962. But the first consistent leadership was provided by Tika following his own baptism. He went to Raxaul occasionally for Bible teaching, then faithfully repeated what he learned to his own people back in the Don. By 1974 twenty-four Tharu from the Don had been baptised, most of them by Tika. But this was not without local opposition, and over the following years several of the converts turned away from their new faith. Tika, with no formal Bible training and very little outside encouragement, was ill equipped to meet the continual challenges to this small band of new Tharu Christians, and the RBMU missionaries were only able to make increasingly irregular visits. Further support finally came in 1981 from an indigenous Indian mission, the Friends' Missionary Prayer Band. They sent an Indian missionary family to settle at Belatari village in the Don in an effort to build up the local Tharu church. By 1987 there were twenty-two Christian families, and another Indian missionary couple were being sought to carry on the work.⁶⁸

Mission involvement among other plains tribals in North India, with no thought for Nepal at the time, had unforeseen later consequences through the migration and settlement of some of those tribals in Nepal's eastern terai. This is particularly true of work among the Santal, who began migrating from the Santal Paraganas of South Bihar into the jungles of current-day Morang and Jhapa Districts of Nepal from before the Rana era, when this area was largely unpopulated.⁶⁹ As they became aware of the need, both the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches and the Brethren in Christ (BIC) in Bihar gradually extended their work among the Santal in Nepal.

In 1942 a Santal Christian, Phagu, who had moved into Nepal, made his way to the Santal Mission headquarters in Dumka. He appealed for someone to be sent "to care for the 'lost sheep' in Nepal and instruct new converts who had

expressed the desire to become Christians."⁷⁰ Two Indian workers were sent, including Bhogon Murmu, an ordained pastor. They found a number of Christian families, gathered them together for worship services in several different places, and baptised more than twenty new converts. After Murmu's co-worker died in Nepal, Murmu himself became ill and had to leave. There was very little further contact until the mid-1950s. At this time an RBMU missionary stationed on the border of Nepal called their attention again to Santal within Nepal who were interested in Christianity.⁷¹ The Santal Mission made inquiries concerning membership with the United Mission to Nepal in order to care for the Santal Christians in Nepal and to do further evangelism. It was finally decided not to join the UMN, but the Santal Church (rather than the Mission) took up the challenge, and in November 1956 two Santal pastors were sent from Bihar to Nepal to make a survey tour. This resulted in a resolution the following year at the Eighth Ordinary Synod Meeting of the Ebenezer Evangelical Lutheran Church (now called The Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, NELC) to send a missionary to Nepal. (See Appendix J for the complete text of the resolution.) From 1958 Hopna Tudu moved to Nepal as the Lutherans' first missionary of the "Nepal Mission," formalising a link between the Christian Santal of Dumka District, Bihar and the terai of East Nepal.⁷² This was hailed by the parent Santal Mission as "very encouraging that the NELC...has had the vision and courage to step outside its boundaries and take up a new field among Santals living in Nepal...fully financed by the Church with the Church's own resources and it has shown good progress."⁷³ By 1993 there were about 250-300 Santal Lutheran Christians divided between five village congregations in Nepal. They are pastored by Raesan Duguc Murmu and his wife, who were sent to Nepal by the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church, based in Dumka District, Bihar.⁷⁴

BIC missionaries in Purnea District, Bihar also noted the migration of Santal and Uroan from India into Nepal, including Christians related to their mission.⁷⁵ As recalled by one of the missionaries:

The Santals and Uraons followed rivers up across the border to get land devastated by floods back into cultivation again. Then some of the Christians of Purnea Dist. went up there to visit relatives and witnessed to them. And some Christians moved up there as well. And these people with others came down to attend meetings at Banmankhi. Then they began calling Evangelists to come up for meetings with them there.⁷⁶

Rev. W.R. Hoke draws attention to "natural bridges of family ties" as the simple means by which many Santal have become Christians: "The Christians sometimes moved from one place to another; and as they would win their relatives and neighbors to faith in Christ, new Christian communities would come into being."⁷⁷ Miracles of healing and deliverance from evil spirits were also instrumental in many choosing the God of the Christians.⁷⁸

BIC ministry among the tribal Santal and Uraon began in Purnea District in the 1940s, and two mission stations focused on these tribal groups were established at Banmankhi and Purnea city by the early 1950s. This was in response to their growing numbers in the area and the finding that they were much more responsive to the Christian message than the majority caste Hindu population. As stated in the BIC Council Minutes of the India Missionary Council in 1952:

Within our present areas are many aboriginal peoples, mainly Santals and Uraons who are among the most responsive people to the Gospel in India today. We are also on the border of Nepal which is opening to the Gospel. These areas present to us a more challenging field of work.⁷⁹

Within a decade the work had spread on up into Nepal. Howard Barclay, while manning the small RBMU station on the border at Jogbani, was instrumental in calling the BIC's attention to the large number of Santal living in Nepal's eastern terai.⁸⁰ Rev. Patras Hembrom and some Santal evangelists were sent to investigate, and Barclay helped them to set up a camp and conduct meetings every night for a week in different villages. This was followed up by regular visits from Purnea to preach in the Santal villages. Within a few months the first

baptism of a Santal family from Nepal took place in Banmankhi. Then the first baptism of five Santal within Nepal was held at Hatibandha on 21 April 1959.⁸¹ This event marked the beginning of regular BIC ministry in the Eastern Nepal terai. Santal churches were established as the newly baptised converts began to tell others in their villages about their Christian faith, and as evangelists from Purnea continued to visit the area. A Christian Santal school teacher also moved up for a few years both to teach school and to do follow-up. As Indian nationals they could freely cross the border into Nepal, whereas the missionaries were more restricted, thus ensuring indigenous leadership of the churches which emerged. Today BIC-related Christians in Nepal number several hundred in eight different congregations, the majority being Santal, but also Uraon and some Tharu.⁸² One former BIC Santal pastor in Nepal, Patrus Murmu, has also planted churches among the Khawas and Rajbansi in the terai.

The establishment of the above Lutheran and Brethren in Christ churches among predominantly the Santal of Morang District, East Nepal is a clear example of the spread of Christianity within a particular ethnic group through migration, with the support and encouragement of the mother church/mission in the place of origin. It is noteworthy that in each of the above cases Indians of the same linguistic group were the ones who did the front-line evangelism. However, it should also be noted that they have developed very little practical relationship with the predominant Nepali-language churches around them in the country of their domicile, but rather have maintained ties across the border in Bihar. Although the BIC Church in Nepal started negotiating in the early 1990s for membership in the Nepal Christian Fellowship (now National Churches Fellowship of Nepal) they were turned down, reflecting in the Christian sphere the general lack of political and social acceptance of the Santal in Nepal.

POST-INDEPENDENCE

The only specifically Nepali-oriented Christian ministry after Indian

Independence was the establishment of the Nepali Bible School by Rev. Al Garrison, a retired CIGM missionary, at Gorakhpur in 1951. But during its short existence (closed 1954) only a handful of students were involved, all of them from Darjeeling District, and it had very little impact in the area of its location. There were also other initiatives, but they either proved short-lived or were focused on Nepal more than on the scattered Nepali in North India. WEC considered moving its Himalayan Mission headquarters and Nepali Bible Correspondence Institute (NBCI, formerly DBCI) to Gorakhpur during the 1960s, due to its centrality and the local Nepali colony.⁸³ But they settled on Ranchi for the NBCI, and the Newell family located themselves in Doranda, the Nepali section of town. This initiative was also short-lived. Within two years the Himalayan Mission merged with WEC's India General Field because of new government regulations and restrictions on visas, and in 1969 WEC missionaries began to work inside Nepal alongside the NEB. They also re-established the NBCI in Nepal. During the 1970s and 1980s Operation Mobilisation established a base in Gorakhpur for literature storage and distribution into Nepal, and in 1973 Samuel and Jill James set up the Jivan Jyoti Press on former RBMU premises in Motihari -- but both were so located as a staging ground for ministry inside Nepal. The Nepali in North Bihar and the plains of UP continue to be relatively untouched in terms of Christianity.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 10

- (1) D.R. Regmi, 1961, 147.
- (2) Oldfield, 1974, 280.
- (3) Kansakar, Himalaya Today, Sept. 1988, 42.
- (4) Ministry of Defence, NEPAL AND THE GURKHAS (London: HMSO, 1965), 133.
- (5) Kamal Raj Singh Rathaur, THE BRITISH AND THE BRAVE: A HISTORY OF THE GURKHA RECRUITMENT IN THE BRITISH INDIAN ARMY (Jaipur: Nirala Publ., 1987), 66.
- (6) According to Rathaur (1987, 77), recruiting outposts were also established at Pilibhit and Bahraich in UP for West Nepal, but the author has found no other mention of this in other sources.
- (7) Ministry of Defence, NEPAL AND THE GURKHAS, 1965, 134-5.
- (8) Vansittart, 1915, 167.
- (9) Timsina, 1992, 26.
- (10) Himalayan Mission of WEC, "Field Letter," Aug.-Sept. 1967, in WEC file, NCHP Collection.
- (11) E.B. Alexander, "Gorakhpur," in STATISTICAL, DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE NORTH-WESTERN PROVINCES OF INDIA, ed. Edwin T. Atkinson, Vol. VI (Allahabad, 1881), 346.
- (12) Eastwick, 1882, 35.
- (13) Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, NEPAL AND THE INDIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1975), 53 and 59 n.46.
- (14) Paul Woolsey, letter to E. Franklin in Darjeeling, 23 Jan. 1950, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.
- (15) E.A. Gait, 1911 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. 1, Part II, "Tables," Table XI - Birthplace (Calcutta, 1913), 151; and A. Mitra, 1961 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. 1, Part II, "Migration Tables," Table D-II - Place of Birth.
- (16) M. Weiner, "The Political Demography of Nepal," Asian Survey 13:6 (June 1973), 621.
- (17) Vidya Bir Singh Kansakar, "Population Change in Nepal: A Study of Mobility During 1911-1961" (PhD thesis, Patna University, India, 1974), 179. In Davis' work on the population of India (1951, 94-5) he also emphasised the high incidence of marriage migration in the districts of Bihar and UP which border Nepal; and Weiner (June 1973, 621) estimated about 3000

women from Nepal crossed into Bihar each year to marry Indian men.

(18) Bista, 1987, 110.

(19) Gait, 1911 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. 1, Part II, "Tables," Table XI-Birthplace and Table V-Language, 151 and 105.

(20) Mitra, 1961 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. 1, Part II, "Migration Tables," Table D-II Place of Birth; and Part II-C, "Language Tables," 74.

(21) J.W. Elder and A. Mahabir, PLANNED RESETTLEMENT IN NEPAL'S TERAI (Kathmandu: INAS, CEDA, 1976), 28-9.

(22) Elder and Mahabir, 1976, 28.

(23) In Bista's classic work on the various ethnic groups of Nepal he notes that the Rajbansi were formerly known as the 'Koch' and formed a powerful nation during the 17th and 18th centuries which extended from the western half of Assam to the eastern half of Morang (1987, 134). Within Nepal they are now found mostly in Morang and Jhapa districts. Bista further says that the Santhals of Bihar are called Satars in Nepal (1987, 138). Although he does not comment on how and when they immigrated into Nepal, he notes that "they have not yet given up the habit of continually moving both within the country and back and forth across the Nepal-India border." They are also concentrated in Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal.

(24) Bista, 1987, 110.

(25) This practice was noted by the RBMU during their work among the Tharu in Champaran District, Bihar from the 1920s.

(26) M.C. Regmi, THE STATE AND ECONOMIC SURPLUS: PRODUCTION, TRADE AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION IN EARLY 19th CENTURY NEPAL (Varanasi: Nath, 1984), 10-11; quoted by N.R. Shrestha, 1990, 168.

(27) See above, p.58 for an account of the Titalya Mission of the CMS.

(28) Long, 1848, 144.

(29) In Eugene Stock's four volume history of the CMS, he also merely makes mention of this mission as "near the frontier of Nepaul" but not of any ministry developed among Nepali people (Vol. 1, 1899, 313).

(30) Long, 1848, 144-145.

(31) See Perry (1993, 9) for the story of how 14 Newar Christian families went into exile to Bettiah, India in 1769 following the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley by Prithvi Narayan Shah.

(32) Wylie, 1854, 233 & 236.

(33) ZBMM "Annual Report for 1914."

(34) See Lindell (1979, 104-112) for a descriptive account of the various individuals and missions working among the Nepali along Nepal's border to the south in the first half of the 20th Century.

- (35) Joshua Pradhan, OM leader in Gorakhpur, letter to author, 29 August 1991.
- (36) The RBMU stations in Bihar included four in Champaran District: Motihari (HQ), Chainpatia, Harnatar, and Raxaul; and three in Saran District: Siwan, Chapra, and Gopalganj.
- (37) J.Z. Hodge and George E. Hicks, *CASTE OR CHRIST* (London: RBMU, 1906), 21.
- (38) Hodge and Hicks, 1906, 92.
- (39) Mission News, Dec. 1919.
- (40) Mission News, Sept. 1920. Ratandhoj's wife was the fifth daughter of Padre Ganga Prasad Pradhan, one of the first Nepali converts in Darjeeling and translator of the Nepali Bible.
- (41) See Perry (1993, 41-43) for the story of Nawalbir James Rai, who made at least yearly visits during the winter months from Darjeeling to Raxaul between 1924-27. Then another Darjeeling Christian was noted by J.Z. Hodge to be in Raxaul in 1929, Mr. Jai Kumar, with the hope of becoming a permanent evangelist. However, there is no further mention of him, and David Mukhia arrived in 1930, staying as the first resident Nepali evangelist in Raxaul. He was followed the next year by George Pradhan, then Buddhi Singh the winter of 1932. David's future wife Premi arrived the following year as a women's evangelist, and after their marriage they remained in Raxaul until Duncan Hospital was closed due to the War.
- (42) J.Z. Hodge, "Raxaul, the Key to Nepal," RBMU 1926 Report, 51-52, in RBMU file, NCHP Collection.
- (43) For the full story of David Mukhia's ministry, see Perry (1993, 82-90).
- (44) Rishi Raj Acharya, interview with author, Raxaul, 1986. This is confirmed in the article, "The Christian Literature Centre," *DUNCAN HOSPITAL: GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1930-1980* (Duncan Hospital Unit Management Committee, 1980).
- (45) For a description of this colorful woman's pioneer ministry among Nepali, see J. Lindell (1979, 97-99).
- (46) O'Hanlon and Steele, *EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD*, n.d., 12.
- (47) Agnes Beckdahl, *A WITNESS OF GOD'S FAITHFULNESS* (Lucknow, India: Lucknow Publ. House, 1929), 68 and 78. This is a publication of her personal diary, and contains a full description of the Beckdahls' ministry, including notes on the beginnings of the Assemblies of God Mission (USA) in N. India.
- (48) Prior to Indian Independence, AG mission stations were found in at least the following locations in N. India: Bahraich, Lakhimpur, Hardoi, Nanpara, Rupaithia, Nawabganj, Uska Bazaar, Basti, Siswa Bazaar, Bettiah, Laherai Sarai, Darbhanga, and Chapra.
- (49) Beckdahl, 1929, 59.
- (50) Lindell, 1979, 110. Jonathan Lindell first went to India with a vision for

Nepal in 1941, later serving as the Executive Director of UMN, during which time he did extensive research concerning the history of missionary involvement among Nepali, especially as related to the formation of the UMN in 1954.

(51) Narayan Sharma, "The Church History of Nepal with Special Reference to Assemblies of God," MS, 3 Oct. 1984, in NCHP Collection.

(52) Esther B. Harvey, "Crumbling Walls in Nepal," Pentecostal Evangel, 2 Sept. 1944, 11, photocopy in AG "History of Nepal: Research" file, NCHP Collection.

(53) See Perry (1993, 78-82) for Barnabas Rai's full testimony, and a description of how the church across the border in Nepalganj was started.

(54) Andrew McCabe, interview with author, Edinburgh, 5 Oct. 1992.

(55) From the 1970s there was a shift and Doon Bible School in Dehradun, UP, also with a Pentecostal emphasis, became the most popular destination for students from Pentecostal churches in Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Sikkim, and many from Nepal (see below, p.509).

(56) From the 1980s AG Bible students from Nepal have increasingly preferred to attend Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, an AG institution in the English language, rather than NIBI in Hardoi which only has courses in Hindi.

(57) The Brethren in Christ and the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church also have churches inside Nepal, but they are among Santal and Uraon settled in the eastern terai. See below, p.471-474 for an account of these churches.

(58) Jimmy Roane, "The Winter is Past," Pentecostal Evangel, 18 Jan. 1976, 16-17. J. Roane was an AG missionary in Nepal working with the United Mission to Nepal.

(59) David Stewart, "Nepal - Ezekiel," TS of report to AG Headquarters in USA, 9 Sept. 1975; and J. Roane, TS of a report to AG Headquarters in USA, Summer 1976: both in AG file, NCHP Collection.

(60) For a complete list of "Missions Working Among Nepalis Along the Border," see Perry (1993, Appendix B, 136-7). The location of the mission stations, and which missions had members in the Nepal Border Fellowship, are both indicated.

(61) Keith Jones, handwritten submission for "NBF Report," 1952, in CIGM file, NCHP Collection.

(62) Patrick Johnstone, OPERATION WORLD, 5th ed. (Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1993), 280-81 and 290.

(63) Lindell, 1979, 101 n.6.

(64) Regions Beyond, RBMU magazine, June 1925, 76.

(65) Dr. Keith Sanders, former RBMU missionary at Raxaul, interview with author, London, 8 Oct. 1986.

- (66) Julia Patten, "The Land of Decoits," Horizons (RBMU magazine), Autumn 1982, 4.
- (67) Patten, "The Land of Decoits," Horizons, Autumn 1982, 4.
- (68) Horizons, Summer 1987, 11.
- (69) Shem Lal Hembrom, letter to author, 22 March 1994. Hembrom maintains three reasons for the Santal migration into the eastern terai of Nepal. First, to escape the oppression of non-tribal peoples in south Bihar they moved northwards and into jungle area. Second, they were invited in from the Rana era by large landholders to clear the jungle for cultivation, and basically became slaves of the landlords, without land or homes of their own. Third, some moved out of the Santal Paraganas to escape famine and outbreaks of disease. He further states that although they constitute the majority of the population in Morang and Jhapa Districts of Nepal, only about twenty percent own their own land and about ten percent have received citizenship. Now a gradual reverse migration is taking place back to Bihar due to their dissatisfaction in gaining political or social recognition.
- (70) Rev. A.E. Stronstad, Santal Mission of the Northern Churches, letter to E.W. Oliver, UMN Director, 1 May 1956, in Santal Mission file No. S-06.00.01, UMN Archives. The migration of Santal Christians into Nepal was also noted by Jonathan Lindell in a letter home dated March 1945, in NCHP Collection.
- (71) Howard Barclay, RBMU missionary at Jogbani from 1954 to 1960, letter to author, 29 April 1994.
- (72) H. Tudu was a teacher who worked in Nepal among the Santal for several years. Howard Barclay of RBMU helped to make the initial arrangements for him when he came to Nepal.
- (73) Hodne, 1982, 160.
- (74) Naomi Torkelson, former Secretary to the Bishop of the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in Dumka, letter to author, 22 Nov. 1993.
- (75) W.R. Hoke (EACH ONE WIN ONE, n.p., 1972, 10) notes that the Santal were experts in clearing forests and bringing them under cultivation and had migrated by the thousands from South Bihar across the Ganges River into Purnea District of North Bihar. Citing Charulal Mukherjee (THE SANTALS, Calcutta: A. Mukherjee & Co., 1962), Hoke says there were only 6,848 Santals in Purnea District in 1901, but 46,995 by 1931. This migration pattern continued northward into the densely jungled Eastern terai of Nepal.
- (76) Leora Yoder, TS for the NCHP, 23 Oct. 1986, in BIC file, NCHP Collection.
- (77) W.R. Hoke, 1972, 61-2.
- (78) W.R. Hoke, 1972, 83.
- (79) Quoted by Hoke, 1972, 33.
- (80) Barclay, letter to author, 29 April 1994. Barclay opened the shop front of his house, which was on the main road into Nepal, every Sunday for preaching and the sale of Christian literature. In the mid-1950s he was

approached by a young man from Morang, about five miles over the border, who asked for scriptures in Santali, then Barclay visited him in his village. Finding several people interested in learning more, Barclay contacted both BIC in Purnea and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Santal Paraganas.

(81) Charles Engle (letter to author, 31 Jan. 1994), former BIC missionary in Bihar, was present at this baptism. W.R. Hoke (1972, 82) places this event in 1960, and says that a further 26 Santal were baptised in Nepal in 1965. According to Barclay, 'Paul' and his family (eight children) from Hatibanda were the first baptised Christians.

(82) Engle, letter to author, 31 Jan. 1994. Shem Lal Hembrom, currently in training at SAICS in Bangalore as a BIC pastor for the Santal in Nepal, says that the BIC Church in Nepal now includes two Uraon congregations in Sunsari District, five Santal churches in Morang District, and another at Mal Parasi, Bihar, which has recently shifted back across the border due to the difficulties for Santal in Nepal (letter to author, 22 March 1994).

(83) Ken Booth, "Field Letters," Himalayan Mission of WEC, Sept., Oct. and Nov. 1966, in NCHP Collection. See above, "The Entry of Other Missions," p.105ff for the background of WEC and the NBCI in Darjeeling.

CHAPTER 11 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

NEPALI WESTWARDS MIGRATION: BEFORE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

It has already been noted that western Nepal has ancient connections with the hills of Kumaon and Garhwal of present-day Uttar Pradesh, India. Together they formed a common cultural area for several centuries prior to the unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors, with close ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic similarities, and there was regular population movement back and forth.¹ These similarities have carried over into the present day, and especially the hill people of the Mid- and Far-Western Regions of Nepal have maintained a close relationship with the contiguous region of Kumaon across the border.² This affinity between Kumaon and Western Nepal was noted by Northey in the 1930s, who pointed out Dr. Turner's observation that the Nepali language is more closely related to Kumaoni than any other Indo-Aryan dialect, and that the people have merged by intermarriage.³ Writing in the late 1970s about hill-to-hill migration from the Far-Western district of Dharchula to India, Dahal also noted that ethnically the population just across the river (in India) is exactly the same culturally and linguistically, that the border is permeable for marriage, and the Indian side has the added attractions of hospitals, schools, colleges, roads, and access to large market towns.⁴ These have been significant pulls to Nepali immigration. Until the east-west highway was built during the 1980s in Nepal, connecting the Far-West with the rest of the country, the only outlets for trade or transport were either to the south or the west. The Far-West of Nepal has also received the least attention in development efforts, with very few medical or educational facilities before the 1980s, and those were concentrated in the terai. Declining economic conditions and productivity of the

land have forced generations of men out of the Western hills of Nepal into India, seeking means to support their families.

EARLY EXPANSIONISM

The advent of modern Nepal itself, following its formation by Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769, and then continuing expansion, soon brought a large swath of the Western Himalayas beyond the Mahakali River under Gorkhali dominion. Kumaon was invaded in 1790 and subsequently ruled for 24 years. According to Fraser, the Gorkhali were "invited" into Kumaon, and Kumaoni were even incorporated into their armed forces.⁵ The eminent Nepali historian D.R. Regmi notes that the ruling Gorkhali "commanded a great support from the general population" in Kumaon.⁶ This is a further indication of the already close relationship between the peoples of Kumaon with the "invaders" from across the river in Nepal.

By the early 1800s the Western Himalayas right up to the Sutlej came within the Gorkhali orbit, with consequent immigration of army and support personnel, administrators, government officials, and all that followed in their wake -- the first wave of Nepali immigration into the Western Himalayan hills. There was a system of giving individual "jagir" land grants in conquered territories as a form of payment to the Gorkhali army's fighting men, which persisted in Kumaon, although with the expansion into Garhwal lands were assigned to companies rather than to individuals.⁷ This, and its closer proximity to Nepal, partially accounts for the higher concentration of early Nepali settlement in Kumaon. Writing the latter part of that century, Atkinson noted that many of the Gorkhali involved in the occupation married and settled there, and in the 1880s could be found in the hills of every district of Kumaon and Garhwal.⁸

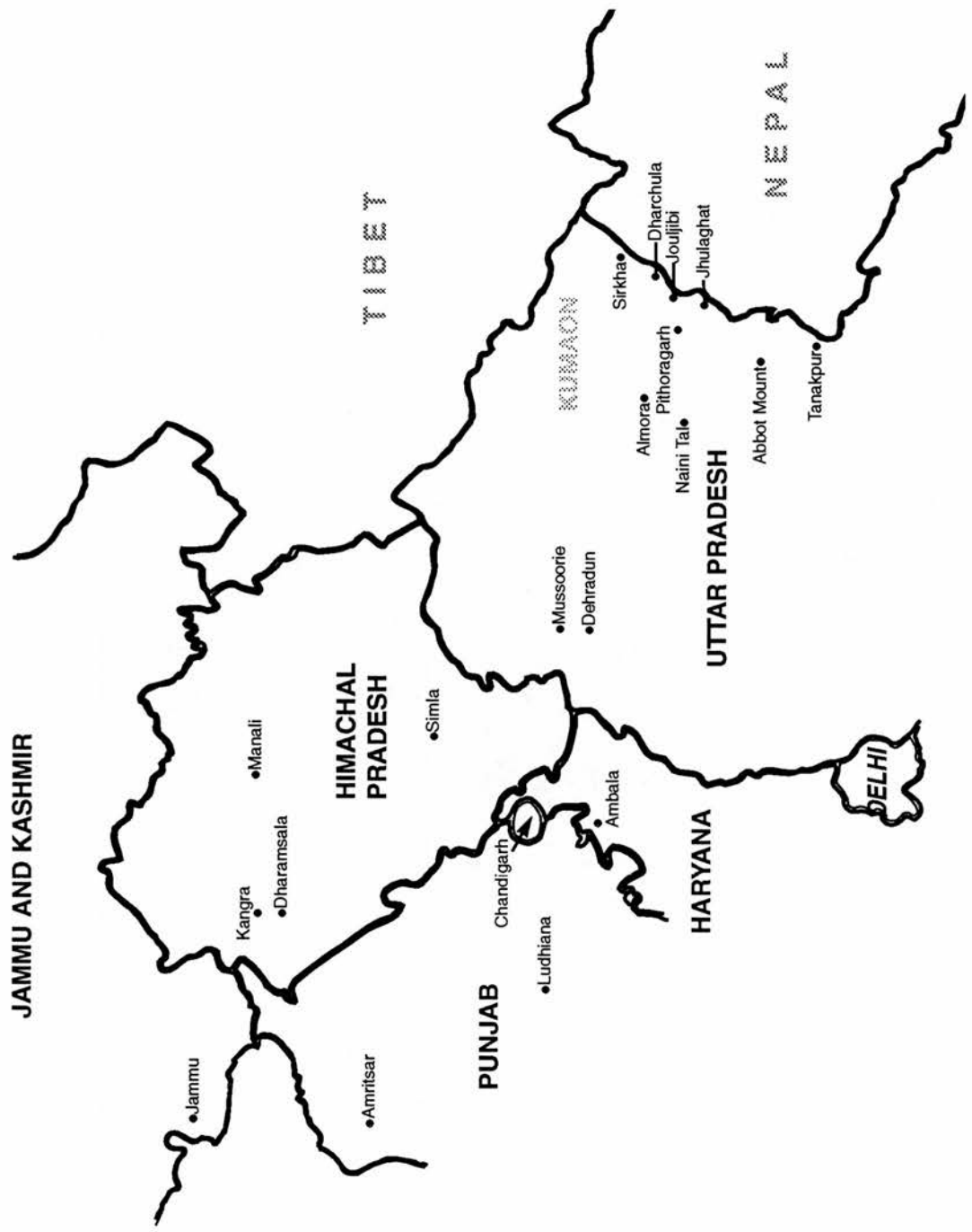


Figure - 9 Western Himalayas

GURKHA RECRUITMENT BY THE BRITISH

Following Nepal's surrender of all territory west of the Mahakali River after signing the Segauli Treaty, the next major inflow of Nepali ethnics into the Western Himalayas came with British recruitment of nearly 4,650 men into four Gurkha battalions for service in the British Indian Army.⁹ The British officers who fought the Gorkhali were much impressed with their martial qualities, and made strong recommendations for them to be recruited into the East India Company's armed forces. In a confidential statement to Lord Hastings, Gen. Ochterlony expressed his high opinion by stating "that the Company's sepoy could never be brought to resist the shock of these energetic mountaineers in their own ground."¹⁰ Thus by 1816 there were Gorkhali garrisoned in Almora of the Kumaon Hills, in Dehradun, and as far west as the Simla Hills.

However, further recruitment in Nepal proved extremely difficult, being consciously obstructed by the Darbar over the next 70 years, into the 1880s. An order was issued by Jang Bah. Rana, the Prime Minister of Nepal, dated 1 August 1858, which forbade Nepali nationals to go to India for recruitment, and stipulated that they must have approval from the Darbar in order to join the Indian Army.¹¹ Therefore Gorkhali migration was surreptitiously encouraged by the British, together with their families, and settlements were established for them in the hills of India. As described by Kansakar,

Sensing the harassment meted out by the Nepal government to the families of the Gurkhas serving in the Indian army and to make the recruitment easier, the British government encouraged migration of the Gurkhas from Nepal with their families and established Gorkha settlements in the hills of India. The largest of these colonies was in the Kangra valley, where it spread from the early settlement of Dharmashala (Bhagsu) and Bakloh. Others were at Darjeeling, Dehradun and Shillong.¹²

Land for four regimental homes was officially sanctioned by the Military Department under the 1864 Charter. Here they could bring their families, with travel paid for by the army. The resultant Gurkha colonies in the Western

Himalayas provided fertile ground for further recruitment and an attraction to additional Nepali emigration, but almost exclusively from western Nepal.

Despite Jang Bah. Rana's order, during this period two additional Gurkha regiments were recruited, "indirectly and without the prior knowledge and permission of the government of Nepal."¹³ The 4th Gurkha Rifles were raised in 1857 at Pithoragarh, Kumaon, just a few miles from Nepal's western border. Their regimental home was Bakloh, in the hills of present day Himachal Pradesh (HP). Several years earlier, in 1849, Punjab Irregular Forces (later the Punjab Frontier Forces) began to be raised for the broad rough area of Punjab following its annexation by the British. Some Gurkhas were included among them, but in 1858 a specifically Gurkha battalion was raised for the Punjab Irregulars -- the Hazara Gurkha Battalion (later the 5th Gurkha Rifles) -- which was cantoned in Abbottabad. The "Historical Record" of the 5th Gurkhas recounts that the nucleus of this new battalion was made up of Gurkhas already serving in other Punjab forces: four regiments of the Sikh Infantry, the Corps of Guides, twenty-four regiments of the Punjab Infantry, and nine battalions of the Punjab Police.¹⁴ This shows just how wide-spread the recruitment of Gurkhas into various Punjab forces already was by that time. Land just north of the cantonment in Abbottabad was made available for a Gurkha colony, and relatives and friends of the soldiers were encouraged to colonise the valley.

GURKHAS SERVING OTHER FOREIGN POWERS

In the meantime, it was not only the British who appreciated the martial qualities of the Gorkhali during their expansion into the Western Himalayas. Ranjit Singh, the Sikh King, also began to recruit Gurkhas into his armed forces following the Anglo-Nepal War, taking them all the way to his capital of Lahore. Ever since then Gurkha soldiers have been popularly referred to as "lahuris" within Nepal. Kansakar notes that Ranjit Singh sent Shiva Dat Rai, who was then living in Sikh territory, "as agent to entice the 2nd Nasiri Battalion to forsake

the Company's service for his own."¹⁵ Although Rai was unsuccessful, Ranjit Singh found other ways to entice Gorkhali into his service, by offering high pay, and then in 1839 he negotiated a treaty with the Nepal government.¹⁶ Testimony to this is found on a monument erected by the British near Fort Kalunga to honour the Gurkha hero Bal Bahadur Kunwar and his men. It is inscribed to read,

This is inscribed as a tribute of respect for our adversary,
Bulbudder, Commander of the fort, and his brave Goorkhas,
who were afterwards, while in the service of Runjeet Singh,
shot down in their ranks, to the last man, by Afghan artillery.¹⁷

The latter may have had reference to Ranjit Singh's campaign against the Afghans in 1823 when he conquered Peshawar. In the 1st Sikh War in 1845, Gurkha Regiments of the Indian Army faced Gurkha battalions in the Sikh army.¹⁸ However, Ranjit's infant son was soon installed on the throne by the British, and following the 2nd Sikh War just a few years later, the Punjab was annexed in 1848, becoming a British Province. Soldiers from Nepal and their families had already been resident in the Punjab from at least the 1820s. They were brought in increasing numbers following British acquisition of the Punjab, but in service with the Indian government's military forces.

In addition there were Gurkha battalions in Shah Shuja's army after he was restored to the throne of Afghanistan in Kabul by the British in the 1st Afghan War.¹⁹ Shah Shuja had been a refugee in Lahore from the early 1800s, after being deposed by his brother Mahmud, and probably followed the example of Ranjit Singh in adding Gurkhas to his armed forces. However, he was assassinated in 1842, after only three years on the throne, and it is doubtful that the Gurkha battalions in his army survived beyond that. Although Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army may have been engaged during the 2nd and 3rd Afghan Wars of 1878 and 1919, they were never garrisoned in Afghanistan.

It is also claimed that Gulab Singh started a Gurkha Regiment in 1848 in

Kashmir, and they were allowed to bring their families and settle.²⁰ He had been made the ruler of Jammu by Ranjit Singh, then was given Kashmir by the British following his help in negotiating the peace following the 1st Sikh War of 1846. Although the author has found no independent confirmation of this, it is quite possible that Gulab Singh followed the lead of both the British and Ranjit Singh in recruiting some Gurkha troops from this early date. They were certainly being recruited into the Kashmir Imperial Service Corps by the end of the century. Husain details nine companies of Gurkhas in the Corps, and three Gurkha companies in the regular Army in Kashmir in the 1890s.²¹ By 1918 they had formed their own social welfare organisation, the Jammu and Kashmir Gorkha Sabha.²²

During the 1800s Gurkhas were also to be found among the armed forces of one other foreign nation, as the bodyguard of the Khan of Khelat, the sovereign of Baluchistan.²³ During the 1st Afghan War, British forces killed the Mehrab Khan and conquered Khelat enroute to Kandahar and Kabul. After his son Nasir Khan ascended the throne in 1841, British troops evacuated. Then in 1854 a treaty was signed with Nasir Khan, and 22 years later a British residency was founded at Quetta. Presumably during early contacts with the British forces, or possibly through contact with Ranjit Singh, the Khan became familiar with the Gurkhas' martial qualities and reputation for loyalty, and decided to surround himself with them as a personal bodyguard which had no other loyalties in the country. But the largest contingent of Gurkhas in Baluchistan followed the British acquisition of "British Baluchistan" in 1879 as a frontier post, the southernmost point in a line of frontier posts and system of strategic railways on the North West Frontier of India.

Thus by the middle of the 19th century five Gurkha regiments had been raised for the Indian Army, with regimental homes and resultant Gurkha colonies in Almora, Dehradun, Dharmasala, Bakloh and Abbottabad. Also Gurkha soldiers had served the Sikh empire of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh in Kashmir,

Shah Shuja in Afghanistan, and the Khan of Khelat in Baluchistan, for varying amounts of time. Nepali emigration reached not only across the border into the familiar Kumaon Hills, but as far away as the North West Frontier bordering Afghanistan, and continued into the 20th century.

As Gurkha recruitment increased from the late 19th century, so did the civilian Nepali migration into India.²⁴ The Army's attention became more focused on Afghanistan and the North West Frontier, plans were made to delocalise regiments in Burma and Assam, and the 6th, 7th and 2-10th Gurkha Rifles were all transferred by 1905 to Punjab and Quetta.²⁵ By 1913 there were reportedly over 19,000 Gurkhas serving in the ten Gurkha Rifle regiments and the Imperial Service troops, plus about 100 in Reserve with each of the twenty Gurkha Rifle battalions.²⁶ These men were concentrated almost exclusively in the Western Himalayas until called into service in the world theatre during the First and Second World War.

OTHER EMIGRATION WESTWARDS

Even after the western boundary of Nepal was defined by the Segauli Treaty, it continued to be permeable to population movement, especially for trade and for marriage migration. From the Far-Western hills and mountains of Nepal it was the most direct way into Kumaon and onwards, although it was only possible to cross the Kali River during the winter season. There were three main routes across the border: the furthest north at Dharchula, where a temporary bridge was annually rebuilt; at Jhulaghat, the only permanent suspension bridge, leading to the trade center of Pithoragarh where a company of the 3rd Gurkha Rifles was posted since 1882 and many Gurkha pensioners had been settled;²⁷ and at Jouljibi, where another temporary bridge was annually rebuilt. According to Pant, this last route was opened by villagers of Doti, Nepal, and the first trade mela was organised in 1914 at Jouljibi, the junction of four important trade routes.²⁸ It became an annual event drawing about 15,000 people by the 1930s.

The trade across this border in India was essential to the Dotials livelihood, and they were exempted from import-export duties by the Nepal government.²⁹ A fourth route, the most southerly, was limited to boat service across to Tanakpur as late as the 1960s.

In addition to trade and marriage migration along the western border of Nepal, the holy shrines and temples of the Kumaon-Garhwal-Simla hills have long attracted Hindu pilgrims from Nepal. The Western Himalayas are at the heart of orthodox Hinduism, and Kumaon-Garhwal contains the highest ratio of Brahman population in India.³⁰ Those on pilgrimage have come from all over Nepal and India, and some have settled in the area.

However, with the British acquisition of Kumaon and Garhwal (1815), then the Punjab (1848), also came development of services, trade, transport and communications, and consequent labour demands -- new pulls for Nepali emigration. The North-Western Provinces were constituted and a Lt. Governor installed in 1835; until then Kumaon and Garhwal had been administered as a part of Bengal and little was done to promote its development. The Indian government founded a Public Works Department in the 1850s, and the rail network was started. Tea cultivation was also introduced in Kangra, Dehradun, and the Kumaon and Garhwal Hills about this time. Labourers originating in Western Nepal were surely involved in these efforts, although statistics are hard to come by.³¹ Near the turn of the century, in Crook's comments about foreign emigration in the North-Western Provinces he wrote, "Along the Nepal frontier there is a constant flux and flow. New settlers move backwards and forwards..."³² For example, Nepali tea coolies were working in Almora District by 1900. The prevalence of porters from Doti was observed by Walton in Dehradun near the same time: "...the Dotials who are often men of enormous strength prefer to handle heavy goods...";³³ and again by Pant some twenty years later as working in the sub-Himalayan markets of Kumaon.³⁴

The establishment and growth of towns and cities under British patronage

also contributed to this westward attraction to Nepali emigration. The Western Himalayas, especially in Kumaon-Garhwal and the Simla and Kangra districts in Punjab, were favoured for the establishment of hill resorts-cum-sanatoriums, and for troop garrisons. They were built strategically for defence, government administration and development of trade, resulting in the growth of an efficient transport system and increasing contacts with the outside. For example, Nainital, formerly uninhabited, was founded in 1842, connected by rail in 1884, and served as summer headquarters for the government of the Province. Almora became the headquarters of Kumaon division and a tea growing centre, as well as the regimental home of the 3rd Gurkha Rifles. Lansdowne was founded in 1887, serving as a sanatorium and hill cantonment for the Garhwal battalions. Dehradun began to grow from 1816 when the 2nd Gurkha Rifles were garrisoned there; then tea cultivation was introduced, a Gorkha Press was started by 1910, the All India Gurkha League was established in 1921, and a Gurkha primary school in 1925. Landour and Mussoorie, popular hill stations immediately north of Dehradun, grew into towns by the 1860s. Even further west, Simla was founded in 1822. It later served as the summer capital for the Indian Government from 1912 until the Second World War. Dharmsala was made the headquarters of Kangra District of Punjab in 1855, and became a centre of European settlement and the cantonment for the 1st Gurkha Rifles. Abbottabad was settled soon after the Punjab was annexed, and also became a cantonment and a sanatorium for the British. Lahore came under British dominion following the 2nd Sikh War and became the headquarters for a division of the Indian Army, and an important junction on the North West railway. All of these served as pulls to Nepali immigration into the Western Himalayas.

The 1901 Indian Census recorded over 32,000 Nepali-speakers in the Western Himalayas, with roughly two-thirds of them from Kumaon to Dehradun, and one-third in the Punjab (including the Simla Hills and Kangra Valley) and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).³⁵ The majority of these were

Gurkha soldiers and their families, along with some settlers, businessmen, and a growing number of migrant labourers.

MISSIONS IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS:

THE FIRST NEPALI CONVERTS

As soon as the Western Himalayas and Punjab were opened up to European settlement, missionaries began to set up centres. Capt. Ramsey, the Civil Officer in Almora, started a simple Christian work among lepers in 1840 out of his private means. Then at the invitation of Capt. Ramsey, Rev. J.H. Budden of the London Missionary Society (LMS) took over its superintendency in 1850, formally constituted as the "Kumaon Mission" (later called the "Almora Mission").³⁶ School work, orphanages, and outstations with native preachers grew up, along with the original leper asylum. About twenty years later, when Budden trekked eastward out of Almora to Pithoragarh with his son, he indicated an interest in Nepal and Tibet, noting that Pithoragarh was strategic for reaching "travelers from those shut-in-countries ever on the tramp."³⁷ He went so far as to make arrangements to place a preacher there, but when the LMS authorities decided not to develop it as a station, Pithoragarh was offered to the American Methodist Episcopal Mission. The only other instance of LMS contact with Nepali in Kumaon was in 1900 at the new station in Katyur, 30 miles north of Almora, where there were a large number of Nepali coolies on the tea plantations. But the initial vision of evangelising them evidently never came to fruition.

The pioneer of the American Methodist Episcopal Mission (AMEM) in North India, William Butler, evidenced a hope to enter Nepal before he had even established the AMEM's first headquarters in Bareilly. In a letter to Durbin, dated 27 October 1856, he wrote, "Oudh and Rohilkhund include the keys to Nepal, Tibet and Chinese Tartary. The door is open to us."³⁸ Just a few years later J.M. Thoburn made an evangelistic tour to a mela on the border of Nepal and noted unlimited opportunities for evangelism, but it was evidently not

followed up. The offer by LMS for the AMEM to open a station at Pithoragarh almost twenty years after Butler's earlier letter confirmed his hope, when one of his colleagues wrote, "This may open a way into Tibet, which together with Nepal, whose borders we have reached, should be occupied at no distant day."³⁹ Dr. Gray of the AMEM arrived in Pithoragarh in 1873, married Budden's daughter, and they worked together there. A few years later Budden's second daughter, Miss Annie Budden, was also accepted as a Methodist missionary and joined them in Pithoragarh.⁴⁰ A thriving work was built up including schools, a hospital, a widows' home, a church and Bible classes, and evangelistic work throughout the district with native preachers. But Badley notes that there was very little response to the preaching except among a few low-caste, and he makes no mention of Nepali.⁴¹

The main response among Nepali came in conjunction with Dr. Martha Sheldon's appointment to Pithoragarh in 1893. Although her special interest was Bhot (Tibet) and work among the local Bhotiya, her choice of a winter quarters in Dharchula and summer quarters in Sirkha also brought her into regular contact with Nepali. According to a missionary of over thirty years later, "She worked tirelessly all along the Nepal and Tibet borders," and a few Nepali converts became a part of the Christian community at Dharchula.⁴² An obscure reference in an issue of "Indian Witness" in 1893 to Christians freely going and coming from Nepal across the Kumaon border "for some years" may refer to Sheldon's work.⁴³ Following Sheldon's death at Dharchula in 1912 her work lapsed, and so did any further AMEM outreach to Nepali in the Western Himalayas. Although individual American Methodist missionaries had shown a fleeting interest in Nepal as one of the "closed lands," there was no work aimed specifically at Nepali in their midst, only literature distribution and the few Nepali converts in conjunction with Dr. Sheldon's work among the Bhotiya.

A small independent mission, founded and staffed by Rev. and Mrs. Ezra Steiner, was established in Dharchula about fifteen years after Sheldon's death.

The Steiners served in Central India for ten years with the General Conference Mennonite Church. But they had a "calling" to Tibet which finally led them to its border at Dharchula where they formed the Tibetan Frontier Mission, built on the foundation of Sheldon's earlier work. The Steiners took over the dilapidated mission bungalow in Dharchula and opened a school from 1929, opened dispensaries at both Dharchula and Sirkha from 1930, and made extensive preaching tours with native evangelists, including to the Jouljibi mela. They contacted the local Bhotiya, Nepali and Tibetan traders.⁴⁴ The Evangelical Alliance Mission's historical account says that from the 1930s, due to medical aid offered, the Steiners were able to cross the border into neighboring villages in Nepal; two of the national evangelists, Lobsang and Guru, also made an extensive evangelistic tour into Nepal "at the risk of their lives... carrying the gospel to remote parts in that land."⁴⁵ As described in an earlier work by the author:

By 1937 it was reported that 30 Christians were gathering for worship in Darchula, from Tibet, Nepal and India, "all living in perfect harmony and fellowship." A small church was even built and dedicated in March 1940, made up of Tibetan, Nepali and Indian converts. During preaching tours along the border often three languages were used -- Nepali, Tibetan and Hindi. However, a Nepali church as such was never formed along this border.⁴⁶

Although an exclusively Nepali-language church was not formed, one of Steiner's successors report that there were a number of Nepali converts who were active members of Steiner's church during these pre-Independence days.⁴⁷ Large quantities of Nepali literature obtained from Darjeeling were distributed, as well as Tibetan and Hindi literature. Steiner's burden was for both of the closed countries of Tibet and Nepal, and he had a vision of establishing fifteen outstations staffed by twenty-two evangelists, and three evangelists each in Nepal and Tibet.⁴⁸ Of all the missionaries working in the Western Himalayas during this period, the Steiners demonstrated the clearest vision for reaching Nepali-speaking people.

Several individual Nepali were also converted through The Leprosy Mission's hospital at Chandag Heights, a work originally started by Dr. Dease of the AMEM in the 1880s. When the doors of the leper asylum first opened Dease forecast that many leprosy patients from Nepal would cross the border to come for treatment -- a forecast that was fulfilled in the years to come:

Dr. Dease's prophecy proved to be a very true one; and in the years that followed very many Nepali victims both of the disease and of social ostracism made the arduous mountainous journey to find welcome at Chandag. Indeed, it was the fact that so many Nepali patients made their way across to India which made the Mission conscious of the call to enter Nepal; but one which it could not answer for over seventy years, because Nepal was a country closed against foreigners from the west.⁴⁹

When Dr. Mary Reed of the AMEM contracted leprosy herself, she was appointed by TLM to be the superintendent at Chandag Heights, where she served for 50 years until her death in 1943. She was succeeded by Dr. Katherine Young who recorded many contacts with patients from Nepal: Gajbir who came in 1944 from the north-west corner of Nepal, travelling mostly on his hands and knees, and was baptised in June 1946, and returned to his home to share the Gospel; Mohan Masih who came in 1945, was converted, and became a dresser in the hospital; Hira, a "Sadhuni" who was baptised in 1947; and Khem Singh who was converted and trained by Dr. Young, and returned to a remote spot on the Nepal border to start a small leprosy clinic in 1947.⁵⁰ But Young resigned from Chandag in the early 1950s to start an out-patient clinic right on the border with Nepal at Jhulaghat. It was run especially for Nepali patients to check their influx into India, until she finally secured permission to start a clinic across the border inside Nepal itself in 1960. Thereafter the importance of TLM at Chandag Heights in relation to Nepali ministry declined.

About the same time Capt. Ramsey had initiated the first Christian work in Kumaon, CMS started a "Himalayan Mission" further west near the hill station of Simla, with a view to Tibet and the local Pahari hill tribes. In 1840 money was

raised by local British officers and civilians to start evangelisation, and Mr. Procknow, who was formerly with Rev. W. Start in Darjeeling, was given "English orders" by the Archdeacon of Calcutta and sent to Kotghur in 1843.⁵¹ A school, orphanage, dispensary, and agricultural work was started. Then in 1853, two German missionaries of the Moravian Mission, E. Pagell and A.W. Heyde, arrived at Kotghur with an introduction to the CMS, staying for about two years.⁵² But then they decided to move on to Kyelang, Lahul, to be as near as possible to the frontier of Tibet. Although Procknow's original missionary work was among the Nepali and Lepcha of Darjeeling, there is no evidence that he had any contact with or ministry among Nepali civilians or Gurkhas in the Simla Hills, where his primary concern was for Tibetans and Bhotiya. Further to the west, in Dharmsala, there was a mission among Gurkhas before the turn of the century -- Major-General Millet's Private Mission to Gurkhas. But it was short-lived and very little is known about it.⁵³ Following Major-General Millet's efforts, there is no further evidence of outreach among Nepali in HP for almost 100 years, until the late 1980s, although the Nepali population grew dramatically following Indian Independence. The lack of evangelisation of Nepali is not surprising in a state that is 95.9 percent Hindu; the least evangelised state in India, with a very weak local church.⁵⁴

Missionaries also arrived at Ludhiana and Lahore in the Punjab during the 1840s, and soon extended work to Dehradun District at the hill stations of Landour and Mussoorie. They were Presbyterians from America. Again there is no evidence that they had any outreach among or impact among the Nepali in these places, nor has the author found reference to their having any interest towards Nepal prior to Dr. Carl Friedericks' treks into Nepal with Bob Fleming, which led to formation of the United Mission to Nepal in 1954.

Leading up to Indian Independence the only significant Christian outreach to Nepali that had taken place in the Western Himalayas was in the Kumaon Hills near the western border of Nepal. In addition, the only members of the

NBF west of Nepal were with the more recent and smaller, independent or non-denominational missions poised along the border: the Tibetan Frontier Mission since 1927 in Dharchula; WEC in Lohaghat, Almora District since 1937; and The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM) which officially assumed responsibility for the Tibetan Frontier Mission from 1946. The major denominational missions -- Methodists and Presbyterians from America, and the CMS -- were not represented in the NBF, another indication of their lack of involvement in Nepali ministry at the time. However, all three of them later became members of the UMN. The Leprosy Mission also gained entry to Nepal in the 1950s, starting with a leprosy out-patients clinic at the UMN's Shanta Bhawan Hospital, then building Anandaban Hospital on a site granted by the Nepal government a few miles outside Kathmandu.

POST INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The events of World War II, closely followed by Indian Independence and then partition, changed the whole configuration of Nepali population in the Western Himalayas. It also affected the destination of further migration into the area. Between the 1901 and 1931 Indian Census the number of Nepali in the areas to the west of the UP hills doubled to over 23,000.⁵⁵ But partition dramatically changed that. The Gurkhas and their families based in Quetta (Baluchistan), Hazara (NWFP) and the western part of Punjab were all pulled back and returned to within the new boundaries of India. If any of the Nepali civilian population stayed behind in the newly formed Muslim nation of West Pakistan, it was a very small percentage.⁵⁶ Also, with Independence the Indian Army only retained six of the ten Gurkha Rifle regiments, all six of them traditionally recruited from Western Nepal. By the 1960s they were expanded to include a seventh regiment, the 11th Gurkha Rifles, and each regiment had five or six battalions. Confrontations with China and Pakistan in the 1960s and 1970s caused increased Gurkha recruitment, until by the 1990s estimates of Nepali

ethnics in the Indian Army ranged from 60,000 to 100,000.⁵⁷ Following Indian Independence the Gurkhas were concentrated mostly in the UP hills and Kangra (later part of HP), with their cantonments, Gurkha colonies and pensioners' settlements. Other Gurkhas continued to serve in the Kumaon Regiment and the Garhwal Regiment, both in the UP, and in the Jammu and Kashmir Rifles.⁵⁸ Their presence, and those who followed them, ensured a continuing and growing presence of Nepali immigrants in these areas. Even when the concentration of Gurkha regiments in Dehradun and Dharmsala was broken up and they were dispersed to new regimental homes in the 1970s, the long-standing Gurkha colonies remained.

However, the major shift in Nepali emigration westwards since Independence has been the dramatic influx of labourers, particularly into Himachal Pradesh, and an increasing dispersal towards urban areas, especially in present-day Punjab (India) and Haryana (formerly a part of Punjab). When the number of Nepali in UP nearly doubled between 1931 and 1951, the 1951 Census report attributed the increase "to intervening labour migration."⁵⁹ Marriage migration of women from Nepal into the border districts of Kumaon has also continued, as have seasonal trading expeditions. But the greatest number migrating out of the hills of Western Nepal, noted in numerous studies since the 1970s, are unskilled labourers.⁶⁰ They are found as porters in the hill stations and at religious pilgrimage sites, on road crews and construction gangs, from Pithoragarh on the western border of Nepal throughout Kumaon and Garhwal into HP. The local people often refer to them as "Dotials," although they originate from several different districts of Far and Mid-West Nepal. They are locally "praised far and wide as porters of great stamina and honesty."⁶¹ Since the 1980s, observers noted a new trend of Dotials beginning to settle in the Western Himalayas, whereas they were formerly almost all circular migrant labourers. As Kumaoni and Garhwali are themselves moving out of their villages in search of better opportunities, the even less advantaged Nepali are moving

Especially in Himachal Pradesh the number of Nepali immigrants has dramatically increased, from 10,811 in 1961 to 40,526 in 1981.⁶³ The majority are labourers in rural areas, particularly in construction and road-building projects, and come from western Nepal. While according to Census reports the Nepali population in the UP has experienced zero growth during this period, in HP it has quadrupled, evidently due to the profusion of development activities taking place in the state and consequent labour demands. Also, with advances in education more and more menial labour positions have been vacated by the local population as they look for better opportunities. As described by a local observer:

For decades, migration has taken place from Western Nepal to the hills of Himachal Pradesh. There are two or three thousand Nepali workers in the Shimla hills alone, out of whom about a thousand work on road construction in Shimla town. The others are employed as apple pickers, porters and agricultural workers in the rural areas. In conversations, these Nepali workers say their main goal is to save money for the support of their families in their native villages... Nepali labourers lack a sense of security, unlike other migrant labourers here who come from the different states of India. Being foreign nationals, they cannot enjoy benefits such as ration cards... most had hoped to do better when they first started out from their homes.⁶⁴

Conservative estimates put the actual number of ethnic Nepali in HP today, including the large proportion of migrant labourers, at over 100,000 -- the largest concentration in the Western Himalayas.⁶⁵

The permanent residents and Gurkha pensioners associated with the long-established Gurkha colonies in the UP hills and HP are still there, especially near Dehradun and Dharmsala, and a few of them or their sons have attained prominent local positions. But the vast majority of the younger generation have dispersed in search of better employment opportunities, mostly towards urban areas. The three sons of one informant in Dehradun, resident there since 1947, are now resident in Bombay, London and California. The new arrivals are mostly

unskilled labourers.

The dispersal of Nepali emigrants to urban areas of North-West India is largely a recent phenomenon. The surge of Nepali urban immigration westward has been to the states of Punjab and Haryana, which attained their present form only in November 1966. Whereas their combined Nepal-origin population was only about 4,000 in 1951 (including the Gurkhas in Kangra and Simla Districts to the north), it had climbed to about 10,000 in 1971 (no longer including Kangra and Simla), and to 13,000 in 1981.⁶⁶ The great preponderance has been male labourers to urban areas, engaged largely in "other services" and manufacturing; and about half of those who listed their last residence as Nepal in the census had only been in Haryana/Punjab for four years or less.⁶⁷ Most of them are found in the urban centres of Ambala, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Firozpur, and Jullundar. Although there is also reportedly a Nepali concentrated area of Jammu city called "Gorkha Nagar," which probably dates back to Gurkha recruitment in the Kashmir Frontier Forces, three-quarters of the Nepali population in Jammu and Kashmir still live in rural areas.

NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN NORTH-WEST INDIA

Although the configuration of Nepali population movement changed significantly following Indian Independence, there was no matching move in the evangelisation of Nepali in North-West India. By 1960 the few missionaries who had been serving in the Kumaon Hills along the western border of Nepal were forced out by new Indian government restrictions, and there was no other Christian outreach among Nepali further west. The UP hills have been basically devoid of any Nepali-oriented ministry since that time. It was not until the late 1970s that a small outreach to Nepali in Dehradun, at the foot of the hills, was started for the first time, and by the 1990s the first tentative steps were being taken in Manali and Simla of HP -- over 150 years after the first Nepali emigrated to those areas. The author is not aware of any efforts, past or present,

by Indian or expatriate Christians, to evangelise the Nepali dispersed throughout the urban areas of Haryana, Punjab, and Jammu-Kashmir. However, the presence of Nepali believers in a Pentecostal church in Jammu has been reported, and three Nepali pastors in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal were ordained in 1987 by Pentecostals in Kashmir.⁶⁸

NEPALI MINISTRY ALONG NEPAL'S WESTERN BORDER

Of the few independent and non-denominational missions which dotted the western border of Nepal in Kumaon, only WEC had a primary focus on Nepali people, forming what they called their "Nepal Border Field" in 1945. WEC's first contact with Nepali work was through Dr. Kitty Harbord, when she persuaded Dr. W.H. Morris to take over her work at Nautanwa on the southern border of Nepal in 1935. Len Moules and Gordon Lewis, two new WEC recruits who joined Morris the following year, soon moved on to Lohaghat, in Kumaon, where they established a base. From there they journeyed northward all the way to Darchula, took part in the multi-lingual outreach at the Jouljibi mela, and noted various points along the border for potential Nepali ministry. But Jonathan Lindell, who arrived in India in 1941, was the first WEC-linked worker whose main interest was in Nepal. He made his way to Kumaon in 1943-4 in hopes of establishing WEC's first station on Nepal's western border. Following a survey of the border he wrote:

The WEC has at present no functioning purely Nepali work, but has an option of opening part-time Nepali work in any place from Nautanwa to Jhulaghat. Tanakpur is the only station with a purely Nepali work possible, and that is largely men's work and seasonal... There is no 100% Nepali work station available, till Nepal itself opens, in the WEC field... All plains stations from Tanakpur east are cold-weather stations.⁶⁹

In 1945 Lindell returned to Darjeeling, where he turned over the leadership of the WEC Nepal Border Field to Jac Dyck, having secured Jhulaghat from the AMEM as a new WEC field.⁷⁰ But it was two years later, the end of 1947,

before this new field was occupied.

The initial team included Jac and Helen Dyck, Henry Tyskerud, and "two young lads from Darjeeling who felt the call of the Lord to join us," Subit Tshering and Jonathan Rai.⁷¹ WEC nourished a hope that their two Nepali helpers would be the nucleus of a band of native workers for the western border of Nepal, a vision very similar to that of the NEB; but for WEC this vision did not materialise, although a third evangelist from Darjeeling, George Rai, did join them for a time. The team's first prayer request was for "the reaching of the Nepali population localized for the time being and also the transient population."⁷² The "localized" Nepali population were mostly retired Gurkhas around Pithoragarh, who had been given land to settle on and were mixed in with the local society, but still spoke Nepali.⁷³ At an NBF Conference in 1950 about seventeen settlements of Gurkha pensioners and their families were reported around Kharakdesh, over a 7,000 foot pass.⁷⁴ Most of the rest were traders and coolies constantly moving across the border and up and down the trade route. The team finally settled at the village of Bharalu, a week's march north of the railhead at Tanakpur, but just seven miles from the border of Nepal, directly on the trade route. From there they itinerated up and down the border, distributing literature brought from Darjeeling, preaching, camping and evangelising at the Jouljibi mela for a month at a time. In another similarity to the NEB, their primary goal was evangelism, to spread the message of Christianity as far as possible; not to form churches. Dycks often wrote of meeting Nepali coolies on the road, in the bazaars and villages of the area:

Daily one sees scores of coolies moving back and forth across this trade route. Looking down into the village below we see the silver thread-like road winding in and out, and coolies coming from Nepal carrying their loads, heading for the trading centre.⁷⁵

But after the Dycks left for American on furlough in 1951, and Tshering and Rai were sent to Bible school in Allahabad, it was decided to close the

Bharalu station. The NBF Conference Report for 1953 gives the reason as being strong local anti-Christian feeling and efforts of the Arya Samaj and anti-foreign elements against the missionaries which had grown alarmingly since 1949. Missionary colleagues of that era recall it being due to the minimal response received and lack of conversions. Upon the Dycks return to India, they went straight to Darjeeling to start a new aspect of ministry. Subit Tshering and George Rai also returned to Darjeeling at the conclusion of their Bible course.

The WEC Nepal Border Field, the only mission in the Western Himalayas with a primary goal of evangelising local Nepali, only lasted five years. During that time masses of Christian literature was distributed and the Gospel was preached tirelessly. Tshering and Rai also worked together with Len Moules in 1951 to produce the first three recordings in the Nepali-language to be processed by Gospel Recordings.⁷⁶ But there were few evident results in terms of converts, and no churches were planted or Nepali evangelists left in place to carry on. WEC missionaries did continue some evangelistic ministry among Nepali from Tanakpur into the 1960s, mainly seasonal trekking into the hills, but by 1966 the Tanakpur area was absorbed into the "India General Field of WEC."⁷⁷ WEC's Nepali-oriented ministry was now centered in Darjeeling as the "Himalayan Mission," until their first missionaries entered Nepal in 1969.

By the 1960s the Tibetan Frontier Field of TEAM (formerly the Tibetan Frontier Mission of the Steiners) were also been forced out of the Kumaon border area with Nepal. The Steiners' son and daughter had both returned to India in 1947 with their spouses, Dr. Bradford and Martha Steiner, and Charles and Anita Warren, under TEAM to carry on the work in Dharchula and Sirkha. Within five years there were eighteen TEAM missionaries serving in five different locations in UP, and all of them requested membership in the NBF.⁷⁸ This demonstrated a high degree of interest in Nepali ministry, although only those at Dharchula had direct contact with Nepali, particularly through a grammar school which forty pupils from Nepal crossed the border daily to attend.

By 1952 the missionaries were cut off from Sirkha due to new government security regulations. An "inner line" was drawn within which foreigners could no longer reside, and by 1960 they had been forced out of their other border stations as well, leaving a church of Nepali, Tibetan and Bhotiya Christians, and the Steiner Memorial School behind in Dharchula.⁷⁹ That was the end of TEAM's involvement in Nepali ministry in Kumaon. But they finally got an opening to Far-West Nepal itself in 1968, when they took over the leprosy clinic of Dr. Katherine Young in Dandeldhura.⁸⁰

Throughout these years the NBF also maintained an interest in Nepal's western border. Following Lindell's survey in 1943/4, another survey was carried out in 1950 at the NBF's instigation, and a consequent suggestion was made to members who were looking for a field among Nepali "to investigate the possibilities of Naini Tal, particularly for work among the Dotiyals."⁸¹ This was followed up by a new missionary couple with the Independent Presbyterian Board of Missions, but they concluded it was not a good centre for Nepali work and ended up in Darjeeling. The only other NBF member from this area was Max Strong who founded the Good Shepherd Agricultural Mission near Tanakpur in 1948. He observed in a letter to the NBF Secretary, "Literally thousands and thousands of Nepalis pass through Tanakpur during every winter season, offering, in my opinion, the best opportunity for evangelizing western Nepal."⁸² However, his primary work was among Anglo-Indians, complementary to Graham's Homes in Kalimpong from which boys occasionally came for agricultural training; his work had little direct impact on Nepali ethnics. Kate Young, who returned in 1970 to her old stomping ground at Champawat after leaving Dandeldhura, found a response to Christianity among her beloved leprosy patients, including those from Nepal. But she had to leave the immediate border area the following year due to government restrictions, and finally settled in Kathgodam, Naini Tal from where she made regular visits to four different leper colonies throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In her correspondence home she makes numerous references

to patients from Bajhang and Jumla (Nepal) among those at the leper colonies.⁸³ A number of them became Christians, and they nearly always asked her to hold a short worship service before the conclusion of her visits. But these were isolated communities and made no Christian impact among other Nepali in Kumaon.

All told, Christian mission work among Nepali along the western border of Nepal in Kumaon had very little discernible impact aside from the "good works" done medically and educationally. Jonathan Lindell later assessed it succinctly: "...the Gospel had little effect on the Nepalese because they were seasonal transients passing through... Missionary work among Nepalese on this west side border was meager because the Nepalese who travelled in and out were few, they kept on the move, and in their settled places they lived aloof."⁸⁴ Certainly the transient nature of most of the Nepali with whom the missionaries were in contact, the special difficulties that presented, and the relative dearth of Nepali-focused mission work were key factors in the lack of Christian impact among the Nepali population. Also the mission strategy of wide-spread evangelism and literature distribution with almost no further contact, dictated by the transient nature of much of the Nepali population and by a focus on getting the Gospel into Nepal, rather than on the resident Nepali communities, led to few tangible results. There was little evident emphasis on the local Nepali residents, although research had pinpointed several Nepali villages in and around Pithoragarh.

Another key factor in the lack of Christian impact among Nepali in Kumaon was the missionaries' evident failure to perceive or prepare for the ethnic and linguistic differences between the Nepali of the Western and Eastern Himalayas. Even today within the India-domiciled Nepali community it is rare for East Nepal origin Nepali ethnics to migrate to the Western Himalayas. NBF Reports indicate that language difficulties were encountered by the missionaries when trying to communicate in Darjeeling-style Nepali with Nepali villagers in Kumaon. This may have also limited the effectiveness of the Darjeeling-

produced Nepali Christian literature which was distributed. There was also the strength of local Hinduism to contend with, in a high-caste Brahman dominated society. The only continuing Christian witness among Nepali traversing the border of Nepal into Kumaon today is the Steiner Memorial School at Darchula.

CURRENT DAY NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN DEHRADUN

Although historically Christian outreach among Nepali in the Western Himalayas was all concentrated in Kumaon, near the border of Nepal, in the last fifteen years the situation has changed. Dehradun, one of the historic Gurkha Regiment homes, has become the centre of ministry among Nepali. The main influences have been T.B. Limbu and an Indian missionary from Madras, Emmanuel Raj, since the 1970s; Nepali Bible students from Darjeeling-Kalimpong and Nepal at Presbyterian Theological Seminary and Doon Bible College, especially Purna Bal Tamang from the early 1980s; and the arrival in 1988 of Rev. Nicanor Tamang following his arrest and expulsion from Nepal as a Christian minister.

Christian outreach to local Nepali started with T.B. Limbu, a newly converted Christian from Sikkim who was posted to Dehradun in the mid-1970s. He was given the address of Emmanuel Raj by his Bible correspondence course tutor to contact for Christian fellowship. T.B. Limbu introduced Raj within the local Nepali community, especially his relatives and friends where there was a communal link among the Limbu, and within the Gurkha Regiment. Before long, Raj claims that he performed 25 baptisms, mostly among the Gurkha Regiment. Evangelism was extended from there to the larger Nepali colony surrounding the regimental areas.⁸⁵ New converts were incorporated as members into Raj's Hindi-language church, Doon Bible Church, and a separate Nepali-language Bible study was started. This latter initiative was short-lived. As contacts widened, Nepali children were admitted into Raj's children's home and

school, Bal Vikas Kendra. But soon after the initial baptisms the Gurkha Regiments were transferred out of Dehradun, including several of the new converts, and Raj had no further contact with them. There was little additional expansion of Christianity among local Nepali through Raj's church. Raj has employed several of the Nepali converts as guards, cooks, a warden, and a physical training master, guaranteeing their loyalty to his church.

When a student of P.T. Seminary, Purna Bal Tamang, conducted a survey of all the churches and Christian organisations in Dehradun in 1983, he only found three resident Nepali Christian families, all members of different churches: T.B. Limbu's family at Doon Bible Church; B.B. Simon's family at the Moravian Church; and Prem Singh Gurung, a Gurkha and his family, converted through a local Pentecostal church. They had no Christian resources in the Nepali-language, and knew only the Hindi Bible and Hindi hymns. On 4 March 1984, Purna Bal called the three families together to discuss the idea of starting an interdenominational Nepali fellowship for the Nepali Christians of the Dehradun area, to promote a Nepali consciousness and reach out to the wider Nepali community.⁸⁶ They agreed to meet monthly in different homes. The following month the name "Doon Gorkha Christian Fellowship" was agreed upon and officers were elected, with B.B. Simon, the eldest of the group, as President. They met together regularly for over a year, learning to pray and sing in Nepali, and occasionally going out for evangelism and tract distribution. They also discussed the need for a full-time evangelist. But after Purna Bal graduated in 1985 and returned to Kalimpong attendance became sporadic, until Purna Bal returned to Dehradun in July 1987 to do further studies at P.T. Seminary and tried to revive the Fellowship. About six months later, Rev. Nicanor Tamang and his family arrived from Nepal and were warmly welcomed. However, a misunderstanding arose between Purna Bal and N. Tamang, and Doon Gorkha Christian Fellowship finally dispersed in 1988. In the meantime six new Nepali families had become Christians and were attending different churches, including

some Gurkhas who were later transferred, and others who were very poor, some of whose children were admitted to Bal Vikas Kendra.

Rev. N. Tamang started an informal Sunday afternoon Nepali fellowship in his home. He invited the known Nepali Christians to attend, and soon engaged four of them as evangelists, including T.B. Limbu, another man, and two women -- the first full-time workers directly among Nepali in the Dehradun area. They were supported by International Needs, of which Tamang was the National Director in Nepal. However, Tamang soon found that he had made some hasty decisions in his initial enthusiasm to start a new Nepali work in an area so different from Nepal. There were difficulties with one of the evangelists, and after a year all four were dismissed and the informal fellowship halted, so that a fresh start could be made. By this time about nine new Nepali converts had been baptised, most of whom were contacted through the women evangelists who had done extensive house to house visitation. In 1990 Doon Christian Fellowship was founded as a Hindi-language church under the joint leadership of Nicanor Tamang and Stephen Hishey, a respected local Christian from the Bhotiya community. The Nepali converts were incorporated into the church, and a mid-week house fellowship held in their own language. By the end of 1991 Doon Christian Fellowship included six families of Nepali converts, all labourers or employed as domestics or guards. Two years later the work had expanded to include five small Nepali house groups meeting weekly. These groups are overseen by Amulya Rai, a mature Christian from Darjeeling who Tamang brought to Dehradun in 1990 with his family, to assist him as an evangelist in building up a local Nepali work.

In the meantime, when most of the early members of Doon Gorkha Christian Fellowship joined Nicanor Tamang's group, Purna Bal and another Nepali student at P.T. Seminary continued to do evangelism on their own, particularly around Garhi military cantonment. They discovered three Christian military families, all from Darjeeling or Kalimpong. Following Purna Bal's

graduation in June 1989, the first Nepali-language church in Dehradun was formed, Gorkha Presbyterian Church, as a branch of Covenant Presbyterian Church (connected with P.T. Seminary). However this was also short-lived, lasting only a year and a half, until Purna Bal, the leader, had to return to Kalimpong due to family pressures. The members were then integrated into Covenant Presbyterian Church. The 1989-90 "Gorkha Presbyterian Church Membership Register" listed 20 Nepali members, including four families, their children, and a few individuals. By the end of 1991, the original three military families had been transferred out, two families of new converts had been baptised, and there were three Nepali families attending the Hindi services at Covenant Presbyterian Church.

In just over six years (1984-1991) two different inter-denominational Nepali fellowships and one Nepali church were formed and disbanded in Dehradun. Sporadic evangelism has gone on for about fifteen years. Resident Christian Nepali have been sought out and various evangelistic approaches made, within both the Gurkha cantonment area and the wider resident Nepali community. But Nepali Christians ultimately have been incorporated into local Hindi-language churches, while Christian military families have come and gone with their transfers. In the cases above, incorporation into Hindi-language churches of the dominant community has generally severely limited further Christian expansion among the socially marginalised Nepali. The key factor in Doon Christian Fellowship's continued expansion among the local Nepali community has been the establishment of separate Nepali-language house meetings overseen by a full-time Nepali evangelist.

Purna Bal Tamang seems to be an exception among the many Nepali Bible students who have attended Doon Bible School and P.T. Seminary. More than thirty-five Nepali students from Nepal, West Bengal, Sikkim, and North-East India have attended Doon Bible School since the 1960s, and nine have attended P.T. Seminary since 1981.⁸⁷ Many of them have gone on to become

pastors and evangelists back in their home areas, yet they have had little impact within the Nepali community around Dehradun during their time of student residence. This is partly due to the self-contained nature of their residence and priority commitment to their studies; but also due to the fact that both schools have their own churches which the students are required to attend, preventing them from getting out into the wider Christian community or getting involved in churches which have other Nepali members. There has only been occasional student evangelism as part of the curriculum, but with no evident system of follow-up. Purna Bal's level of involvement in local outreach was unusual, evidently sparked by a practical assignment from the Seminary to do a survey of the Nepali community. The Seminary and its associated church stood behind him, giving guidance and encouragement, providing mediation when there were misunderstandings, helping with the establishment of Gorkha Presbyterian Church as a branch of their own, and providing partial support for Purna Bal during the brief life of the church. Since Purna Bal's departure, another P.T. Seminary student from Darjeeling has continued to follow-up the Nepali families who were incorporated into Covenant Presbyterian Church. The outreach through P.T. Seminary carried out by Purna Bal shows what can be done through creative Bible school curriculum and the motivation and support of students of various ethnic backgrounds among migrant communities of their same ethnic or language group.

NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

Christian expansion among the growing numbers of Nepali in HP is a very recent occurrence. As in Dehradun, one of the initiators was a South Indian missionary, Varghese Thomas from Kerala, with the indigenous Mission to the Unreached. From his arrival in HP in 1987 he had limited contact with Nepali, through literature and Gospel Recordings distribution. A few Nepali attend his church, but there is no separate Nepali work, although he has tried to get an

evangelist from Nepal to join him in HP.⁸⁸

Youth With A Mission (YWAM) teams in Simla and Manali have also had increasing work among Nepali since the 1990s. The team in Simla, involved in primary health care, started a Sunday afternoon Nepali house fellowship in October 1991, although they had no one doing direct evangelism.⁸⁹ But by 1994 there were three YWAM-led Nepali house churches in Simla. Until recently the YWAM team in Manali had contact only occasionally with nearby Nepali labourers' camps, usually upon invitation of a lone missionary lady, Beryl Norman, who has been in the area for about twenty years with a nutrition and health teaching ministry primarily among children. YWAM in Manali had no regular involvement with Nepali until the arrival of Vijay Chhetri late 1992, who became the leader of a new Nepali branch of YWAM's work, the first YWAM-trained Nepali to join their team.⁹⁰ Within a few months four young men from Manipur also joined the newly formed YWAM team for Nepali work in Manali, and began to live with Nepali families in the road camps.

According to Beryl Norman (formerly a missionary in Kalimpong), the Nepali around Manali have arrived within the last ten years, as road workers who live in very rough conditions and often move up and down the valley according to the season.⁹¹ A few are settled, some stay for several years at a time, and others have come and gone within one to two years, yet many have wives and children with them. Norman's nutritional work and feeding programme has taken her into many of their homes, where she distributes Christian literature and explains the Gospel along with basic health teaching. Her relief work following a freak flood in March 1989 which left ninety people bereft of even their rough shelters opened many of their hearts to her. Later in the year a Nepali "Sunday School" was started on Wednesday afternoons in a proffered small hut, and was attended by about fifty children sitting squashed together on the dirt floor.⁹² By January 1993 the Nepali "Sunday School" in the labourers' camp area had about 60 children in regular attendance, and had expanded to also include a youth group.

Within a few months, under the guidance of Vijay, regular Sunday worship services were started in Nepali. The Manali church is now made up of three autonomous language groups with their own services -- Hindi-English, Nepali, and Tibetan -- which also have a weekly united worship service. In July 1993 the Nepali church baptised thirty-nine people, and from January 1994 a Nepali-language Discipleship Training School run by YWAM was planned for an expected thirty students.⁹³ With a combined emphasis on evangelism and intensive discipling of new Christian converts, by mid-1994 the work had expanded to surrounding labour-camps; four week-day Nepali-language house fellowships and two Sunday worship services were being held.

There are similar Nepali road gangs and groups of labourers scattered in other parts of HP, above Mussoorie in UP, and other places in the Western Himalayas, but there is no known Christian work among them.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 11

- (1) See Chapter 1, "The Western Hills: Nepali-Pahari Culture Area," p.15ff.
- (2) Present-day Nepal is divided into five regions, from east to west: Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western and Far-Western Nepal.
- (3) W.B. Northey, *THE LAND OF THE GURKHAS* (Cambridge, 1937), 193-4. As noted in Chapter 1, the Pahari language was carried into the heart of Nepal in the ancient west to eastward population movement from the Western Himalayas of the Khas people.
- (4) Dilli Raj Dahal and N.R. Rai and A.E. Manzardo, *LAND AND MIGRATION IN FAR-WESTERN NEPAL* (Kathmandu: INAS, 1977), 110. This is also pointed out by G.D. Berreman ("Ecology, Demography and Social Strategies in the Western Himalayas," in *HIMALAYA: ECOLOGY-ETHNOLOGY*, Vol. 1, 1977, NCRS, 453-5): "Historically, culturally and socially, the Indian Himalayas (west of Nepal) share much with Nepal, and especially with adjacent western Nepal." He also notes the close affiliation of the languages of the two areas, that the topography, climate and geography are almost identical, and that both are thoroughly Hindu, with less intermingling of Tibetan or tribal traditions and languages as there is in the Eastern Himalayas.
- (5) James Baille Fraser, *THE HIMALA MOUNTAINS* (1820; reprint Delhi: Neeraj Publ. House, 1982), App. VIII, 538; also Edwin Atkinson, *HIMALAYAN GAZETTEER*, Vol. 2, 1973, 622-24.
- (6) D.R. Regmi, 1961, 123-4.
- (7) Stiller, 1976, 16-17.
- (8) Atkinson, Vol. 2, 1973, 622.
- (9) "The Four Goorkha Corps," India Office, Military Records, L/MIL/5/390, 270-300; and Kansakar, Sept. 1988, 42. According to these sources the four initial Gurkha battalions included: two "Nupuree" Battalions (later amalgamated into 1st Gurkha Rifles), formed from those who surrendered at Melown Fort and based in the Simla hills; the Sirmur battalion (later 2nd Gurkha Rifles) under Lt. Young and based at Dehradun; and the Kumaon Battalion (later the 3rd Gurkha Rifles) raised and cantoned at Almora. In other accounts, the 'Nupuree' battalions are referred to as 'Nasiri,' 'Nussuree,' or the 'Melown Regiment.'
- (10) Oldfield, 1974, 174 note.
- (11) Rathaur, 1987, 53. Disobedience of this order meant that a recruit's land and house could be taken by the Nepal government, and further, a recruit had no right to punish his wife if she took a lover in his absence.
- (12) Kansakar, Sept. 1988, 42.
- (13) Rathaur, 1987, 54.

- (14) HISTORICAL RECORD OF THE 5th GOORKHA REGIMENT (Lahore, 1886), 1.
- (15) V.B.S. Kansakar, "Recruitment of Nepalese in Foreign Armies," Ch. 4 in EMIGRATION, REMITTANCES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Kirtipur: CEDA, 1982), 79.
- (16) Kansakar, Sept. 1988, 42.
- (17) G.R.C. Williams, "Historical and Statistical Memoir of DehraDun," partial typescript, 1874, in NW Himalayas file, NCHP Collection.
- (18) Bruce, 1934, 200.
- (19) Bruce, 1934, 200.
- (20) Timsina, 1992, 26. The author has found no independent confirmation of this, nor is it mentioned by C.G. Bruce (1934) whom most other authors cite concerning Gurkhas serving with Ranjit Singh, Shah Shuja, and the Khan of Khelat.
- (21) Asad Husain, BRITISH INDIA'S RELATION WITH THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL 1857-1947 (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1970), 253. The presence of Gurkhas in the 'Kashmir Frontier Forces' was also noted by W.B. Northey (1937, 180).
- (22) Timsina, 1992, 27.
- (23) Bruce, 1934, 200.
- (24) Recruitment for the Gurkha Regiments was initially very difficult and obstructed by the Nepal darbar. British officers were not allowed into Nepal to recruit, so Gurkhas themselves were sent into the hills to bring young men out to depots set up across the border in India. The number of Gurkha battalions was doubled in the 1880s following a change in the Nepal Darbar's attitude to recruitment with the Shamshere family's rise to power and the opening of the first recruitment depot at Gorakhpur. In exchange for British official recognition of PM Bir Shamshere's government, recruitment was made easier and even assisted by the Nepal Darbar.
- (25) Assam Regiments, in India Office Library, Military Collection 96, File 4, 1/MIL/7/4195.
- (26) Vansittart, 1915, 170. These do not include those serving in Assam and Burma.
- (27) This bridge was mentioned by S.D. Pant (THE SOCIAL ECONOMY OF THE HIMALAYAS: Based on a survey in the Kumaon Himalayas, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1935, 221), showing that it was constructed at least by the 1930s, perhaps by the British as an aid to recruitment.
- (28) S.D. Pant, 1935, 198.
- (29) S.D. Pant, 1935, 199.
- (30) Davis, 1951, 95.

- (31) The author has not been able to find any records of labour recruitment for the Western Himalayas similar to those for recruitment from Darjeeling and Calcutta for Assam and Burma.
- (32) William Crooke, NORTH WEST PROVINCES OF INDIA (1897; reprint London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 328.
- (33) H.G. Walton, DEHRA DUN: A GAZETTEER, Vol. 1 of DISTRICT GAZETTEER OF THE UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA AND OUDH (Allahabad: Govt. Press, 1911), 72.
- (34) S.D. Pant, 1935, 67.
- (35) 1901 CENSUS OF INDIA, figures for "Naipali (Khas-kura)" mother-tongue (Table XI): UP 24,088 (8,830 Almora, 5,928 Dehradun, 4,238 Nainital, 2,537 Garhwal); Kashmir 856; Baluchistan 14. The figure for those "born in Nepal" (Table X) in UP was significantly higher, totalling 46,486, probably accounted for by the high rate of marriage migration into the border districts. Figures for Punjab and NWFP are taken from Grierson (Vol. IX:IV, 1916, 19), "E. Pahari/Khas-kura": Punjab 7,641; NWFP 3,983.
- (36) Brenton T. Badley, VISIONS AND VICTORIES IN HINDUSTAN (Madras: Methodist Publ. House, 1931), 826-7.
- (37) Badley, 1931, 376.
- (38) John N. Hollister, THE CENTENARY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN SOUTHERN ASIA (Lucknow: Lucknow Publ. House of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia, 1956), 351.
- (39) Hollister, 1956, 351.
- (40) Mary Isham, VALOROUS VENTURES, ([Boston]: Women's Foreign Missionary Society of the MEC, 1936); and Badley, 1931, 337-8.
- (41) Badley, 1931, 380.
- (42) Charles Warren, son-in-law and successor of Rev. Ezra Steiner in Dharchula, letter to author, 13 Feb. 1987. An official history of the Evangelical Alliance Mission by J.F. Swanson, THREE SCORE YEARS...AND THEN (Chicago: Evangelical Alliance Mission, 1951), p.425, also notes that a Christian church was established by Dr. Martha Sheldon in Dharchula which was composed of Indian, Bhotiya, Tibetan and Nepali peoples.
- (43) Indian Witness, quoted in Mission News, June 1893, 22.
- (44) Samuel Moyer, THEY HEARD THE CALL (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1970), 87-88. Moyer's work contains a full account of the Steiners' missionary work from Dharchula in chapter 9, "Story of Ezra and Elizabeth Steiner," p.82-93; also see Lindell (1979, 101-2); and Swanson (1951, 413-429).
- (45) Swanson, 1951, 419 and 426.
- (46) Perry, 1993, 104 n.8.
- (47) Charles Warren, telephone interview with author, Nov. 1986, and letter to author, 13 Feb. 1987. This is also attested to in TEAM's history of its first

sixty years by Swanson, (1951, 428). Twelve national workers are also mentioned, but their ethnicity is not given.

(48) David Woodward, *DETOUR FROM TIBET* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1975), 92.

(49) A. Donald Miller, *AN INN CALLED WELCOME: THE STORY OF THE MISSION TO LEPERS, 1874-1917* (London: The Mission to Lepers, 1965), 42.

(50) The stories of these Nepali converts are found in two of Katherine Young's books: *LENGTHEN THY CORDS* (London: Mission to Lepers, 1952), and *GO YE THEREFORE* (London: Leprosy Mission, n.d.).

(51) Stock, Vol. 2, 1899, 202; and Wylie, 1854, 236. The most complete account of this mission is found in J. Long, 1848, 160-162.

(52) Janet Holton, librarian of the Moravian Church in Great Britain and Ireland, letter to the author, 6 April 1987.

(53) See Chapter 13, "Nepali Christians Among the Gurkhas," p.551-552 for a description of Major-General Millet's Private Mission to Gurkhas.

(54) Johnstone, 1993, 282.

(55) J.H. Hutton, 1931 *CENSUS OF INDIA*, Vol. 1, Part II, "Imperial Tables," Table XV-Language-Part I-Mother Tongue (Calcutta, 1933). The figures on "Eastern Pahari, Khas-Kura, or Naipali" as the mother-tongue included: UP 31,067 (and 43,494 as POB); Punjab 8,022; NWFP 9,731; Kashmir 1,120; and Baluchistan 4,653.

(56) N.R. Shrestha (1985, 304 n.4) includes Pakistan among three countries from which there was a "massive return" of Nepali living abroad following World War II. The 1952/54 Census of Nepal recorded only 153 people who were absent abroad more than six months in Pakistan, and only 100 in the 1961 Census (Harka Gurung, *REGIONAL PATTERNS OF MIGRATION IN NEPAL*, Honolulu East-West Population Institute, Paper 113, 1989, Table 7, 21). Further, Kansakar (1974, 189) attributes this to the few Nepali who still remained in East Pakistan at that time. The 1961 Census of West Pakistan itself makes no mention of either Nepal as a place of birth or the Nepali language; rather, it includes Nepal together with "other Asian countries."

(57) Informants closely associated with the Indian Army's Gurkha Brigade estimate a minimum of 60,000 Gurkhas, with only about 25 percent of current enlistees coming directly from Nepal, and the remaining 75 percent being India-domiciled Nepali. N.R. Shrestha (1990, 88) noted an estimate of 100,000 Nepali in the Indian Army. But Kansakar (1982) found it "impossible" to get accurate information on the strength of Nepali ethnics in the Indian Army or annual recruitment due to defence considerations.

(58) Kansakar, 1982, 98.

(59) 1951 *CENSUS OF INDIA*, Language Tables (1954), 35. Both the number of those who returned Nepali as their mother-tongue (from 31,067 to 61,000), and those who returned Nepal as their place of birth (43,494 to 83,900) nearly doubled between the 1931 and 1951 Census of India.

(60) See A. Patricia Caplan's study of a village in Belaspur District (PRIESTS AND COBBLERS, San Francisco: Chandler, 1972); R. Shepherd's study of Doti District ("Socioeconomic Change in Far-West Nepal," Asian Survey, Vol. 29:6, June 1989, 573-579); and D.R. Dahal et al's (1977) studies based on Darchula District.

(61) Man Mohan Sharma (THROUGH THE VALLEY OF GODS, New Delhi: Vision Books, 1977, 31) and S.C. Bose (THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE HIMALAYA, 1972, rev. 1976, reprint New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1979, 74) also praised the Dotial when writing about Garhwal: "The Dotial porters of Nepal do brisk business in Garhwal, where they carry goods for pilgrims visiting religious places of Uttarkhand. The Dotials are strong, sure-footed, honest and dependable. On the other hand, the Garhwali porters...are slow and not so dependable."

(62) Writing about the UP Himalaya, several authors have noted the trend of outward male migration, usually of those with a good educational level, because of the below subsistence level economy. P.S. Rawat ("Migration and Development in UP Himalaya," in WESTERN HIMALAYA: ENVIRONMENT, PROBLEMS AND DEVELOPMENT, Vol. 2, eds. Y.P.S. Pangtey and S.C. Joshi, Nainital, UP: Gyanodaya Prakashan, 1987, 805) states that 66 percent of the males of the UP Himalaya emigrate to urban areas, and the ploughing must be done by hired men in their absence. In a study of Almora in the same book, D.C. Pande and S.C. Joshi ("Occupational Migration in Rural Kumaon," 1987, 464 and 469) decry the mass outward migration of males, noting that 70 percent of those who migrate have at least a high school education.

(63) CENSUS OF INDIA for 1961 and 1981, Nepali "mother-tongue" figures.

(64) Luxmi Singh, letter to editor, Himal, Jan.-Feb. 1989, 1.

(65) This is borne out also in the 1981 CENSUS OF INDIA statistics, in which 40,526 in HP were recorded as speaking Nepali as their mother-tongue, against only 29,570 in the whole UP (including the plains districts).

(66) Census of India figures for those "born in Nepal." In the 1951 Census, Punjab included present-day Haryana and Simla and Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. In 1966 the boundaries of the states were re-drawn; Simla and Kangra Districts went to Himachal Pradesh, and Haryana was formed of a portion of Punjab. The 1971 and 1981 Census figures are drawn from a combination of Punjab and Haryana returns.

(67) In the 1981 Census, of the total 13,000 Nepali-origin emigrants in Haryana and Punjab: almost 10,000 were in urban areas; and about 10,000 were males.

(68) Prem Dahal, Nepali evangelist, interview with author, 5 May 1992. Dahal reported meeting some Nepali believers in late 1991 at the Indian Pentecostal Church in Jammu pastored by A.M. Samuel. During James Thapa's survey of the Duars churches mid-1992 he found three men who claimed to have been ordained in Kashmir in 1987 by a Full Gospel Pentecostal pastor from Gorakhpur: Pastors Timothy Khati and Benjamin Khati of Duars Christian Fellowship, Odlabari; and Pastor Kubir Singh Bishwakarma of Himachal Masih Mandali, Chamarchi bazaar.

(69) Jonathan Lindell, "Outline of Missionary Work on the Nepal Border,"

unpubl. typescript, n.d. (1943/44).

(70) J. Lindell, personal letter home to America, Dec. 1945, in WEC file, NCHP Collection.

(71) Jac Dyck, letter to Dr. K. Harbord, from Tanakpur, 8 Dec. 1947, in NBF correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

(72) J. Dyck, letter to Dr. Harbord, 8 Dec. 1947.

(73) Subit Tshering, interview with author, Kurseong, 14 May 1992.

(74) "NBF Conference Report," 1950, 6.

(75) Jacob and Helen Dyck, "Nepal Bulletin," WEC Bharalu, Jan. 1949, in WEC file, NCHP Collection.

(76) "NBF Conference Report," 1952, 7.

(77) "Field Letters," Himalayan Mission of WEC, Sept./Oct./Nov. 1966, in WEC file, NCHP Collection.

(78) TEAM, letter to Miss Franklin of NBF, 9 March 1953, in NBF file, NCHP Collection.

(79) C. Warren, letter to author, Feb. 1987.

(80) When Dr. Katherine Young came out of Nepal to "retire," she resettled herself at Champawat, again right near the border, and continued to treat leprosy patients who came mostly from Nepal. When the author visited her in 1987, by then resident in Haldwani, she was still running a weekly clinic from her home, but had discontinued her monthly mobile clinics to leprosy camps.

(81) "NBF Conference Report," 1950, 6.

(82) Maxton Strong, letter to Elizabeth Franklin of NBF, 4 Sept. 1950, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

(83) K. Young, *LENGTHEN THY CORDS*, 1952; and K. Young file, NCHP Collection. The four leper colonies were at Ramnagar, Motinagar, Khatima, and Lalkua where the majority of the patients were from Nepal. She also held a regular general clinic for many years at the farm at Banbassa, outside Tanakpur, where there was a continual stream of patients who came over the bridge from Nepal.

(84) J. Lindell, 1979, 103-4.

(85) Emmanuel Raj, interview with author, Dehradun, Nov. 1991.

(86) Doon Gorkha Christian Fellowship, handwritten Minutes Book, minute dated 4 March 1984.

(87) Jacob Chacko, Principal of Doon Bible School, interview with author, Dehradun, Nov. 1991; Matthew Chacko, Principal of P.T. Seminary, interview with author, Dehradun, Nov. 1991; and examination of both institutions' student registers. Also, Barbro Andreasson's account, *DOON BIBLE SCHOOL, 1944-1981* (Dehradun, 1981), contains a list of all students until

that time.

(88) Varghese Thomas, letter to the author, 6 March 1993; confirmed by telephone interview with Jon Rulison, Gospel Recordings, Sept. 1989.

(89) Prasad Bellan, Administrator for Himalaya Social Service, Simla, letter to author, 23 March 1992.

(90) Vijay Chhetri, from Ilam in East Nepal, was converted in Kathmandu where he became a member of an Assembly of God Church. After Sam Hoffman of YWAM India met Vijay in 1990 he invited him to join YWAM and sent him for training.

(91) Beryl Norman, letter to author, 27 April 1992.

(92) Beryl Norman, duplicated prayer letters to the UK, no. 34, March 1989, and no. 35, Oct. 1989, in B. Norman correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

(93) Sam Hoffman, "YWAM Manali-Centre Events and Prayerletter," n.d. (about August 1993), in NCHP Collection.

CHAPTER 12 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN INDIAN URBAN AREAS

NEPALI MIGRATION TOWARDS URBAN CENTRES OF INDIA

In the early history of colonial India, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras emerged as the three major cities. Bombay, with its excellent natural harbour, became known as the "gateway to India" and was turned over to the East India Company in 1668. But Calcutta, a creation of British rule founded in 1690, served as the seat of the government of India until 1912. It was the port for Bengal and all of North-East India, the centre of commerce and trade, and an important point of industrial development in that area, while Bombay developed as the centre of the cotton and textile industry, the most important of India's large-scale industries during the time of British rule. Both became important rail centres. Madras was also founded in the 1600s on the Eastern coast of the Indian peninsula, on the first grant of Indian soil given to the East India Company. Although considered the third city of India by the 1940s, manufacturing and commerce had not developed to the same degree as in Bombay and Calcutta, nor did it attract the immigrant labourers from the North as they did.

In the meantime Delhi, the old capital of the Mughal empire, had developed as an important commercial and rail centre, and in 1912 it was made the new seat of British Indian government. New Delhi was designed and built specially as the new capital for all of India, and its population began to surge along with the transfer of government offices and industrial development, although by the 1940s it was still fourth behind Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

As industrialisation developed apace, especially between the First and Second World Wars, newly-opened factories and other opportunities for employment provided a great attraction for emigrant labour from the less

developed areas to the north, including from Nepal. Historically, Nepali migration into urban areas of India is connected with the development that took place under British rule. The only exception is Varanasi, where migration for Hindu pilgrimage and contacts between the Hindu royalty and nobility pre-date British rule. But this was primarily a religious rather than an industrial or commercial centre, and thus did not play any significant part in British development efforts, nor attract significant labour migration.¹

Calcutta long provided the biggest attraction to Nepali migration, and by the 1930s it had the largest Nepali colony of any Indian city, which Northey estimated at about 30,000.² Before the capital was shifted to Delhi, Nepali government agents were stationed in Calcutta. It was also a destination of political and economic refugees seeking employment opportunities. It was the centre of trade, industrial development and education for all Bengal, which at that time included Bihar and Orissa as well as the whole North East and current-day Bangladesh. In the whole eastward trend of Nepali migration, and as the transport network was established in Bengal, Calcutta was the most accessible developing urban area. Thus it became a pull both to the elite of Nepal seeking trade, economic investment and educational opportunities, and to Nepali labourers. Both Dasgupta and Zachariah point out the economic attraction of Calcutta during the colonial period, with "organized migration" to provide industrial labour, often from remoter areas as Bihar and UP.³ Weiner and Blaike, writing as late as the 1970s, still point to Calcutta as a destination for emigrants from Nepal as a response to declining living standards.⁴

Calcutta not only attracted Nepali from Nepal, but it has had a long-standing connection with the Nepali-populated district of Darjeeling, and with Sikkim. India-domiciled Nepali were recruited into the armed police of Calcutta, living in "wretched little barracks, little more than huts," as described by Toker.⁵ Northey also mentions their recruitment into the Indian Hospital Corps.⁶ This would have included Nepali nurses, dressers and compounders

trained at Charteris Hospital in Kalimpong, who were also sought after for service at Duncan Hospital in Raxaul. Before Nepal's change of government in the 1950s, the only educational opportunities available to her people were in India. On the Darjeeling side, although the Scottish EHM established primary schools from the 1870s, the first school elevated to High School level was only in 1922, SUMI in Kalimpong, followed by Turnbull School in Darjeeling over thirty years later (1954). Post-secondary education for native students in the hills only began after Indian Independence.⁷ Thus, even as the Eastern Himalayan hills became the centre for basic education for Nepali people from the late 1800s, so Calcutta, where the first University was established in 1857, became the desired destination for those seeking further educational opportunity. Until the latter half of the 20th century those educated in Darjeeling, Kalimpong or Sikkim were the source of Nepali (and Lepcha) recruitment into service occupations such as clerks, teachers, nurses and dispensers in British India, and they went on to Calcutta to improve their skills. Shiva Kumar Rai, former leader of the Gorkha League, recalls that most of his generation went to Calcutta from Darjeeling District for education in the 1940s. This trend began to slacken from the 1960s as more colleges were established in the hills, and North Bengal University was opened in 1962 at the foot of the hills in Siliguri.

This dual migration of Nepali into Calcutta, both directly from Nepal and from Darjeeling District and Sikkim, led to the formation of two distinct groups of Nepali within Calcutta, based primarily on education and social status. The first, including both disaffected Ranas, traders and others from Nepal with the means to set up businesses, some dating back four or five generations, along with the more educated and professional Nepali from Darjeeling and Sikkim, are generally well respected within Calcutta society. But the largest group is made up of labourers, most of whom originated in Nepal, generally quite poor, with a low educational standard, and looked upon more as second class citizens. They tend to hold service jobs as chowkidars, domestics, and gardeners, and also work

in factory and manufacturing jobs.⁸ Descendants of Gurkhas who have retired in India over the years are found in both groups, depending largely on what educational opportunities their children were able to take advantage of. There is little communication between the two groups, and this is starkly reflected in the way Christianity has expanded among them. Although the 1981 Census of India only recorded 20,217 people in the Calcutta urban conglomerate with Nepali as their mother-tongue,⁹ the real number, including ethnic Nepali descendants, is estimated at over 100,000.

In contrast to Calcutta -- with its strong link to Darjeeling and Sikkim, and where a significant proportion of the Nepali population is made up of domiciled Nepali, many of whom today would class themselves first as Indians with a Nepali ethnic heritage -- the distinguishing mark of Nepali migration into other Indian cities has been its origin in the western half of Nepal. Anthropologists and demographers writing about Far-West Nepal, particularly from the 1970s, have repeatedly commented on the circular migration pattern, from a few months to several years at a time, of men out of the hills of Far-West Nepal to Bombay, Bangalore and Delhi.¹⁰ There has also been an increasing number of well-educated Nepali migrating to these urban centres in search of professional opportunities, particularly from the Darjeeling area, but the preponderance of migrants are labourers from Nepal.

Bombay had begun to attract Nepali labourers by the beginning of the 20th century. Those born in Nepal are found enumerated in the Census of India from as early as 1901 in Bombay Presidency, presumably mostly in the city of Bombay itself. By 1951 Greater Bombay had the second largest urban Nepali population in India: 3,525 with Nepali as their mother tongue (Nepali-speakers), compared with 16,508 in Calcutta. In 1981 it retained the same position, but the gap had significantly narrowed, with 14,368 Nepali-speakers recorded in Greater Bombay and 20,217 in Calcutta urban area.¹¹ In addition, there were well over 3,000 Nepali-speakers in Nagpur, Thane and Pune, near Bombay, with a total of

23,428 Nepali-speakers in the state of Maharashtra as a whole, the most urbanised and industrialised state in India today.¹² Industrial development from the colonial period demanded an adequate labour supply, and as in Calcutta, there was organised migration to fulfill the need. Migration continued on through the decades under its own steam, with the largest percentage of Nepali in Bombay consistently employed in manufacturing and "other services."¹³ A more unsavoury side of the Nepali migration to Bombay has been in conjunction with prostitution, most of the girls enticed under false premises, sold into the trade by their parents, or kidnapped from the hills of Nepal. Dubbed the "anonymous" Nepali emigrants by Dahal and Mishra, thousands of young Nepali girls are said to be plying the streets of Bombay.¹⁴

Even though much closer to Nepal, Nepali emigration to Delhi developed much later than to Bombay, primarily due to Delhi's later development. Only 1,073 people born in Nepal were reported in Delhi in the 1951 Census of India, but twenty years later the number had grown nine times to 9,670, closely following those in Calcutta and Bombay, and has continued to increase during the last two decades. Nepali immigration into Delhi has involved both those directly from Nepal, and India-domiciled Nepali, with by far the largest proportion being involved in lower level service occupations.¹⁵ Although in informal conversation Indian informants in Delhi consistently praised Nepali people as hardworking and trustworthy, it was in the context of their making excellent domestics or security personnel.¹⁶ An increasing number of students from Nepal, and from Darjeeling District and Sikkim, also began to go to Delhi for higher education.

Nepali migration to Madras has been the least of that to any of the major Indian urban areas, perhaps due to its location and the lack of early industrial development. In the 1971 Census of India only 1,995 people in Madras reported their last residence as Nepal, compared with 9,127 in Delhi and over 12,000 each in Bombay and Calcutta;¹⁷ but this does not account for the Nepali who have

migrated there from other parts of India either for further education or for employment.

The growing pattern of Nepali migration to urban areas throughout India since Indian Independence is striking. As Nepali have migrated beyond the historical destinations of the Western and Eastern Himalayas, the border districts with Nepal, and North-East India and Burma, it has been overwhelmingly into urban areas. In addition to the four most populous Indian cities detailed above, by 1951 there were more than 1,000 Nepali immigrants in each of the following Indian states: Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat and Bhopal (later merged with Madhya Pradesh), Hyderabad (later named Andhra Pradesh) and Rajasthan. By this time a much higher proportion of those in the plains of UP and Bihar were also in urban destinations removed from the border of Nepal. By 1971 at least 1,000 Nepali immigrants had reached into every state of India; all of those to the south (except the border districts with Nepal) being predominantly in urban areas. By 1981 the highest concentrations of Nepali in urban areas, besides those in the historical destinations of Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi, were in the following places: Madhya Pradesh (nearly 12,000 MT), Maharashtra (about 9,000 MT excluding Bombay), Orissa (nearly 8,000 MT), Haryana and Punjab (about 6,500 POB each), Gujarat and Karnataka (nearly 5,000 MT each), as well as those in the urban areas of South Bihar (about 16,000 MT), HP (nearly 8,000 POB) and the UP plains (over 24,000).¹⁸ (See Figure 10 below, and details of population figures in Appendix K.)

Nepali resident in Bangalore claim a current population of almost 10,000 ethnic Nepali, some domiciled there for two and three generations, and most having originated from western Nepal.¹⁹ Even a state as far south as Kerala has exerted a pull, with its relatively high wages and good benefits. According to an informant who went there as a student, he met many Nepali working in factories and others as security guards, mostly living together in Nepali enclaves, and appreciated for their hard work and trustworthiness by their Keralan employers.

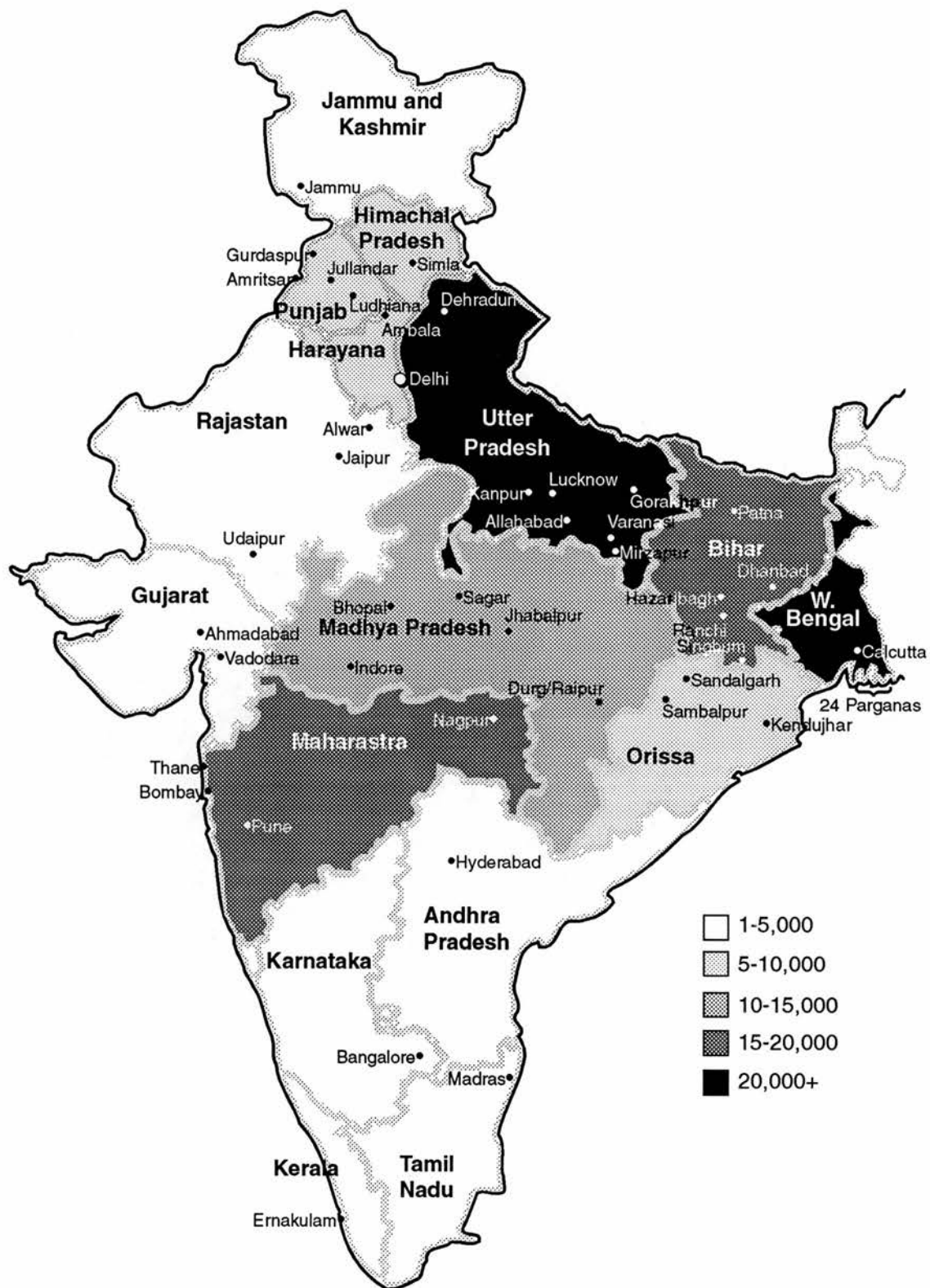


Figure - 10. Nepali population in urban centres of India.

NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN INDIAN URBAN CENTRES

Darjeeling's, Kalimpong's and Sikkim's close connection with Calcutta was a major factor in the formation of the earliest Nepali Christian congregation in any Indian urban area. The first outreach to Nepali in Calcutta was carried out by Nepali Christians themselves during the winter of 1916-17, at the initiative of the Darjeeling Presbytery of the EHM. A congregation of "hill Christians" was formed in 1928. But it was not until the 1980s, almost sixty years later, that there was any similar Christian expansion among the Nepali in other urban areas. Today Nepali-language Christian congregations can also be found in Bombay and Delhi, initiated in both places by Christians from Darjeeling and Kalimpong. There have been sporadic evangelistic outreaches in Bangalore and Madras, but no on-going Nepali fellowships have been formed.

CALCUTTA: EARLY CONNECTIONS WITH DARJEELING

As already noted, the missions based in Calcutta had very early contact with the Nepali-populated area of Darjeeling, Anglicans and Baptists alike.²⁰ But it was the Presbyterian Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission which was instrumental in establishment of the first Nepali church in Calcutta. When Nepali and Lepcha Christians began to migrate to Calcutta, the EH Presbytery worked with the Calcutta Presbytery to provide for their spiritual needs.²¹ Through this cooperation and mutual concern for "the hill Christians" a Nepali-language church was formed in Calcutta some fifty years after the mother church in Darjeeling.

As early as 1890 there are mentions in the EHM Annual Reports of leading Nepali and Lepcha Christians going to Calcutta for further training.²² Ten years later concern was expressed by one of the EHM Scottish missionaries for the many Nepali whom he met on a visit to Calcutta, including half a dozen Christians from the hills.²³ But it was not until fourteen years later that the Darjeeling Kirk Session formally drew the attention of the EH Presbytery to the

large number of Christians going to Calcutta, especially during the cold season.²⁴ According to the official Minutes of that Presbytery session, "it was decided to ask the Clerk to communicate with the Presbytery of Calcutta with a view to devising means for looking after them and for working among other Nepali either by means of someone sent from the hills or otherwise."²⁵ The following year a committee was appointed by the EH Presbytery to inquire into the matter, called the Committee on Hill Christians in Calcutta, and Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, one of the EHM's senior ministers, was deputed to spend a month during the winter of 1916-17 in Calcutta to assess the situation firsthand. The Committee recommended that this work be undertaken by the Presbytery as a "Joint Home Mission Effort," that Rev. G.P. Pradhan spend one month each winter in Calcutta, and that the EH Kirk Sessions take up collections to cover his expenses.²⁶ Pradhan carried out this seasonal ministry every winter for four years consecutively, then between the winters of 1920 and 1923 three different men from Darjeeling made short journeys to Calcutta to visit the hill Christians.²⁷ In the Presbytery Minutes of this period a shortage of funds for this Home Mission work is consistently lamented, and after the winter of 1923 no one else was deputed from the Presbytery to Calcutta.

Yet the numbers of hill Christians going to Calcutta continued to increase, including students for University studies. In 1919 it was reported that "an increasing number of Hill people including many of our Christian community go to Calcutta during the cold weather months as house servants and in other capacities."²⁸ Two years later G.D. Pradhan reported contacting 58 hill Christians during his winter visit, and he took back to Darjeeling a request for a pastor to be appointed for them in Calcutta. It had, in fact, already been resolved by the EH Presbytery "to take all possible steps to secure the appointment of a whole-time Agent for this important work in Calcutta," but the resolution was not fulfilled.²⁹ Although the Gorkha Mission was informed of this need, they also were unable to send anyone. Whether due to a lack of finances, the lack

of someone from the hills willing to go, or a lack of will, the resolution was referred to the Calcutta Presbytery a few years later, with the suggestion that St. Andrew's Kirk Session, Calcutta, help with necessary funds. Thus the Calcutta Presbytery was pressed to take responsibility for the hill Christians, and a full list of those known to be in Calcutta was sent to them in 1926. When an application was finally received from someone interested in ministering to this group, it was from a Bengali in Calcutta, K.C. Roy.

From the time of its formation the congregation of hill Christians in Calcutta came under the Calcutta Church Council (later called Bengal Church Council), from the same Scottish Presbyterian tradition, but with no formal relation to the EHM churches where its members originated. However a sense of connectedness was maintained by the EH Kirk Sessions informing Pastor Roy of members of their congregations who moved to Calcutta, and by Pastor Roy's occasional visits to the hills, and missionaries' and hill Christian leaders' visits to Calcutta. In addition, during the 1960s and again since 1981 the church has been served by ordained ministers from the hills, and services have continued to be carried on in the Nepali language.

Calcutta Hill Christian Church

1928 marked the official beginning of Calcutta Hill Christian Church, under the patronage of Duff Church Kirk Session which provided a monthly stipend for Kamal Chandra Roy as the pastor.³⁰ The first regular services were held in Wellesley Street Church, then moved to St. Andrew's Church in the early 1940s when Wellesley Street was sold by the UCNI. It has continued to meet in the stately St. Andrew's sanctuary for the past fifty years. However some of the hill Christians had already been meeting together informally, reportedly "...for prayer under the shade of some tree or in the home of one of their number,"³¹ and probably with the help of K.C. Roy. Roy is said to have slowly developed a desire to be involved in Nepali ministry through his contact with Nepali living

near his small property in Siliguri, which he visited occasionally. But little is known of how he became aware of the specific need in Calcutta, or was put in touch with the EH Presbytery.³²

Roy became a fluent Nepali speaker, and conducted services in Nepali.³³ He regularly visited people in their homes and at the hospital, and ran a primary school for Nepali children for a time. But such home visitation, and even holding regular services, was quite difficult. The congregation was spread out across the city, and the numbers of Nepali coming to Calcutta continued to grow. In 1930 one of the EHM missionaries wrote,

The number of Hillmen migrating to Calcutta is constantly growing. And amongst them numbers of Christians move down every year from these parts. This community is a shifting one spread across the whole city from Cossipore to Ballygunge, and lives in the byeways and alleys.³⁴

When W.W. Ferrie visited Calcutta a few years later, he reported that about 50 were attending the services, the majority of them house servants spread all across the city, making it both difficult to locate their homes and "extremely difficult to hold service at a time when all could be present."³⁵ Following another visit in 1940, Ferrie reported back, "The members of this Church are drawn from among our own people who have gone there for work."³⁶ But after this brief report, over the next 25 years there is no further mention in EHM reports or in Mission News of the ministry in Calcutta, until the appointment of Rev. Martin F. Rai as the new pastor of the church following K.C. Roy's death.

Although Calcutta Hill Christian Church is over 60 years old, it has experienced little growth, and it seems to have been at its strongest during the early period of its history, although the absence of church records makes this difficult to assess. During the 1930s visiting missionaries from the hills consistently referred to a congregation of about 50 in attendance. In the 1940s and 1950s there are no comparative reports. When Rev. Martin F. Rai arrived in 1963 he estimates there were about six active Christian families, a few singles,

and students who came and went.³⁷ Fifteen years later there were only 27 members listed on the electoral roll, and again about ten years later, by 1989, this figure had slightly increased to 33, but with an average attendance of only 25.³⁸

Five factors stand out in an assessment of the possible reasons why this church has experienced limited growth. First, Calcutta Hill Christian Church has had little active evangelistic involvement. Although the initial concern shown by the missionaries in Darjeeling included working among the Nepali population in Calcutta at large and placed an emphasis on evangelism, this was largely lost sight of in the following years.³⁹ The church's primary mission has always been to serve the existing Nepali Christians and their families, especially those who have come down from the former EHM area. According to Rev. Andrew Simick, the current minister, the Church has very little association with Nepali from Nepal, and no natural inroads to contact them, although they make up the majority of the Nepali population in Calcutta.⁴⁰ The only evangelists ever engaged by the church, H.B. Pradhan and Prem Thapa, served for merely a year, 1986-87.⁴¹ Baptisms have primarily been of family members, of non-Christians seeking to marry a Christian, and occasionally of friends of those in the congregation. In 1992 when the author visited the congregation, only one family and two individuals were named as being converts to Christianity from Hinduism or Buddhism.

Second, as pointed out from the 1930s, members of the congregation continue to be scattered across the city, making it difficult for some to attend services due to distance and problems of transport. This also makes personal follow-up extra difficult, time-consuming and expensive. Since the congregation has not had its own full-time pastor since 1969, personal visitation except in emergencies has been nearly impossible.

Third, the floating nature of part of the congregation, to and from the hills, has made continuity of ministry difficult. This has been especially true

among the numerous students. Although Calcutta Hill Christian Church has historically played an important role in the care of Christian students from the hills, that has declined over the last 10-20 years as more opportunities for higher education have opened up in the hills.

Fourth, although officially a Pastorate under the Bengal Church Council, it has functioned more as a fellowship for a common language group from a similar place of origin (Eastern Himalayas). Most members attend the main worship service of other churches and go to Calcutta Hill Christian Church at St. Andrew's in the afternoon. Through the years there have been sporadic meetings of a Sunday School, youth group, home Bible studies, and a weekly prayer meeting, but only Sunday afternoon worship has been maintained consistently.

Finally, church leadership has been a factor in the church's lack of growth. The majority of the time the congregation has had Bengali rather than Nepali leaders, of which only Pastor K.C. Roy spoke fluent Nepali. After Roy's demise in 1960, except for a brief six years when served by Rev. Martin F. Rai, it was largely the efforts of students and dedicated lay members of the church which kept it running. Different Bengali ministers, who had other primary commitments, were deputed from time to time.⁴² From 1963-68 the church experienced its only period of leadership by an ordained Nepali minister dedicated to it full-time, M.F. Rai of Sikkim. During Rai's few years in Calcutta he had a strong desire to evangelise the wider Nepali community, estimated at about 50,000, and in 1965 he reported a monthly outreach where tracts were distributed and Nepali Bibles were sold.⁴³ But Rai was discouraged by the lack of response and the degree to which local Nepali had been influenced by Bengali society.⁴⁴

Over ten years later the next "hill Christian" was appointed as Presbyter to Calcutta Hill Christian Church Pastorate, Rev. Andrew Simick of Kalimpong. Simick originally went to Calcutta in 1969 as a student to do his BSc, during

which time he felt a call from God to go into the ministry. Due to opposition from his family, he decided to stay in Calcutta, applied to the Calcutta Diocese of the CNI and was accepted at Bishop's College in 1975. During his training as an ordinand he assisted the Nepali congregation at St. Andrew's, and together with Ashok Pradhan started an active youth group primarily among students from the hills. This continued until he was fully ordained as a Presbyter in 1981. However, since his ordination Simick's commitment to Calcutta Hill Christian Church has of necessity been subordinated to his responsibilities for a larger Bengali pastorate. This has left him little time to engage in Nepali evangelism or to develop the ministry of Calcutta Hill Christian Church.

Carey Baptist Church

While Calcutta Hill Christian Church's primary function has been the pastoral oversight of those who were already Christians from the hills, others have evidenced an evangelistic concern for the wider Nepali community. During 1950 an exchange of letters between Rev. Walter Corlett of Carey Baptist Church, Calcutta, and the Nepal Border Fellowship (NBF) reveals a passionate concern on the part of Rev. W. Corlett for effectual outreach to local Nepali. Since the revival of the 1940s in the hills, especially with new teaching about the necessity of the "new birth" and adult baptism by immersion, a few members of the EHM churches are reported to have been re-baptised at Carey Baptist Church. Some students, nurses and other hill Christians began to attend Carey Baptist in the mornings for the Bible teaching, and went to Calcutta Hill Christian Church in the afternoon for fellowship in their own language. Others attended a Sunday afternoon Bible study for students run by Sheila Masterton.⁴⁵ Carey Baptist also had a link with mission work in Nepal, especially with the NEB in Pokhara. Corlett was on the NEB board from the 1940s, a weekly prayer meeting for NEB was held at Carey Baptist, and tinned goods were occasionally sent out. There was also contact with Duncan Hospital in Raxaul. A young

anglo-Nepali who was baptised at Carey Baptist Church in the early 1950s, Archie Shear, spent a year doing evangelism from Raxaul among Nepali, before returning to attend Calcutta Bible College.⁴⁶ All of this raised the church's awareness and fueled their concern for Nepali people.

At the same time, Corlett had little respect for the existing ministry of Calcutta Hill Christian Church, evidently due to its lack of evangelistic outreach and its Bengali leadership. In 1950 he wrote to the NBF begging them to send a Nepali evangelist to Calcutta:

My hope was that some already trained Nepalee worker might consider the Nepalee community in this great city a call from God. The least said about the existent Nepalee Church in Calcutta, the better...my heart is sore when I see the appalling need and tremendous opportunities and no one to do the work ...what we need is a saved and consecrated Nepalee. I suppose you know that the Scottish Church Missionary to the Nepalees here is a Bengalee?⁴⁷

However, while noting the general lack of Nepali workers and the many other missions also searching for such, the NBF admonished Corlett to work in cooperation with the existing church, hopefully strengthening them thereby, and to avoid the possibility of establishing another Nepali-speaking church in the city. In the words of the NBF Secretary, "... breathe a breath of new life into the existing church there... Surely a spirit of gentle long-suffering co-operation with a weaker brother and a weak church is more God's method than a boycotting of the same brother and church?"⁴⁸

The following year, NBF suggested to two new missionaries with the Independent Presbyterian Mission that they consider going to Calcutta to work among Nepali, Mr. Cunningham and Mr. Strom, and they went to investigate the possibilities.⁴⁹ But it evidently did not work out, as Cunningham's next correspondence with NBF is from Darjeeling where he had embarked upon translation work. Was this due to Corlett's influence whose earlier correspondence clearly indicated he did not think a European could fill the

need? About fifteen years later another missionary couple, Ron and Mary Byatt from Nepal, who were looking for more evangelistic outlet among Nepali, also considered going to Calcutta; but they too ended up in Darjeeling.

In the meantime a number of Nepali continued to attend Carey Baptist Church, especially students, among whom the church had its greatest impact. Through the years those who came as Christians were helped to grow in their faith, while several others were converted and baptised, largely through the student work started by Sheila Masterton in the 1950s. Masterton's emphasis was on training students to be Christian leaders. Several of them later took up influential positions in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sikkim, Nepal, and even abroad.⁵⁰ Miss Henimit Karthak, a Lepcha Christian from Kalimpong and Matron of the hospital at Calcutta's Medical College, also had a Bible study for Nepali nurses. In addition, the opening of Calcutta Bible College in conjunction with Carey Baptist attracted a few Nepali Bible students. During the Bible college holidays one of the earliest students, Archie Shear, preached on outreach teams which went to Darjeeling, and he later entered full-time Christian service.⁵¹ Archie also had a good relationship with Martin Rai at Calcutta Hill Christian Church, and informally assisted him in evangelistic efforts around Calcutta. In this way, although Carey Baptist Church never developed a Nepali branch ministry per se, through various Nepali student converts it had an indirect influence both within Calcutta and without.

Assembly of God Church, Nepali section

During the early 1970s a new Nepali church began to take shape in Calcutta, with quite different theological roots. From November 1970 Samuel H. Sereng, the son of the pioneer of Pentecostal ministry in Sikkim, joined Every Home Crusade in Calcutta as a language assistant, responsible for its Nepali Bible correspondence course. Following in his father's footsteps, Sam used his free time to do evangelism among the wide-spread Nepali community. Through

contact with Mark Buntain and the Assembly of God Church, Sereng was allowed the use of a vehicle for his outreach efforts. He often took a group of friends "to visit, (and) hold meetings in distant places exclusively among the Nepalese."⁵² On the basis of his initial evangelism and Buntain's vision of a church made up of several sections to accommodate different language groups, Sunday services in Nepali were started at the AG's Suzanni Hall.

After Sereng left in 1973, two of the Nepali members, Eden Peters Rai and M.B. Rai, both government employees, alternately led the group with Buntain's encouragement. About the same time, Rev. John Hannay of Kurseong also began to make occasional visits to encourage this new group. He had been ordained at the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Kalimpong in 1966, and from January 1977 he accepted a call from Buntain to serve as the Calcutta AG Nepali section's first full-time pastor, which he is still serving today.⁵³

Following initial opposition from the lay leaders who had kept the group going before a pastor was appointed, the new church has experienced steady growth, with an average of 10-15 baptisms of adult new converts every year.⁵⁴ Hannay engaged in regular house-to-house visitation and evangelism during his first several years, and many new Nepali converts were added to the church. But as he became increasingly busy with official AG matters, and was expected to spend regular hours in his office, little time was left to get out during the day. In addition, in the last 15 years no other leadership aside from Hannay's family has been raised up for the AG Nepali section, nor are there elders or a church committee. Prayer and planning for ministry is done between Hannay and the leaders of the other AG language sections. Thus lay involvement in the life and extension of the church is minimal. The basic weekly programme of Sunday morning worship, Sunday School, mid-week prayer meeting and Bible study, and youth choir has also remained consistently the same. The main innovation has been an annual youth camp started in 1989, which has been an effective evangelistic tool. The first camp resulted in six requests for baptism; at the

second, twelve made decisions to become Christians; and following the third camp in 1991, twelve more young people were baptised.⁵⁵ Hannay also wrote and published his own Nepali tract in 1991, which he says has brought many responses. But he has no system of following up the responses, and there is no longer a Nepali-language Bible correspondence course available from Calcutta.⁵⁶

By the early 1990s, an average of 100-150 were attending Sunday morning worship, conducted entirely in Nepali. In twenty years it had become the largest Nepali-language church in Calcutta, with a full-orbed programme of ministry. This includes practical and spiritual assistance through AG services in the form of school sponsorships and medical attention, given at the recommendation of Hannay. Similar to Calcutta Hill Christian Church, most of the members have their roots in Darjeeling-Kalimpong or Sikkim. But the similarity ends there. The AG Nepali church is made up mostly of converts to Christianity, from the less-educated resident Nepali population in Calcutta, descendents of those who moved down from the hills in past decades. By Hannay's estimate 80-90 percent of his congregation are tribal Nepali ethnics rather than the generally more privileged Newar or Bahun-Chhetri. They are mostly employed as labourers or in lower level service jobs and are quite poor, and there is a growing unemployment problem.

Relative Impacts of Nepali Ministries in and from Calcutta

Calcutta Hill Christian Church and the Nepali section of the Assembly of God Church, together with Carey Baptist's impact among Nepali students, have encompassed the main means of Christian expansion among the Nepali of Calcutta. Calcutta Hill Christian Church took up the necessary role of caring for immigrant EHCC Christians in a new and strange environment, including numerous students. The student ministry of Carey Baptist took this a step further, realising the strategic importance of outreach to non-Christian students

outside of their home environment, open to new ideas and to the English milieu. They saw the potential influence of these students as future leaders back in their own communities. On the other hand, the AG Nepali section's primary influence has been among a quite different segment of the Nepali population: the generally less educated resident Nepali and their descendants with roots back in the EH hills. However, neither of the local Nepali churches has had much contact with the thousands of Nepali labourers from Nepal in Calcutta, and evangelistic outreach among them has been extremely limited. Hannay justifies this by saying that Nepali ethnics born in India are more receptive to Christianity and have a broader frame of reference than those who come from Nepal itself.⁵⁷ As in other parts of India, there are restrictions on entry to army areas where Gurkha soldiers are barracked, making this segment of the Nepali population largely inaccessible.

Although both Calcutta Hill Christian Church and the AG Nepali section are part of large denominational networks, their respective spheres of influence have been basically confined to Calcutta itself. Both the former EH Presbytery and the Calcutta Presbytery are now part of the Church of North India, although in different Dioceses, but they have no practical contacts or inter-relationship today except on a personal basis. The Nepali section of the AG Church in Calcutta is the only official AG Nepali work in all of North and North-East India, except for a separate work in Darjeeling started in 1982, but with which Hannay has no relationship.⁵⁸ Hannay's church also has no relationship with the fast growing AG work in Nepal. Not only are Calcutta Hill Christian Church and the AG Nepali section largely isolated within their denominations, they also have no working relationship and very little contact between themselves, although they are the only two Nepali-language churches in Calcutta.

The main direction of Christian influence among Nepali in Calcutta has been from north to south, precipitated by Christians coming down from the hills and needing a place of worship. The Scottish Mission churches provided a link,

with the EH Kirk Sessions sending Nepali preachers and partially supporting the work in Calcutta financially during the early years, and providing Nepali Christian literature. Men who originated in the EH hills have served as the ministers of both churches: Martin F. Rai, Andrew Simick, and John Hannay. But there has been little reciprocal influence or input flowing back north, except through the lives of individual Christians who have returned to the hills of either Darjeeling-Sikkim or Nepal. Although the AG Nepali section has engaged in evangelism among the widely scattered resident Nepali community in Calcutta, neither of the Nepali churches have grown to a place of influence beyond Calcutta. Even on a denominational level, the one new link that has been forged between the EH hills and Calcutta is north to south. The Presbyterian Free Church Council (PFCC), based in Kalimpong, recently admitted Dregil Hill Presbyterian Church in Calcutta to their fellowship, a Bengali church and the first non-hill church to join the PFCC.

Both Calcutta Hill Christian Church and the AG Nepali-section have experienced the difficulties of ministering to a community which has a significant proportion of floating population, and its negative effects on the growth of their churches, continuity of ministry, and development of lay leadership. They also struggle with the challenges presented by a generation of young people born and brought up in Calcutta, many from mixed marriages of Nepali men with Bengali women, who are beginning to function primarily in the English language, and are less desirous of attending Nepali-language services. Hannay noted the tendency of especially the youth and grown children of older members of his congregation to join the AG English section, while their parents continue to be loyal to the Nepali section. This presents difficulties when there is a need in one of these families for the service of a minister, and sometimes results in confusion over whether the Nepali or English-speaking minister should respond. On the other hand, there are several examples of well-educated Nepali who have been converted in an English-language church and then chose to

continue in that milieu because it was the most familiar. For example, a doctor who originally came to Calcutta as a student from Kathmandu and was converted at Carey Baptist Church later attended the Nepali-language service at Calcutta Hill Christian Church. But she found that she was unable to follow the Nepali Bible, being totally unfamiliar with Christian terminology in Nepali, and went back to Carey Baptist.

Aside from the above, there have been very few, and only sporadic, contacts between Nepali Christians in Calcutta and others spread across India and in Nepal. As already mentioned, the NEB had close connections with Calcutta, and they took David Mukhia there to be ordained. But this was mostly a contact between missionaries rather than Nepali Christians. Nepali evangelists and preachers from the hills have occasionally gone to Calcutta to hold special meetings, but they have had little lasting influence. There have also been missions based in Calcutta which have had some ministry among Nepali in Nepal and in the EH hills: Indian Evangelical Mission of David Dutt, Every Home Crusade's Nepali-language Bible correspondence course, Operation Mobilisation, and Youth With A Mission. But ironically none of them has focused on the Nepali in Calcutta itself. Perhaps the most significant contributions from Calcutta to the expansion of Christianity among Nepali in a wider sphere have been the printing of Nepali Christian literature, and the conversion and Christian nurture of a few key individuals who have subsequently been involved in Christian ministry in their places of origin.

DELHI

More than 50 years after the first urban Nepali congregation was started in Calcutta, a similar group started in Delhi, in about 1987.⁵⁹ This time it was at the initiative of immigrant Nepali Christians. As in Calcutta the original members were almost exclusively from Darjeeling and Kalimpong, pushed out of their home areas by the declining economy and attracted to the city by the

prospect of economic opportunity, like so many of their colleagues and friends. Scattered throughout the city, in a new and strange environment, two or three who were committed Christians began to feel the need for fellowship with others from their own home area and in their own language. They also wanted to provide Christian fellowship for the many nominal hill Christians who they perceived were just drifting in their faith in the midst of the city. Nagendra Kumar and Pradeep Pradhan of Darjeeling, both graduates of Prairie Bible Institute in Canada, and Sisar Adhikari of Kalimpong, who had worked with Operational Mobilisation in Nepal for several years, began to contact other Nepali-Lepcha Christians whom they knew in the city. With the offer of a meeting room from the Free Church, Sunday afternoon Nepali-language meetings were started. The primary purpose of the meetings was for mutual encouragement and Christian growth among those who were already Christians, rather than for evangelism of non-Christian Nepali.

Unique among the early leaders of this group was Pradeep Pradhan, who migrated to Delhi from Darjeeling in 1987 specifically for full-time Nepali-focused Christian work in conjunction with the Delhi Bible Institute (DBI). He started by translating some materials into Nepali, including the ten-lesson Bible correspondence course, "Foundations of Faith." From 1988 an annual six-week Nepali-language Bible Foundations course was added to the DBI curriculum, using Nepali Bible teachers invited from places as far apart as Dehradun and Manipur. This is the only Bible course in Nepali regularly offered outside of either Darjeeling District or Nepal, and it has attracted Nepali students from across North and North East India, and Nepal.

Pradhan was joined by another full-time colleague from Kalimpong, Satish Chhetri. Together they were responsible for all the follow-up for FEBA's daily broadcasts in Nepali, including the "Foundations of Faith" correspondence course, and for producing two weekly programmes themselves. In addition, a second Nepali fellowship was formed from 1990, as a branch of Bethany

Assembly (of which DBI is an outgrowth). Three key characteristics distinguish it from the earlier group meeting at the Free Church. One, it functions as a church for its Nepali-speaking members, rather than simply a gathering for mutual encouragement. Two, it is primarily made up of new converts from Hinduism, all of whom are living and working in Delhi, mostly in service occupations. They originate from both Nepal and the EH hills. A few attend the early morning English worship at Bethany Assembly, but most do not understand English and therefore go directly to the Nepali-language service led by Pradhan and Chhetri. Three, the Nepali group at Bethany Assembly has taken evangelistic initiatives among the local Nepali community. During 1991 they held two Nepali evangelistic campaigns, the first ever held in Delhi. Following the campaigns they had their first baptisms, performed by Rev. James Shankar of Manipur, the guest speaker: ten in February, and six in July.⁶⁰ These new converts formed the core of this first Nepali-language church in Delhi. However, aside from these evangelistic meetings, they have no clear strategy or plan for taking the Christian message to the thousands of Nepali in Delhi, and have little awareness even of where they are concentrated. So far the evangelism has been primarily of Nepali with whom they already had contact, and friends of the new converts.

BOMBAY

A small Nepali-language fellowship was also formed in Bombay during the late 1980s. As in Delhi, it was originally made up of Nepali-Lepcha Christians mostly from the EH hills, particularly Kalimpong, professionals resident in Bombay who began to feel a need for Christian fellowship with their own people, including an airline stewardess, a homeopathic doctor, an air steward, and a few students. However, in contrast with the first group in Delhi, the group in Bombay developed into a full-fledged church, rather than just an informal fellowship of Christians. Evangelism became a key-note of the church,

first among the members' non-Christian friends who also came from the Himalayas, and increasingly among the much larger concentrations of Nepali labourers. James Salins, a South Indian, became the pastor of the group, and in May 1990 they had their second baptismal service. Evangelism among the local Nepali labourers has been conducted both by concerned members of the congregation and by Nepali Bible students from Bangalore and Pune in cooperation with the congregation. In the young Nepali church in Bombay the two distinct streams of Nepali, those of both high and of low economic-social-educational status, have been the most fully integrated of any Nepali church in the urban areas.

BANGALORE, MADRAS, ETC.

The expansion of Christianity among Nepali in Bangalore and its environs has primarily been a consequence of increasing numbers of Nepali Bible students coming to the area, especially since the 1980s. All of Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ's permanent staff are required to attend a nine-month course at their Indian headquarters in Bangalore; Southern Asia Bible College is now the Assemblies of God in Nepal's preferred place for ministry training; a few Nepali students have been sent by International Needs to ACTS for vocational-cum-Bible training; and at least two Nepali pastors from North-East India have been trained at Biren Baptist Bible College. During their training, and sometimes as a part of it, these students have done evangelism among the local and surrounding Nepali population as far away as Bombay. They have also organised small local Nepali Christian fellowships from time to time, but due to a lack of consistent leadership these have attained no permanence. In contrast to Nepali Christian ministry in other urban areas, which has mostly been at the hands of Darjeeling, Kalimpong or Sikkim-origin Christians, the initiatives in Bangalore have mainly been through Nepali Christians from Nepal, demonstrating one aspect of their rising involvement in

ministry outside of Nepal. However, this has contributed to the lack of consistent follow-up and leadership due to the students' inevitable return to their primary place of ministry in Nepal. Some of the local Nepali who have become Christians have joined other local churches, usually Hindi-speaking. Others have dropped out due to the lack of follow-up, while still others have returned to their places of origin.

Evangelism and a small Nepali fellowship was also reportedly started in Madras in the early 1980s by a converted Buddhist from near Darjeeling, but then he moved on.⁶¹ Depending on language ability, local Nepali Christians either attend Hindi language or one of the many English language churches. Christians from Darjeeling have also made their way into various other parts of South India. There are reports of a Lepcha pastoring a church in Visak, Andhra Pradesh, and of Nepali Christian literature obtained from JJP being distributed in Kerala.⁶² But the vast majority of Nepali in the burgeoning urban areas of India are basically anonymous, and untouched by Christian ministry. Aside from the church in Bombay, no other Nepali-language congregations are known in South India, and nothing between there and Delhi, Nepal or Calcutta and Darjeeling to the north.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 12

- (1) See above, p.452 and 458 concerning migration to Varanasi (Benares).
- (2) Northey, 1937, 195. This figure is often referred to by others writing about Nepali migration, including Kansakar (1982, 88) and the Ministry of Defence (1965, 131).
- (3) Biplab Dasgupta, **MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT: MAJOR FEATURES OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENT IN INDIA**, UNESCO Reports and Papers in the Social Sciences no. 52 (UNESCO, 1982), 12; and K.C. Zachariah, **A HISTORICAL STUDY OF INTERNAL MIGRATION IN THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT, 1901-31** (London: Asia Publ. House, 1964), 204. Although Nepali are not mentioned specifically as participating in the organised migration to Calcutta, it is highly likely that they were included along with those from the neighbouring areas of Bihar and UP, just as they were among indentured labourers to Assam and to overseas colonies.
- (4) Blaike, 1979, 29; and Weiner, 1973, 620.
- (5) Sir Francis Taker, **WHILE MEMORY WAITS** (London, 1950), 233-4.
- (6) Northey, 1937, 180.
- (7) Dick B. Dewan, **EDUCATION IN THE DARJEELING HILLS: AN HISTORICAL SURVEY 1835-1985** (New Delhi: Indus Publ. Company, 1991), 246. Dewan acknowledges that SUMI was the pioneer in post-secondary education in Darjeeling District by its establishment of the first college in 1933, an Intermediate College of Arts affiliated to the University of Calcutta, catering to native students. Its total enrollment in 1947 was only 37. But it closed in 1958, then converted to a pre-University course in 1961.
- (8) "People Group Summary: Nepalis," **BENGAL PEOPLE'S PROFILE** (Calcutta: National Fellowship, n.d.[1980s]). In the survey conducted by this group, they also specified "considerable concentrations" of Nepali in the following wards of the city: 53,54,56,59, and 38. The 1971 Census of India indicated that the largest number of Nepali in Calcutta urban area are involved in "other services," the second largest group in "manufacturing," and the third largest in "trade or commerce."
- (9) "Household Population by language mainly spoken in the home: Gorkhali/Nepali," in 1981 CENSUS OF INDIA, Table HH-16, Pt. B(ii), Series 1, Paper 1 of 1987.
- (10) Dahal et al. (1977, 75) notes men from Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Jumla, going as far south as Bombay and Bangalore to work in factories for several years at a time. R. Shepherd (June 1989, 575) goes so far as to link those in specific locales with their place of origin, as Dotial in Bombay, Bajhangi in Bangalore, and Acchami in New Delhi, with informal supply networks which have evolved and ease their sense of isolation in the new surroundings. A.P. Caplan (1972, 40-1) confirmed this in her study of Bilaspur District which has a pattern of unskilled, seasonal labour migration to

India, noting that they usually go in groups of kinsmen or fellow castemen and stay together in shared lodgings at their destination. D.D. Bhatt ("Nepali Himalaya and Change," in *HIMALAYA: ASPECTS OF CHANGE*, ed. J.S. Lall, 1981, 269) links this to the rapid deterioration in economic conditions and land productivity in the Far-West, resulting in chronic food shortages and the need to buy food grain.

(11) "Language spoken in the home: Gorkhali/Nepali," in 1981 CENSUS OF INDIA, Paper 1 of 1987.

(12) "Language spoken mainly in the home: Gorkhali/Nepali," in 1981 CENSUS OF INDIA, Paper 1 of 1987.

(13) Of 6,994 Nepal-origin workers in Bombay enumerated in the 1961 Indian Census, 3,107 were involved in manufacturing, and 2,718 in other services ("Migrant Workers by Place of Birth: Nepal," in 1961 CENSUS OF INDIA, Part II-C(iv), Migration Tables, Table D-VI). Similarly, in the 1971 Census, of the 8,325 workers who showed their last residence as Nepal, 3,765 were in manufacturing, 2,875 in other services, and 880 in trade or commerce ("Migrant Workers by last place of residence: Nepal," in 1971 CENSUS OF INDIA, Part II-D(ii), Migration Tables, Table D-V).

(14) D.R. Dahal and C. Mishra, *NEPALI IMMIGRANTS IN INDIA*, CNAS Forum, Current Issues Series no. 4 (Kathmandu: CNAS, 1987), 3. See the article "Where Is Our Daughter" in *Himal* (Vol. 2:1, Jan.-Feb. 1989, 14), for a descriptive account of Nepali prostitutes in India.

(15) According to the 1971 CENSUS OF INDIA, of the 9,000 who returned Nepal as their last residence, 3,942 of them were employed in "other services," with only 769 in trade, and 711 in manufacturing ("Migrant Workers last residence: Nepal," in Migration Tables, Table D-V).

(16) There is a popular perception in India of Nepali people being very fit to "serve" the upper and rising middle class, and they are often preferred as domestics or chowkidars. But little recognition is given to the number of highly qualified Nepali professionals scattered throughout India.

(17) "Migrant Workers by last place of residence:Nepal," in 1971 CENSUS OF India, Migration Tables, Table D-V.

(18) Figures extrapolated from "Language mainly spoken in home: Gorkhali/Nepali," Table HH-16 of Paper 1 of 1987, and "Population by Place of Birth: Nepal," Table D-1, in 1981 CENSUS OF INDIA.

(19) The Census of India shows consistent growth in the numbers of Nepali in Bangalore: from 226 Nepali-speakers (MT) in 1951 to 1,055 in 1981; and almost 3,000 born in Nepal in the whole state of Karnataka. This is far below the popular estimate of 10,000 ethnic Nepali in Bangalore's environs, but would not include the more recent descendants of Nepali who were neither born in Nepal nor continue to speak Nepali as their mother-tongue. The reality is probably somewhere in-between.

(20) See above, p.58ff.

(21) Both the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery and the Calcutta Presbytery were outgrowths of the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission in India. From 1911 they joined together to form the Synod of Bengal, of the Presbyterian Church in India.

(22) "Church of Scotland Missions in the Eastern Himalayas: Report for the Year 1890," 37-38, in EHM REPORTS. This report notes that Harkadhoj, "a Nepali Christian who had just finished his studies at the General Assembly's Institution, Calcutta," started an Anglo-Hindi School in 1890 in Kalimpong. It further states that Rapcha, the son of the Lepcha catechist Dyongshi, was sent that year to Calcutta to the CMS Boys' Boarding School to be trained for mission work.

(23) Mission News, Jan. 1901, 155. Even earlier than this, from at least the end of the 19th century, Nepali in Calcutta had become members of local churches. Richard Lovett's history of the LMS mentions a new LMS church in Calcutta which was started in 1884 and grew to 89 members within five years, and included "...Nepaulese who have settled in Calcutta." (HISTORY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY 1795-1895, Vol. 2, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1899, 189).

(24) E. Mackenzie, Mission News, Aug. 1915, quoted in "From the Past," Church News, Oct. 1965, 35.

(25) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 22 July 1915.

(26) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 26 July 1917.

(27) G.D. Pradhan made two visits the winters of 1920 and 1921; Hangsa Das Rai combined two weeks of business with visits to the hill Christians in mid-1922; and K.S. Peters went the winter of 1923.

(28) "Darjeeling Mission: Annual Report for 1919," in EHM REPORTS.

(29) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 23 March 1919.

(30) On 25th January 1928 the EH Presbytery officially minuted their thanks to the Duff Church Kirk Session for making arrangements for the shepherding of the hill Christians in Calcutta and giving a grant to K.C. Roy. For a number of years a subscription was also taken in the Hill Kirk Sessions as a contribution towards the expenses. Calcutta Hill Christian Church continued to receive regular subsidies from the Scottish Mission churches in Calcutta until the 1980s.

(31) Church News, June 1965, 19.

(32) Calcutta Hill Christian Church has no extant records from its early days under Pastor K.C. Roy. The only early document still in their possession is a church Bible dated 1928.

(33) In 1930, only two years after K.C. Roy had taken the post with the Hill Christians, the fact of his being a Bengali, yet having "a remarkable hold of the Nepali language," was commented on in the EHM's Mission News (Sept. 1930, 36).

(34) Mission News, March 1930, 8.

(35) Ferrie, Mission News, March 1937, 15.

(36) Ferrie, Mission News, March 1940, 10.

(37) Martin F. Rai, interview with author, Gangtok, 26 March 1992.

(38) "Presbyter's Report" for 1977 and 1989, in Calcutta Christians file, NCHP Collection. Those on the electoral roll consisted of all adult, at least 21 years old, baptised voting members.

(39) In the "EH Presbytery Minutes" for 22 July 1915 a concern was noted both for the needs of the Christians who had gone to Calcutta and "for working among other Nepalis" as well. Again, the Minute of 7 June 1922 noted the desire for their representative, who was going to Calcutta during the coming cold weather, to emphasize the evangelism of non-Christians. But then within two years it was decided to turn the responsibility for hill Christians in Calcutta over to the Calcutta Presbytery, and there is no further mention or evidence of an evangelistic emphasis after that.

(40) Andrew Simick, interview with author, Calcutta, 9 March 1992.

(41) Bharat Darnal, Secretary, "Annual Report for 1986," Calcutta Hill Christian Church, MSS. According to this report Pradhan and Thapa distributed over 17,000 tracts and 341 Bibles among various language groups during the year. H.B. Pradhan has been the most active of any of the members in personal evangelistic endeavours, often going out to distribute tracts supplied by the Bible Society, for street preaching, or visiting people in their homes or the hospital. However, his lay ministry has encompassed several language groups, and has not been specifically directed at Nepali ethnics.

(42) Among the Bengali ministers who served Calcutta Hill Christian Church after 1960 were: Rev. S.K. Adhikari, Moderator of the Bengal Church Council, early 1960s; Rev. B. Sojowal of St. Andrew's, early 1970s; and Rev. S.C. De, officially appointed 1976-81, but who served off and on since 1969 alongside his work in the education field. Among the most committed lay leaders have been: H.B. Pradhan, currently an Elder and the oldest living member of the church, who served as Treasurer for 26 years, and gave spiritual and pastoral oversight during periods when there was no pastor; and Niren Roy, son of K.C. Roy and Secretary of the Pastoral Committee, until his death in 1979.

(43) Church News, June 1965, 19.

(44) M.F. Rai, interview with author, Gangtok, 26 March 1992.

(45) Sheila Masterton, interview with author, April 1993.

(46) See below, p.534 and n.51.

(47) Walter Corlett, letter to E. Franklin, NBF, 3 March 1950, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

(48) E. Franklin, NBF Secretary, letter to Walter Corlett, 15 March 1950, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

(49) "NBF Conference Report," 1951, 4, in NBF file, NCHP Collection.

(50) Sheila Masterton and Birendra Rongong, interview with author, April 1994. Some of the Nepali-Lepcha associated with Carey Baptist Church's earlier student work included: K.B. Rokaiya of Jajarkot, W. Nepal, who became Chief of the Engineering Campus in Kathmandu and a leader of NBCBS, a Nepali campus students' ministry; Rosabel Rai of Gangtok, who now holds a top position in the Education Department in Sikkim, and is a

leading woman's worker in the local CNI church; Dr. Belarani Cinturi of Gangtok, who became Deputy Medical Director in Sikkim; Hendramit Syodhi of Darjeeling, who is head of Medical Services in Sikkim; Dr. Janak Thakali Hartnet of Kathmandu, who is now a medical doctor in Calcutta; the late Henimit Karthak, Matron of the hospital at the Medical College in Calcutta; Dr. Indira Pradhan, the first female doctor in Darjeeling; Birendra Rongong, producer of FEBA Nepali-language radio programmes; Archie Shear; Himlal Pradhan of Shillong, who was President of the Calcutta E.U. and today is pastor of an English-language church in Sebu City, Philippines.

(51) Archie Shear went to Calcutta in 1949 from his home in Darjeeling. He was converted in the early 1950s and baptised by immersion at Carey Baptist Church, and went to Raxaul for one year of ministry among Nepali. Upon return to Calcutta in the mid-1950s, and while attending Calcutta Bible College, he was appointed assistant pastor of Carey Baptist Church's Hindustani worship service. Subsequently he was made the Pastor of the Hindustani service, and went to Carrackpore from the early 1960s.

(52) Samuel Sereng, letter to author from Guahati, Assam, 23 Oct. 1992.

(53) John Hannay, interview with author, Calcutta, 6 March 1992. Hannay's parents were Tamang Buddhists who fled Burma during World War II. John was born in Kurseong, Darjeeling District, where he was adopted at the age of seven by Miss Edith Hannay. He received part of his early education in Calcutta. Converted at the age of 14 through the testimony of a S. Indian Pentecostal preacher, he was baptised by immersion on 14 May 1951, and left for the Nepali Bible School in Gorakhpur in 1952. After this he returned to Kurseong where he met a foreigner who had a ministry of healing. He began to pray for the gift of healing, and after several days of special prayer and fasting he says that he received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. During this time he had contact with Al Adams of WEC, who also had a Pentecostal experience, but was also involved with the local Presbyterian (Scottish Mission) church in Kurseong. After encountering opposition because of sharing about the "new birth" and re-baptising some of the local Presbyterians by immersion, he left Kurseong. Several years later, in 1966, he was ordained in Kalimpong at the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church.

(54) "Annual Reports," Assembly of God Church, Nepali section, 1978-1991, at Assembly of God Church headquarters, Calcutta.

(55) "Annual Reports," AG Nepali section, for 1989-90, 1990-91, and 1991-92, copies in the Calcutta Christians file, NCHP Collection.

(56) There are Nepali-language Bible correspondence courses available from Darjeeling (AG), Delhi, and Motihari in India, and several from Nepal. But at the time of the author's visit to Calcutta, Hannay had not chosen to utilise any of them. The former Nepali EHC course with which Sam Sereng assisted from Calcutta was discontinued during the 1970s.

(57) Hannay, interview with author, 6 March 1992.

(58) See above, p.121.

(59) This account is taken from interviews by the author with Pradeep Pradhan, Satish Chhetri, S. Adhikari, and other Nepali Christians in Delhi, October 1991; also with Nagendra Kumar in Kathmandu.

(60) Pradeep Pradhan, "Nepali Gospel Meeting," TS, n.d.[1991]. Those

baptised in July included Rajen and Meera Pradhan from Nepal, Hastaman Rai from Sikkim, Bidhan Rai from Darjeeling, and Shoba and Meera, two girls from Kalimpong.

(61) Christopher Lepcha, letter to Suknam in Darjeeling, 4 Dec. 1982.

(62) L.B. Rai, letter for JJP, 17 Dec. 1977, in Nepali Christian literature correspondence file, NCHP Collection.

SECTION 4

THE GURKHAS AND NEPALI OVERSEAS

CHAPTER 13 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS AMONG THE GURKHAS

BEFORE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

The British first started to recruit Gurkha soldiers in the wake of the Anglo-Nepal War, during which they had tasted their excellent fighting qualities.* Four battalions were raised in the Kumaon and Garhwal hills by 1816, partly from the prisoners of war. Until the 1850s these remained the only four battalions, when during the Indian Mutiny they proved their loyalty beyond any doubt. A fifth Gurkha battalion was raised in 1858; then with the reorganization of the Indian Army in 1861 the Gurkhas were upgraded to riflemen. Soon after, the 1864 Charter of the Government of India, Military Department, sanctioned land for regimental homes for each of the regiments "in perpetuity."¹ This was the beginning of different Gurkha colonies built up around the regimental homes, which came to include civilians and pensioners as well. The 1860s also heralded the first battalions being sent to Assam, with Gurkha settlements following them there. By the late 1800s there were Gurkha settlements near the regimental homes at least in the Kangra Valley, Dharmsala, Bakloh, Abbottabad, Dehradun, Almora, Pithoragarh, Shillong, and even Maymyo (Burma).²

There was only one mission from the 1890s geared specifically at the Gurkha soldiers themselves. Major-General Millett's Private Mission (MMPM)

* Throughout this chapter the term "Gurkha" is used specifically to refer to those involved in the military.

to Gorkha soldiers was based in Dharmsala, which then had an estimated Nepali population of 3000.³ In cooperation with the Scottish EHM in Darjeeling, they supplied "gratis" Hindi and Nepali tracts to the soldiers. The high regard in which the EHM held the MMPM is evidenced in their Mission News magazine of June 1894, "We are in constant touch with this noble private Mission to Nepalis, especially to the Nepali soldiers of the imperial army in India, and give all the literary aid we can... we supply the 'copy', and the M.M.P.M. does the printing and publishing, and supplies us with copies." As the only other mission of that era directed at Nepali, they must have felt a special affinity. Mission News went on to quote a letter received by MMPM,

It would have done your heart good to have heard, this evening, Gurkha soldiers singing page 37 of the Hamait-i-Sitaish (Garland of Praise by M.M) Pita dayalu bida paun. From this circumstance we learn --

1st. That we must have more Nepali Hymns and Bhajans.

2nd. That as you have several colleagues now, you must withdraw from ordinary work, much of it secular...and must, aided by a large Native staff, apply yourself mainly to Nepali literature.

3rd. That Scotland must send out more men and women to work in the hitherto barely touched field. An enormous field.

Whitaker's almanac allows Nepal a population of 2,000,000.

In the Dharmsala parish we put it at 3,000 increasing daily. Then the Dun, Abbottabad, Bakloh, Kumaon, etc., have to be thought of.⁴

This evidenced not only a real keenness to reach the Nepali in general, but an awareness of their locale throughout the Western Himalayas, particularly Gurkha regimental homes. This is the only mission until the mid-20th century that specifically targeted the Gurkhas as a mission field, although the scope was evidently limited to Dharmsala. The author has not been able to find any further references to this mission, its longevity or its outcome.⁵ Until the 1960s, after Indian Independence, and when the British Army was no longer on Indian soil, there was no further mission specifically directed at the Gurkhas.

However, in addition to the Gurkha settlements around the regimental homes, which by the late 1800s were spread from the Punjab to Assam and even

into Burma, various recruiting stations sprang up along the borders of Nepal, and then pension camps and new settlement areas for pensioners. This flow of Nepali population to and from India provided missionaries along the southern border of Nepal with points of contact with the "closed land." There were those whose whole mission was directed at Nepal, like Dr. Katherine Harbord and then the NEB who purposely stationed themselves at the railhead at Nautanwa to intercept the flow of traffic back and forth to Nepal, which included many Gurkhas and their relatives. In addition to evangelistic activities, NEB opened a medical clinic and started a primary school for Nepali children. It also had some contact with Gurkha soldiers through its mission station in Shillong in North-East India, later carried on by WEC missionaries.

Other missions near the Nepal border had their own distinct concerns, but took advantage of the opportunity to contact Nepali when it presented itself. The lure of the "closed land" was in the forefront of most of the missionaries' thinking of that day, especially those stationed anywhere near the border. Thus, the hundreds of Gurkhas who traversed back and forth to Gorakhpur to collect their pensions, often staying there through the cold months, were frequently contacted by the Gorakhpur Nurseries' ladies. They reported, "We go to them in their camp - talk with them, make friends and sell gospels in their own language... God has found a way to enter closed lands...through His written Word, carried through the gates open to them by the very people of the land."⁶ The ZBMM were also aware of such opportunities, and in 1914 secured permission to visit women at the Gurkha recruiting station in Durbhanga.⁷ They also distributed tracts and Gospels, in 1926 reporting that over 1000 Gospels had been sold to Gurkhas "who have taken them into their closed land."⁸

There was even a prayer band of India-based missionaries who yearned to see Nepal opened to the Gospel, the Nepal Border Fellowship, consisting of over 30 missionaries, from 10 different missions.⁹ The NBF had its first conference in 1933. Most of the missionaries involved had at least occasional contact with

Nepali in India. But their thoughts were all towards getting the Christian message back into Nepal rather than establishing work among the Nepali in India. They viewed the diaspora Nepali, including Gurkhas, primarily as a means to the end of contacting the "closed land." Except for the NEB and WEC, they showed little interest in the Gurkha settlement areas where tens of thousands of Nepali had become resident in India and Burma.¹⁰

Despite the above mission efforts, prior to Indian Independence there are very few instances of Gurkhas becoming Christians while in the British-Indian Army, and following Independence just as few among those who remained in the Indian Army. Several reasons for this can be noted. From the missions perspective, there was only one small mission, the MPM in Dharmasala, which directly targeted the Gurkhas, and it seems to have been mostly involved in literature distribution during the 1890s. Other missions along the border of Nepal located near Gurkha recruitment-cum-pension distribution centres also did occasional literature distribution. However, they were not so concerned with the Gurkhas themselves, but primarily with them as a means to making contact with the "closed land of Nepal" which they could not enter. There is no evidence of Nepali language churches or fellowships being established among these Gurkhas, which in any case would have been difficult due to the transient status of most of them. The one exception to this was the NEB work in Nautanwa and Shillong where there were several conversions and small fellowships were started from the 1940s; but these converts were mostly from among the wider Nepali community and not the Gurkha soldiers.

Secondly, although a number of Nepali from Darjeeling District and Sikkim who were already Christians joined the Gurkha Regiments, especially during World Wars I and II,¹¹ they were not from an evangelical background and there is little evidence that they sought actively to share their faith. Moreover, there was an educational and social gap between them and the majority of recruits who were from Nepal, and because of their generally higher educational

level, they tended to be the officers or clerks. Further, having originated in India where there was freedom of religion, they could register in the army as Christians. This largely exempted them from the kind of social pressure put on those who were registered as Hindus and then sought to convert.¹² One example is Capt. D.S. Lepcha, born in Sikkim in 1899 and educated at SUMI in Kalimpong. He joined a Gurkha Rifles Regiment during World War I, served also during World War II and eventually rose to the rank of Major before retiring, having been a Captain for thirty-four years. Throughout his time in the Gurkhas "he never lost his habit of Church going, Bible reading, and prayer."¹³ After retirement he was ordained to the Eldership of the Sikkim Church in 1954 -- a solid church-going Christian -- but his testimony does not include any references to his actively sharing his faith within the ranks.

In contrast, in the few isolated cases of individual conversions of Gurkhas which have been able to be documented, it is evident that they experienced ostracism and strong social pressure from the other men in the ranks. It was neither in the interests of the British authorities, nor the Nepal government with whom the British had to retain smooth relations in order to recruit Gurkhas, for conversions to take place. British-Indian Army policy was to form battalions on a class or religious basis, to avoid difficulties of different eating patterns, inter-caste complications, etc. Just as importantly, Nepal was and remains today a Hindu nation, with the law of the land forbidding proselytizing. (See Appendix M for details of Nepali law pertaining to religious rights.) Within the Gurkha units Hindu religious practices, such as attendance at temple and participation in various festivals and ceremonies, have always been a part of the regular routine. For a Gurkha to become a Christian was to become an out-caste, disrupting normal social relationships, and potentially endangering the cohesiveness of his Gurkha unit. Thus potential objections to Gurkhas becoming Christians came from all sides, from among the men themselves as a Hindu community, the legal and religious system of Nepal, and the British Army authorities bound to respect

that system.

One of the earliest known examples of a Gurkha converting to Christianity is of Goman Singh Thapa (a Magar caste) in Shillong, the Training Centre for the 8th Gurkha Rifles. According to elderly Nepali Christians in Shillong, about 1906/7 he began to attend Mawkhar Presbyterian Church on his own initiative. This was a local Khasi church under the Welsh Presbyterians. He was baptised there. He became known for his strong prayer life, and began to distribute tracts among his fellow soldiers. For this he came under a lot of pressure in his unit, not being allowed to eat with the others, and even physical abuse.¹⁴ Cunville wrote that:

Whenever he had the opportunity he would stand at the junction of roads and preach Christ to his fellow Nepalis. It is told that his fellow soldiers used to torment him many times, they placed his rice outside the mess hall and made him eat outside because he was a Christian.¹⁵

According to Rev. T. Pradhan's account of his life, Goman Singh was discharged after 14 years of service and lost his right to a pension simply because of becoming a Christian.¹⁶

In another case even further away in Upper Burma, the son-in-law of a high-ranking Gurkha officer became a Christian in 1914 while acting as an interpreter in a school for the local "Goorkha" boys operated by the American Baptist Mission in Taunggyi. According to Dr. Henderson's letters at the time, his father-in-law was "a man highly respected by the Government," and "the chief native officer in the battalion here, who is violently opposed to Lal Singh taking any such step (baptism)."¹⁷ When young Lal Singh did finally take the step of baptism, in spite of the strong objections, the reaction was swift:

...in retaliation, all the Goorkha boys were withdrawn from our school... There is legal religious freedom, but caste imposes rules in private life that can be used to enforce punishments for infringements of the code.¹⁸

Lal Singh was also ostracized by his own wife and mother for some time, although his wife later became a Christian. Such social pressures were typically brought to bear on any Hindu Gurkhas who converted to Christianity, and has continued into the latter 20th century among the Indian and British Gurkhas as well.

In addition, the Gurkha recruitment stations and settlements in North India, from Bihar through Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh in the Western Himalayas, were in the midst of staunch Hindu areas. Even today, the lowest percentage of Christians in all India is found in these states. Thus there was little in surrounding society to draw them to Christianity. It is not surprising that the few isolated cases of conversion which have come to light were in Shillong in North East India and in Burma.

The situation in North East India was quite different, even though there were still very few conversions among the Gurkhas posted there. This area was becoming rapidly Christianized by the early 1900s. Both the American Baptists in Assam and then Nagaland, and the Welsh Presbyterians in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills and then Mizoram, found a ready reception, especially among the predominantly tribal populated hill states. By the mid-20th century the Gurkha settlements in these areas were surrounded by largely Christian societies (except in the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam). But the Gurkhas lived within closed camps, segregated from outside society, and where no church or evangelism was allowed inside. Even the larger Nepali communities that grew up nearby the camps tended to live to themselves in separate villages where the Hindu caste and religious structure still held sway, and Nepali was the language of the home. Also, it was not until the late 1970s that the local churches of the North East India hill states began to make concerted efforts to reach peoples beyond their own ethnic groups.

BRITISH GURKHAS, POST INDEPENDENCE

Among the Gurkha Regiments which remained with the British Army

following India's Independence it is a different story. There are well verified accounts of numerous British Gurkhas stationed in the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, and to a lesser extent in Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei converting to Christianity. By 1986 it was reported that at least 50 men in the Queens' Gurkha Engineers alone had become Christians.¹⁹ There have also been many more in other Gurkha regiments. This has been mostly the result of personal witnessing within the ranks, Gurkha to Gurkha, backed up by the encouragement and fellowship of expatriate and local Christians in the places they were posted. Especially in Britain and Hong Kong the Gurkhas have found themselves in an outside environment friendly towards Christians, although often harassed from within their regiments.

The Tripartite Agreement signed between the governments of Nepal, India and the United Kingdom, in 1947, militated against conversions to Christianity within the Gurkhas.²⁰ It reportedly stated that Gurkhas recruited from Nepal were not to be "proselytized" or allowed to change their religion. But why would the Nepal government have felt the necessity to make this a part of the agreement at that time? Was it continuing an old arrangement, merely formalising an understanding the British already had with Nepal, which as already noted was in the interests of Nepal as a Hindu nation and in the interests of British military discipline, that Gurkha recruits would not be disturbed in their Hindu religion? Nepal itself was still closed to missionary activity and there were no known Nepali Christians living within Nepal, so it was not yet a local issue. However, the Nepal government and religious establishment was well aware of the growing Nepali churches off its eastern border in Darjeeling District and Sikkim. They were also cognizant of the slowly growing numbers of Christian Gurkhas recruited from those areas during the First and Second World War, and this may have been perceived as a potential threat.

As mercenaries, the Gurkhas are totally subject to Army Regulations and the law of the land within which they are deployed. But with the inclusion of an

anti-conversion clause in the Tripartite Agreement, a reflection of Nepali law as contained in the Muluki Ain (Civil Law Code), the British and Indian governments were bound to uphold it in opposition to their own countries' guarantees of freedom of religion.²¹ Yet at the time, this would have been a rather innocuous issue as far as the British were concerned, and would seem a reasonable demand. Conversions within the Gurkhas were practically unheard of, and it was never imagined that Hindu Gurkhas from Nepal would seek to become Christians. Also, it had been normal British Army policy to form companies on a religious basis in India, and conversion would have been perceived as potentially disruptive of the unity of the Gurkhas, one of the most highly valued Brigades in the British Army.²² Thus, paradoxically, a Christian authority (the British Army) was in the position of potentially having to curb Christian activity in their midst.

At the same time, a dichotomy in the treatment of Christian Gurkhas emerged. The "official Christians," those registered on their enlistment documents as Christian, from Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Sikkim, were allowed to participate in Christian activities and attend the garrison churches, as long as they did not seek to influence other Gurkhas to become Christians. Some testify to sympathetic British officers even arranging transport for them to church services on Sundays. The freedom for Christian Gurkhas to worship at Army churches was publicly acknowledged by the Secretary of State for Defence in 1985 when the question was raised in the House of Commons.²³ However, his further statements, as recorded in Hansard, clearly show that this freedom of worship was only for those officially recognized as Christians by virtue of declarations on their service documents. It was stated that: 1) only one Gurkha soldier has become a Christian during his military service and changed his religious affiliation on his service documents; and 2) there are 16 Christian Gurkhas presently serving with the British Army.²⁴ What this does not acknowledge is the scores of Gurkhas who have become Christians during their

military service, but have been prevented, by a confidential policy formulated within the Brigade of Gurkhas in 1973 to combat the rising "problem" of Christian conversions, from changing their documents to reflect their new religious affiliation.

In addition, some of those who were Christians when they were recruited in Nepal discovered only later that they had been automatically registered as "Hindu," and thus were prevented from attending Christian worship.²⁵ Mr. David Alton MP alluded to this in his speech to the House of Commons on 25 March 1986, when he noted that during Ron Byatt's employment at the Brigade of Gurkhas training depot in Hong Kong:

He (Byatt) also discovered actual discrimination against those who wanted to change their documents to declare the fact that they had become Christians. In the brigade, recruits have their forms automatically stamped 'Hindu' to ease the flow of registration.²⁶

According to Byatt's explanation:

Two Christian clerks whom I helped to recruit in Nepal, one from Bagh Bazaar Church Pokhara and the other from Aradhana Mandali, were amazed to discover that they had been automatically registered as Hindus. With their agreement I managed to get their documents changed but it cost them the loss of a day's pay and a public reprimand in Daily Routine Orders.²⁷

Another young recruit, Lok Darshan Lama, even though a Christian and raised in a Christian orphanage, for the nine months of his recruit training in Hong Kong was not allowed to attend church. Alton notes that he told his adoptive mother that "the hardest part of serving in the Gurkhas was not being allowed to go to church."²⁸

Social pressure against new converts within the Gurkha ranks was to be expected, and was nothing new to Nepali Christians' experience back in India and Nepal. Additionally, legal strictures against change of religion from Hinduism were embodied in Nepali law, and legal prosecution became common in the Nepal context after the first case was brought against Christians in 1960. But the

British government's becoming a party to the suppression of Gurkha Christians within the ranks of its own Army has been a well kept secret.

A British Gurkha Headquarters was opened in Delhi in January 1948, but in 1952 the Indian Government withdrew Britain's right to recruit from Indian territory, and a new agreement was signed directly with Nepal. The Gurkha regiments had been divided between the Indian and British Army, the British retaining only four of the ten regiments: the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles. The other six regiments were retained by the Indian Army. Gurkhas for both armies continued to be recruited from Nepal, as regulated by the Tripartite Agreement. Thus India also, a secular state by its new constitution, ended up "protecting" the Gurkhas recruited directly from Nepal from any Christian activities within their camps. This fact, combined with the strong Hindu local societies among which most of the Gurkha Brigade regiments in India live, helps to explain why there has been no movement towards Christianity among Indian Army Gurkhas similar to what has happened within the British Army Gurkhas. It should also be noted that the Gurkhas within the Assam Rifles, which make up the majority of the military forces in North East India, are not subject to this Agreement. In Shillong therefore there is a church in the Assam Rifles camp which anyone may attend, while there is no Christian meeting place or activities allowed within the nearby 8th Gurkha Rifles Training Centre.

The British Gurkhas new Brigade headquarters was established from 1948 in Malaya, which was still a British Protectorate at this time. It was complete with training centre and provisions for families. This meant the setting up of schools for the children and bringing in civilian Nepali teachers, and nurses to help the women at each base. Most of the early civilians recruited for these posts were from the Darjeeling area, because of generally higher educational standard and opportunities than in Nepal, and included a number of Christian Nepali who had been trained in Church of Scotland EHM institutions.²⁹ The Gurkhas in their new "home" were soon called on to act against the communists in the

Malayan Emergency which lasted from 1948 to 1960. During this time Malaya had become an independent state of the Commonwealth and was working out a Defence Agreement to make itself less dependent on Britain. By 1963 the Federation of Malaysia had been created, including the N. Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak. This occasioned new hostilities, this time with Indonesia into which the former Dutch Borneo had been amalgamated. The Gurkhas were again called upon in this conflict, which lasted until 1966, with the initial three battalions being augmented to twelve during the campaign.³⁰ British troops withdrew from Malaysia and all its territories in 1971, moving the Brigade of Gurkhas headquarters to Hong Kong.

In the meantime the 1-6th Gurkha Rifles and support units, including the Army Service Corps, were in 1962 sent to Britain for the first time to train with the strategic reserve, with a squadron of Gurkha Engineers soon following. They were posted at Tidworth. In those initial days, a few wives and children were allowed to join them. Since the late 1970s there has been one battalion of British Gurkhas posted in the UK at Church Crookham, and since 1981 an independent squadron of the Queens' Gurkha Engineers at Chatham, but no families have been allowed in residence.³¹

Not long after their posting to Britain, a number of these men were shipped back to the Malaysian theatre to help in the conflict with Indonesia which broke out in Borneo. Just prior to this, Gurkha troops had been sent from Singapore to Brunei for the first time, to put down an attempted coup d'etat in December 1962. The revolt was quickly suppressed with the help of the 1st battalion of the 2nd Gurkha Rifles,³² and since that time until the present there has been one battalion of the British Gurkhas stationed in Brunei. In addition, from 1973 the Sultan of Brunei began to engage retired Gurkhas directly in government service as security guards, in what became the Gurkha Reserve Unit.³³ They have their own camp where families are allowed to join them, and a Nepali school is maintained for the children.

Meanwhile in Hong Kong, camps with family accommodation and schooling by Nepali teachers had been provided for many years. For many of the men's wives, life in the Gurkha camps was often their first and only exposure to the world beyond Nepal. Hong Kong continues to be home to the Headquarters, Brigade of Gurkhas, with the majority of British Gurkhas posted there, but also an infantry battalion in both Britain and Brunei, and a squadron of Queens' Gurkha Engineers in Britain. However, with overall cutbacks in the British Army now going forward, the Brigade of Gurkhas is being reorganized and gradually reduced to just 2,500 men. Although the Brigade will continue after withdrawal from Hong Kong in 1997, being based in the UK, the end of a proud tradition seems to be at hand.

THE FIRST GURKHA CONVERTS TO CHRISTIANITY

In the context of overseas postings, removed from both the Nepal and Indian context, the unexpected happened. The seeds of conversion to Christianity began to be sown, growing into a tree whose branches spread back into Nepal itself. The first group of conversions took place in Britain in the early 1960s, when 24 men were baptised within a brief two-year period, were then posted back to Malaya and Singapore, Brunei and on to Hong Kong where the numbers continued to grow. This resulted in the acute embarrassment and discomfort of the Gurkhas' British Senior officers, as they came to fear a potential diplomatic row with the Nepal government. It also brought stiff social opposition from within the Gurkha ranks and threats from the Gurkha officers.

Why and how did this take place? One factor was the foreign context itself, and the taste of new freedoms and experiences it afforded when off the military base. Britain was not only a wealthy, developed nation, but was also perceived as a Christian society with freedom of religion. The men testified to feeling a different spiritual atmosphere in Britain than they had experienced

before, a kind of spiritual freedom. Whereas in Nepal and even Malaya and Singapore they were very conscious of the presence of evil spirits and rarely dared to go out at night, in Britain they felt free of that.³⁴ The Gurkhas overseas were also well aware of the political changes taking place back in Nepal, in the midst of its first experiment with a democratic form of government. Freedom and democracy were the catch-words of the day. It is noteworthy that the first conversions to Christianity among the Gurkhas paralleled similar happenings back in Nepal, although they had no direct connection. The ensuing opposition encountered within the Gurkha ranks also reflected what was happening back in Nepal, both with official and societal censure of the new Christians.

Another factor in Gurkha conversions was the presence of sympathetic Christians, willing to open their homes and offer hospitality, a very strong value in Nepali culture, and to give Christian fellowship and teaching to the curious inquirers. Civilian friends were not bound by the strictures of the British Army's agreements with the Nepal government. One of the things that gave sensitive Christians in the surrounding community opportunity to contact the Gurkhas was their intense desire to learn English to improve their chances for promotion. Then when some conversions began to take place, especially the large group in Britain in 1963, the rapidly growing numbers of Gurkha Christians became a source of internal support and encouragement, even in the face of stiff opposition. In addition, there was an emerging awareness among some of the missionary community in Darjeeling and Nepal of the numbers of Nepali now scattered abroad. By the mid-1960s the Gurkhas came to be seen as a mission field in themselves by one missionary couple in particular, Ron and Mary Byatt.³⁵ But most important was the strength of character of the men themselves -- their sincerity, the search for spiritual reality in a new context, and tenacity to hold firm to a decision once made. Loyalty, trustworthiness and fearlessness in the face of the enemy, some of the characteristics that have brought the Gurkhas fame, stood them in good stead when they began to encounter opposition for

their conversion to Christianity. On the other hand, from the perspective of some of the British officers it socially isolated them and caused confusion and conflict as the converts struggled to meld two radically different world-views and sets of religious practice together.³⁶

Another significant influence as conversions began to take place came from a relatively new section of the Nepali church in Darjeeling District -- the El Shaddai group of churches with headquarters in Kalimpong, a Brethren style group linked with the Bakht Singh movement in India.³⁷ They had introduced strong evangelical teaching on the "new birth," being "born again," and emphasized adult water baptism. In addition the group's stress on the individual responsibility to be soaked in the Scripture, and to evangelise neighbours and barrack-room mates, and the absence of any "ordained ministry" (which the churches reject) were particularly well-adapted to army life. How all of this combined, resulting in growing numbers of conversions among the Gurkhas posted overseas, and their subsequent significant impact on the young church back in Nepal, is perhaps best seen by a historical recitation.

IN BRITAIN

By all oral accounts the man who started the chain of conversions within the overseas British Gurkhas was Ong Tshering, a Lepcha, junior NCO of the Gurkha Transport Regiment (then called the Gurkha Army Service Corps). He was originally from Khasmahal, near Darjeeling, where he grew up in a Buddhist family. After enlisting in 1944 at the age of seventeen, he was converted and baptised ten years later when he attended a Holy Convocation of the El Shaddai group in Kalimpong, evidently while home on leave. From that time his home church became Mt. Pisgah, the El Shaddai branch in Darjeeling. From the time of his conversion he began to tell the other soldiers about his new faith, but found very little response or interest. In 1962 he was sent with an advance party from Malaya to the UK to prepare the married quarters for the incoming troops.

Through a remarkable set of circumstances he became acquainted with the local Scripture Reader, Jim Kirk, and they formed a fast friendship.³⁸ Although this group of Gurkhas was only in Britain for roughly two years, the "open door" of the Kirk family during that time was of the utmost significance in the unfolding events.³⁹

An excellent sportsman and musician, Corporal Ong Tshering had good relationships with the other men. He was even sought after by local English football teams to play for them. Not only his physical abilities, but his sense of sportsmanship and conduct on the playing field impressed teammates and opponents.⁴⁰ Open and unashamed of his Christian faith, Ong sought to explain it to other Gurkhas as there was opportunity. One such opportunity came when one of his men was injured in a football game and laid out with a bad back, unable to get up. Although Birendra's friends did not show any concern, Ong Tshering came to visit him, and even took him to his own room, got food for him, and massaged his back. He also took a Hindi Bible and began to explain to Birendra about Creation and they had a long discussion, which opened the door for further discussions later on. Birendra also remembers how Ong Tshering bought an accordion in England, then used to get up early at 5:00 a.m. and sing and play Nepali style Christian songs outside the barracks.⁴¹

Earlier, Ong had shared his new faith with another man, Khim Bahadur Rana, who became a Christian after they arrived in the UK, partly due to the extra encouragement and teaching received from Jim Kirk. His baptism was such a novel event, and aroused such interest among the other men, that a coach had to be hired to carry them all to the church. Khim Bah. also began to come to Birendra's room, and other friends would listen and join the discussions. One of those who joined in was Nar Bah. (N.B.) Sahi, also in the Transport Regiment. When he returned to Nepal after retirement, he founded a new El Shaddai assembly in Kathmandu called Berachah. Then in 1963 Khim Bah. encountered his nephew, Mukta Singh (M.S.) Rana, who had recently arrived from Brunei

with the Gurkha Engineers, and he took him aside and explained the Gospel to him. M.S. Rana had got hold of an English Bible while he was in Brunei as a way of improving his English, and it had whetted his interest about Christ. Although the Engineers were only in the UK for three or four months before being shipped back out to Malaya, in that time M.S. Rana and two other men to whom he had "witnessed" were baptised.⁴² A kin relationship between two men of the Transport Regiment and the 1-6th Gurkha Rifles also occasioned witnessing to the latter, resulting in at least four of the bandsmen of the 1-6th Gurkhas being baptised. Through inter-personal and kin relationships, the message of Christ was communicated both within and between the Gurkha regiments (see Figure 11 below).

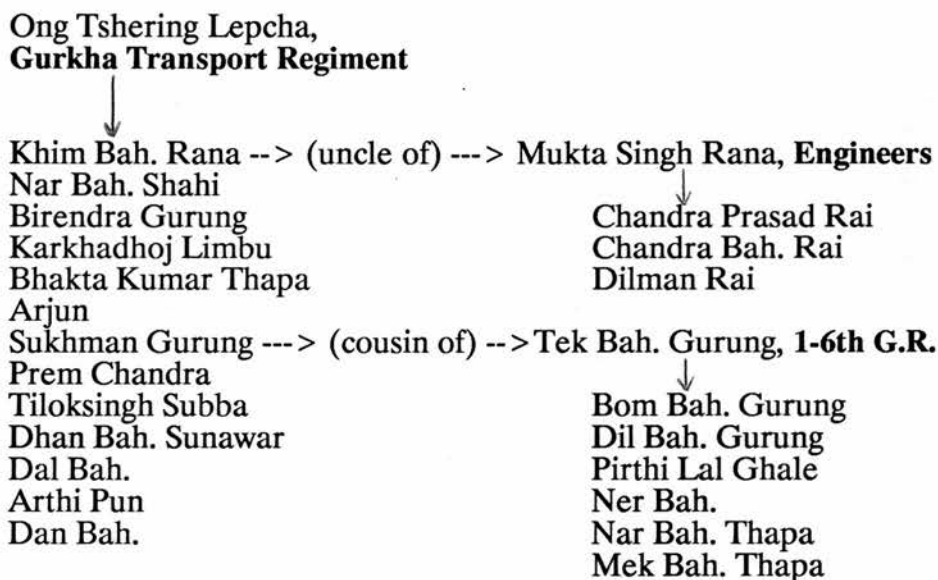


Figure 11. The first 24 British Gurkha Christian converts in the UK.

In addition to this kind of one-to-one witnessing, the initial friendship between Ong Tshering and the Scripture Reader in Tidworth developed into an open home to the Gurkhas. The Kirks' bungalow, just outside the gate to the barracks, became a kind of "home away from home" for the Gurkhas which they felt free to visit at any time. If such a place had not provided an opportunity for the newly engendered spiritual ideas to take root, it is doubtful that such a

blossoming of new Christian converts would have taken place.

When Jim Kirk had applied to the Army authorities for permission to visit the Gurkhas in their barracks, permission was refused, "...but I was told that any soldier wishing to visit me was quite at liberty to do so."⁴³ This pattern has been repeated in the various places the Gurkhas have been posted: Christian activities have been disallowed within their camps, but generally a blind eye has been turned, especially by the British officers, to their activities outside of the camp. From the first weekend that Ong Tshering went out with Kirk, the Kirks' home was filled with "the Gurkha lads" until they were shipped out again in 1964. Here they also came into contact with various missionaries from Nepal -- Elizabeth Franklin, Mabel McLean, Ernest Oliver and Ron and Mary Byatt of UMN, and Jean Raddon of NEB -- an added strong attraction because they could speak the Nepali language. Birendra Gurung recalls how his first contact with Jim Kirk was actually through a missionary lady whom he met just outside the gates of the camp as he and some friends were on their way to the cinema.⁴⁴ She greatly surprised them by speaking to them in Nepali, and they were so intrigued that they took up her invitation to come to a nearby home for tea. They were warmly welcomed by Kirk's whole family, and made to feel at home. When Ong Tshering soon after invited Birendra and N.B. Sahi to a house fellowship off base where they could meet local Christians and discuss more of the Bible, they were surprised to find that it was Jim Kirk's house.

The Kirks maintained this "open door" policy to the Gurkhas, where those who were Christians or just interested felt free to bring their friends any time of the day or night, for the two years of their association. The whole Kirk family opened their hearts to them, from Granny, bedridden in a side-room, for whom the Gurkhas always showed a special affection, to the children whom they often took on spur of the moment outings, to Mrs. Kirk who freely turned over her kitchen when they arrived with the makings for a traditional dhal bhat (rice and lentils) meal. Interest in spiritual matters was so great that every Friday evening

was given to Bible study led by Mr. Kirk, and usually interpreted by either Ong Tshering or Birendra Gurung. It was a non-threatening environment, a home away from home, where they could both enjoy a warm family atmosphere and have their questions about Christianity answered without threat of reprisal. In Jim Kirk's own description,

For political reasons, it was not permitted to visit them (Gurkhas) with the Gospel message... In such circumstances one was reminded that, when Paul as a prisoner in Rome, he had his own hired house and received all Jews who came to him... In a similar way...these men from the far country of Nepal, soon began to visit the SASRA bungalow in good numbers to hear the Word of God... They have come here seven days per week, sometimes from early morning to late at night.⁴⁵

When home on furlough from Nepal in 1963, Mabel McLean, Mrs Kirk's sister, also helped some of the men learn to read and write in Nepali. She gave much yearned for first-hand news from Nepal, and explained to them how the Christian church was beginning to take root in their own land, something with which they were unfamiliar, but which gave them great encouragement.

By 1963 several Gurkhas in Britain had come to the point of desiring baptism. The first group, all from Ong Tshering's regiment, were baptised at Silver Birch Gospel Hall in Andover. Before the end of the year twenty-four Gurkhas had been baptised at this Brethren Hall. What had started with the tenacious faith of one man who stood alone as a Christian within his regiment for several years, then in the friendly Christian environment of the Kirks' bungalow started a chain reaction of conversions within the regiment, later spread along kin-relationship lines to and within both the Gurkha Engineers and the 1-6th Gurkha Rifles, also posted around Tidworth. News of this caused excitement among Nepal missionaries who had not seen so many conversions within such a short time and space in Nepal itself. By the time most of these new Gurkha Christians were shipped to Malaya in 1964, they had developed habits of regular church-going and fellowship among themselves.

According to Ron Byatt, "Since then the main Christian teaching and prayer support of the new Gurkha believers has been through El Shaddai or Brethren channels."⁴⁶ This was a combination of the influence of Ong Tshering who referred the men back to El Shaddai before his own retirement in 1964, and of the Scripture Reader at Tidworth, Jim Kirk, who purposely steered them clear of denominationalism and arranged for their baptisms at the Brethren Hall in Andover (a non-denominational group). Their common self perception was not of belonging to a particular denomination, but simply of being Christians, a parallel development to the emerging church in Nepal. This enabled them to worship freely in various churches as they were posted on to different places where they were no longer able to easily meet together as a cohesive Christian group within the Gurkhas.

They had also begun to taste opposition from within the Gurkha regiments to their conversions. Some were warned by their Gurkha officers not to convert. According to Major D.J.R. Stack, the Gurkha officers are the "guardians of Nepalese culture" within the Gurkhas; it is part of their brief to be a guide to their British officers in all matters of Nepali culture, and as such they wield a lot of power. Corporal Sukman Gurung's simple testimony is an illustration of this:

We used to worship idols and sacrifice to them. Even after doing this thing I had no peace in my mind..it gave me no answer, and it could not speak... Thank the Lord in 1962 when I arrived in England brothers Ongtshering and Khem gave me holy words from the Bible. When I heard this word I became full of joy, and peace in my heart, and I was all the time happy knowing this Lord ... On the 23rd April the Gurkha officers called me into the office and asked me, "Are you a christian?" then I replied, "I am going to be a christian, and I will be a christian." They asked me many questions, and I said, "Do you find any righteousness in Hinduism?" Then the officers dismissed me. Same day I took Jesus as my own Saviour in my heart.

On the 4th May the Gurkha officer told me that the O.C. had ordered all Bibles to be taken away. But we did not say anything to them, but prayed and prayed about this thing. These books they kept in the office for about four days, but after four days we got our Bibles back, and we are very happy. After that we came together to sing Hymns, and to pray to God to thank Him for prayers answered.⁴⁷

According to Kirk, the incident of their New Testaments, which had finally been obtained with great difficulty from India, being taken away followed an earlier effort to isolate and intimidate the new Christians of the Transport Regiment.⁴⁸ One day while out on parade, all who were Christians were ordered to step forward and declare themselves, and the others were then told not to associate with them.

By another account Ong Tshering was called in by his British officer who asked, "Why are you ruining the Gurkhas?"⁴⁹ Then he was given a direct order not to preach in the barracks. However, Tshering replied that he must obey Jesus Christ first, and asked the Major why was he discriminating against them. Did not God create both the British and the Gurkhas? He was finally told that he could go to church as a declared Christian, but he was not to take others with him or to try to convert other Gurkhas. Because Tshering was from Darjeeling and had been baptised there, he did not fall under the same restrictions as the new Gurkha converts. This pattern also became clear in the following years: Gurkha "official Christians" from India were free to participate in Christian activities and attend the Army churches on the bases, while new converts were restricted. Following Tshering's confrontation with the officer, the group of new Gurkha Christians and inquirers stopped having informal fellowship inside the barracks, but continued to meet unmolested at the Kirks' bungalow. Such opposition to conversions to Christianity within the British Gurkhas followed them wherever they were deployed, yet their numbers continued to grow.

IN MALAYA, SINGAPORE AND BRUNEI

The short-lived revolt in Brunei, and the outbreak of hostilities between Indonesia and Malaya in Borneo, caused all of the new Gurkha Christian converts to be redeployed to those areas by 1964. Here they found no such close Christian fellowship in one place all together as they had tasted at the Kirks'

home in Tidworth. As they were frequently shifted between locations in Malaya, Singapore, Brunei and Borneo, they only occasionally met one another, but mostly they sought out Christian fellowship on their own in ones and twos. When a few did end up in the same place together it was a cause for rejoicing, as demonstrated in letters from the men to the Kirks back in Tidworth.⁵⁰ Yet when on their own, they often felt "friendless" as M.S. Rana wrote from Johore, Malaya when he found no other Christian Gurkhas in the camp.⁵¹

Ong Tshering, who had been instrumental in several conversions, and was the Christian mentor within the Gurkhas, had now retired to Darjeeling, and Khim Bah. returned home before the end of the decade. As young Christians with no earlier Christian background, they keenly felt their need for fellowship, teaching and guidance in their new faith. This is evidenced in the volume and intensity of correspondence during this period between several of the men and the Kirks. They wrote often: asking for prayer, expressing the frustration of not being able to find Christian wives in Nepal, then rejoicing when one of their wives became a Christian, giving news of one another and of various Christian expatriates who befriended them and gave them Bible teaching, rejoicing at other Gurkhas' interest in learning about Christ, requesting Bibles, and sharing their earnest desire during their leave in Nepal to tell their family and friends about the "Truth" they had found in Christianity. They were also conscious of the fact that they were not only a tiny and unwelcome religious minority within the Gurkhas, but that in most of these locations they were in the midst of a Muslim environment.

As the Christian Gurkhas sought out fellowship and teaching they gradually found it from a variety of sources, including: a Chinese Church in Kluang, Malaya; a Monday evening Bible class run by an Anglican padre in Singapore, a former missionary to China ; the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Singapore; a large church in Kuching, Sarawak where the clergyman had served with the Gurkhas in the Indian Army years before; an Anglican Church in

Brunei; a Bible study in a Chinese woman's home; and with missionaries in various locations. However, it was not always easy. After a South Indian pastor in Kluang befriended the two or three local Christian Gurkhas and began to visit them at the barracks, their Gurkha officer reportedly made the barracks out-of-bounds to him. In another situation, Birendra Gurung remembers innocently going into the church at the camp in Singapore where he was the only Gurkha present. He says he was told that it was only for the British officers, and he should not come again.⁵² On the other hand, sympathetic British officers sometimes took individual Christian Gurkhas along to a local church.

They also continued to quietly tell other men about their Christian faith, and the Kirks occasionally received reports of new converts and baptisms. According to M.S. Rana four men of the 6th Gurkha Rifles who he told about Christ were baptised in Kluang, and three others from his Gurkha Engineers company, also in Malaya. In a letter to Kirk dated 30 October 1965, Rana told how his uncle's son, Cpl. Netra Rana of the Gurkha Parachute Co. "became a true Christ's follower this year." He went on to say, "We have countless friends in Jesus Christ now-a-days! You will not know them if I mention here as you have never seen them."⁵³ After M.S. Rana returned to Nepal on pension, Tikaram Rai, also in the Engineers, arrived in Kluang and found a tract that had been left behind by Rana. He started looking for a church where he could learn more, and met some local OMF missionaries who began to teach him the Bible. Then he was baptised in 1969 in a local Presbyterian Church by a Chinese pastor. But Tikaram met no other Gurkha Christians until he went to Hong Kong in 1970.⁵⁴

In another instance, one of the men who inquired with the Christian Gurkhas about their new faith later contacted Rev. Peter Broadbent, CMS missionary from Australia. Broadbent had been appointed as Officiating Chaplain to the Europeans attached to the Gurkha Training Depot in Sungei Patani, Kedah State, Malaya, when he was approached by Phaud Bahadur Thapa, one of the trainers at the Depot.⁵⁵ Phaud Bah. told him that he was interested in

being baptised and wanted instruction. They began to meet weekly for Bible study, and Phaud occasionally brought along other Gurkhas for whom he would translate. When Phaud returned to Nepal in 1969 he was baptised there.

OPPOSITION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

During this period of the 1960s the handful of scattered Gurkha Christians in different regiments in South East Asia continued to experience some opposition. Some were able to face it, and it strengthened their faith. Others renounced Christianity and returned to Hindu practices. The Gurkha officers concerned were becoming more aware of this new religious phenomenon in their midst, and were evidently worried, if not outrightly opposed to it. The large number baptised within such a short time in the UK had taken them unawares, but the evidence suggests that since that time they had been on the lookout and pressure was sporadically brought to bear on the new converts. One of the Christian Gurkhas serving in Malaya at the time recalls that following the baptism of the four men in Kluang by a local Indian pastor, the pastor went to the British commanding officer to request a place of Christian worship for them within the cantonment. The British officer consulted his Gurkha officer, and word soon spread to all the other regiments, bringing more opposition and threats from the Gurkha officers on an even wider scale. The Gurkha officer concerned stated that no Gurkhas should be allowed to go to church because they were Hindus, but the British officer in-charge conceded that if the young converts sought Christian fellowship outside of the camp boundaries that was outside of the Army's jurisdiction. However when Col. T.C. White, Garrison Commander in Kluang at the time, was consulted by the author about this incident, he stated that he had "no memory at all" of such an incident.⁵⁶

Yet such a response would have been consistent with the pattern already emerging in other situations, as already seen. Although there was no written policy about such details of how to handle the increasing "Christian problem"

within the Gurkhas, there was an effective grapevine communication, especially among the Gurkha officers. The amount of pressure brought to bear on the Christians in each regiment varied with the attitude and tolerance of their respective Gurkha officers. Some were more zealous than others in their guardian role of Nepali culture and Hindu religious observances. From the British officers side, neither Col. T.C. White nor his adjutant at the time, Major M. Fuller, recall any of the Gurkhas under their command in Malaya during the 1960s converting from Hinduism to Christianity, although Col. White did hear of isolated instances in other places, and there were occasionally Gurkha Christian clerks under his command who had originated from Darjeeling.⁵⁷ This emphasises the fact that the conversion of Gurkhas at this early date in the Malayan theatre was relatively rare, and those who had converted in the UK kept a very low profile. Opposition to conversion at this point was expressed primarily by their own Gurkha officers.

One of the dilemmas the Christians often faced was the requirement that all members of their regiment attend the Hindu temple each Saturday morning and participate in the "puja" (worship) ceremonies.⁵⁸ Pressure has also been brought on them to participate in special Hindu festival pujas, particularly at Dasai time. Such matters are not covered in the Queen's Regulations, but are at the discretion of the Gurkha officers. Several Christian ex-Gurkhas have reported that their promotions were blocked, and a Staff Sergeant in the Transport Regiment (N.B. Sahi) was reportedly told directly that a Christian convert could never become a commissioned officer in the British Gurkhas. In fact, the first Christian Queens Gurkha Officer (QGO), Lt. Jarna Bah. Rai of the 7th Gurkha Rifles, was only commissioned in the mid-1980s.⁵⁹ Jarna Bah. was reportedly told by the Gurkha Major of his battalion that he would never be commissioned, although his name had come up more than once and he was awarded the BEM for service in Belize. He was finally commissioned Lieutenant, after being a Warrant Officer, during the short lived reincarnation of

the 2nd Battalion 7th Gurkha Rifles in the 1980s, and retired to Nepal when the 2-7th was disbanded several years later. It has been confirmed by one of the high-ranking British Gurkha officers that any Gurkha who became a Christian definitely ran a risk of either his service or his promotions being cut short, entailing a great personal financial loss.⁶⁰ Even one of the civilian Nepali Christian teachers from Darjeeling testifies that four times he was recommended to be made the school headmaster, but each time it was blocked by the Gurkha officer because of his being a Christian.⁶¹ He was told that the children must be raised as Hindus and given Hindu teaching. Due to such harassment and threats from their Gurkha officers, all four of those who were baptised in Malaya by the Indian pastor later reverted to Hinduism. The others sought out Christian fellowship quietly, playing a kind of cat and mouse game with their Gurkha officers, enduring occasional harassment, and continuing to witness to their faith where they found opportunity.

In the meantime, the Gurkha Christians were beginning to get some encouragement from other quarters. The Kirks, although transferred out of Tidworth in 1964, kept in touch with several of the men, continuing to write letters, and encouraging others to pray.⁶² They also arranged for Bibles to be sent to the men, sending thirty Bibles to Malaya at the request of Tek Bah. Gurung in 1964, and another to M.S. Rana in Brunei. Word of the Gurkha conversions had spread in Christian circles through an article in the SASRA magazine "Ready" in 1964.⁶³ It also spread through mission circles in Nepal and Darjeeling via Mabel McLean, the Byatts and others who had contact with the initial group of converts in Britain.

Ron and Mary Byatt had returned to the UK on furlough from Nepal in 1961. Then when the Gurkhas arrived in 1962,

We felt "called" to spend our month's "holiday"...assisting Jim to reach them for Christ. Jill Cook's brother-in-law lent us a caravan where we met them. Already we felt that this was an important means for getting the Gospel into Nepal but this

was abundantly confirmed next year (by the baptisms)."⁶⁴

Back in Nepal, the Byatts were increasingly frustrated by the lack of freedom to openly preach and the constraints of the missionary situation.⁶⁵ The 1963 baptisms of Gurkhas in the UK confirmed to them that this was a more fruitful way to reach Nepal with the Gospel. In early 1964 Byatt wrote to Kirk,

We believe the Lord is calling us into evangelism among Nepalis outside Nepal who are of course available to the Gospel. At this present juncture it has become quite clear to us that we are to seek openings among the G. troops in Malaya in a similar way to Tidworth. At present we know nothing of the whereabouts of the twenty or so who have taken the big step but understand they have all returned to Malaya....It would seem a natural first step to seek some civilian occupation in the vicinity of a camp in which there already is a nucleus of the Lord's and provide a home to which they can invite their friends as in your case.⁶⁶

Later in the year the Byatts resigned from the UMN and began to apply for teaching posts which would get them closer to the Gurkhas, starting with inquiries in Malaya. But nothing worked out at the time, and in 1966 they ended up going back to India to work with a Nepali Christian literature society, the NISS, alongside Roy Hagen in Darjeeling.⁶⁷ From there they passed on their vision for evangelising Nepali outside of Nepal, as evidenced by an exchange of letters between Roy Hagen and Jonathan Lindell and Howard Barclay of the UMN. Therein Hagen indicated Byatts' desire to leave Darjeeling and go to Hong Kong to be among the Gurkhas, and voiced his own supportiveness, writing, "I feel he is trying to put first things first."⁶⁸ The Hagens themselves later followed the Byatts to Hong Kong, after being put out of Nepal in the mid-1970s.

Meanwhile in Britain another SASRA couple, Neil and Barbara Innes, had a strong desire to carry on the work of evangelising the Gurkhas which had been started by the Kirks a few years earlier.⁶⁹ During the 1968 Royal Tournament in London they made a special effort to attract the hundred strong Gurkha contingent to the SASRA Rest Room at Earl's Court, and were joined by

the Byatts, who had just returned from India.⁷⁰ At the Edinburgh Military Tattoo just a couple months later they set up a separate Rest Room just for the Gurkhas, and another month-long outreach was held, again with the help of Ron Byatt. Birendra Rongong, a Nepali Christian and excellent musician from Kalimpong, also spent time every day at the Rest Room at Dreghorn Camp to talk with the Gurkhas.⁷¹ On the final Thursday of the Tattoo, the men's day off, the Innes family invited thirty-two of the Gurkhas who had shown an express interest in Christianity to a rice and curry lunch at their home, and the Gospel was clearly explained to them. Again in 1971 Innes coordinated a similar outreach to the Gurkha bandsmen at the Edinburgh Military Tattoo with the help of Birendra Rongong, but was then transferred to Germany the following year. The next such outreach was not held until 1990, after Innes' return to Edinburgh. During these outreaches aimed at the Gurkhas scores of Nepali New Testaments and other Nepali Christian literature was distributed, and at least six of the Gurkhas clearly indicated to the Innes their personal decision to become Christians, although none of them were baptised.⁷²

In Darjeeling the NISS and NBCI was aware of and concerned for the scattered Gurkha Christians from at least the early 1960s.⁷³ They helped to provide Nepali-language Christian literature and the Bible correspondence course. In 1964 the NISS Secretary appealed for "Nepali contacts who might help with the distribution of Christian literature among Nepalis abroad," noting that they already had contacts in Burma, Singapore and England.⁷⁴ On a visit to Hong Kong in 1966 Dorothy Barker met with Mr. Hanson of the Taosheng Publishing House. He offered to stock Nepali books from the NISS in his bookshop, but had no means of contacting the local Gurkhas. Dorothy Barker also left a NISS catalogue and some books with a local Christian couple, but how or if they were utilized is unclear. At that time she noted that the NISS only had one Gurkha from Hong Kong on its mailing list.⁷⁵

IN HONG KONG

Two years later, in 1968, another Christian bookshop provided the setting for the first Bible studies for Gurkhas in Hong Kong, when some of the new converts of the Gurkha Transport Regiment were looking for a place to meet near their camp. Emmanuel Bookshop was run by a missionary formerly in N. India who spoke Hindi, Allen Shirk, and he opened the bookshop to the Gurkha Christians on Tuesday evenings. The same year, the Byatts received a letter from an ex-CIM missionary, Grace Jephson, who had a Bible study for British and American servicemen in Hong Kong. Several Gurkhas had started to attend, including S.Sgt. N.B. Sahi and Lieutenant Dermont Stack, and Miss Jephson wanted advice on how to get Nepali Christian literature for them.⁷⁶ This inquiry, combined with the expected move of the Brigade of Gurkhas to Hong Kong, confirmed the Byatts' sense of calling to move to Hong Kong. When Ron was offered a teaching post at Ying Wa College in Kowloon, they were on their way, this time as independent missionaries.

By September 1969 there was a Christian missionary couple working directly among the Gurkhas for the first time, although very discreetly. Now, in Hong Kong, just as in Britain earlier, they had a home open to them for gathering and Christian fellowship, someone to give regular Bible teaching in their own language and help them to grow in their faith -- and this time in the midst of the whole Brigade of Gurkhas, consisting of four Gurkha Rifle Regiments, the Gurkha Engineers, the Gurkha Transport Regiment, the Gurkha Signals, and the Training Depot and Brigade Headquarters personnel. Ron was immediately pressed by the Gurkha Christians who knew him into leading Nepali-language Bible studies from the Nepali Bible on Sunday afternoons at the YMCA. He tried to help organise the Gurkha Christians scattered between the camps and to give them opportunities for Christian teaching. He soon also secured permission for Sunday afternoon meetings to be held at a Chinese Church in Fanling. In addition, there were already several more Gurkhas inquiring about baptism, and

within a few months several were baptised. According to Ron's description,

...(in Kowloon) our most profitable time among Nepalis began, with meetings in our flat, in the YMCA and in a borrowed church. We ourselves did virtually no direct evangelistic work - that was done by the men in the camps who brought their mates to learn more at the meetings. We arranged for local missionaries to baptize new believers (though later nearly all were baptized by mature Gurkha believers).⁷⁷

In addition to meetings off-base, at some of the Gurkha camps where there were two or more Christians they would get together informally for prayer, usually quietly or in secret. Within some camps it was more difficult than others, depending on their Gurkha officers' attitude. More men became Christians, some standing strong and others succumbing to harassment and pressure as before. A few of their British officers were sympathetic, as evidenced by their occasional attendance at Gurkha Christian gatherings outside of the camps, but they had to be very circumspect about any involvement because of official policy.⁷⁸ Tikaram Rai, who had been baptised earlier in Malaya, took his friend Lal Bahadur Rai along to the fellowship at the Byatts' home. Lal Bahadur, Jarna Bahadur Sahi, three others from different regiments, and Tikaram's wife were baptised together in 1970 at the Swatow Baptist Church (Chinese). Then Lal Bah. suddenly found himself retired early to Nepal in January 1971, just six months before he was due his pension. He feels he was sent quickly because he became a Christian.⁷⁹ Among the Christians there was a feeling that the Gurkha officers had taken note of who they were and were looking for chances to remove them.

Then in late 1973 an official, but strictly confidential, policy was formulated in top level consultations among the British officers in Hong Kong to handle the growing "Christian problem" among the Gurkhas. According to Brigadier J. Whitehead, now retired, the conversion of Gurkhas was a problem that had been "bubbling away" but had not come to the surface before the 1970s.⁸⁰ When a young Gurkha under Whitehead's command requested that his

documents be changed to reflect his conversion to Christianity, the problem had to be confronted. In the initial enthusiasm of his new faith, the young Gurkha evidently felt he must thus declare himself publicly. But this put the British Army in a very awkward position, revolving not so much around his personal decision to be a Christian, but the change of documents, which were accessible to the Nepal government representative attached to the Gurkhas. It was feared that this could cause acute embarrassment to the British government. Whitehead points to two reasons the Army had to consider the matter seriously: the Tripartite Agreement of 1947 which controls the conditions under which Gurkhas can be employed, and the Nepal government's known strong opposition to the conversion of its citizens to Christianity.⁸¹ One example of the reality of this fear can be seen in an incident which reportedly took place in the UK about this time. When it came to the attention of the Gurkha Major of the 7th Gurkha Rifles that two Christians were quietly sharing their faith with others within the ranks, he immediately complained to his senior British officer, calling it a diplomatic offence against the agreement between the British and Nepal governments.

A policy to deal with this perceived danger was created and circulated in confidence to all the commanding officers of the Brigade, and they were advised to also take their senior Gurkha officers into confidence.⁸² Measures were specified to discourage the Gurkhas from change of religion from Hindu to "Christian" on their documents: anyone who insisted was to be sent back to Nepal "on leave" for a few months, in hope that the social pressures at home would cause him to change his mind; and if he still persisted, he was then to be given a compassionate discharge. News of the policy also quickly passed between the Christian Gurkhas.⁸³

When a Gurkha is discharged from the British Army, no reason has to be specified, simply "services no longer required." Thus it is very difficult to determine if any Gurkhas were actually dismissed on the grounds of change of religion. Brigadier J. Whitehead, who retired in 1980, clearly states that no

Gurkhas were discharged from the Brigade during his tenure because of conversion to Christianity, although individuals were called before their Gurkha officers for questioning and counsel. The testimony of Christian Gurkhas in Hong Kong at the time leaves the matter also doubtful, as they relate having made a decision among themselves that since the change of religion declared on their documents was basically a bureaucratic procedure it was not wise to force the issue. They felt it had no real bearing on the reality of their new Christian faith, and some of them had counselled the young man who originally forced the issue not to do so.

When this issue, along with others concerning religious persecution in Nepal, was brought to the attention of David Alton MP several years later, he protested at the above policy's injustice, calling it "a major act of discrimination," but there is no evidence that the policy has ever been changed.⁸⁴ Alton presented written questions to the Secretary of State for Defence for clarification:

Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what was the number of Gurkha soldiers serving with the British Army who received a compassionate discharge for each year since 1970, and on what grounds.

Mr. Lee: (Chart of numbers year by year.) The grounds for discharge were domestic problems, involved in legal or property disputes or further educational requirements.⁸⁵

No discharges were recorded as being on the grounds of change of religion. When Alton further inquired "as to the number of Gurkha soldiers at present serving with the British Army who have become Christian during their military service, and how many of these have changed their religious affiliation on their service documents," he was answered simply, "One."⁸⁶ This is in obvious reference to the one case above which precipitated the crisis; the resultant strict policy from the British command, reinforcing the Gurkha officers' already evident prejudice, was an effective deterrent to others requesting to have their documents changed. Nevertheless, the Christian Gurkhas persisted in meeting together and

quietly telling others about their faith, and their numbers continued to grow.

To what extremes this policy against change of religion was carried still depended to a large degree on the prejudice or tolerance of individual Gurkha officers, as seen in the testimony of Bom Prasad Rai, the only Christian in the Motor Transport unit of the 10th Gurkha Rifles.⁸⁷ While in the UK in the early 1970s, he had an encounter with his Gurkha officer, Major Purna Singh Limbu. When Limbu found out that Rai had been trying to convince two of the other men of the truth of Christianity, he called the men in, and under severe threat they both rescinded any interest in Christianity, turned over the Christian books they had received and burned them. Rai reports that he was also threatened, abused, even spat upon in disgust, while the Major shouted at him, "Are you British?" saying that Nepali could not be Christians. Major Limbu threatened to send him home for three months, saying that he must come back as a Hindu or he would be discharged. But Rai challenged him to show him where in the Queen's Regulations it says a Gurkha cannot become a Christian, which made the Major even angrier. Rai was then warned against having contact with any Christians or he would be sent home, and was confined to the base for several months, with all letters censored and telephone calls intercepted. He experienced a time of deep depression until he was finally returned to Hong Kong where he again found fellowship with other Christians outside of his barracks.

Following the Byatts' departure for personal reasons in June 1972, others also took an interest in the Christian Gurkhas in Hong Kong and helped to provide opportunities for them to meet together. Several of the Gurkha "official Christians," such as Samuel Tamang, a GCO from Darjeeling and his family, and ex-Gurkha Swiba Simick of Kalimpong, were attending St. Martin's, the Anglican Army Church. The Gurkha converts were not allowed to attend the regular services. However, when the Anglican Padre was requested to perform a Christian funeral for one of the Gurkha's wives, and thus discovered that there were Gurkha Christian converts, he invited Byatt to start an informal Nepali

Bible study at St. Martin's. This was followed up by the Padre's successor, Rev. Ian Bull, who arrived in January 1972, and was very sympathetic to the Gurkhas' situation. As the Army Chaplain he saw no distinction between those who were Christians before or after their enlistment, and as the Church was his domain, he not only allowed them to use the vestry of St. Martin's for Nepali-language meetings on Sunday afternoons, but arranged the use of army transport to bring them in from the various army camps around Hong Kong. They ran the meetings themselves, starting with only a handful in attendance, but experienced such dramatic growth, partly through the encouragement of being able to meet thus openly together, albeit not at the regular worship service, that the meetings reportedly grew to over forty and they moved into the church sanctuary. They were also invited to other churches to give their testimonies from time to time. In the meantime, when the case concerning change of religion to "Christian" on a Gurkha's documents arose in 1973, Bull was involved in the high-level discussions and fought for the Gurkhas' freedom to change. By mid-1974 he had been moved out of Hong Kong. The growth in numbers of the Sunday afternoon meetings also drew renewed attention from the Gurkha officers, until three of the officers reportedly unexpectedly showed up at a meeting and took a head count of who and how many were there.⁸⁸ From that point it was decided to stop meeting at St. Martin's, but to meet in varying locations to avoid undue attention.

In the summer of 1976, Roy and Alma Hagen moved to Hong Kong after being put out of Nepal, and stayed until 1981. Like the Byatts before them, they also opened their home to the Gurkha soldiers. "We looked for a place convenient for the Nepalese to come to. From the very first Sunday a number of the Nepali men came for fellowship."⁸⁹ They found a place in Fanling, just across the road from the rear-guard of all the camps, the "Pol-Mil", known to every soldier in Hong Kong. Being a private home, the men felt it was safer to meet there. For a few months during 1977 they were joined by the Birendra Rongong family from Kalimpong, who came to make Nepali recordings for the

Hagens' cassette ministry. Birendra often led the meetings, and his contribution as an excellent musician proved a great attraction to even more men to attend. The Hagens were also able to visit individuals in the camps, using the name of one of the Darjeeling Christians when questioned by the military police.⁹⁰

The Hagens not only provided an open home, they also introduced a new Bible teaching which eventually led to a polarisation within the growing Gurkha Christian fellowship -- a charismatic emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit. The more enthusiastic style of worship, the good Nepali style music introduced by Birendra Rongong, and teaching on the supernatural intervention of God in healing and deliverance was a cultural fit. However, such teaching is strongly opposed by the Brethren oriented El Shaddai churches in Kalimpong, especially an emphasis on speaking in tongues. Those with ties back to El Shaddai, led by Jarna Bah. Rai, began meeting separately from those at the Hagens' home. The El Shaddai newsletter dated 18 June 1981 stated,

"From 1980 these believers began to meet together separately not because they were fond of schism, but because the missionary, in spite of their opposition, began to baptize people who had no experience of salvation, and began to give emphasis on something else according to the teaching of Chrismatic [sic] Movement."⁹¹

The Byatts returned to Hong Kong in 1980, this time Ron having secured a post as a civilian lecturer teaching English to the Gurkhas at the Training Depot, and they lent some support to the El Shaddai related group. This pattern of the El Shaddai related Christians meeting separately from other local Nepali Christians reflected the situation already prevalent in Darjeeling District from the late 1940s, and spread to Gurkha fellowships in Brunei and Singapore.

However, it is important to note that Brethren style teaching was predominant amongst the Christian Gurkhas during this whole post- Indian Independence period. This was partly due to regular contacts with El Shaddai back in Darjeeling District, originating with Ong Tshering. Also, as some of the Gurkha converts started looking for Christian wives in the 1960s and early 1970s

it was natural for them to look towards Darjeeling, as the church in Nepal was still in its first generation. The more mature among them had El Shaddai connections and referred the younger ones there; the first El Shaddai congregation in Nepal was not established until 1978. In an El Shaddai newsletter it was reported that two Gurkhas who had accepted Christ in Hong Kong heard about the church in Darjeeling and went there immediately upon their return to Nepal in 1978 and were baptised, thereafter making occasional visits back and forth.⁹² In addition, the Byatts, with the longest record of working as missionaries directly among the Gurkhas, although they did not come from a Brethren background had become convinced of these principles, yet did their best to maintain good relations with all the Christian Gurkhas, regardless of theological orientation. Ron Byatt explains the connection:

For various historical reasons most Christian Gurkhas have become associated with a group of churches in India and Nepal started by evangelist Bakht Singh, very similar in doctrine and practice to Brethren assemblies in UK and the Little Flock movement of Watchman Nee in China, Hongkong and Taiwan. Generally this has been beneficial, as they have stood firmly for the Lord as individuals in the British army, free of the lure of (relative) fame or fortune that sadly besets many young Christians in most churches with a paid ministry. On the negative side, however, separation from the world is often confused with separation from other Christians and even from one another.⁹³

These trends continued throughout the 1970s and 80s -- Nepali-language services in missionaries homes and various churches in Hong Kong (Kowloon YMCA, St. Andrew's, St. Martin's Garrison Church, Grace International later called Lighthouse Baptist, Chinese churches in Yuen Long and Fanling); informal meetings at the Gurkha camps; growing numbers of one-by-one conversions and baptisms of both soldiers and their wives throughout the different regiments; pressure from both British and Gurkha officers against conversion from Hinduism; and freedom of Christian association for the "official Christian" Gurkhas. The same basic pattern continued amongst the much smaller number of Gurkhas in Britain.⁹⁴

The other thing which brought the Gurkhas into contact with Christians in Hong Kong, especially in the 1980s, was their thirst to learn English. It became more and more necessary for promotion and advanced training opportunities as the army became more technological. In Hong Kong the now Queens' Gurkha Engineers (renamed 1977) were situated close to a newly built city where there was a Chinese Christian College offering English courses. Through strong Christian influence at the college several were converted and began to attend the college Chapel. There was also aggressive witnessing about their faith by individual Gurkhas within the ranks, and numerous baptisms were performed. Byatt recounts a secret place in the hills spied out by two of the men where from 20-30 baptisms of Gurkhas were performed in the early 1980s, by two of the Gurkha converts themselves; and possibly 50 baptisms at Butterfly Beach during the 1970s and 80s, again mostly by these two men, both connected with El Shaddai.⁹⁵ By the mid-1980s the majority of Gurkha Christians in Hong Kong were in the Engineers.⁹⁶ When M.S. Rana, one of the first of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers to become a Christian as far back as 1963, returned to visit his squadron in 1988, he found about forty Christians among them, and they were allowed to have weekly informal Christian fellowship within the camp.⁹⁷ Similarly, when Ron Byatt returned on a visit in 1986, he found Gurkha Christians and their families in seven different camps and was able to have informal fellowship with them.⁹⁸

In the early 1990s, the Christian Gurkhas now report a generally more relaxed or tolerant attitude of their officers towards them, although there is no evidence of an official policy change. This is probably a reflection of the political changes which have taken place within Nepal itself since the change of government in 1990 and restoration of a multi-party system. The old Constitution and the Civil Code were abolished and all religious prisoners were freed in June, including 27 Christians and 2 Muslims, while cases against nearly

150 other Christians were under consideration. A new Constitution and Civil Code was then adopted in 1990 and 1992 respectively, guaranteeing freedom to practise one's own religion, but not "to convert anyone into another religion."⁹⁹ Penalties for doing so are much the same as before. The most significant change is the repeal of the restriction against an individual's voluntary change of religion, and of the earlier requirement that any Hindu who changed religion must "return to their own Hindu religion" after paying the requisite fine.¹⁰⁰ However, this has occasioned no complementary change in the official stance of the Gurkhas' against conversion from Hinduism to Christianity. As recently as September 1993 one of the leaders among the Christians in the 7th Gurkha Rifles at Church Crookham, in Britain, was summoned to a meeting with his Gurkha Major where he was questioned about the Christians' activities.

Throughout this time and into the early 1990s the Byatts continued their ministry among the Gurkhas. It was done quietly of necessity, out of a deep sense of commitment to the men and their families and so as not to make their situation within the Gurkhas any more difficult. There was no publicity apart from the Byatts' private newsletter to their praying friends. While resident in Hong Kong during two different periods they maintained an open home, preaching and teaching the Bible both in groups and to individuals, visited the camps and cared for the Gurkhas' families, while Ron also made occasional visits to Nepal for extensive revision of the Nepali hymnal, "Kristiya Bhajan." After the Byatts' first term in Hong Kong, when they left in 1972 with every intention of returning, the Gurkha Christians themselves started the "Gurkha Christian Fellowship" and named Ron as President in absentia, showing their keen appreciation for his ministry among them. But Ron declined the honour and circumstances kept the Byatts in England for the next eight years. When the Byatts finally returned to England after a second term in Hong Kong in March 1984, their concern for the Gurkhas and various ministry expressions continued unabated -- regular correspondence, supplying Nepali Christian literature,

producing and sending out Nepali Bible-teaching tapes to Gurkhas stationed around the world, and occasional return trips to Hong Kong and Nepal to follow up, give further teaching and to encourage.

GURKHA CHRISTIANS BACK IN NEPAL

As stated earlier, the baptism of the first twenty-four Gurkhas in 1963 was hailed by some missionaries in Nepal as representing more conversions of Nepali nationals than had yet taken place within Nepal itself, since its opening to them in 1952. Although this was an exaggeration, probably a product of Nepal's geography and the still primitive transport and communications system, so that the scattered missionaries and Nepali Christians were isolated from one another, it is still indicative of the significance of such a large number of conversions at this early hour in Nepal's own Christian history. As the men returned to their homes on leave or retirement, they carried their new faith with them. Often they were the first to take the Christian message into their home areas. The correspondence carried on by the early converts from Tidworth with the Kirks bears numerous mentions of the men telling others about Christ in their villages on leave, or after being pensioned.¹⁰¹ This continued over the ensuing years. When two men from Diktel District, E. Nepal, were pensioned in the 1970s, they took some from their village of Dorpa with them to meet Christians in Darjeeling, and seven of the villagers were baptised. Then two years later they were visited in their village by a preacher from Kalimpong and twelve more were baptised, the beginning of the first local church in their district.¹⁰²

Difficulties were also faced, including the desire to find Christian women to marry. Some were already married before their conversion, and others accepted arranged marriages with Hindu women during leave due to lack of alternatives and family pressure. Some of those whose wives have not subsequently converted to Christianity have experienced immeasurable heartache and divided homes. Others looked to the Nepali Christian community in

Darjeeling for help, as when Ong Tshering arranged for M.S. Rana's marriage to the sister of his wife, a nurse trainee recently returned from Duncan Hospital in Raxaul.¹⁰³ Another difficulty in the early years was the lack of Christian fellowship in most of the men's native villages. These problems gradually lessened over the years as the church within Nepal grew in number and local churches spread throughout the country. There were also social pressures and ostracism by the overwhelmingly Hindu society to be faced, and occasional legal prosecution. For example, Sgt. Balram (Barnabas) Rai was arrested for preaching in East Nepal during his leave in 1985.¹⁰⁴ Some bent to the strong family and social pressures brought to bear and reverted to Hinduism, particularly when the pressures were combined with a lack of Christian fellowship.

Despite the difficulties, most of the returned Christian Gurkhas have remained strong in their faith, and many have gone on to become Christian leaders, pioneer evangelists in formerly unreached areas, and pastors, both within Nepal and in other overseas locations where they went for further employment.¹⁰⁵ A complete list of how many British Gurkhas have converted to Christianity during their military service, or what is the state of their religious faith today, is almost impossible to compile in the absence of any official or unofficial records. However, the following list of Christian leaders in Nepal today who were converted in the Gurkhas, although admittedly incomplete, is clear evidence of the Christian impact these men have had following their retirement, particularly in E. Nepal where most of them originated from:

Pirithi Lal Ghalle (Tidworth convert) and Dil Bah. Gurung
- Founders of a church in Barpak, Gorkha District

Birendra Gurung, Gurkha Transport Reg. (Tidworth)
- Leader in Christian Professionals and Prison Fellowship

Prithvi Lal (baptised at Basingstoke Baptist Church, UK)
- Christian meeting in his home in Dharan

- Boudah Masih
- Pioneer evangelist in E. Nepal
- N.C. Pradhan, Gurkha children's school teacher in Hong Kong
- Teacher at Darjeeling Hills Bible School
- Balram "Barnabas" Rai, Queen's Gurkha Engineers
- Arrested for preaching in 1985 while on leave in Nepal
- Responsible for the conversion and baptism of numerous servicemen, and for founding churches in Nepal
- Bom Prasad Rai, 10th Gurkha Rifles
- Leader in Brunei Nepali fellowship
- Lt. Jarna Bah. Rai, 7th Gurkha Rifles
- Leader of an El Shaddai-related church in his home
- L.B. Rai, Gurkha Engineers
- Founding member of Bahrain Nepali Christian Church
- Lal Bah. Rana, 1-2nd Gurkha Rifles
- Deacon and evangelist of Bagh Bazaar Church, Pokhara
- Sgt. Nar Bah. Shahi, Gurkha Transport Reg. (Tidworth)
- Founder of Canaan Church (El Shaddai), Kathmandu
- N.K. Rai
- Active lay leader in St. Andrew's Church, Darjeeling
- "Philip" Tikaram Rai, Gurkha Engineers
- Former leader of Bahrain Nepali Christian Church
- Leader in Little Flock Church, Dharan
- P.B. Rai
- Deacon of Gyaneshwar Church, Kathmandu
- Prem Bah. Rai (Tidworth convert)
- Pastor of Fattepur Church, E. Nepal
- M.S. Rana, Gurkha Engineers (Tidworth)
- Deacon at Gyaneshwar Church, Kathmandu
- Ram Prasad Rai
- A fellowship in his home, Diktel District, E. Nepal
- Major Samuel Tamang, Sandhurst graduate
- Elder of St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling
- Major John Tenzing, Gurkha Engineers
(originally from Darjeeling Dist.)
- Active in Christian Professionals, Kathmandu

Figure 12. List of retired Gurkhas in Christian leadership

There have also been some ex-Gurkhas converted within Nepal and other places after retiring who have become Christian leaders, such as Pastor D.R. Thulung of Dharan Church, one of the first Nepali Christians in East Nepal; Major (Retd.) Tul Bahadur Rai, leader of an El Shaddai assembly near Dharan; Bah. Saheb who was hostile to Christians while a Gurkha Major in the army then had a Christian fellowship in his home in Dharan until his recent death; and Bir Bah. Rai, now an elder in Canaan (El Shaddai) Church in Kathmandu. Examples of ex-Gurkhas converted in Kalimpong and Sikkim, and now in Christian leadership, include Mishal Subba, pastor of Himalayan Free Church in Singtam, E. Sikkim, and Jai Pal Rai, pastor of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Kalimpong. The conversions of D.R. Thulung and Tul Bah. Rai are intimately related to Christian activity which began to take place at the British Gurkhas' Military Camp in Dharan, from the mid-1960s.¹⁰⁶ There were a few civilian Nepali Christians working at the Military Hospital as medical orderlies or nurses, including Tikaram Rai, but most of them were from Darjeeling or Kalimpong. There was a chapel in the camp where occasional services were held for the Christians who desired to attend. But out of a desire for more meaningful and regular fellowship, particularly with the Nepali Christians in the camp, one of the British officers, Capt. John Neeve, started a Nepali-language fellowship on Wednesday evenings in the chapel. These were the first regular Nepali Christian meetings to be held in East Nepal. At first it included only those officially recognized as Christians within the camp, and posed no problem. But after D.R. Thulung, and then retired Major Tul Bah. Rai and his family, began to attend, it came to the notice of the camp commander who objected. From that time the meetings were held outside of the camp, and developed eventually into the two different churches mentioned above.

SUMMARY

The first breakthrough in ministry to the Gurkhas came soon after the first battalion of men and their support units were sent to Britain. In 1963 twenty-four men were baptised in the relatively friendly environment of the UK, with the back-up encouragement of the Kirk family, SASRA. Conversions came primarily through one-to-one personal witnessing about Christianity within the ranks, and opposition soon followed. But soon after these Gurkha regiments were redeployed to the Malayan theatre due to local conflicts in the region, the new Gurkha Christians were scattered and found little fellowship together. Their Gurkha officers had also been alerted by the sudden number of Christian converts, which they perceived as a threat to their authority and an insult to Hindu Nepal, and pressure increased against the Christians. At the same time, awareness of potential ministry opportunities and needs was building among a small sector of the missionary community in Nepal and Darjeeling. Then with news of the Brigade of Gurkhas headquarters being moved to Hong Kong, the Byatts moved ahead of it as the first missionaries fully dedicated to Gurkha ministry. In Hong Kong for the first time regular Nepali-language services were started, and meetings took place in several different places over the years in the New Territories. Informal gatherings in the Gurkha camps also continued, along with more conversions and baptisms, as well as harassment and various pressures. The latter mushroomed into a full-blown "Christian problem," when a Gurkha in Hong Kong tried to have his service documents changed to reflect his change of religion, involving the highest British authorities in the Brigade of Gurkhas and formation of a policy to confront the situation. Back in the UK the same pattern prevailed, and the number of Gurkha Christians continued to grow in both places. Brethren influence remained predominant, from the initial baptisms in a Brethren Hall in the UK, through the Byatts in Hong Kong and El Shaddai back in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, although some charismatic influence came in Hong Kong through the Hagens during the late 1970s.

GURKHAS - CHAPTER 13

- (1) Byron Farwell, *THE GURKHAS* (Penguin Books, 1985), 145.
- (2) Ministry of Defence, 1965, 131; and Kansakar, Sept. 1988, 42.
- (3) In the Official Army List, War Office, London, it is noted that Major-General M. Millett received his first commission on 4 Sept. 1857, served with the Bengal Infantry, and finally attained the rank of Major-General on 1 Jan. 1893, the same date he was placed on the "unemployed supernumerary list" at the age of 60 years. he must have remained in Dharmsala to start his private mission to Gurkha soldiers after leaving the service.
- (4) Mission News, June 1894.
- (5) The next reference to Dharmsala found in EHM records is the Darjeeling Annual Report for 1908, when Rev. R. Kilgour rejoiced over reports of New Testaments reaching from Dharmsala to Maymyo. Then in the mid-1950s, R.K. Redman, an independent missionary in Dharmsala, in a letter to the Secretary of the NBF, dated 22 June 1953, noted that he spent his summers near the headquarters of the Gurkha regiment and handed out some SGM booklets to the soldiers. But it is very doubtful that this had any relation to the earlier MMPM work, and it was obviously peripheral to his main mission work.
- (6) Mary Warburton Booth, *WHOSOEVER SHALL RECEIVE* (London: Marshall Bros., n.d.).
- (7) ZBMM Annual Report for 1914.
- (8) ZBMM Annual Report for 1926.
- (9) Perry, 1993, 100-101 n.1-2.
- (10) Of course, missions of that day also faced issues of comity, working in agreed upon designated geographically defined fields. The NEB was only able to work in Shillong with the agreement of the Welsh Presbyterians, and in Assam with the agreement of both the American Baptists and General Conference Baptists. They were not free to extend their work into any area they wished. It was also the day of pioneer evangelism in previously unreached areas, so the emphasis of most missions was understandably on the local native populations rather than minority immigrant communities like the Nepali.
- (11) Prior to World War I Gurkha recruits were almost exclusively from Nepal, as they were considered the better fighters. But with the outbreak of war massively increased recruitment needs also meant fewer strictures on who was recruited. As of Jan. 1913 there were 24,305 Gurkha soldiers in British India, only about 2000 recruited from British territory (Vansittart, 1915, 170). But during World War I over 200,000 Nepali were used, including 55,000 in ten Gurkha regiments (Farwell, 1985, 84-5).
- (12) There are indications that some of those who were Christians before

joining the army also experienced social ostracism and discrimination because of their faith, particularly if they were open about it and sought to evangelise others. For example, three Adhikari brothers who grew up at Graham's Homes in Kalimpong and joined the Indian Army told their families how they were not allowed to enter the mess, but had to eat their meals outside, and that their promotions were withheld in spite of their outstanding records as sportsmen and marksmen. This may have been partly due to the fact that Adhikari is a priestly caste, so their practice of Christianity would have been particularly offensive.

(13) Church News, April 1958, 30.

(14) S. J. Lama, interview with author, Shillong, India, 9 Dec. 1991. S.J. Lama is the son of the late J.B. Lama, leader of the Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church, Shillong, who was recruited into the 8th Gurkha Rifles by Goman Singh Thapa.

(15) Cunville, 1975, 230-231.

(16) Ka Pateng Khristan (Khasi), July 1971.

(17) A.H. Henderson, letter to American Baptist Missionary Union, 22 July 1914.

(18) Henderson letter, 22 July 1914.

(19) Ron Byatt, letter to prayer partners, 8 Sept. 1986, in NCHP Collection.

(20) This agreement concerning the future of Gurkha troops is referred to in the **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES: HOUSE OF COMMONS OFFICIAL REPORT** (Hansard, Fifth Series, Vol. 445, Session 1947-48, London: HMSO, 1947, 34). Discussions were held between representatives of each of the three governments in Kathmandu, and they signed "a tripartite memorandum of agreement and accompanying documents" on 9 November 1947. However, as further negotiations were needed before a final settlement, publishing of the agreement was left pending, and it has not been published until today.

(21) See Appendix M for details of the Civil Law Code (Muluki Ain) and Constitution of Nepal regarding religious rights, and changes through the years.

(22) Major Dermot Stack, interview with author, Glasgow, Sept. 1993.

(23) "Written Answers to Questions," **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES** (Hansard), Sixth Series, Vol. 93, Session 1985-86, 264. "Mr. Alton asked the Secretary of State for Defence what provision is made for Christian Gurkha soldiers to worship during their recruit training at the training depot of the Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong. Mr Lee: Gurkha soldiers in Hong Kong are able to worship at whatever church they wish. No special provision is made for Christians at the training depot of the Brigade of Gurkhas but there are two local Army churches, one Church of England, and the other Roman Catholic, which they may attend."

(24) Hansard, Vol. 93, Session 1985-86, 265 and 266. When asked by Alton the number of Hindu, Christian and other Gurkhas in the British Army, he was told that there were 7893 Hindu, 297 Buddhist, and 16 Christian.

(25) Former Brigadier E.D. Smith (1985, 120) noted that when Rai and Limbu were recruited, many of whom traditionally were animist or Buddhist, their religion was always shown as 'Hindu' on Army documents, in deference to Nepal as a Hindu kingdom. This evidently held true for Christians from Nepal also, but Smith makes no mention of Christian Gurkhas either in the above or his earlier Gurkha history, *BRITAIN'S BRIGADE OF GURKHAS* (1973; reprint London: Secker and Warburg, 1982). In Smith's estimation most of the Gurkhas were indifferent and took a pragmatic approach to religion; they either said Buddhist prayers or consulted a Brahman priest as it suited them (1985, 120).

(26) David Alton MP, speech in House of Commons 25 March 1986, Hansard, Sixth Series, Vol. 94, Session 1985-1986, 843-847.

(27) Ron Byatt, letter to author, 14 Nov. 1993.

(28) Alton, speech 25 March 1986, Hansard, Vol. 94, 846.

(29) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, Mirik, Darjeeling District, India, 1 June 1992. Pradhan, an EHC Presbyterian from Darjeeling, served as a civilian teacher for the Gurkha children in Malaysia and Hong Kong for over 20 years.

(30) Richard Clutterbuck, *CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE IN SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA 1945-1983* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985), 280.

(31) Smith, 1985, 108.

(32) David Hawkins, *THE DEFENSE OF MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE* (London: Royal United Services Institution, 1972), 23.

(33) Major Martin Fuller, British Gurkha officer who served in Brunei, telephone conversation with the author, 12 March 1994; and Kansakar, 1982, 4.

(34) May Kirk, interview with author, Edinburgh, 9 June 1993. This feeling was related to the Kirks by several of the Gurkha soldiers who frequented their home from 1962-64, when Jim Kirk was the Army Scripture Reader at Tidworth.

(35) This awareness of Nepalis abroad, especially Gurkhas, and the willingness or ability to act on it was actually quite limited aside from the supply of Christian literature from NISS in Darjeeling. The Byatts resigned from UMN in 1964 with a desire to work among the Gurkhas overseas, but they could not get any support from their mission or missionary colleagues for this endeavor. They finally went to Hong Kong independently in 1969 (Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992).

(36) This confusion was noted by Brigadier J. Whitehead in his dealings with some of the earliest Gurkha converts to Christianity in Hong Kong (telephone conversation with the author, 12 March 1994.)

(37) In the Himalayas the Bakht Singh assemblies are often referred to by the generic "El Shaddai," the name used at their headquarters in Kalimpong. Individual assemblies adopt various Biblical names. Hereafter in the text the general term El Shaddai will be used when referring to these assemblies. See above, p.117-118 for a brief history of the El Shaddai churches in the Eastern

Himalayas.

(38) Scripture Readers are evangelists among the military forces with the Soldiers' and Airmens' Scripture Readers Association (SASRA), the only mission organisation with an official charter permitting them access to the barracks. Scripture Readers, all ex-servicemen themselves, are posted to the various military bases where they work in cooperation with the Royal Army and Royal Air Force Chaplains. SASRA is inter-denominational and no proselytising is allowed for any particular Christian denomination.

(39) See Appendix L for the full story in Jim Kirk's own words of his family's relationship with the Gurkhas and how twenty-four of them became Christians and were baptised during their two years of acquaintance.

(40) Birendra Gurung, interview with author, Kathmandu, Nepal, 22 March 1993.

(41) B. Gurung, interview with author, 22 March 1993.

(42) In this context 'to witness' meant to explain to others about Christianity and why or how the individual concerned believed in Christ.

(43) Jim Kirk, cassette, "Gurkhas at Tidworth," n.d. (1960s), in NCHP Collection.

(44) B. Gurung, interview with author, 22 March 1993.

(45) Jim Kirk, "Missionary Outreach," Ready (SASRA magazine), April-June 1964, 110-111.

(46) Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992.

(47) Cpl. Sukman (Gurung), testimony No. 10, Kirk's collection of Gurkha testimonies, in Gurkha file, NCHP Collection.

(48) Kirk, cassette, "Gurkhas at Tidworth," n.d. (1960s).

(49) B. Gurung, interview with author, 22 March 1993.

(50) N.B. Sahi from Neesoon Transit Camp, Singapore (letter to Kirk, n.d.[1964], in Gurkha file, NCHP Collection) writes of meeting up with six other Christian Gurkhas, saying, "Anyway we are enjoying ourselves. We have big fellowship here same as we did at Bethany [the SASRA bungalow in Tidworth]." The following year Birendra Gurung wrote from Borneo (21 Aug. 1965) at his excitement because there were four Christians together for a few months, two from the G.T.R. and two Gurkha Engineers.

(51) M.S. Rana, letter to Kirk from Johore, 12 Aug. 1964, in Gurkha file, NCHP Collection.

(52) B. Gurung, interview with author, 22 March 1993.

(53) M.S. Rana, letter to Jim Kirk from Kuching, Sarawak, 30 Oct. 1965, in Gurkha file, NCHP Collection.

(54) Tikaram Rai, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 4 April 1993.

(55) Peter Broadbent, letter to author, 1 March 1993.

(56) Col. T.C. White, telephone conversation with the author, 12 March 1994. White further stated that if such a request had been made he would have said that any Christian Gurkha could attend the regular garrison church, that there would have been no Army restrictions against their doing so, although the Gurkha officers might well have restricted their own men.

(57) Col. T.C. White and Major Martin Fuller, telephone conversations with the author, 12 March 1994.

(58) M.S. Rana, interview with author, 19 Feb. 1992.

(59) Maj. D. Stack, interview with author, Sept. 1993. Queen's Gurkha Officers are specially commissioned within the Gurkhas, but not equivalent to British officers; they rise through the ranks until achieving the non-commissioned rank of Warrant Officer, then are commissioned as a QGO. The next possible level is for a QGO to be fully commissioned as a Gurkha Commissioned Officer (GCO), equivalent to British officers of the same rank.

The only Christian Gurkhas commissioned either as QGOs or GCOs before Lt. Jarna Bah. Rai were those who had enlisted as Christians, with it declared on their documents, and originated from Darjeeling District; for example, Major Samuel Tamang, and Major QGO John Tenzing, Head Clerk of the Queen's Gurkha Engineers, then of the Brigade of Gurkha's Training Depot. In addition to Lt. Jarna Bah. Rai, Paul Pradhan from Darjeeling, a convert to Roman Catholicism in the 1970s after joining the Gurkhas, was commissioned as Lieutenant.

(60) Christian Gurkhas having their promotions blocked or service cut short is also attested to by several ex-Gurkhas in personal interviews by the author, and was noted in an El Shaddai newsletter of 18 June 1981.

(61) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992.

(62) SASRA outreach among the Gurkhas stationed in the UK in later years also continued. SASRA held an outreach among the 2nd Gurkha Rifles Band who participated in the Royal Tournament in 1968, calling on the Byatts, former UMN missionaries, to help, then again at the Edinburgh Festival where Birendra Rongong, a resident Nepali Christian from Kalimpong has assisted in Gurkha outreach through the years. Neil Innes, Scripture Reader in Edinburgh, has been particularly active in evangelism of the Gurkhas from the late 1960s. In addition, another British Christian family opened their home to the Gurkhas based in South England from about the same time, Charles and Edna Witts, affectionately known as "Mum" and "Dad" by their Gurkha "lads."

(63) See above, n.45 in this section.

(64) Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992.

(65) Since the 1960 arrests at a baptism in Tansen, the fledgling church in Nepal had decided to hold further baptisms across the border in India. See Perry, 1993, 88-89, 128 n.136.

(66) Ron Byatt, letter to Jim Kirk, 3 April 1964, in Gurkha file, NCHP Collection.

(67) See above, p.110ff.

(68) Roy Hagen, letter to Howard Barclay, 9 July 1967, in NISS file, NCHP Collection.

(69) Neil and Barbara Innes, interview with author, Edinburgh, 31 May 1994. Neil was a soldier at Tidworth and present when the first group of Gurkhas was baptised in 1963. He joined SASRA, with his wife, in 1965 as a Scripture Reader.

(70) This was the first time that a SASRA Scripture Reader specially targeted the Gurkhas at the Royal Tournament and sought to attract them to the Rest Room, a kind of coffee room and place to relax where Christian literature was also made available and there was an opportunity for informal conversation, including about Christianity if instigated by the Gurkhas themselves.

When Innes went to see the Gurkha contingent's commanding officer and explained his plans, the CO sent the whole contingent on parade to the Rest Room where Byatt showed slides of Nepal and invited the men to return anytime during their free time.

(71) Rongong, a blind man married to a Church of Scotland missionary teacher, was in Edinburgh learning how to teach math in braille at the time of the Tattoo. His presence in the Rest Room, with his guitar and singing Nepali songs, was very attractive to the Gurkhas. A tartan business, set up and managed by Ron Byatt as a service to the men and to secure a fair price for them, also attracted the Gurkhas into the Rest Room. Special Sunday evening meetings were held by Innes throughout the month.

(72) The Innes family had very little subsequent contact with any of the Gurkhas contacted during either the Royal Tournament or the Edinburgh Military Tattoos, and the baptism of only one man has been confirmed; it is unknown if any of the other men were subsequently baptised, or if others made decisions to become Christians. In 1993 Innes heard his first report of one of the men who decided to become a Christian in 1968, Bo Bah. Pun, that although he had encountered much opposition when he returned to his village in Mustang, he and his wife were now actively involved in a church in Pokhara, Nepal.

(73) See above, p.109.

(74) J.M. Brodie, "Some comments on the Nepali Christian Literature Scene after a visit to some Christian centres in Nepal," 6 March 1964, confidential typescript, 4, in NCHP Collection. Rev. Brodie was the NISS Secretary at the time he wrote this report.

(75) Dorothy Barker, letter to J. Lindell of UMN, 11 May 1966, in NISS file, NCHP Collection.

(76) Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992.

(77) Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992.

(78) Ready (Oct.-Dec. 1970, 251) noted the attendance one week of three British officers at the weekly Bible study among Gurkhas being held at the YMCA in Kowloon.

(79) L.B. Rai, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 4 April 1993.

(80) Brigadier J. Whitehead (Retd.), telephone conversation with the au-

thor, 12 March 1994.

(81) Whitehead, telephone conversation, 12 March 1994.

(82) According to Brigadier J. Whitehead, this was normal practice in handling such a sensitive issue.

(83) As no copy of this policy is available in the public domain, the exact content cannot be verified. The description given was confirmed by two British men who viewed the document at the time (20 years ago). There is a strong oral tradition of its contents among the Christian Gurkhas. Brigadier J. Whitehead recalled the first measure of using social pressure as accurate, but questioned the second of discharging men who refused to change their mind.

(84) David Alton, MP in speech to House of Commons, 25 March 1986.

(85) Hansard, Sixth Series, Vol. 93, Session 1985-86, 264-5.

(86) Hansard, Vol. 93, 265.

(87) Bom Prasad Rai, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 4 April 1993. This account is according to his own testimony.

(88) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992. The author has not been able to confirm this account from other sources.

(89) Alma Hagen, letter to author, 10 Feb. 1993.

(90) Alma Hagen, letter to author, 10 Feb. 1993; N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992.

(91) El Shaddai, Kalimpong, mimeographed newsletter, 18 June 1981, in NCHP Collection.

(92) El Shaddai newsletter, 12 April 1980.

(93) Byatt, letter to author, 24 Nov. 1992.

(94) After the Byatt's return to the UK in the 1970s they ran a Saturday meeting in a friend's home in Fleet for the Christian Gurkhas from Church Crookham camp. Charles and Edna Witt have maintained an open home for 'Gurkha lads' also near Church Crookham since at least the 70s.

(95) Ron Byatt, telephone conversation with author, 30 Sept. 1993. Byatt himself did not baptize Gurkhas in Hong Kong, as his philosophy was to see the men themselves raised up in ministry. But he supported and encouraged, and was often involved on the sidelines and in the organisation.

(96) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992.

(97) M.S. Rana, interview with author, 19 Feb. 1992.

(98) Byatt, letter to prayer supporters, 8 Sept. 1986.

(99) See Appendix M for the full text of the new Civil Code pertaining to religious rights.

- (100) Edgar Metzler, UMN Executive Director, "News Release: New Law Improves Religious Liberty in Nepal," TS, 9 July 1992.
- (101) Letters from Christian Gurkhas to the Kirks (1963-65) and their personal testimonies, in the Gurkha file, NCHP Collection.
- (102) El Shaddai newsletter, 12 April 1980, in NCHP Collection.
- (103) M.S. Rana, letter to Kirk, 30 Oct. 1965.
- (104) Major D. Stack, interview with author, 16 Sept. 1993. Sgt. Balram Rai was Major Stack's former driver when he was a Sapper.
- (105) El Shaddai churches do not have pastors, as they abhor "one man ministry," so they leaders in their groups are simply designated as elders or deacons.
- (106) This account is taken from interviews with Prem Masih (Dharan, 1985), the first Nepali Christian in Dharan from Dec. 1961 and a medical orderly at the Military Hospital; and with Jill James (Edinburgh, 18 Sept. 1993), a missionary in Okhaldunga and then Dharan during this period of the 1960s-early 1970s.

CHAPTER 14 - NEPALI OVERSEAS

Historically there have been two main impetuses to Nepali emigration overseas: as part of the British colonial labour force, and as British Gurkha soldiers. In the modern era, colonial labour has given way to contract labour, primarily in response to the oil boom in the Middle East and to fuel the developing economies of East Asian countries; and internal security forces, made up mostly of ex-Gurkhas in Muslim nations from the Gulf to Brunei, have arisen in addition to the long-standing British Gurkha forces. There have also been growing numbers of Nepali students and professionals migrating abroad to the more developed nations, some returning after a few years, and others becoming permanent residents.

EMIGRATION TO BRITISH COLONIES FROM CALCUTTA

With the expansion of the British colonial empire came an increasing need for labour, especially for the labour-intensive sugar, rubber and coffee plantations. The first Indian labour migration was in 1810 to nearby Ceylon, then on to Tenasserim, Mauritius, the West Indies, and the Straits Settlements.¹ Following the abolition of slavery in British territories in the 1830s, the recruitment of Indian labourers was looked to more and more to fill in the gap. Export of indentured labour from the Indian sub-continent lasted almost 100 years, coming to an end only with the outbreak of World War I in order to conserve manpower for the war effort. In 1918 further emigration was prohibited under the Defense of India rules, and the last Report on Emigration from Calcutta was dated 1920.² By that time Indians were the majority of the population in the colonies of Mauritius, British Guiana and Fiji. They were also

the largest immigrant group in Trinidad, and the third largest ethnic group in Malaysia and Singapore.

Although officially Nepali were not supposed to be included in this overseas labour force, many of them found their way in. Under the Indian Emigration Act recruitment was to be confined to British India.³ According to Gillion's research concerning Fiji,

From 1894 all recruiters had to sign a pledge not to recruit Nepalis: ostensibly this was because the Nepal Darbar did not wish its subjects to be sent to the colonies, but the real reason was the objection of the Indian Army to colonial competition with enlistment for its Gurkha units.⁴

On 4 September 1913, in a report to the Colonial Office by A. Marsden, Agent for Trinidad at Calcutta, he noted that "...we are confined in our recruiting... The enlistment of Punjabis, Sikhs, and Nepalis is forbidden."⁵ This seems a clear reference to objections the British-Indian Army had to those they considered their best fighting forces being potentially depleted by labour recruitment.

There is also little doubt that the Nepal government itself had strong objections to its citizens being sent overseas, just as they opposed and obstructed the recruitment of Gurkhas into the Indian Army for many years.⁶ Historically there were religious restrictions to travel abroad. As late as 1900 the Raj Guruju (Royal Priest) refused "pani patia" purification rites to Gurkhas who crossed the border into China to quell the Boxer rebellion.⁷ This was only resolved in 1920 when it was agreed that those going abroad on active service should not be made outcastes.⁸

Nevertheless, the emigration restrictions were relatively easily frustrated in practice. In a settlement of Nepali ethnics near Sigatoka, Fiji, one man related how he was at first rejected by the recruiter because of being a Nepali, but he was later registered by simply changing the particulars of his domicile.⁹ Another man, Ratan Bah. Singh, was a soldier in the Nepali army about 1900 when he heard that labourers were being recruited for sugar cane plantations in the

Pacific. Since the current Prime Minister of Nepal had asked the British not to recruit Nepali, Singh went disguised as a sadhu, changed his name, and was soon on a ship out of Calcutta.¹⁰ In 1883 Bronkhorst reported, "We have in the Colony Coolies from all parts of India... Nepaul...who have found their way to British Guyana as labourers to work on the sugar estates."¹¹ Such accounts are further attested to by the regular references to Nepali embarking from Calcutta for foreign colonies in the British official emigration reports (see Appendix N).

Nepali were included in the indentured labour force recruited and sent to British colonies from at least the 1870s, though not in large numbers. From 1900 until labour immigration was prohibited, Nepali made up five percent or more of the total annual emigrants from Calcutta; in 1900, 948 emigrants from Nepal (8.1 percent of the total) were sent to six different countries, from 11,674 total emigrants.¹² According to the Annual Reports on Emigration from Calcutta, by 1917 well over 2,000 emigrants from Nepal had reached each of Trinidad, British Guiana and Fiji; nearly 1,500 had gone to Natal; and about 500 each to Mauritius, Surinam (former Dutch Guiana) and Jamaica.¹³ This is undoubtedly well below the actual number of emigrants from Nepal since so many concealed their identity from the recruiters.

Gillion noted that Nepali labourers for Fiji were mainly recruited through Gorakhpur "where they had come looking for work or adventure."¹⁴ From the mid-1800s, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in N. India, contiguous to Nepal, were some of the main recruitment areas,¹⁵ making it easy for the Nepali to be included. However, there were also growing demands for labour within India, especially towards Assam and on into Burma. If it were not for this competing labour demand closer to home, many more Nepali would most likely have ended up emigrating abroad.

Although census figures in these former labour-importing British colonies give no clue to the number of residents of Nepali descent today, there is other evidence to indicate that there is still an identifiable Nepali community at least in

Fiji.¹⁶ They have clear memories of their heritage, still celebrate Dasai and Bhai Tika and evidently are able to converse in the Nepali language.¹⁷ This would indicate a sizable enough community to have a collective memory and retention of some cultural practices. There are also scattered ethnic Nepali descendants in Trinidad, British Guiana, Jamaica, Mauritius, Natal, Surinam, and possibly even Guadalupe, although it is unknown whether they have retained a collective Nepali identity.

Although emigration to these colonies was stopped from 1917, few of the emigrants had the opportunity to return to their homeland, and they have been gradually assimilated into the local populations. After being given free passage to the far-away colonies, upon fulfillment of the usual 3-5 year labour contract land was often offered in forfeit of the return passage. Most settled in the new lands to which they had been attracted, and the number of their descendants has multiplied through the years,¹⁸ although they have gradually lost their distinctive Nepali identity. According to Clark the Indian community in Trinidad today generally lacks awareness of its origins.¹⁹ The same would doubtless be true of the descendants of Nepali in their midst.

EMIGRATION TO MALAYA AND SINGAPORE

The situation of labour recruitment for Malaya, including Singapore, was different. Emigration was only permitted from Madras State, and it was "overwhelmingly South Indian."²⁰ There were heavy labour demands for the sugar, then rubber and coffee plantations. The government also recruited labour for public works and services, road and rail construction and security services. However, the government brought labourers directly on its own from India rather than through the Madras recruiters, and from a wider range of places.²¹ Nepali would have been more likely to be included in this group, as it included North Indians, and recruitment was often by British officers from among soldiers with whom they had worked. As in the other colonies, with World War I came a halt

to immigration to Malaya, but only temporarily. With the resumption of normal trade after the war, and the expansion of rubber plantations, came some of the highest inflows of Indian labour, continuing until 1930.²² An unknown number of Nepali continued the eastward trend of overland migration which had reached Assam and Burma on into Malaya.

Although the exact extent of Nepali emigration to Malaya and Singapore during those years is hard to determine, the Nepal Government Memorandum submitted by the Resident to the Government of India, dated May 1925, attests to the fact that enough such emigration was taking place to cause the Nepal Government concern.²³ In the Memorandum they objected to Gurkhas going to Singapore and other places as a labour force, because they generally settled there. Husain maintains that the Indian government took special care to meet these demands since their primary concern was the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers.²⁴

Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that Nepali caught up in the relentless eastward migration flow made their way to Malaya and Singapore both as plantation workers and as direct government recruits for various services. Winstedt noted in the 1920s that in popular Malay terminology all North Indians were dubbed "Bengalis," although they were mostly Sikhs and also included "a very few Gujaratis, Mahrattas, Gurkhas [Nepali] and Burmese."²⁵ In the 1960s, when a group of Gurkha soldiers was deployed in a densely forested area for jungle warfare training, they were amazed one night to hear Nepali singing and to see lights in the distance from their trenches. It was a group of local people of Nepali descent celebrating the Tihar festival. They soon discovered that they had come over as labourers to British rubber plantations, married locally and settled.²⁶ Again about 1990 on a trip by a retired British Gurkha's son to Malaysia, he reported the presence of a Gorkha school in Selangor, the heart of the rubber plantation industry.²⁷ That is the same place that Tufo, in analyzing the 1947 Malay Census, identified as having the highest concentration of Nepali

people, not including Gurkha soldiers.²⁸

Added to their numbers were the Gurkha soldiers who were pensioned in British Malaya following World War II, and others who took up the Malayan government's offer of citizenship to veterans of the "Malay Emergency" who wished to settle there.²⁹ According to an eyewitness report,

Out of that grew two Nepali communities, one in Rawang (20-30 miles north of Kuala Lumpur) and the other in Kuala Lumpur itself... a few Nepalis are 'on their feet', but most of them live in the two ghettos in Rawang and Kuala Lumpur. Typically these isolate themselves rigidly from their surroundings...the Rawang community preserve rigidly their Hindu Nepali traditions and culture.

...the present young generation now have 'Bhasha Malay' as their first language, though they understand Nepali as a second language. Only the older ones really use Nepali.

A specific problem faced by these Nepalis is that, although they're a growing community, they are all descended from a few original families. This makes marriage difficult without either in-breeding or else marriage outside their own ethnic group.³⁰

A Nepali who is a schoolmaster reportedly circulates notices among Nepali who are scattered around the country in various jobs to keep them informed about upcoming Hindu festivals, etc. Some of those in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur hold top professional jobs, but the majority live in predominantly Nepali "villages". The above description is fairly typical of isolated Nepali enclaves which can be found in various places outside Nepal.

NEPALI OVERSEAS AND CHRISTIANITY

What about the influence of Christianity among the Nepali and their descendants in the overseas labour-importing colonies? From the colonial period onwards they were too insignificant a minority among the masses of immigrants to attract any specific attention from Christian missionaries. They were generally lumped together with the Indian community in popular understanding, and have been largely assimilated into their receptor communities. Although individuals here and there have undoubtedly converted to Christianity, there has been little

question of Nepali language churches being established. However, the author has heard one interesting report of a Nepali being the first pastor of a Hindi-speaking church in Surinam.³¹

IN MALAYSIA

Near Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, a Nepali house fellowship was reported in the mid-1980s, evidently mostly among the Gurkha ex-servicemen who gained citizenship and settled there.³² Efforts by Chinese Christians of Faith Assembly of God Church (later Faith Charismatic Centre) in Kuala Lumpur to reach the Nepali, at both Kampung Medan on the edge of Kuala Lumpur and at Rawang, have generally met with stiff resistance by community leaders. Pastor Erwin Ong, in-charge since 1990 of the Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) congregation in Kuala Lumpur, comprised mostly of Nepali, reported being "threatened no less than 3 times with death or bodily harm" by the local Nepali of Kampung Medan.³³ However, when Dr. Michael Robsen, a missionary from Nepal, first went to Kampung Medan about 1990 he was welcomed into the village because of his ability to speak the Nepali language, and he discovered a small group of Nepali meeting together for Christian worship.³⁴ He reported that the few Nepali Christians "are heartily resented by their close neighbours."³⁵

The first Nepali converts in this group were two teenage girls in 1980, followed by the first adult, a young widow named Uma Devi, the following year.³⁶ The two original Christian converts later converted to Islam in order to marry Malay husbands. Further Nepali conversions to Christianity followed along kinship lines in Uma Devi's family, until eleven of her relations had been baptised by 1989. The one convert in Rawang was forced to move to Kampung Medan because of the Hindu community's hostile response. The Nepali converts in Kampung Medan began to meet together as a house fellowship from 1982, and in 1987 Sunday services were started in Bahasa Melayu (Malay language) at Faith Charismatic Centre, which became the base for the Centre's outreach to Nepali

and other language groups. What started as a Nepali-language fellowship evolved into a Malay-language congregation which incorporated Nepali, local indigenous tribes, and migrant workers from Indonesia, under the leadership of Pastor Erwin Ong since 1990.³⁷ The Nepali house fellowship in Kampung Medan was turned over to the Tamil Department of Faith Charismatic Centre, thus eradicating the originally specifically Nepali work; similar to what happened to the NCF in Mizoram. Although evangelistic outreach continues among Nepali and other surrounding ethnic communities, there are few cases of further Nepali conversions. However, a link has been established with a church in Bhairawa, Nepal, where one of Uma Devi's sisters and family re-emigrated in 1970 and were subsequently converted during a visit from Uma Devi in 1990.³⁸

THE GURKHA CONNECTION

It was only the Nepali involved in the other main overseas migration stream, the British Gurkhas, who began to convert to Christianity in significant numbers. Historically, Nepali Christian fellowships overseas have been Gurkha-related. The beginnings of overseas fellowships only go back to the early 1960s within the Brigade of Gurkhas of the British Army, but soon involved Christian Gurkhas posted in the UK, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong and Brunei. The UK and then Hong Kong emerged as the two main "breeding grounds" of Gurkha Christians and their families.³⁹

However, in more recent years Nepali Christian fellowships have grown up in two other places where there are Gurkha-related security services, in Singapore and Brunei. The same recruitment posts used for the British Gurkhas are also used to recruit for the Singapore Police and a special contingent of retired Gurkhas for Brunei's security guards, including the Sultan's Bodyguard. Since it is possible to retire with pension from the British Gurkhas after 15 years of service, and there is compulsory retirement at age 45, most of the Gurkhas retire with many productive years ahead of them. But finding good jobs back in

Nepal is quite difficult, as many of them are strong in practical skills, but weak in educational background. Thus many have looked back overseas for employment, where their experience is more highly regarded and generally higher salaries can be earned. This has taken them to Singapore and Brunei in local security forces, and more recently to the Gulf region. The youngest Nepali church established overseas was dedicated on 15 January 1993 in Bahrain, the country where retired Gurkhas pioneered the way for a new wave of Nepali migrant labour throughout the Gulf region from 1977.

IN SINGAPORE

Although Gurkha regiments have been deployed in Singapore from the 1940s, and there were a few individual Christians among them, they mostly sought fellowship outside the camps. For a short time in the 1960s, M.S. Rana with some of the other men converted in the UK, formed their own SASRA branch meeting.⁴⁰ But it was only in the 1980s that a Nepali-language Christian fellowship was first formed, among Gurkhas serving in the Singapore Police. This was well after the Brigade of Gurkhas had been redeployed to Hong Kong in 1971, and by which time Nepali were being recruited into service with the Singapore Police.

Sandhu notes the recruitment of Nepali "whose loyalty was above reproach" into police units from the 1940s, when they were recruited for a kind of "Special Force," an anti-riot squad.⁴¹ In 1950 the Singapore Police included a contingent of 119 Gurkhas specially trained for dealing with riots, and 48 of them were used to help quell the 1950 Hertogh riots.⁴² In the mid-1960s H.B. Gurung noted that for young men from the Pokhara valley of Nepal seeking outside employment, their first choice was the Singapore Police, and then the British Army.⁴³ When the Gurkha Brigade was moved out in 1971, the Singapore government continued an arrangement to recruit "Gurkhas" for the Singapore Police and by the early 1980s it included about 600 men from Nepal. In 1991

there were about 860 in service, living together with their families in a special camp, and having a Nepali primary school for the children. They continue to be recruited through the British Army depots in Nepal; young Nepali who have never served before, almost exclusively of the "matwali jats." Even though there have been Gurkhas serving in Singapore for so many years, there are very few who have attained citizenship, and there is no resident Nepali community. Those with the Singapore Police are required to live in the camp provided. Since 1972 citizenship became almost impossible to get, and it was no longer given to all children born in Singapore.

In this context a small Nepali fellowship grew up in Singapore, basically confined to those serving with the Singapore Police. There also, as within the British Gurkha ranks, they have direct ties back to the Bakht Singh movement in India and Nepal, and upon return to Nepal most attend the El Shaddai related assemblies. A Chinese pastor, Rev. Dr. Quek Swee Hwa of the Zion Bible-Presbyterian Church, has been a great encouragement to them ever since he was introduced to the leader of their fellowship in 1985. At that time there were only two or three Christian Gurkha families meeting together informally on a week-night in one of their quarters, and Dr. Quek Swee Hwa was given special permission to join them. However, due to opposition within the camp they were ordered by the camp commander to stop the meetings and their distribution of tracts. Upon request, Dr. Quek Swee Hwa arranged for the group to meet in his church fortnightly on Sunday evenings, and arranged transport because of the distance involved. He also arranged for them to use the premises of another church within walking distance of the Gurkha camp on alternate weeks. From this time there have been regular Nepali services held in Singapore, with Holy Communion usually administered by one of the pastors of Zion Bible Presbyterian Church every other week, and a Nepali lay-leader who leads the service and gives a "word of exhortation."⁴⁴ Dr. Quek Swee Hwa has also been to Nepal to visit some of the local El Shaddai assemblies.

Although within Singapore there is freedom of religion and a large local Christian community, evidently within the Gurkha contingent of the Singapore Police there are restrictions on the men changing religion or practicing Christianity within the camp, similar to the situation in the British Army. This may be due to a hangover of the understanding between the British and Nepal governments concerning the Hindu status of the Gurkhas. They are obviously treated as a separate community within Singapore, and religious rights of Singapore citizens do not apply.

IN BRUNEI

The Gurkha Christians in Brunei have found themselves in quite a different religious context. An Islamic sultanate since the 15th century, there are government restrictions on practice of other religions, in addition to opposition which the Christians face within the Gurkhas. Again, the few individual Christian Gurkhas stationed in Brunei with the British Army in the 1960s and 1970s quietly practiced their faith and found fellowship within the local community whenever possible. But from 1973 the Brunei government began to recruit a second group of Nepali directly into a government force called the Gurkha Reserve Unit (GRU). Built up from scratch with only six men in 1973, the Unit now has a strength of 2,250 Gurkhas, a very well trained and well equipped defence force under the command of His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei.⁴⁵ Similarly to those in the Singapore Police, these men are allowed to have their wives and families with them, and have the usual welfare and administrative facilities, including doctors, a Hindu priest, canteens, sports facilities, and a Nepali school for the children.⁴⁶ They are also recruited through the British Army depots in Nepal, but in contrast to Singapore, only retired British Gurkhas are sent to Brunei to serve in the GRU.

The recruitment of retired Gurkhas for the GRU accounts for the number

of Christians employed in Brunei government service who were converted earlier in the British Gurkhas. Retired Christian Gurkhas (GRU) together with British Gurkhas currently serving in Brunei have been the backbone of the Nepali-language worship services which started in the early 1980s, along with occasional Christian civilians, such as Sharon Rongong of Gyaneshwar Church in Kathmandu, recruited as a teacher for the Gurkhas' children. They started meeting together out of their own felt need for Christian fellowship in their own language. In 1987 they were given a room of Bethel Church, actually the home of Pastor Wong since church buildings are not allowed in Brunei, and started meetings in Nepali on Sunday afternoons, following the main English service. The meetings were attended mostly by the GRU Gurkhas, with Gurkhas from the British Army only joining them occasionally, as their camp (Tuker Lines) in Seria is about 50 miles away.

Due to the distance between them, the Nepali Christians in Brunei have mostly met in two groups: the British Gurkhas based at Seria, most of whom are linked back to El Shaddai in Nepal and India, led by Lt. Jarna Bah. Rai; and those meeting at Bethel Church in the capital of Bandar Seri Bhagwan, mostly those engaged in government service, led by Bom Prasad Rai. The British Gurkhas are only posted for two year terms to Brunei, so the number of Christians in the Tuker Lines has fluctuated according to which infantry regiment is currently doing their stint. Some differences surfaced within the groups, particularly between those from an El Shaddai background and others, with the El Shaddai group insisting on re-baptism of those who were not water baptised as adults, and others emphasising the charismatic gifts such as speaking in tongues. Ron and Mary Byatt, settled back in Britain but continuing a ministry of correspondence with Gurkhas around the world, kept in touch with both groups, providing counsel, cassette Bible teaching tapes and Christian literature in Nepali.

The Nepali group meeting at Bethel Church were also befriended by

Steve and Anne Heap, who provided an "open house for the Gurkhas."⁴⁷ In 1991 that open house became more essential when the police raided Bethel Church, took away all the song books, Bibles, and Sunday school materials, and forbade Pastor Wong to have further Christian meetings in his home. From this time the Nepali group began to meet in a nearby jungle picnic area, on Saturdays when it was mostly deserted. Even there they continued to have 15-16 coming regularly to the services, and two of the men bought a car purposely to help transport people to and from the meetings. They also met informally at the Heaps' home, and on Wednesday evenings a prayer meeting was started in the camp. But it had to be held in the dark, outside their rooms, for fear of detection. Here also they were not able to freely practise their faith. Nevertheless, in recent years a few of both the British Gurkhas and the GRU Gurkhas have become Christians and been baptised in Brunei. They have faced much the same pressures as Christian Gurkhas from Britain to Hong Kong.⁴⁸

IN BAHRAIN AND THE MIDDLE EAST

As retired Gurkhas were looking further afield for employment opportunities, an unexpected avenue opened up in the mid-1970s in the Middle East due to the oil boom. Suddenly the Gulf states were in need of a vastly increased labour force. As their economies grew, they looked more and more to cheap labour from South Asia. The largest group was used in construction and transport, then in the private sector and services, as government employees (professionals as engineers, nurses and doctors), and also as domestic servants.⁴⁹ Retired Gurkhas got in on the ground floor of this newly opened up circular labour migration route because of the respect with which they were held by their former British comrades in arms. After a British ex-soldier was employed in Bahrain as a security person he called Norgen Lama, an ex-Gurkha friend from the 10th Gurkha Rifles, to join him in 1977.⁵⁰ On their recommendation a further three retired Gurkhas were employed on trial. Their employer was

satisfied and soon the way was open for more and more to come, not only as security guards but as mechanics and drivers, construction labourers, household servants, in services, etc. Ex-servicemen were soon outnumbered by Nepali from various other walks of life who joined this lucrative migration stream to "Arab." From Bahrain the way opened to Oman for employment with the Fire Brigade and security forces, to Saudi Arabia which now has the largest number of Nepali labourers anywhere in the Gulf, to Kuwait for the Palace Guard and as nurses and doctors, and to the United Arab Emirates.⁵¹

This imported labour force has become integral to the Gulf economy, yet it is characterised by impermanence. The labourers have no political power or rights within local society, no possibility of attaining citizenship, and live within their own social enclaves.⁵² The Nepal government has no agreement with the Arab states concerning labour or immigration, and the only Nepal Embassy in the region is in Saudi Arabia, which makes Nepali labourers' situation all the more precarious. Nonetheless, with the attraction of high wages, housing usually provided and low costs, going to "Arab" has become one of the most sought after employment opportunities outside of Nepal. In 1992 there were an estimated 5-6,000 Nepali employed in the Gulf states. In contrast to those with the British Gurkhas in Hong Kong, or the security forces in Brunei and Singapore, in the Gulf they have no facility to bring their wives or families, and exist as "temporary workers," although often staying for many years.⁵³

Amongst the first group of retired Gurkhas to be called to Bahrain in 1977 was L.B. Rai, baptised a Christian in 1970 in Hong Kong while serving with the Gurkha Engineers. He was surprised and delighted to find that in Bahrain there were no objections to his being a Christian, or to church services. He could even carry his Bible openly.⁵⁴ This was in marked contrast to the other Gulf States into which Nepali soon began to filter as temporary workers. In Bahrain expatriate Christians could freely meet together either in churches or private homes, and could even freely witness to their faith within their own social

enclaves, as long as they did not disturb local Islamic society. Following L.B. Rai, over the years several other Nepali Christians one by one found their way to Bahrain, both civilians and ex-Gurkhas.

However, it was not until after the arrival in 1987 of another retired Christian Gurkha, "Philip" Tikaram Rai, that a regular fellowship was started among the Nepali Christians in Bahrain.⁵⁵ He was a committed Christian, and had helped to found a new congregation in East Nepal while at the Dharan British Military Hospital.⁵⁶ He and other Nepali Christians whom he met, including Moti Gurung (the second son of one of the earliest evangelists in Nepal), began to meet together occasionally for fellowship, and to pray towards the formation of a regular Nepali fellowship in their own language. Although a few of them had good English, the majority of the Nepali labourers living bunched together in camps were only fluent in Nepali.

They faced three key difficulties in being able to meet together for Christian fellowship: they had quite different work schedules; they had no place to meet; there were transport difficulties due to their widely separated work places, and no one had personal transport.⁵⁷

In 1988, Tikaram and Moti began to attend an informal fellowship in the home of Peter and Jane Hawkins, the local managers of Rolls Royce. Part of an international group of Christians who held a Bible study on Friday evenings at an American chapel, the Hawkins had opened their home for younger believers in Christianity. As Tikaram and Moti began to take along their friends, soon the Bible study was divided into language groups, with one in Nepali, so they could communicate together more easily. When the Hawkins left in Nov. 1989, another couple, Peter and Cheryl Daniel, provided a place for this group to meet.

By 1990 there were about ten or twelve Nepali coming to the meetings at the Daniels' quarters, and four new converts had been baptised. They were meeting twice weekly, once for Bible study and again for discussion and prayer. A core of four of them began to pray regularly for their own place to meet

together as a Nepali church. They were beginning to feel a desire to preach to the hundreds of Nepali labourers in the Korean companies' labour camps, but knew it would have to be in their own language and culturally appropriate format. They also wanted to take more responsibility for the spiritual growth of the new converts in their midst. Soon after, another couple, the Richards, offered the use of their home for weekly Thursday evening meetings. The Richards introduced the Nepali Christians to a Korean pastor who had free access to the Korean companies' labour camps, and he opened the way for them to get into the camps. By 1992 Moti Gurung, a privately employed driver, was regularly using his free time to visit Nepali labourers in different camps, to individually explain to them about Christianity and distribute Gospel booklets. When two men were converted and baptised in August of that year, the new converts daily presence in the camps gave even more impetus to the Christian message.

On 15 January 1993, the Nepali Church Bahrain was formally dedicated, the only Nepali church in the Gulf States. During the year ten more Nepali were baptised. Meeting in the hall of the National Evangelical Church, which hosts worship services in several different languages each week, the Nepali Church now has 40 to 45 regular attenders, and conducts a weekly house fellowship. A 26 seat mini-bus helps to bring people from widely scattered locations in the city to the service, a tradition started at Christmas 1988. Since Tikaram Rai returned to Dharan, East Nepal in 1992, the group has been led by Moti Gurung, with Hari Dital as the treasurer.

IN EAST ASIA AND OTHER PLACES

Modern overseas labour opportunities open to Nepali have not been confined to security forces and the Middle East. The 1980s and 1990s have seen more and more circular migrants (temporary workers, usually contracted) and businessmen going to East Asia, especially Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Hong Kong. Needing cheap labour to fuel their growing economies, for manufacturing

and construction projects, Nepali have been attracted by the lure of relatively high wages. Several thousands have already made the expensive journey, but unlike their predecessors of a century ago, the passage is not free, nor are there land or settlement rights at their destination. Ethnic Nepali in Myanmar are also moving further east into Thailand and on to Malaysia in search of employment opportunities.⁵⁸ In addition, a Brigade of Gurkhas Resettlement Office was set up in 1992 to help place ex-Gurkhas in second career jobs. By 1994 approximately 800 men had been employed in the following countries: Bermuda, Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR), Angola, Cambodia (UN), Hong Kong, Singapore, Somalia (UN), Dubai, Brunei, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan.⁵⁹

Nepali seeking employment abroad include Christians, in addition to Hindus and Buddhists. In the 1990s occasional reports have surfaced of fellowships of Nepali Christians in East Asia. Ron Byatt received word of a group of Tamang working in a Korean factory who were worshipping together.⁶⁰ Then in 1991 a request from Nancy Chan, a Chinese missionary in Taiwan, was sent to Byatt for Nepali hymn books and Bible teaching tapes "on behalf of a little group of newly-believing Nepali factory workers."⁶¹ Economic migrants to Hong Kong have sometimes attended the Gurkha-led Nepali Christian worship services there. Ethnic Nepali Christians from Myanmar have also been reported in Bangkok, where at least six of them regularly attend the Burmese worship service at Calvary Baptist Church and are "very keen to have a missionary come to help establish a work among the Nepali" in Bangkok.⁶²

The final category of migrants overseas includes mostly students and professionals going to developed countries in the Western world. After India, the former USSR and Eastern European countries used to attract the largest number of Nepali students, almost all of them on scholarships, but that has now largely stopped due to economic conditions. The next largest number went to the UK, and since the change of government in Nepal to a multi-party democratic system,

the British Council started awarding 600 scholarships per year to students from Nepal. There are also more and more students seeking to find places in the USA and Canada. Many Nepali professionals have settled in these countries, often having gained entry first as students, and some having married local women. In addition, there are an undetermined number of unskilled labourers, frequently employed illegally, in countries around the world. There are an estimated 1,000 Nepali in London alone, many of them restaurant workers, and a medical association of over 50 Nepali doctors in the UK who hold yearly conventions, usually at Dasai festival time.

Among the Nepali students and resident professionals in Western countries there has been occasional outreach by local Christians. A few individual missionaries from Nepal or Nepali-populated areas of India who have returned home have shown a keen interest. For example, one woman who returned home to care for her elderly parents has had particular impact among the numerous Nepali students in the Bradford, UK area, simply by extending friendship, opening her home and using her car for practical helps. Another pair of retired ladies in Edinburgh organise quarterly outings for the local Nepali students and residents, and regularly entertain various ones in their flat. In addition, there are a few Nepali Christians resident in these countries who regularly open their homes to any Nepali passing through.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 14

(1) Sinnappah Arasaratnam, **INDIANS IN MALAYSIA AND SINGAPORE** (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford Univ. Press, rev. ed. 1979), 11.

(2) **ANNUAL REPORT ON EMIGRATION FROM THE PORT OF CALCUTTA TO BRITISH AND FOREIGN COLONIES** (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1918), 1.

(3) K.L.O. Gillion, **FIJI'S INDIAN MIGRANTS** (Melbourne: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), 49.

(4) Gillion, 1962, 50; citing *India E.P.* Oct. 1894, A.8-9.

(5) Quoted by Tinker, 1974, 59.

(6) Rathaur, 1987, 43-44; and Husain, 1970, 239ff.

(7) Kansakar, 1974, 203.

(8) Kansakar, 1974, 203.

(9) Gillion, 1962, 50.

(10) "One Person's Journey," *Himal* 1:2, Nov.-Dec. 1988, 9. Information for this article was supplied by Charlotte Ram Padarath, daughter of Ratan Bah. Singh.

(11) H.V.P Bronkhorst, **THE COLONY OF BRITISH GUYANA AND ITS LABOURING POPULATION** (London, 1883), 133.

(12) **ANNUAL REPORT(S) ON EMIGRATION FROM CALCUTTA**, analysis of Appendix II:2, "As to whence the Emigrants come to Calcutta for dispatch," from 1876-1917.

(13) **ANNUAL REPORTS ON EMIGRATION FROM CALCUTTA**. See Appendix N for a complete breakdown of emigrants from Nepal dispatched from Calcutta between 1876 and 1917.

(14) Gillion, 1962, 50.

(15) Hugh Tinker, **THE BANYAN TREE: OVERSEAS IMMIGRANTS FROM INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH** (Oxford:Oxford Univ. Press, 1977), 4.

(16) Gillion (1962, 50) identified a Nepali settlement near Sigatoka, some of whom he interviewed. In a separate report (N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992) a group of Gurkha soldiers who were on duty in Fiji for a few months in the 1960s unexpectedly met a group of ethnic Nepali in the

jungle. Their ancestors had originally come as labourers for the sugar plantations, and although most of them had never met someone directly from Nepal before, they had a vivid community memory of Nepal. They were so thrilled to meet Nepali from Nepal (the Gurkhas) that they saw them off at the airport with garlands of flowers and many tears. The Gurkhas estimated there were about 700 families of ethnic Nepali descent in Fiji. Lall estimated in the Nepal Review in 1968 (p.343-346) about 1,000 families of Nepali descent in Fiji.

(17) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992.

(18) For example, Charlotte Ram Padarath, a 70 year old Fijian of Nepali descent, estimates there are about 10,000 Fijians of Nepali descent today (Himal 1:2, Nov.-Dec. 1988, 9).

(19) Colin G. Clarke, EAST INDIANS IN A WEST INDIAN TOWN (London: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 9.

(20) Arasaratnam, 1970, 15.

(21) Arasaratnam, 1970, 14-15.

(22) Arasaratnam, 1970, 29-30.

(23) Husain, 1970, 254.

(24) Husain, 1970, 254.

(25) R.O. Winstedt, ed., MALAYA (London: Constable and Co., 1923), 124.

(26) N.C. Pradhan, interview with author, 1 June 1992. This account was related to him by men from the Gurkha regiment where he was serving as a teacher at the Gurkha children's school in Malaysia.

(27) M.S. Rana, interview with author, 19 Feb. 1992. He reported that the Nepali ethnics in this area are mostly rubber plantation workers. They are mixed up with South Indians, and mostly speak Tamil and Malay.

(28) M.A. Del Tufo, MALAYA: A REPORT ON THE 1947 CENSUS OF POPULATION (London: Govt. of Federation of Malaya and Colony of Singapore, by Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1949), 80. Tufo noted that in the 1921 and 1931 Malay Census figures of estate population, 280 and 490 Nepali respectively were identified. In 1947 Nepali were included in the 'Others' category, but he separated them out, putting the total at 400. This included 159 in Selangor, 117 in Malacca, 45 in Negri Sembilan, 44 in Pahang, and 14 in Singapore. These figures did not include Gurkha soldiers with the British-Indian Army.

(29) Tinker, 1977, 101 n.1. Y.P. Pant, POPULATION GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN NEPAL (New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publ. Co., 1983, 46) also refers to Nepali who have "embraced" citizenship in Malaysia and Singapore. Members of the Gurkha contingent in the Singapore Police told the author that there is a "Gurkha basti" in Malaysia made up of numerous Gurkhas who received citizenship. But such citizenship is no longer possible for them to obtain.

(30) Dr. Michael Robsen, letter to author, 13 Nov. 1993. Dr. Robsen, formerly in Nepal, has visited these two Nepali communities in Malaysia on

three occasions. The presence of a predominately Nepali community on the edge of Kuala Lumpur, made up mostly of ex-Gurkha soldiers, was confirmed by M.S. Rana, a retired Gurkha who served in Malaya (interview with author, 19 Feb. 1992). Pastor Erwin Ong (letter to author, 22 Feb. 1994), in-charge of a predominantly Nepali congregation in Kuala Lumpur, says that the two Nepali communities at Kampung Medan, Kuala Lumpur, and Rawang in the state of Selangor, are two of the largest in Malaysia. Most of the second and third generation Nepali now work in the cities, and very few in the plantation sector. Although Nepali is still the first language in their homes, it has changed from the Nepali used in Nepal, and the second-third generation use Bahasa Melayu and English for business and social transactions outside of their own community. Although conversant in Nepali, very few are literate in the Nepali language, except for a handful of elderly people. They still observe important festivals like Dasai and Bhai-tika.

(31) Reported to the author by a Dutch missionary in Nepal, as related to him by an elderly doctor who served with the Hern Hutters in Surinam. If the account is true, this Nepali pastor was most likely converted through the Scottish Mission work in Darjeeling District of India. There the use of the Hindi Bible and hymns was common in earlier days, so ministry in a Hindi-speaking church would have posed no language difficulties.

(32) Reported to the author by both K.B. Rokaiya and Pastor Dilip Chhetri, in Nepal. K.B. Rokaiya was invited by an ethnic Nepali Christian lady, Uma Devi, to minister to a Nepali fellowship in her home on the edge of Kuala Lumpur in the mid-1980s. Pastor Chhetri later had contact with the same family, but they are the only Christian Nepali he knows of in Malaysia, and they attend a local Malaysian church.

(33) Erwin Ong, letter to author, Kuala Lumpur, 22 Feb. 1994.

(34) Dr. Michael Robsen, telephone interview with author, 20 Nov. 1993. Since 1990, Robsen has visited these two Nepali enclaves on three occasions, but regular follow-up and ministry has been maintained by an AG Church in Kuala Lumpur.

(35) M. Robsen, letter to author, 13 Nov. 1993.

(36) Ong, letter to author, 22 Feb. 1994. These converts were contacted by two Chinese Christians, Tony Tan and Jimmy Kang, of Faith Assembly of God during an evangelistic outreach. After becoming Christians the converts began to attend a local church regularly. Uma Devi's parents migrated to Malaysia in the mid-1940s. Her father was a Nepali priest who was responsible for conducting all the Hindu religious ceremonies of the community until his death in the 1970s; thus the family was highly respected in the local Nepali community.

(37) Ong, letter to author, 22 Feb. 1994. The former predominantly Nepali congregation is now composed of less than ten percent Nepali.

(38) Ong, letter to author, 22 Feb. 1994. During Uma Devi's three week trip to Nepal in June 1990 with her mother and one of her sisters, they met Pastor Ramesh Thapa of Bhairawa Church. Since then the Bahasa Melayu congregation of Faith Charismatic Centre has supported Bhairawa Church financially and by prayer, and are currently supporting two members of the church in Bible school in India.

(39) See Chapter 13 for a complete history of Christians within the Gurkhas.

- (40) James Kirk, "Gurkhas in Tidworth," cassette, n.d. (1960s).
- (41) Kernial Singh Sandhu, **INDIANS IN MALAYA: SOME ASPECTS OF THEIR IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT 1786-1957** (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), 128.
- (42) Clutterbuck, 1985, 72.
- (43) H.B. Gurung, 1965, 154.
- (44) Emily Quek, Missions Secretary of Zion Bible Presbyterian Church, letter to the author, 21 July 1993.
- (45) Col. F.C. Scotson, letter to the author, 25 March 1994; and Maj. Martin Fuller, phone conversation with the author, 12 March 1994.
- (46) The Gurkha school teaches children according to the Nepali system of education up to Class 8, about age 15 years, and older children are sent to Nepal.
- (47) Paul Bhakta Rai, letter to Ron Byatt, 10 Sept. 1989, in Gurkha Christians file, NCHP Collection.
- (48) Bom Prasad Rai, interview with author, 4 April 1993; and letters from various Gurkhas to Ron Byatt, in Gurkha Christians file, NCHP Collection.
- (49) Myron Weiner, "International Migration and Development: Indians in the Persian Gulf," Population and Development Review, 8:1 (March 1982), 8.
- (50) Lal Bah. Rai, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 4 April 1993. Lal Bah. was one of the first group of three ex-Gurkhas invited to Bahrain.
- (51) Lal Bah. Rai, interview with author, 4 April 1993.
- (52) Weiner, 1982, 2,4,27.
- (53) The author personally knows several Nepali who have worked in Bahrain from seven to sixteen years, both civilians and retired Gurkhas.
- (54) Lal Bah. Rai, interview with author, 4 April 1993.
- (55) Tikaram Rai was converted and then baptised in 1968 while on tour with the Gurkha Engineers in Malaya, retired to Nepal in 1972, and later made his way to Bahrain in 1987.
- (56) See above, p.592.
- (57) Tikaram Rai, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 4 April 1993.
- (58) Bob Cole, letters to author, Bangkok, 12 March and 24 April 1994. According to ethnic Nepali Christians in Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok, a Burmese language congregation, there are between 10,000 and 20,000 Nepali in Bangkok alone, from both Myanmar and Nepal. Cole classifies them as 'economic migrants' who mostly come on 90 day tourist non-immigrant visas and have no work permits, and thus are employed illegally at great personal risk.
- (59) Major G.L. Davies, Brigade of Gurkhas Resettlement Office, letter to

author, 16 March 1994. They are mostly involved in security employment working for Embassies, UN Humanitarian Agency, civilian commercial companies and for two different governments.

(60) Ron Byatt, letter to author, 24 Jan. 1992.

(61) Ron Byatt, letter to prayer partners, Easter 1991, in NCHP Collection.

(62) Bob Cole, letter to author, 12 March 1994.

CONCLUSIONS:

A SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND MISSIOLOGICAL ISSUES RAISED

Tracing the Nepali diaspora proved to be an even broader task than originally anticipated. It is an amazing breadth of a people's dispersion from one relatively small land-locked nation, partly due to the Gurkhas' historic trail-blazing and also on into the modern era as they have sought re-employment in such areas as the Gulf. The eastward flow of emigration out of Nepal, noted by numerous scholars, extended not only into the Eastern Himalayas, Assam and Burma, but has continued in the modern day to Thailand and Malaysia. There was also the largely unknown and undocumented colonial dispersion to such widely separated locations as British Guiana and the Fiji Islands; and a continuing modern day labour migration with resultant Nepali enclaves from the Western Himalayas and urban India to East Asia and the Indian and Pakistani restaurants of Europe. It was also very interesting to note the adaptive ability of Nepali ethnics in widely disparate geographical locations and cultural settings, who often retain an ethnic pride in their essential, but difficult to define, "Nepaliness." This has been just as true for those who have converted to Christianity as within the Nepali diaspora as a whole. Thus one of the challenges to the expansion of Christianity among the diaspora was found to be the presentation of Christianity as consistent with being authentically Nepali. The need of such presentation highlighted the significance and primary effectiveness of Nepali-to-Nepali ethnic witness.

Even as the migration of Nepali ethnics out of Nepal was a result of a combination of "push and pull" factors, so there was a complex of factors that contributed to the spread of Christianity among them. The migration flow followed the progress of British influence, particularly the eastward flow where a

large portion of the development efforts in the Eastern Himalayas, on into Bhutan, Assam, and Burma was accomplished through the sweat of Nepali labour. The progress of Christianity among the increasingly dispersed Nepali roughly followed this eastward migration flow, from Darjeeling outward. However, it has been seen that there was also a flow of population southward and westward out of Nepal, one stream in conjunction with Gurkha recruitment, and another into the border districts of India, then further afield particularly into urban and industrial areas. But there was no parallel Christian expansion among these streams until over 100 years later. The Gurkhas, in the vanguard of the Nepali migration stream, were beyond the bounds of normal mission activity and the propagation of Christianity, although a few of the earliest individual Nepali converts outside of Darjeeling-Sikkim were Gurkhas. The Nepali of North and North-West India were largely ignored or overlooked by the major missions of the 19th century. Although a few European and American missionaries sporadically focused on the Nepali in the border districts to the south and west of Nepal during the first half of the 20th century, their efforts were largely unproductive. When Nepal opened from the 1950s these efforts were almost totally abandoned in favour of work inside Nepal, restricting the main influence of Christianity to Nepal itself and the Eastern Himalayas, until Nepali Christians themselves later became carriers of the message in the broader geographic sphere.

Prior to the 20th century very little attention was paid to Nepal itself by early Protestant missionaries, aside from William Carey's team's efforts to translate the Bible into the Nepali language. The common perception of Nepal was as a "closed land," which precluded mission efforts. Only two groups of dispersed Nepali gained notoriety in the public view, those in the Gurkhas and the "Himalayan highlanders" of Darjeeling. Christian converts from these two groups also became the main impetus to the spread of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora and during the early stages of its entry into Nepal. It was among

the second group, in the heart of the Eastern Himalayas, that Protestant Christianity first found a foothold among Nepali. The church that took root in Darjeeling-Kalimpong at the behest of the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries, a Nepali-Lepcha amalgam, spread on from there throughout the Eastern Himalayas largely through Nepali-to-Nepali evangelism, and back into Nepal. Christianity continued to spread from these beginnings both via the migration of Nepali Christians and through the medium of Christian receptor communities amongst which migrant Nepali worked and settled, especially in NE India where there has been relatively rapid expansion during the last twenty years. During the past decade Nepali Christians themselves have started the first regular evangelistic work and Nepali-language churches among Nepali in the Western Himalayas and major urban centres of India, and in Burma. In a separate movement, with the discreet encouragement of local European Christians, converts among the British Gurkhas became the impetus for the establishment of Nepali-language Christian fellowships and the further spread of Christianity among Nepali overseas, both in places of their military posting (such as Hong Kong and Brunei) and where they have found re-employment as ex-Gurkhas (such as Bahrain), and in their homeland of Nepal.

There is no simple answer to why there was such a widely divergent response to Christianity between these different streams of Nepali emigrants, and in different periods of history. While upon initial investigation certain factors seemed fairly self-evident -- such as a clear mission focus on the Nepali in the Eastern Himalayas compared with no such focus in the Western Himalayas by early Protestant missionaries, and easily delineated religio-politico-social differences between the Nepali receptor communities in these two areas -- further analysis revealed a complex set of factors.

For instance, a unique combination of factors contributed to the establishment of the first Nepali churches in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, which spread on from there throughout the Eastern Himalayas and beyond. Nepali

ethnics not only quickly became the majority population in Darjeeling, but they came into a virtual vacuum where there was no entrenched native socio-political power structure, in striking contrast to the strong Tibeto-Buddhist power structure of Sikkim and Bhutan, the Hindu monarchy of Nepal, and the historically embedded Hinduism of Bihar and UP. Nepali were an integral and welcomed part of a new society which took form under British administration. This presents another striking contrast to most other parts of India where Nepali are a minority community and often considered second class citizens, having a subservient position in society. Together with British sympathy for the civilising effects of Christianity, this produced an atmosphere conducive to the Scottish Eastern Himalayan Mission's combined approach of starting schools and establishing Christian churches throughout the countryside. They focused on those most responsive to the Christian message, which in the early stages were the animistic and partially Buddhaised Lepcha, then increasingly the East Nepal origin Kirata tribals and a smattering of others, such as the influential Ganga Prasad Pradhan family. This is in striking contrast to early evangelistic efforts in the Western Himalayas among people of a completely different part of the Nepali ethnic spectrum, from a different cultural area of Nepal and involved in different migration patterns, and with no economic or political clout in local society. These were differences which the later WEC missionaries, with their Nepali cultural orientation from Darjeeling, failed to take into account, although their evangelism was specifically Nepali focused.

While the greatest response to Christianity among the Nepali diaspora was found historically to be in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, in the modern day there has been a new wave of expansion within Sikkim, in the hills of NE India and among the Gurkhas, and most recently in the Western Himalayas, urban areas of India, and in Burma. In each of these locations evangelism was Nepali focused, using the Nepali language, and the primacy of Nepali-to-Nepali ethnic witness and development of local Nepali leadership was seen. In parts of NE India there

was the additional factor of living and working in the midst of Christian receptor communities, some of which were aggressively evangelistic towards the immigrant Nepali, and enhanced by the Nepali's overall acceptance in the hill communities as hill people. Similarly Christian Gurkhas found encouragement and spiritual support from local Christians where they were posted.

KEY FACTORS IN CHRISTIAN EXPANSION IN THE NEPALI DIASPORA

The main factors upon which the expansion of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora were contingent where found to revolve around four key questions, with several delineating features. These are elucidated below, with salient observations concerning each:

1. Which dispersed Nepali have responded to Christianity -- ethnically, religiously and economically -- and from where did they originate? Although conversions were found from among almost all tribes and castes of Nepal, the greatest overall response to Christianity was among the Kirata tribals from East Nepal and other matwali. This is directly comparable to the response pattern found within Nepal. There were also some Newar, particularly in Darjeeling District, a growing response by Sherpa in Sikkim, and a slightly higher incidence of Bahun-Chhetri conversions in NE India than other places. The most resistant group to Christianity has been the strong Hindu and Hinduised Nepali ethnics from western Nepal who have migrated either south or further west and on into urban areas. In contrast, Nepali moving eastward are much more mixed ethnically, generally less Hinduised, have more Buddhist influence, and a higher percent come from an animistic background. Regardless of which Nepali ethnics have embraced Christianity, wherever Nepali-language churches or fellowships were identified they have met together without regard for caste or tribe; rather, they have gathered together simply as Nepali, with a common linguistic bond. No cases of caste-stratified Nepali churches were found, which is also characteristic of the churches in Nepal. In general Christianity has spread the

most rapidly among Nepali labourers rather than the higher educated professionals, although Christians among the latter group have been instrumental in its further spread, particularly in urban areas such as Calcutta and Bombay.

1.a. Other important delineating characteristics of which Nepali have responded to Christianity concerns the type of migration in which they were involved -- permanent, transient, or circular -- for what purpose, and how permanent they were in their new locale. It was not found to be a matter of one type of migrant responding to Christianity and another not, rather of seeing each in his or her context and having a strategy of presentation suited to that context. For instance, the circular migrants of the Western Himalayas have traditionally been seen as resistant to Christianity, partly due to their transient nature; but the Nepali floating population of NE India has been among the most responsive, and due to their transience they have been free to move nearby or on to other areas as evangelists in turn. The current generation of Nepali converts from NE India have been the most mobile Nepali Christians from any area or time period in purposeful migration in order to propagate their faith. This has been spurred on by the strong missions emphasis and motivating of local Naga and Mizo churches.

1.b. Also, what proportion of the overall population were the Nepali in a given locality, and did they form a community of their own as such? Where dispersed Nepali have formed distinctive communities or villages, whether in Assam or Malaysia, they were found to be more resistant to the encroachment of Christianity, whereas Nepali "wanderers," part of the floating population, were generally less subject to social pressures and more open to Christian influence, especially in times of personal need. On the other hand, Nepali villages or enclaves, minority communities except in Darjeeling and Sikkim, were most responsive to Nepalised presentations of Christianity, presented by Nepali.

1.c. A further element in the question of which dispersed Nepali have responded to Christianity is the dichotomy that has developed between domiciled Nepali and the floating population of Nepali labourers in India. This is reflected

in a differentiation in which Nepali have been targeted for evangelism, particularly in urban areas, and in the very makeup of some Nepali-language churches, occasionally denoted in India by the difference in use of the term "Gorkha" or "Nepali" in the name of a church. Simply having the same language and Nepali descendency has not been the only basis for fellowship among diaspora Nepali Christians. Disparities in economic, social or educational background within the Nepali community in India have begun to bring differentiation, as has the distinction between India-born Nepali and Nepal-born Nepali. Christian professionals with good facility in English or the local language of the receptor community often preferred to worship with a local or English-language church, with more status attached and in keeping with their social standing. Exceptions were found among those with a vision borne out of personal conviction to reach out with the Christian message to the Nepali community at large, such as Pradeep Pradhan in Delhi and the Bombay Nepali fellowship.

2. Where did they emigrate to and what were the characteristics of the receptor community? These characteristics were delineated in the region by region analysis. The values of receptor communities had most effect on the domiciled Nepali among them, especially those seeking full acceptance within local society. Thus the strongly entrenched Hinduism of UP, Bihar or Assam, and Lamaistic Buddhism of Sikkim and Bhutan, both reactionary to the expansion of Christianity, reinforced the religious predisposition of various Nepali ethnics and militated against Christianity's acceptance; while the rapid acceptance of Christianity among the mainly animistic hill tribes of NE India created a conducive atmosphere to its expansion among dispersed Nepali as well.

2.a. This consideration is coupled with that of the immigrants' status in the receptor community, their self-perception, and their degree of assimilation. While in UP some domiciled Nepali were found to submerge their Nepali identity in favour of integration into local society, and thus would not respond to a Nepali presentation of Christianity, those among whom Christianity is currently

expanding the most rapidly in UP are those in the Nepali labour camps, disenfranchised by local society and with few or no rights, most of whom were born in Nepal. For some individuals acceptance of Christianity was part of an assimilation process, especially where inter-marriage with women of a predominantly Christian receptor community was involved, as in parts of NE India and Upper Burma. However, inter-marriage within receptor communities has not been uncommon among Nepali as a whole, particularly the matwali, and generally the stronger value found among diaspora Nepali was retention of their Nepali identity. Female marriage migrants in districts of India bordering Nepal are a separate phenomenon. Further, where there has been an attempt either to integrate Nepali converts into a Christian dominant receptor community or subordinate them to the dominant community's churches, the appeal of Christianity has been limited, as in Dehradun, part of NE India, and among the Kachin Baptists in Burma. Christianity thus still had a "foreign" flavour to the wider Nepali community, and there was no sense of uplift or treatment as equals, rather of still being second class in the society.

2.b. Another aspect of the question of where Nepali have emigrated is the attitude of local government and society to Christianity, religious change, and missions where they were involved. It has been amply demonstrated that the British influence in Darjeeling-Kalimpong was a key factor in the earliest expansion of Christianity among Nepali-Lepcha, and in the Christianisation of large sections of the NE hills, which led to later influence among diaspora Nepali. Additionally, the presence of a Christian missionary community involved in government sanctioned development projects often softened official attitudes towards Christians (as in Bhutan), and where the projects contributed to social uplift of dispersed Nepali they also created inroads for the acceptance of Christianity. On the other hand, strongly entrenched Hindu and Buddhist receptor societies have acted as a deterrent. Even where there has been technical freedom of religion there was found to be consistent opposition to

religious change from within Nepali society itself. For diaspora Christians resistance potentially came from three levels: State legal and religious structures; the local receptor community's social and religious leaders; and from within Nepali society, especially as Christianity was perceived as a threat to advancing Nepali-Pahari culture. Yet on the whole neither the lack of freedom of religious change by government decree or societal attitudes stopped the expansion of Christianity. Rather than a process of incorporation or acquiescence to societal norms, in the majority of cases reviewed, especially of first generation converts, Nepali have had to go against societal sanctions and been willing to stand against opposition in order to become Christians. This has often meant breaking caste and familial ties, social rejection, difficulties within the marriage relationship or in finding a suitable marriage partner.

3. Who were the agents of the Christian message? Mainly they were foreign missionaries, Indian or other Asian ethnic Christians, both as missionaries and in Christian receptor communities, and Nepali Christians. These will be looked at more closely in the following examination of the patterns of expansion. Although all three of the above have played a role, sometimes interacting together, from the time of the establishing of the first Nepali-Lepcha churches in Darjeeling-Kalimpong onwards the primary efficacy of Nepali-Lepcha ethnic witness stands out throughout the history of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora. Nepali-to-Nepali communication of the message was living proof of the acceptability of being a Christian and still being fully Nepali; the very ethnicity of the agent of the message thereby affirmed that "this is for our people." This was seen to be especially important where a local Nepali community was struggling to retain its identity as Nepali, to preserve its language and culture. Thus cultural sensitivity of the agent can either enhance or limit acceptance of the message. This is closely related to the fourth factor below, concerning how the message is presented. The agents' relationship to those receiving the message, their motivation and their purpose, were also important elements. For instance,

amongst the Lepcha and Nepali tribal ethnics such as the Rai, Christianity spread quickly along family and clan lines.

4. How was the message presented, and was it specifically Nepali focused? Whether presented by Westerner, Indian or other Asian, or another Nepali, Christianity was most easily accepted where it was presented in a culturally sensitive way, from an intimate understanding of the listeners' background and religion, and responsive to their felt needs. In several cases, particularly in Sikkim, Bhutan, and more recently amongst labourers in HP, physical healing or deliverance from the power of evil spirits through prayer was often cited as the attraction to Christianity. This not only met keenly felt personal needs, but acted as proof to the recipient of the power of the new God being propitiated. Use of cultural forms, such as dance, drama and authentic Nepali dress, placed Christian presentation in Mogok, Burma clearly in the Nepali milieu; and the few Nepali Christians in Burma have clamoured for Christian literature, tracts and testimonies from Nepal as proof that "real" Nepali can be Christians.

4.a. Christian outreach which was focused specifically on ethnic Nepali, using the Nepali language, preferably with a Nepali agent as the primary communicator, with access to Nepali-language resources, was found to be the most effective. This was true not only in Darjeeling-Sikkim, again clearly illustrated in the experience of the Himalayan Free Church when it took over from the Free Church of Finland Mission, but also in NE India when contrasting the response of Nepali where they have been specifically targeted with where they have simply been classed as non-Mizo, etc, and in areas formerly unresponsive or where there were very few known Nepali Christians, as in the Western Himalayas or Burma. Where there was a lack of focused evangelism, as in the latter areas until recent years, there were only sporadic individual conversions, with little further effect on the larger Nepali diaspora community, a kind of shotgun effect. Also, where itinerate evangelism was not followed up, and there

was no Nepali Christian fellowship for those interested to relate to or receive further teaching, converts were relatively unknown. This was the case of NEB in Assam and WEC in Kumaon. Even though they had the assistance of Nepali evangelists, the evangelists were strongly identified with the missionaries in the Nepali hearers' eyes, and Christianity was not legitimised within the Nepali context.

4.b. This leads to the complementary consideration of how conversions were followed-up, especially in terms of either incorporation into existing Christian congregations or formation of new Nepali-language congregations, and in training of local Nepali Christian leadership. The degree of Christian expansion in an area was found to be directly tied to how initial evangelistic efforts were followed up, and appropriate Christian teaching given to those interested or new converts. The creation of separate Nepali-language Christian fellowships, provision of consistent leadership, training of local Nepali leadership, and building of simple church structures all enhanced growth. Whereas seeking to incorporate Nepali where they were already marginalised and repressed within a larger society into the dominant community's churches limited growth. Where acceptance of Christianity gave a sense of empowerment, even within the limited sphere of a small Nepali Christian fellowship, of equality rather than a second class status, and reaffirmed their Nepali identity, it spread more quickly. This was also seen in the emergence of groupings of Nepali churches or Nepali-language denominations, independent of either mission or other ethnic Christian dominant groups -- such as the Pentecostal groups and El Shaddai in Kalimpong and Sikkim, NCF in Shillong, NBA and NCC in Manipur, NBIS in Nagaland, and Gurkha Baptist Mission in Myanmar.

4.c. Concerning leadership training, a difference was seen between where there was reliance on a professional ordained ministry within a bureaucratic denominational structure, as in the EHCC-CNI or Nepali branch work of the KJP and Mizo Synods, and the more autonomous Baptist and Pentecostal Nepali

churches which encouraged many more young men and women to go for less formal courses of Bible or theological training. The effect of the latter was enhanced expansion, versus a limiting effect of the former, due to both the numbers receiving training and the respective church governments. The building of simple churches for Nepali congregations, most often by their own efforts, also contributed to a sense of ownership and stability and gave Christianity more status within the Nepali diaspora community.

The expansion of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora, where, when and how it did so, was the result of an interaction of the above factors, in various combinations, and not according to any set formula. However, at least four patterns of its expansion are readily identifiable: the initiative and support of missions in the early stages; indigenous spontaneous growth through either the witness of individual Nepali Christians or their migration; the initiative of indigenous denominations; and interaction with other local Christian ethnic groups.

PATTERNS OF EXPANSION

The earliest Christian inroads among the Nepali diaspora were at the behest of Western missionaries, as has been seen. The Scottish Presbyterian marriage of a school and a church in every parish of their mission territory in the Eastern Himalayas proved to be an effectual means of spreading at least knowledge of Christianity throughout the region. Provision of teachers to start primary schools opened the way from Darjeeling-Kalimpong into Sikkim and Bhutan for Nepali-Lepcha mission agents. Later medical institutions and higher education facilities opened by the missionaries added to the attraction and gave further opportunity for Christian teaching. Darjeeling- Kalimpong-Sikkim, the only part of the diaspora where Nepali became a majority of the local population, is also the only place missions had a significant direct effect in the expansion of Christianity, except for the isolated works of RBMU in Raxaul and NEB-WEC in

Shillong. The influence of missions among the Nepali diaspora on a wider scale (beyond Darjeeling-Sikkim) was short-lived due to their goal of getting into Nepal. In each of these places the primary agents of the expansion were native Nepali-Lepcha preachers and other workers in conjunction with the respective mission. While the mission and its native agents worked hand in hand for the expansion of Christianity, following the first conversions the missionaries' role was primarily as teachers, motivators and supervisors of these agents, empowering them through provision of training, sustenance and a structure to work through. While the Scottish Mission expanded institutional work from the mission centres, their Nepali-Lepcha mission agents expanded the communication of the Christian message and established young churches in outlying areas.

In relation to the "closed" areas of Bhutan and Nepal, both foreign and Indian missions adopted the strategy of establishing work along their borders, attempting to bring indirect Christian influence within those lands by offering medical and educational services to their people, seeking converts among dispersed nationals, and supporting them whenever possible in Christian ministry back in their own country. This basic strategy of working along the border of areas hostile to Christianity has also been used by national churches, particularly in the Duars along the southern border of Bhutan. As invited in to provide needed development services in these countries, missions responded as a means of being a Christian presence in the country. This has undoubtedly had a softening effect and created a certain degree of openness to Christianity, but has had little demonstrable direct effect on its expansion. However, the national Christian workers who accompanied them have been instrumental in further expansion in some places, usually by their own initiative, but often with indirect encouragement from the missionaries.

Following initial mission initiatives, indigenous spontaneous growth became a second significant means of Christian expansion. Early evidence of this

was seen in Nepali-Lepcha converts' formation of the Mission to Bhutan from Kalimpong and the Gorkha Mission from Darjeeling, to areas to which the missionaries could not go. Throughout the Christian history of the Nepali diaspora there were numerous instances of individual converts who exercised a spontaneous initiative to tell other Nepali about Christianity, whether within their own families or the wider diaspora community, such as Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Namthak and Dyongshi in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, B.P. Rai in Burma, Devi in Malaysia, Moti Gurung in Bahrain, or numerous men in the British Gurkhas. In some areas, particularly urban centres and state capitals, this followed the pattern of a few Nepali Christians gathering together for fellowship and mutual support, and this became the basis for the formation of a Nepali-language church and active evangelistic outreach into the local Nepali community. However, it was found that when such fellowships did not move into the second stage of evangelistic outreach, rather existed to serve their own spiritual needs, they did not grow. Such spontaneous growth has been almost exclusively at the instigation of highly motivated lay people or unordained preachers, out of personal conviction rather than the dictate of any outside agency.

Migration and displacement of Christian Nepali has also been a means of indigenous expansion. Migrant and displaced Christians have become the basis of new Nepali congregations, served as lay leaders, engaged in spontaneous evangelism, and established new ministries among Nepali where there were none before (eg. in Delhi and Dehradun). An example of such spontaneous expansion was seen in the movement of Christian Santal and Tharu between the plains districts of N. India and Nepal. Educated professionals and businessmen who found employment in such places as Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal, and urban areas of India have both formed Christian fellowships and engaged in Nepali evangelism in those places. Some individuals have purposely migrated for the sake of telling those who had not heard about the Christian faith. Examples of these include early agents of the Mission to Bhutan, NEB Nepali evangelists to Shillong and

later to Nepal, N.B. Isaac's several months-long trips to NE India, James Shankar's move to Manipur, Joseph Chhetri's move to Dalsingpara on the border of Bhutan, and Vijay Chhetri's more recent move to Manali, HP. This has become even more common in the last fifteen years as there has been an increasing trend of reverse migration to Nepal by Nepali converted in NE India wanting to return as evangelists. Christian Nepali students in various parts of India where there are Nepali enclaves have also promoted indigenous growth. In addition, Nepali Christians displaced due to legal or social persecution (as in the case of Nicanor Tamang from Nepal to Dehradun), or due to political factors (as in the case of Southern Bhutanese forced out to the Duars or Nepal, and anti-foreigner agitations in NE India), have played a role in the further expansion of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora.

A third pattern of expansion is found in the formation of indigenous independent national church groups. As seen in the Darjeeling section, mission-church integration to form the EHCC led to little further church growth. In stark contrast, the formation of independent churches such as Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Himalayan Crusade, Himanchal Christia Sangati, El Shaddai and Himalayan Free Church in the Eastern Himalayas was the key to a new era of rapid Christian expansion. The formation of NBIS in Nagaland and NBA in Manipur, as distinctly Nepali led and organised groups, also enhanced the spread of Christianity among the diaspora in NE India. Similarly, NCF in Shillong has had a much higher rate of growth than the KJP Synod Nepali-branch church at Mawprem. Although in most cases the above were not dependent on a formal ordained ministry, they motivated numerous young people to go to Bible college or various short-courses, and promoted basic Bible training for their church leaders, usually two-year courses either in Hindi or Nepali-medium. This seems to stand in direct correlation to their rapid expansion.

The fourth main pattern of expansion identified was through the interaction of diaspora Nepali with other ethnic groups which are Christian,

particularly where the other group is the dominant one in the area concerned. This was found throughout the hill states of NE India, among the Kachin in Upper Burma, and the Boro in Assam along the border of southeast Bhutan. Some individual conversions and inter-marriage with Christians of the other group have been noted as a mode of integration into the dominant Christian society, but Christian expansion by this means has been limited. This is partly due to such conversions often being from mixed motives, not from personal conviction, adoption of a new religion but not a personal faith. The most expansion has come where the local Christian ethnic group has viewed the Nepali in their midst as a kind of mission field and had a clear vision for evangelising them. Among the Mizo and Naga this involved all levels of the local Christian community: lay Christians, local church outreaches, evangelistic campaigns, and designated missionaries to the Nepali. However, the example of Christianity's spread among Nepali in the NE shows that to reach the more established domiciled Nepali communities, especially those with strong Hindu influence and feeling a threat to their "Nepaliness," the approach must be Nepalised, and Nepali Christian evangelists and leaders trained. Where local Christian ethnics have sought to retain control or dominance over growing Nepali churches it has caused resentment and limited further growth, in contrast to fully Nepalised groups such as NBA-NBIS.

Another aspect of interaction with other Christian ethnics, particularly in NE India, has been their motivating effect on Nepali converts to engage in mission themselves among other diaspora Nepali and in their ancestral homeland of Nepal. For example, Nepali converted and/or trained in NE India have been sent to previously unevangelised areas of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, the border of Bhutan, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling districts of West Bengal, Sikkim, and Nepal.

THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE NEPALI DIASPORA

What overall effects of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora have been

seen? Of course one of the most obvious was the incidence of conversions to Christianity and the formation of Nepali-language churches. For those converted the effects varied, by virtue of where when and through whom they were converted, and their own personal circumstances. For some it was a means of cultural assimilation into a dominant Christian receptor community, for others a place of refuge and acceptance because of already being ostracised by Nepali society, usually due to pollution. But for most it caused a degree of social dysfunction and alienation from family and Nepali society, sometimes to the point of violence, and assimilation into a new Nepali Christian milieu. The formation of Nepali-language congregations, development of Nepali-language Christian literature and use of traditional music forms has helped to overcome the sense of cultural alienation. Among some sections of the diaspora such developments by Christians have helped to preserve and revive Nepali cultural and artistic forms in local Nepali society.

In this and others ways, Christianity has had significant effects on Nepali diaspora society as a whole. Oft noted are the efforts of early Scottish missionaries and Ganga Prasad Pradhan from Darjeeling in the development of Nepali literature: for example, besides the mammoth work of Bible translation, constant revision, and dissemination, A. Turnbull's pioneering Nepali Grammar and English-Nepali, Nepali-English Vocabulary was first published in 1887, and the first Nepali press and newspaper produced by G.P. Pradhan from 1901. In more wide-spread diaspora communities the distribution of Nepali-language Christian literature, along with the promotion of literacy has helped to preserve and encourage use of the language. The contribution of early missionaries and Lepcha converts to preservation of the Lepcha language has also been noted.

Although the most striking contributions of Christianity to Nepali diaspora society were seen in the Eastern Himalayas in the areas of education, medicine, and vocational training, this had a ripple effect into many parts of India and even further abroad, as teachers, medical workers and other professionals moved on.

Other Christian institutions along the southern and western borders of Nepal and in NE India also served Christian and non-Christian Nepali alike, often with the help of Nepali Christian workers. Although the impact of Nepali Christians in areas of social development were mostly in conjunction with missions, there were a few notable individual initiatives. The J.B. Lama family and Padam Lal Adhikari opened schools

for underprivileged Nepali in Shillong and Mizoram respectively; a number have served as teachers in scattered small Nepali schools, particularly in NE India; and Dr. Indira (Pradhan) Maraj initiated an Alcoholics Rehabilitation Centre in Darjeeling in 1984. Since the 1980s several Nepali-led Christian organisations and churches, including the DDC, have become involved in social development programmes. Not the least of the effects of the above has been the uplift of women and girls through education and provision of special schools, vocational training and employment, and places of ministry within the churches. All of these efforts have contributed to the social uplift of Nepali diaspora communities in a variety of locations. It should also be noted that the practice of inter-marriage by Christians across Nepali ethnic and caste lines, and caste-tribal fully integrated "Nepali" churches have contributed to the break-down of the caste system and set precedents for equality within Nepali diaspora society.

Several diaspora Nepali Christians have also made an impact in the worldwide Christian community. For instance, Rev. Benjamin Rai as director of the UBS Translations Centre in Shillong since 1973, overseeing the translation work in twenty languages of NE India; Rt. Rev. D.D. Pradhan as the CNI Bishop of Assam from 1970-1987; Theodore Manaen, an Associate Director of World Mission Prayer League from the late 1970s until the mid-1980s; Ronald Adhikari, son of Padam Lal Adhikari of Aizawl, Mizoram, a missionary with SEND International in Manila, Philippines, teaching at Asia Theological Seminary; and Himlal Pradhan of Shillong, pastoring an English-language church in Sebu City, Philippines, for the past fifteen years.

THE ROLE OF MISSIONS IN DIASPORA WITNESS

It is instructive to review the role missions in particular have played in diaspora witness among Nepali. Mission influence went beyond the immediate spiritual goals of making converts and starting the first Nepali churches. Social work in education and medicine based in Darjeeling-Kalimpong helped to open doors to surrounding areas and brought Christian influence into the whole Eastern Himalaya. In the border districts of N. India and Kumaon with Nepal, although evangelistic efforts were relatively short-lived and produced very few Nepali converts and no lasting churches, except at Raxaul, they drew several Nepali evangelists out of Darjeeling and exposed them to a much wider arena. Further, the very presence of missions in India and their awareness of each other's work provided an informal information network and channel for Christian Nepali-language resources. Thus EHM in Darjeeling received requests for Nepali literature from as far away as Major Millet's Private Mission in Dharmsala and the Baptists in Burma, and NISS from Gurkhas in Hong Kong and Malaysia. Among the missions involved in Nepali work a vision to spread Christianity to the whole "Nepali world" took form, the Nepal Border Fellowship provided a network of communication between like-minded missionaries from various geographical locations, denominations and missions, and a variety of resources were developed to service the vision. But when the missionaries were forced out of India and Burma from the 1960s, combined with the new focus on Nepal itself and gradual transfer of resources to Nepal, the informal communication network was gone and Darjeeling decreased in importance to the Nepali church as a whole. By the 1980s the Nepali churches in their disparate locations throughout India, in Burma and further abroad, had very little awareness or knowledge of one another, nor of the fast growing churches within Nepal. This brief review points to several challenges for the future, both for missions and for Nepali churches.

MISSIOLOGICAL CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

If Christianity is to continue to expand throughout the Nepali diaspora, the vision of the mid-20th century missionaries like Kitty Harbord, Jonathan Lindell, Ron Byatt and Roy Hagen for reaching the whole Nepali world needs to be revived. There is also a need for the availability of basic Christian resource materials and access to training, one of the limiting factors found to expansion in more geographically remote or cut off areas. Although the church within Nepal is now relatively rich in such resources, those resources are largely unknown and inaccessible within the diaspora, especially outside of the Eastern Himalayas. Thus there is also the need for a network of communication and practical links between the widely dispersed Nepali Christians and congregations and those working among them, and a willingness to cooperate together and share resources. Such a communications network would not only increase knowledge of the diaspora and facilitate the sharing of resources, but would communicate to the relatively isolated Christians a sense of being valued and cared for. Finally, there is a need for further research and dissemination of knowledge about the diaspora. A lack of vision is fed by a lack of adequate knowledge. The areas of the Nepali diaspora pinpointed in this thesis as still relatively untouched by Christianity -- most parts of the Western Himalayas, especially the cities; urban metropolises of India; Gurkhali settlements in Myanmar and Malaysia; labourers in Bangkok; Nepali villages and the floating population in Assam and other parts of NE India -- are largely unknown within the missions world or by the Nepali churches both inside and outside Nepal. Diaspora or migrant communities are often overlooked as mission fields in their own right, yet in many respects fit the popular evangelical missions definition of "hidden people." Although the churches of Darjeeling-Sikkim have had the most wide-spread contacts with diaspora Christians (except for those in the Gurkhas), they have shown little evidence of a wider mission concern beyond Bhutan and the Duars. The church

within Nepal is just entering the stage of maturity to begin to look outward in mission; the most natural first steps would be in mission to other Nepali ethnics. Those steps began in the mid-1980s with an initiative by Adon Rongong who called the first Nepali Pastors and Leaders Conference (emphasis on Nepali rather than just for Nepal) held in Siliguri; and teams of Christian Professionals, founded by Solon Karthak in Kathmandu, have made mission journeys to Tibet and Assam in the last few years. Significantly both of these Christian leaders, based and working in Nepal since the 1970s, are originally from Darjeeling District where they were converted, and now are proving instrumental in expanding the vision of Christians in Nepal to include Nepali in diaspora.

The relevance of the need for further research is seen all the more clearly in view of Nepal's current population growth -- Nepal's population of 19 million in 1992 was expected to double within 25 years. Already one of the poorest nations in the world, with little hope of long-term sustainable economic growth, few natural resources, political instability, and a sense of hopelessness in the young concerning the future, all points to increasing external migration. In view of the forgoing analysis for most migrants this will follow the historic pattern across the border into India, increasingly towards urban areas, while semi-skilled labour will continue to be attracted overseas by labour contractors, and those with professional skills and financial means or contacts will also look further afield towards the West, the developing Eastern bloc and Russia, and the more developed Asian countries. Continuing emigration means a consequent increase in the floating population of Nepali in India with no political rights, who in time may lose their kinship ties in Nepal and find it difficult to return. Will they continue to settle in Nepali enclaves where there is at least a minimum of social support, or will they become increasingly dissipated throughout Indian society? Further east a similar situation is found as more and more young Burmese Nepali are emigrating illegally to Thailand and on to Malaysia. Thus the Nepali church also faces a challenge of how to respond to the tremendous and growing social

needs inherent in the diaspora. Within the diaspora churches themselves the inevitability of a growing dichotomy between educated Nepali professionals and the often barely literate Nepali labourers will also have to be addressed.

Although missions may play an important support role in fulfilling this vision, the challenge in this generation is chiefly to Nepali Christian churches and organisations themselves, both within and without Nepal. The whole historical analysis of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora has pointed to the primary effectiveness of ethnic witness, and this needs to be recognised and facilitated within the mission community. Missions could provide a valuable service by helping to facilitate an information network between the widely separated regions of the Nepali diaspora. However, such information must be handled with discretion and there should be clear guidelines concerning publicity, especially regarding politically and/or religiously sensitive areas. Missions could help to facilitate further research, development of Christian resources and their dissemination, training of Nepali Christian workers, and travel and consultations between Nepali Christian leaders concerning all of the above. These are all potential means of working in partnership, all the time the material resource-rich partners being careful not to rob national leaders of the initiative and using their resources to empower rather than inhibit Nepali Christians in the task of further Christian expansion.

A further challenge to Nepali churches as they engage in mission may be to extend the vision of expanding Christianity throughout the Nepali diaspora to include "like" peoples. Even as the NE hill tribals, who felt a certain affinity with the Nepali who immigrated into their communities, were instrumental in communicating Christianity to them, applying the principals of ethnic witness, ethnically similar Nepali Christians from corresponding cultural areas may be effectual communicators among the Hindu peoples of UP and Bihar (eg. Bahun-Chhetri-Thakur from Western Nepal), or among the Tibeto-Buddhist peoples of Tibet, the Eastern Himalayas and within Nepal (eg. Bhutia, Sherpa, Tamang and

Lepcha former Buddhists). The challenge is not only to reach out to Nepali ethnics in diaspora, but also to reach out to similar ethnics in surrounding areas and other ethnics who themselves are essentially in diaspora within Nepal or the dominant Nepali-populated areas of the Eastern Himalaya. This includes a consideration of those who have resided in the Nepal terai, some for several generations, but are not traditionally considered "Nepali" and have not yet been accorded political rights -- for example the Santal and Uraon. When the Santal churches of East Nepal first applied to join the Nepal Christian Fellowship at the beginning of the 1990s they were rejected on the grounds of not being Nepali, an idea perhaps reinforced by mission attitudes and the lack of mission involvement among any of these peoples within Nepal. Will the church in Nepal follow the lead of society and the general disparagement of "mahadeshis", or will it set a precedent by incorporation in Christian fellowship of those formerly rejected and considered as outsiders?

Another challenge is to Christian receptor communities wherever they seek to minister to an ethnic migrant community in their midst, especially where the migrants have retained a strong cultural and linguistic identity -- the challenge to practice cultural sensitivity and develop cross-cultural communication skills, to have the humility to learn about, understand and show respect for them as a unique people. Their assimilation into the dominant Christian setting should not be assumed, rather both their social and spiritual uplift should be sought. In the forgoing examination of the Indian and Asian context where local Christians sought to evangelise diaspora Nepali in their communities, particularly in NE India and Burma, this challenge was apparent, especially the need to be able to contextualise the Christian message. In that context it included the additional challenge in some cases of receptor communities being willing to facilitate the formation of distinct Nepali-language churches and the training of Nepali ethnic leadership, and to welcome them into other ethnic dominant associations of churches where desired.

It was also observed that among Nepali evangelists there was a need for greater awareness and respect for the differences between different Nepali ethnics and the context in which they live, particularly when working in an area outside of the evangelist's immediate familiarity. For example, a Tamang pastor's initial failure to perceive the distinct differences between the Nepali community in the UP hills where he moved, the local Christian context and receptor community society, and the situation he was familiar with in Nepal, led to profound discouragement during his early ministry in UP. Many Nepali Christians from NE India returning to Nepal encounter some of the same challenges, and were found usually to have very little understanding of the modern-day status of Christianity or structure of the churches in Nepal. This again points to the need for communication links and mutual understanding between Christians throughout the diaspora of the Nepali world.

Finally, although much of the forgoing discussion has stressed the primary efficacy of ethnic witness, and has referred to several instances among the Nepali diaspora where formation of churches of Nepali ethnics promoted the expansion of Christianity, it is not presumed that this is the best course of action in all contexts. It has been said that denominations are a moral failure of Christianity, and others debate the moral and theological rectitude of caste stratified churches. What about ethnic based churches, particularly among migrant or diaspora communities? Where they are the dominant group in a given locale the existence of ethnic churches is a given. But when they are a minority in the midst of another dominant ethnic community the question is more complex. Although a full answer to this question is not possible within the scope of this thesis, the following observations are made.

In the Nepali diaspora context churches have been formed on a basis of language difference, both as a unifying factor among the various Nepali ethnics and a practical need in many cases for the sake of clear communication. This was

seen to be most important where the migrant community lived together in ethnic enclaves and Nepali was still their first language, which was especially true among ex-Gurkhas, groups of generally less-educated labourers in India or contract labourers overseas, and some Nepali ethnic village settlements in India and Burma. In these contexts the formation of Nepali churches was in response to felt need among the Nepali Christians themselves. Fellowship in the Nepali-language was also a felt need of many educated Nepali Christians who are fluent in English and/or the language of the receptor community, although they may attend an English-language or other receptor community church as well. Some Nepali Christian informants, from the UP hills to Burma, felt that distinct Nepali fellowships were needed in order to combat the negative attitudes of the larger Nepali community towards Christianity as being anti-cultural and anti-Nepali language. Among others it was a means of ethnic-affirmation to combat loss of identity through absorption into the dominant Christian community. On the other hand, a Nepali pastor in the Western Himalayas questioned the wisdom of an ethnic minority church because of the possibility of attracting undue attention or causing ethnic backlash. A South India leader with several Nepali in his church cited decline in the use of the Nepali language by the younger generation and their inevitable linguistic assimilation into the dominant society as a reason for his policy of their full integration into his Hindi-language church.

Is assuming a minority ethnic group's "need" to be fully integrated a kind of cultural chauvinism? Or is the definition of need something that can or should be worked out in mutual consultation between the respective receptor and migrant Christian communities? What about the second and third generation bilingual descendants of immigrants, particularly those who are on their way to full acculturation within the receptor society? Their felt needs and cultural responses are different. For instance, in Calcutta Rev. J. Hannay finally abandoned the use of Nepali-language films in evangelistic outreach among youth because of their demand for English-language. In Burma evangelist B.P.

Rai, fluent only in Nepali, is usually accompanied on evangelistic tours by one of his sons, fluent in Burmese, because of the growing generational language dichotomy within some Nepali villages. This presents yet another challenge.

These observations once again point up the need for a full understanding of the complex factors involved in Christian expansion among a wide-spread diaspora community, and the various ways they may work together in combination.

SOURCES CONSULTED

Sources consulted are detailed under the following section headings. Unpublished sources, including various letters, reports and other historical documents fully annotated in the endnotes, are mostly part of the NCHP Collection and other archives.

List of Informants	652
Archives and Manuscript Collections, including detailed references from the Church of Scotland's EHM and the NCHP Collection.	666
National Church Sources, India	672
Published Works and Theses	674

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Personal interviews and correspondence were conducted by the author with the following informants between 1985 and 1994, as annotated in the endnotes. Interviews were held in Nepal, India, Myanmar, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. A few sources cannot be named for security reasons, particularly in connection with Bhutan and Myanmar.

Acharya, Rishi Raj. Evangelist for Duncan Hospital, and leader in Raxaul Church, Raxaul, Bihar.

Adam, Edna. Wife of the late Albert Adam. WEC-Canada missionaries in Pedong and Darjeeling, West Bengal. Resident in Canada.

Adhikari, Ronald. Son of Padam Lal Adikari, founding member of Nepali Christian Fellowship, Aizawl, Mizoram. Missionary with SEND Int. in the Philippines.

Allinger, Beth. Retired WEC-Canada missionary, served in Shillong, Meghalaya. Resident in Canada.

Andreasson, E. Retired Swedish missionary with the Svenska Fria Missionen in India. Resident in Sweden.

Bäck, Signe. Retired Swedish Pentecostal missionary, served in Pedong, Kalimpong division, West Bengal. Resident in Finland.

Baraily, C.B. Pastor and Executive Secretary of Nepali Baptist Asso., Kalapahar, Manipur.

Barclay, Howard. Interserve-Australia missionary, former Executive Director of UMN, and former RBMU missionary in Bihar. Resident in Australia.

Barua, Claude. Pastor and leader of Assembly of God churches in Darjeeling area. Mrs. Barua, in-charge of the ICI Nepali-language courses in Darjeeling area.

Basnet, 'James' B.K. Pastor of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Gangtok, Sikkim.

Beckdahl, Sam. Son of Christian and Agnes Beckdahl, AG pioneer missionaries among Nepali in Bahraich District, UP. Resident in Missouri, USA.

Berg, Alvin. Retired WMPL missionary, served in Darjeeling, West Bengal. Resident in Florida, USA.

Best, Barbara. Retired missionary with Gorakhpur Nurseries, UP. Resident in England.

- Bhutia, John. Pastor of Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church, Jaigaon, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- Bhutia, Pema Paul. Pioneer pastor in Jaigaon, retired in Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Biswas, B.K. First pastor among Nepali with the Swedish Baptist missionaries in Algarah, Kalimpong division. Currently Director of the Fellowship of Free Baptist Churches of West Bengal and Sikkim, based in Kalimpong.
- Broadbent, Peter. Retired Australian CMS missionary, served as officiating Chaplain to the Europeans attached to the Gurkha Training Depot, Sungei Patani, Kedah State, Malaya, in the 1960s. Resident in Australia.
- Brodie, James. Former Church of Scotland missionary, served in Darjeeling. Resident in Scotland.
- Bull, Joan. Wife of Rev. Ian Bull (deceased), British Army chaplain in Hong Kong during the 1970s. Resident in England.
- Byatt, Ron and Mary. RBMU missionaries in Nepal and Darjeeling; later independent missionaries among British Gurkha soldiers in Hong Kong, and from the UK. Resident in England.
- Chacko, Jacob. Principal of Doon Bible School, Dehradun, UP.
- Chacko, Matthew. Principal of Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Dehradun, UP.
- Chhatry, Kailash Kumar. Headmaster of Kumacherra Mission ME School, Cachar; the first ordained Nepali with the CHT Synod, Assam.
- Chhetri, Chitra. Principal of Nepal Bible Institute, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Chhetri, Dev Kumar. Evangelist for Putali Sadak Church, Kathmandu, Nepal; originally from Arunachal Pradesh.
- Chhetri, Laila. Daughter of Rev. John Moore, the first pastor at Ghoom with the Free Church of Finland Mission, and wife of the late Pastor J.B. Samuel, Kurseong, Darjeeling District.
- Chhetri, Joseph. Founding pastor of Bethel Church, Dalsingpara, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- Chhetri, Mohan. Pastor of an NBIS Church in Mezhiphema, Nagaland.
- Chhetri, Nar Bahadur. Nepali evangelist with KJP Synod, Meghalaya.
- Chhetri (Neupani), Padam Bah. Elder of Mon Basti Nepali Christian Church, Karbi Anglong, Assam.

- Chhetri, Satish. Assistant for Nepali section of Delhi Bible Institute, and Nepali Bible correspondence course coordinator, Delhi.
- Chhetri, Tilbahadur. Pastor and Executive Seretary of Nepali Christian Church, Kangpokpi, Manipur.
- Chhuanga, Vanlal and Lalrinthuangi. Director of Mizo Synod Siliguri Mission Centre and local Nepali Presbyterian Church, Pradhan Nagar, Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Chibbo CNI Church elders and leaders, Chhibo, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Chongloi, K. Kuki Christian Church missionary, in-charge of the Nepali Christian Church, based in Kangpokpi, Manipur.
- Clark, Mollie. Former TLM missionary in Bhutan. Resident in England.
- Cole, Robert. Australian missionary among the Burmese in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Crane, Elaine. Retired WEC-Australia missionary, served in Shillong, Meghalaya. Resident in Australia.
- Cummings, Abe. Retired CIGM missionary, served in Bihar. Resident in England.
- Darkhuma. Pastor of Mizo Baptist Church, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Daung, Dee Zee. First evangelist among Nepali in Pyin U Lwin (Maymyo), Myanmar; a Kachin Church of Christ pastor.
- Davies, Major G.L., 6GR. Brigade of Gurkhas Resettlement Office, Church Crookham, UK.
- Deshpande, P. James. Independent ministry among Pentecostal churches in Sikkim, resident in Kalimpong.
- Devkota, Govind Prasad. Kuki Baptist-supported evangelist for Gorkha Baptist Church, on outskirts of Guahati, Assam.
- Dewan, Tir Bahadur. Retired NEB and RBMU evangelist in N. India; pastor of Bhaktapur Church, Nepal.
- Dick, James. Retired Church of Scotland missionary doctor, served in Kalimpong and in Nepal. Resident in Scotland.
- Dukpa, Thomas. Pastor of Canaan Church, Free Church of Finland Mission, Jaigaon, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- Dyck, Jacob. Retired WEC missionary, leader of the Nepal Border Field, and founder of the DBCI/NBCI. Resident in Canada.

- Engle, Charles. Retired BIC missionary, served in Bihar.
Resident in California, USA.
- Erickson, Evert. Retired OREBRO Swedish missionary, served in
Gorakhpur, UP. Resident in Sweden.
- Fairservice, Rachel. Retired Church of Scotland missionary,
served with her late husband in Sikkim. Resident in
Australia.
- Fiski, Asbjorg. Retired missionary of the Norwegian Santal
Mission, served in Assam and Bhutan. Resident in Norway.
- Franklin, Elizabeth (deceased). Former RBMU missionary in
Kalimpong and Nepal.
- Fuller, Major Martin. Retired British Gurkha officer, served in
Malaya 1948-70, and as consultant to the Sultan of Brunei.
Resident in England.
- Ghatani, Bhim Prasad. Evangelist among Nepali with Manipur Gam
Presbytery, Churachandpur, Manipur.
- Ghose, John Elliot. Retired CNI Bishop of Darjeeling Diocese.
- Gilruth, Agnes. Retired missionary with Gorakhpur Nurseries, UP,
and at Semri dispensary, Nepal. Resident in Scotland.
- Gurung, Birendra. Retired British Gurkha, served in the Gurkha
Transport Regiment. Resident in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Gurung, Moti. Acting pastor of Nepali Church in Bahrain.
- Gurung, Ishmael. The first Nepali from Sikkim to attend Kohima
Bible College in Nagaland. Resident in Sikkim.
- Gurung, Philip. Retired NEB evangelist, served in Assam,
Shillong, Nautanwa, and Pokhara, Nepal. Resident in Pokhara.
- Hagen, Roy and Alma. WMPL missionaries in Darjeeling, Hong Kong,
and most recently in Japan. Founders of DHBS and JJP in
Darjeeling.
- Hagstrom, Bill. Retired BGC missionary, served in Upper Assam.
Resident in Minnesota, USA.
- Hannay, John. Pastor of Assembly of God, Nepali section,
Calcutta.
- Harry Bahadur. AG Pastor among the Nepali in Mogok, Myanmar.
- Haugstad, Magnus and Edel. Retired missionaries of the Norwegian
Santal Mission who expanded the work into Bhutan. Resident
in Norway.
- Hembrom, Shem Lal. Pastor in-training at SAICS, Bangalore, for
the BIC Church in Nepal among the Santal.

- Hoke, William R. BIC World Missions representative at large in the USA; former missionary in Bihar. Resident in Pennsylvania, USA.
- Johnson, J. Warren. Retired BGC missionary, served in Upper Assam. Resident in the USA.
- Jyrwa, Rev. Former Director of the Department of Mission and Evangelism, KJP Synod; currently in-charge of the Bible House, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Jyrwa, J.F. Current Director of Evangelism Dept., KJP Synod, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Kabo, Sonam. Former NCCC Area Director for Sikkim. Currently Director of NCCC's Great Commission Training Centre in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Kaipeng, Rajani. General Secretary of Tripura Baptist Christian Union, Agartala, Tripura.
- Kappo, Vitoi. Associate Secretary of Nagaland Missionary Movement, Dimapur, Nagaland.
- Karthak, James. Pastor of Bom Basti Church, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Karthak, Lucky. Former CNI Presbyter and Pastor of Siliguri Church; currently Area Director for Asian Outreach in the Himalayas, based in Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Karthak, Nowin. Leader of Sikkim Missionary Movement, a division of Nagaland Missionary Movement, based in Darjeeling.
- Karthak, Robert. Pastor of Gyaneshwar Church, Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Karthak, Solon. National Director of Nepal Every Home Concern, based in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Khanal, Gopal. Nepali evangelist from Golaghat, Assam, currently pastoring a church in Karkavitta, East Nepal.
- Khati, Manju. Pastoress of NBIS Church in Tuensang, Nagaland.
- Khawas, John Dick. Principal of the Salvation Army Blind School, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Kipgen, Paokhosei. Mission Secretary of the Kuki Baptist Convention, Imphal, Manipur.
- Kirk, May. Wife of Jim Kirk (deceased), Scripture Reader (SASRA) among the Gurkhas at Tidworth during the early 1960s. Resident in Scotland.
- La, Tarbu. CNI catechist at Jorebungalow, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.

- Lalchungnunga. President of Mission for Christ, Aizawl, Mizoram.
- Lalhnuna, B. Sr. Executive Secretary of the Manipur Presbyterian Synod, Churachandpur, Manipur.
- Lalpianga. Moderator of the Mizoram Presbyterian Church, Aizawl, Mizoram.
- Lama, Sher Jung and Sarah. Son and daughter of late J.B. Lama, founding pastor of Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Lepcha, Achim. An early Christian convert in Ringim, N. Sikkim.
- Lepcha, Ham Singh. Elder of Calcutta Hill Christian Church, Calcutta, West Bengal.
- Lepcha, Joel. Former pastor of Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church, Jaigaon; now pastor of an independent Pentecostal church in Jaigaon, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- Lepcha, Samuel. Pastor of Shiloh Church and Principal of Singtam Bible Institute, Singtam, East Sikkim.
- Lepcha, Vasti. Granddaughter of Chhangchyung, the first Christian convert in Ringim, North Sikkim, and 'adopted' daughter of Elin Kronqvist.
- Limbu, Jit Bah. Pastor of Gorkha Baptist Church, Mobi, Myanmar.
- Limbu, Kumar. Pastor in-training for the Gorkha Baptist Christian Mission Centre, Myitkyina Zonal Baptist Convention, Myanmar.
- Lingdong, M. Elder and founding member of Gangtok Believers' Assembly, Gangtok, Sikkim.
- Lucksom, D.C. Elder of Gangtok CNI Church, and son of Apun Lucksom, early EHM catechist in Sikkim.
- Lucksom, Eden T. Elder of Presbyterian Free Church, and Director of Grace Bible Institute, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Mahabert, Mrs. George. Founding member of Siliguri Church, and headmistress of Mahabert School, Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Malommu, Nop Tshering. CNI Presbyter of Nimbong Pastorate, and former EHCC Kalimpong District Superintendent, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Manaen, Theodore. Former member of the Indian Parliament, and Associate Director of WMPL; assisting since retirement at Darjeeling Hills Bible School, Mirik, Darjeeling District.
- Mangratee, David. Former WME representative in the Eastern Himalayas; Pentecostal pastor-cum-evangelist based at North Point, Darjeeling.

- Manners, Wellburn. Pastor of Mawkhar Presbyterian Church, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Mao, K. Hepuni. Bible translator from Manipur at the Bible Society Translations Centre, Shillong.
- Matthews, P.M. Founding pastor of Bethel Church (IEM), Jaigaon, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- McBurney, Amy. Retired RBMU missionary, served in Raxaul, Bihar. Resident in N. Ireland.
- McCabe, Andrew. AG missionary, Headmaster of John Harvey Memorial School, Nawabganj, UP. Son of RBMU pioneer missionary among the Tharu, George McCabe.
- McCabe, George (deceased). Son of George McCabe, RBMU pioneer among the Tharu at Harnatar, Bihar.
- McCollum, Sheena. Church of Scotland missionary, Girls' Hostel in-charge for Kalimpong Girls' High School, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Meincke, Ellen. Retired NEB missionary, served in Assam, Nautanwa (UP) and Nepal. Resident in Denmark.
- Moral, S.K. Former CNI Presbyter of Darjeeling Pastorate; currently Area Director of Medical Ambassadors, Darjeeling.
- Morris, Wilfrid H. Retired WEC-UK missionary at Nautanwa and other UP stations. Resident in England.
- Mukhia, David (deceased) and Premi. NEB pastor, served in Shillong, Nautanwa, and Pokhara, Nepal. Wife Premi resident in Pokhara, Nepal.
- Murry, L.Y. Naga independent evangelist from Wokha, Nagaland; founder of Latter Rain Revival Ministry, Namche, Sikkim.
- Namfok, Suk. Writer and translator with WEC in Nepali Christian literature development, Darjeeling.
- Namchyo, P.N. and other El Shaddai elders and leaders, El Shaddai headquarters, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Namchyo, Khush Kumari 'Rosabel'. Secretary, Education Department, Government of Sikkim, and daughter of P.B. Rai, an early elder of CNI Gangtok Church, Gangtok, Sikkim.
- Norman, Beryl. Independent British missionary in Manali, HP; formerly in Kalimpong. Resident in Manali.
- Nyuwi, Thsuwachu S. Naga Bible translator at the Bible Society Translation Centre, Shillong; former Executive Secretary of Pochury Baptist Church Council, Nagaland.

- Oliver, Ernest. Retired English RBMU missionary in Bihar; first Director of the United Mission to Nepal. Resident in England.
- Ong, Erwin. Pastor of the Bahasa Melayu congregation, including Nepali, of Faith Charismatic Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- Patten, Julia. Retired RBMU-Australia missionary, served at Raxaul. Resident in Australia.
- Patterson, Grace. Retired Church of Scotland missionary, served in Darjeeling and Sikkim. Resident in New Zealand.
- Pazo, P.O. Son of Rev. C.T. Pazo, the first native ordained EHM minister of Gangtok Church, Sikkim. Resident in Gangtok.
- Phillips, T. Bevan. Retired Welsh Presbyterian missionary in Shillong; Headmaster of Shillong Government High School in the mid-1930s. Resident in Wales.
- Pradhan, D. Dhan. First Nepali Bishop in the CNI, retired in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Eriel. Elder of St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling. His wife, Phulmani, was known as 'lady doctor', and was the daughter of Harkadhoj Pradhan.
- Pradhan, Ganesh 'Joshua'. Operational Mobilisation team leader in Gorakhpur, UP.
- Pradhan, G.N. Professor in the Department of Nepali, St. Anthony's College, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Pradhan, G.S. Presbyterian of CNI Church in Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, H.B., and son Ashok. Oldest living elder of Calcutta Hill Christian Church, Calcutta, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Hem Chandra. Bible translator of the Nepali Bible, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Kumar. Principal of Kurseong College, scholar and author. Resident in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Mahendra Kumar. Elder of St. Columba's Church and Headmaster of Turnbull High School, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, N.C. Former school teacher with the British Gurkhas in Malaya and Hong Kong. Currently part-time teacher at DHBS, Mirik, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, N.R. Principal of SUMI, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Pradeep. Director of Nepali section of Delhi Bible Institute, Delhi.

- Pradhan, Srimati (Doma). Daughter of Gokal Das Pradhan, EHM catechist and youngest brother of Ganga Prasad Pradhan. Resident in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Pradhan, Thomas. Pastor at large among Nepali in KJP Synod, Meghalaya.
- Puri, Hom Karna. Former Nepali evangelist for the Mizo Synod in Nepal. Currently with Mission for Christ (Mizoram) in East Nepal.
- Quek, Emily. Missions Secretary of Zion Bible Presbyterian Church, Singapore.
- Rai, Basanta. Lay leader of Christian fellowship among Nepali mining community in Lad Rymbai, Jaintia Hills, Meghalaya.
- Rai, Benjamin. Director of the Bible Society Translation Center, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Rai, Bir Bah. Pastor of Anughra Mandali, Dharan, East Nepal.
- Rai, Bhawan Prasad. Founder of Gorkha Baptist Mission, Yangon, Myanmar.
- Rai, Bom Prasad. Retired British Gurkha, served with the Military Transport section of 10th Gurkha Rifles, later with the Gurkha Reserve Unit in Brunei. Resident in Dharan, Nepal.
- Rai, Dambar. Evangelist sent by the Mizo Synod to Nepal; currently with Mission for Christ (Mizoram) in E. Nepal.
- Rai, Daulat. First Rai Christian in Namche area of Sikkim; catechist and elder of Namche CNI Church.
- Rai, G.B. Secretary of Gorkha welfare organisation, Dehradun, UP.
- Rai, H.B. 'John'. Publisher of Kiran Nepali-language broadsheet, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Rai, Hastaman. Former in-charge of Nepal Bible Correspondence Course from Raxaul, Bihar.
- Rai, Indra Bah. Writer and former lecturer at St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Rai, Jai Pal. Pastor of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Rai, Jus Jit, and son David. Son and grandson of Parbal Singh Rai, pioneer EHM catechist in Sikkim. Resident in Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Rai, Kamal Andrew. Principal of Darjeeling Hills Bible School, Mirik, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.

- Rai, K.M. Former EHCC catechist, currently Pastor of Presbyterian Free Church, Jhaldhaka, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Rai, Capt. Kaluman. Retired Gurkha from the Burmese Army, in Pyin U Lwin, Myanmar.
- Rai, L.B. and other elders of Bethlehem Fellowship, Gangtok, Sikkim.
- Rai, L.B. Director of Jiwan Jyoti Prakashan, now Darjeeling Diocesan Press, Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Rai, Lal Bah. 'Lazarus'. Retired from the Gurkha Engineers; one of the first Nepali to work in Bahrain. Resident in Dharan, Nepal.
- Rai, Martin F. CNI Presbyter of Sikkim North-East Pastorate, based in Gangtok, Sikkim.
- Rai, Padam Bah. First Christian in Damthang area of Sikkim, and elder of local CNI church.
- Rai, 'Philip' Tikaram. Retired from Gurkha Engineers; a founding member of the Nepali Church in Bahrain. Resident in Dharan, Nepal.
- Rai, Prem Kumar. Pastor and former General-Secretary of Himalayan Free Church, Ghoom, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Rai, Reuben Moses. Pastor of Emmanuel Pentecostal Church, Namche, Sikkim.
- Rai, Rita. Daughter of Supal Subba, first Nepali evangelist under the Manipur Baptist Convention, Imphal, Manipur.
- Rai, Sharon Meena. Evangelist among Nepali with the Darrang Baptist Christian Association, Assam.
- Rai, Shiva Kumar. Pioneer of Gorkha League; a well-known writer, journalist, and broadcaster in India. Resident in Kurseong, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Rai, Emmanuel. Founder of Bal Vikas Kendra, Dehradun, UP.
- Rana, Mukta Singh. Retired from the Gurkha Engineers. Resident in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Rapgay, Peter. Pastor of Tibetan Believers' Assembly, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Rautamäki, Vappu. Retired Free Church of Finland missionary in the E. Himalayas. Resident in Finland.
- Rema, Sailu. Former Mission for Christ Siliguri Field In-charge, based in Siliguri, West Bengal.

- Ritchie, Isobel M. Church of Scotland missionary; Headmistress of Paljor Namgyal Girls' School, Gangtok, Sikkim.
- Robsen, Michael. Independent missionary among Nepali peoples. Currently resident in Wales.
- Rongong, Adon. National Director of Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ, based in Kathmandu, Nepal, and North East India Coordinator for India Campus Crusade for Christ.
- Rongong, Birendra. Former teacher at the Kalimpong Blind School, musician, and producer of Nepali radio broadcasts for FEBA. Resident in Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Rongong, Kogen. Formerly in Bhutan government service. Retired in Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Rongong, Leom. Headmistress of Kalimpong Girls' High School, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Rongong, Rajendra Kumar. Retired Dean of Curriculum Department, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu; Education Consultant to the UMN. Resident in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Rongong, Surjamati. Granddaughter of Ganga Prasad Pradhan. Resident in Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Ronrang, Molem. Executive Secretary of Tangsa Baptist Churches Asso., Tinsukia, Assam.
- Sada, Donal. NCCC Area Director, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Saharaja, R. CNI Presbyter over Rimbick and Kizom Pastorates, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Sanders, Keith. Former RBMU missionary doctor at Raxaul, Bihar. Currently with Christian Medical Fellowship, London.
- Sangkhuma, H. Former Field Secretary of the Mizo Synod's Siliguri Mission Centre, Siliguri, West Bengal. Currently Administrative Secretary of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North East India, based in Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Sangma, Anderson K. Executive Secretary of North Bank Baptist Christian Association, Sonitpur, Assam.
- Scotson, Col. F.D. Commandant of Gurkha Reserve Unit, Brunei.
- Sema, Mighito. Former pastor of Kohima Nepali Baptist Church, Kohima, Nagaland.
- Sema, Shiwoto. Executive Secretary of Nagaland Christian Revival Church, Mokokchung, Nagaland.
- Sereng, Bahadur. Pioneer of Pentecostal churches in Sikkim and founder of Himanchal Christia Sangati. Resident in Namche, Sikkim.

- Sereng, Samuel H. Son of Bahadur Sereng. A National Director in the Himalayas for Every Home Crusade, based in Guahati, Assam.
- Sewa, Chandra. Director of NCCC's Training Center, Siliguri, and NCCC Regional Director of North Bengal-Sikkim-Bhutan.
- Shankar, James Shah. Founder of the Nepali Baptist Association (Manipur) and Nepali Baptist Isai Sannelan (Nagaland), and pastor of Kalapahar Nepali Baptist Church, Manipur.
- Shanpru, K. Director of Women's Department, KJP Synod; former Director of Evangelism Department, KJP Synod, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Sharma, John. First Nepali ordained pastor with the Mizo Synod, based variously in Aizawl (Mizoram), Siliguri (West Bengal), and Karkavitta (E. Nepal).
- Sharma, Kisanlal. Pastor with the Nepali Christian Church, Kangpokpi, Manipur.
- Sharma, S.K. General Secretary of Gorkha Baptist Churches Fellowship, Imphal, based in Ukhrul, Manipur.
- Sherpa, Gore. Graduate student in Russia, brought up in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Siikanen, Riita. Retired Free Church of Finland missionary in the E. Himalayas. Resident in Finland.
- Simick, Andrew. Presbyterian of St. James Church and Calcutta Hill Christian Church, Calcutta Diocese of the CNI.
- Simick, Enos. Pastor of the independent Siliguri Church, West Bengal.
- Simick, B.C. (deceased). Elder of Macfarlane Memorial Church, Kalimpong, and local historian of the Church of Scotland's EHM.
- Skilbeck, Rita. Retired WEC missionary, served in Darjeeling in-charge of literature development. Resident in Australia.
- Sodemba, Subang. Founder and Director of Himalayan Crusade, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Stack, Major D.J.R. Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas. Resident in Glasgow, Scotland.
- Steele, Hilda (deceased). Co-founder of the Nepali Evangelistic Band.
- Strong, Patricia. Retired RBMU missionary doctor at Duncan Hospital, Raxaul, Bihar. Resident in Ireland.

- Subba, Daniel. Former evangelist with the Evangelical Synod Church, Manipur, pastor of an NBIS church in Nagaland, and currently NMM's representative in Nepal and pastor of a Baptist Church in Itahari, E. Nepal.
- Subba, Hem Datta. CNI Presbyterian of Kalimpong Pastorate, West Bengal.
- Subba, M.H. Founder of Himalayan Evangelical Fellowship and pastor with the Presbyterian Free Church, Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Subba, Mishal. Pastor of Singtam Himalayan Free Church, Sikkim.
- Subba, Samuel (deceased). Evangelist in Assam with NEB and pastor of Nepali Christian Fellowship, Shillong, Meghalaya, until 1980.
- Sukmimu, Phurpa Tsering. CNI Presbyterian of West Sikkim Pastorate, based in Chekung, Sikkim.
- Syiemlieh, David R. History Department, Northeastern Hill Univ., Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Taithul, Lianchinkhup. Bible translator from Churachandpur, Manipur at the Bible Society Translations Centre, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Tamang, Madan. Former leader in the Gorkha League and Gorkhaland National Liberation Front. Resident in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Tamang, Nicanor and Elizabeth. Director of International Needs, Nepal, and co-pastor of Doon Christian Fellowship, based in Dehradun, UP.
- Tamang, Purna Bal. Instigator and early leader of Doon Gorkha Christian Fellowship, Dehradun, UP. Resident in Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Tamang, Surjelal. Evangelist with the Non-Mizo Mission of the Baptist Church of Mizoram, Lunglei, Mizoram.
- Tenzing, Nima. Former Executive Councillor, Sikkim Government; Vice-President of Himalayan Free Church; Elder of Mangan Church, N. Sikkim; and grandson and son of Pastors Pasang and Palden Tshering, respectively. Resident in Mangan, Sikkim.
- Thakuri, Indra Bah. One of first Nepali evangelists with the Mizo Synod, currently based at the Mizo Synod's Mission Centre in Siliguri, West Bengal.
- Thansanga, H. Director of the Non-Mizo Mission of the Baptist Church of Mizoram, Lunglei, Mizoram.

- Thapa, Bikram. Pastor of Church of God, Nepali section, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Thapa, K.B. Pastor of Nepali Christian Fellowship, Shillong, Meghalaya.
- Thapa, Mrs. N.B. Isaac, and sons. Family of the late N.B. Isaac, Nepali independent evangelist to Manipur and other parts of NE India during the 1960s and 1970s. Resident in Mirik, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Thapa, Tikaram, and other Nepali evangelists supported by the Evangelical Convention Church, Manipur, working in E. Nepal.
- Thiek, Hrilrokhum. Executive Secretary of the Cachar Hill Tribes Synod, Haflong, N. Cachar Hills, Assam.
- Thomas, A.T. Founding pastor of Emmanuel Pentecostal Church, Jaigaon, Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.
- Thomas, Varghese. Director of Mission to the Unreached, Himachal Pradesh.
- Timm, Helmut. Retired German AG missionary, served at Rupaidhia, UP. Resident in Germany.
- Tingbo, M.S. CNI Presbyterian of Pakang Pastorate, Kalimpong subdivision, West Bengal.
- Tingbo, Panthuk Singh. CNI Presbyterian of South Sikkim Pastorate, formerly in Bhutan as CNI mobile pastor.
- Torkelson, Naomi. Retired missionary with the American Santal Mission in Bihar; former secretary to the Bishop of the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in Dumka, Bihar. Resident in Iowa, USA.
- Trask, Ray W. American AG missionary in Mogok, Burma, during the 1960s. Currently Principal of Trinity Bible College, North Dakota, USA.
- Tshering, Ishmael. Son of Stephen Kuchu, early Bhutanese convert and evangelist with the Finnish Mission at Baksaduar. Currently pastor of the former Free Church of Finland Church, Ghoom, Darjeeling District.
- Tshering, Subit. Former evangelist with WEC in Almora, UP, and teacher at DHBS. Currently CNI Presbyterian of Kurseong Pastorate, Darjeeling District, West Bengal.
- Tshering, Y.D. Retired from government service in Bhutan. Resident in Darjeeling, West Bengal.
- Upadhaya, Subash. Probationary pastor with the Mizo Synod, based at the Siliguri Mission Centre, West Bengal.
- Vaipai, S. Prim. Editor of Christa Palai, Imphal, Manipur.

- Vanlalbela. Director of Non-Mizo ministry of Mizo Synod, and Principal of the Synod's Hindi Bible School, Aizawl, Mizoram.
- Wallace, Dorothy. Retired Church of Scotland missionary; former headmistress of Nepali Girls' High School, Darjeeling, West Bengal. Resident in Scotland.
- Walther, Grace. Retired American AG missionary, served in N. India and Kalimpong. Resident in Missouri, USA.
- Warren, Charles. Retired TEAM missionary, served in Kumaon District, UP; son-in-law of Ezra Steiner, founder of Tibetan Frontier Mission. Resident in Ohio, USA.
- Westborg, Anne Helene. Retired Norwegian missionary with the Santal Mission, Parkijuli, Assam; formerly with the Norwegian Tibet Mission. Resident in Norway.
- White, Lt. Col. T.C. Retired officer with the British Gurkhas; former Garrison Commander in Kluang, Malaya in the 1960s, and Commandant of the Gurkha Engineers. Resident in England.
- Whitehead, Brigadier John, MBE. Retired officer with the British Gurkhas; Brigadier of the Brigade of Gurkhas in Hong Kong during the 1970s. Resident in England.
- Withey, Hester. Retired WEC-USA missionary, served in China and Kalimpong, West Bengal. Resident in Pennsylvania, USA.
- Yangzung Guruama. Tibetan Christian woman active in Nepali ministry, originally from Algarah. Resident in Kalimpong, West Bengal.
- Yoder, Leora. Retired American BIC missionary, served among the Santal in Purnea District, Bihar. Resident in the USA.
- Young, Betty. UMN archivist; former Personnel Secretary for the UMN in Nepal. Resident in Edinburgh, Scotland.
- Young, Katherine. TLM missionary doctor; first missionary to reside in Far-West Nepal. Retired in Almora District, UP.
- Zatawna, C. Field Director of Assam Dhubri Field, Zoram Baptist Mission, Dhubri, Assam.

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All relevant correspondence and transcripts/notes from interviews conducted by the author during the course of the research for this thesis, as detailed in the end notes.

Miscellaneous correspondence, reports, and other historical documents under file headings as detailed in the end notes, and in the following sections of the Collection:

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APPENDICES

	Page
A - Glossary	695
B - Wm. Macfarlane's original proposals for EHM	697
C - Life-history of Ganga Prasad Pradhan	700
D - List of all Nepali-Lepcha ordained ministers of the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery / Darjeeling Diocese, 1900-1991	705
E - "The Closed Land of Nepal: A Modern Jericho," by Katherine Harbord	709
F - "The Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission and the Nepaulese," by Vappu Rautamaki	713
G - Life-history of Dr. Bahadur Sereng	744
H - William Carey's abortive mission to 'Bootan'	749
I - Kalimpong Bhutan Mission	753
J - Ebenezer Evangelical Luthern Church, Resolution 13	757
K - Chart of Nepali Population in India	759
L - "Story of the Gurkha Stay in Tidworth," by J. Kirk ASR	761
M - Nepali Constitution and Law concerning Religious Rights	768
N - Chart of Emigrants from Nepal via Calcutta to British and Foreign Colonies, 1876-1917	770

APPENDIX A

GLOSSARY

adivasi - original inhabitant; used concerning tribals in Assam in the context of this thesis

anila - single woman missionary

awalia - people immune to awal (malaria) fever

basti - village

Bhai Tika - Hindu festival during Tihar

birta - land grants given by the King as a reward for service or gift to Brahmans; no permanent tenancy rights by peasants

birtawal - owner of birta land, entitled to receive taxes from tenants

bongting - Lepcha animist priest

catechumen - a convert under instruction before baptism

Chogyal - religious and temporal ruler

chowkidar - watchman

dacoit - bandit

darbar - court

Dasai - Hindu festival

Dewan - chief minister

dharma - religion

Dharmaraj - Sanskritised version of Chogyal

hulak - transport system using unpaid porters

jagir - land grants given as awards or emoluments to government employees

jagirdar - owner of jagir land, entitled to receive taxes from tenants

jhakari - witch-doctor

jat - caste

jhara - compulsory unpaid labor, usually exacted by the state

jhum - slash and burn type cultivation

kazi - landlord

kipat - communal land tenure system of E. Nepal among the Limbu

kut - land tenure system based on fixed rents, regardless of success of the tenant's crops

mahadeshi - ones from the big country; immigrants from India in Nepal in the context of this thesis

mandal - headman

matwali - middle castes in Nepal created for hill tribals, literally 'drinking' caste

mela - a fair, usually for trade purposes or a religious festival

Munshi - Lepcha village chief

pahari - hill person

Pasal - Lepcha headman

pracharak - preacher

prachin - preacher; name used for EHM catechists in the early 1900s

pukka - genuine, real

raikar - freehold type land tenure system under state landlordship; half of produce or taxes paid by tenants to the state

Subbah/Subbalog - village chief

zamindar - intermediary class landowners, responsible to collect taxes

APPENDIX B

**WILLIAM MACFARLANE'S ORIGINAL PROPOSALS FOR
THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN MISSION
(former Darjeeling Missionary Institute)**

As expressed by letter from Wm. Macfarlane "To the Sabbath-Schools and other Contributors to the Darjeeling Missionary Institute," 20 Oct. 1871 from Darjeeling, in THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, 1 January 1872, 564-565.

DARJEELING MISSIONARY INSTITUTION.

A PLEA FOR ITS SUPPORT, AND AN APPEAL
TO OUR DIVINITY STUDENTS.

The following extracts, from a Report which recently has been received by the Correspondent of the Darjeeling Mission, and which is about to be sent to the supporters of the Institution, will be read with interest.

To the Sabbath-Schools and other Contributors to the Darjeeling Missionary Institution.

DARJEELING, 20th October 1871.

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,—The past half-year has been one of continued heavy trial to the mission. In the previous half-year I had to lament the sudden death of my fellow-labourer, Mr Campbell. Since then death and sickness have been working among the Christians who came with us from Gya. A man and his wife who joined the Gya Mission about three years since, and whom I baptised just before leaving Gya for Darjeeling, died suddenly, the one after the other, of Terai fever. Nearly all the Christians have been seriously ill with fever, and some who would have been most useful to the mission as teachers, have been obliged, through ill-health, to return again to the plains. I myself have suffered from malarious fever during nearly the whole of the rainy season. I was for some six weeks confined to my room, and so weak that I could scarcely sit in a chair. You can easily conceive my anxiety when I thought of Mr Campbell's death, and when the Christians, one after another, were withdrawn from the work, and when I myself was also laid aside, not knowing what should happen to me. I was enabled, however, to cast the mission upon God in prayer, and to realise the fulfilment of His promise to those who are anxious about nothing, but who in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, make their requests known unto God. My dear friends, these afflictions have served to impress most deeply upon us our own utter helplessness and nothingness, and have made us learn, in the most emphatic manner in which any can learn, that without Christ we cannot do anything. They have, I believe, been blessed to every one in connection with the mission, by the outpouring upon all of a spirit of intenser prayer and supplication. We have established daily, weekly, and monthly prayer-meetings, to entreat God in behalf of the mission. In touching the words of the 80th Psalm, which I have read almost daily for months, we beseech Him, saying, "Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved." I am most thankful to say that, through the goodness of God, sickness has now been removed from us. The approach of the cold season has invigorated all the workers in the mission.

I believe that, by those afflictions which have befallen us, God has been revealing to us His will as to the manner in which He wishes this mission to be conducted. I have sometimes thought that, in beginning a new mission, differing as this one does from the Gya Mission, it would be well if new labourers were sent from home to begin the new work. Such would come out with their minds free to adopt any measures without prejudice. All the labourers in this mission came from Gya, and were naturally biassed in favour of the educational system to which they had been accustomed there. I believe that God is now guiding us to see that that mode of conducting mission-work will not have His blessing in this mission; and that it is His will that we should adopt the simple evangelical way of preaching the Gospel directly to the people in their own tongue.

Accordingly, we have resolved to make the direct preaching of the Word the first and great work in this mission, and to keep everything else secondary and subordinate to that. This is matter which I desire our supporters at home clearly to understand, as I have learned that the hearts of many have been turned aside from this mission through thinking that it was to be conducted in another manner. Every member of our mission committee here is at one in thinking that the great agency in this mission should be the direct preaching of the Gospel in the bazaars on Sundays, in the villages, and wherever people can be got to hear. When the local committee applied to the Church at home for two more missionaries to labour along with me, it asked for two ordained ministers, whose work should be to preach the Gospel to the people in their own tongue. While the members of our Mission Committee here are unanimous in thinking that preaching should be the primary agency in this mission, they are equally unanimous in thinking that vernacular schools, in which the children are taught not English, but to read and write their own language, are a valuable secondary agency. It was for this reason that we, at the end of last year, accepted the offer of Government, and took charge of the vernacular schools in the district. There were only 5 when we took them. Now there are 15, and we hope to be able yet to set up 15 more. In these schools, which are all over the district, the children are taught to read, write, and do sums in their own language—Nepalese, Lepcha, or Bengali, according to the locality. The books used are the Christian Vernacular Education Society's books. No one can possibly object to such schools, or to the missionaries taking charge of them. If the missionaries do not look after them, no other one will, as the Government well knew when it made them over to the mission. Without such schools, how can the people learn to read? and if they cannot read, of what use will it be to send Bibles and tracts among them? We therefore think that it is the duty of the missionaries, in subordination to the great work of preaching, to do their utmost to establish such schools wherever they can be set up. In the vernacular schools there are at present 400 boys on the rolls, and an average daily attendance of 266, which is six times as many as there were at this time last year.

The Mission Institution was rendered necessary by the mission having charge of the vernacular schools. I wish to direct our supporters' attention to this fact, as I am informed that many are under the impression that this Mission Institution is only the old Gya Orphanage again; that we are tempting Nepalese and Lepchas to become Christians for a piece of bread, with the inevitable result of getting "rice Christians," and that therefore it is not worthy of support. Those who have that idea should consider what the Institution really is. We have in connection with the Institution 7 girls and 16 non-caste Hindoostani and Nepalese boys. These are all orphans who came up from Gya, and whom we are bound to look after till they will be able to provide for themselves. We deal with them after this manner: The girls we get married as soon as we can. The boys who have sufficient ability are being taught in the mission school for mission work in future. The others, who have not talent enough for this kind of work, we send out to different families to be taught different kinds of employments. In a few years they will be able to gain their own livelihood; and then this part of the Institution will be closed. Next we have 18 Lepchas, 13 Nepalese, and 1 Bhotee. These form the real Mission Institution, and the only permanent part of it. The reason why we have these lads is this: I have already shown that we consider

vernacular schools such an important secondary mission agency, that we are resolved to extend the vernacular school system to the utmost of our power. But what is the use of having a school without an efficient teacher to teach in it? Now, when the mission came into this district, not a single man could be got who could teach children a Hindi primer. We therefore resolved to set up in Darjeeling a Normal School for training suitable teachers for the district schools. Intelligent Lepcha and Nepaulese lads were chosen from the district, and taken to Darjeeling to go through a two years' course of instruction. If, after trial, they are found to be deficient in any way, they are sent to their homes; and if, after two years, we cannot provide schools for them, they leave the Institution to make room for others. This is the Mission Institution, which must stand or fall with the vernacular schools. As long as we have these schools, we must keep up the Central Institution.

No bribe of any kind is held out to the boys to become Christians. Their worldly prospects are the same, whether they become Christians or not. They are taught the Bible in all its fulness; but it is left open to them to accept or reject it. It is also optional with them to attend or not worship morning and evening with the Christians. We lose nothing by acting in this way, as all the boys thoroughly trust us, and we can always speak freely to them of Christ. Will it not be a great help to the preaching missionary to find that, through the effects of this Institution on the district schools, he has to do with a people who have been taught to read the Scriptures, and to know who Christ is, and why He came into the world?

My sister has taken charge of the Mission Institution. She came out to promote female education in the district; but as all girls' schools in the district will have to be carried on in connection with the boys' schools, we have judged that it would be best, both for the cause of female education and for the interests of the mission generally, that she should take charge of the Mission Institution, and thus teach those who will instruct the boys and girls in the district schools.

We have established three girls' schools out in the district, and only the want of funds prevents us from establishing many more. Mrs Campbell, who, after the death of her husband, came from Kurseong to reside with us till such time as she could go home, kindly took charge of the girls we have in the Institution when Miss Macfarlane took charge of the Normal Schools; and we regret that her departure shortly for home will deprive the mission of her services.

I have now to direct your attention to the unsatisfactory state of the finances of the Mission Institution. Last quarter closes with a debt of £39, and the prospect for the future fills me with anxiety. This is owing, I think, to the falling off in the subscriptions of those who used to be regular contributors; and that falling-off seems to be due somehow to a want of interest and confidence in the mission. I hope that what has been already said will convince those who read this that this mission is established on a sound evangelical basis, and ought to be supported. I have therefore to appeal to those who have charge of Sabbath-schools, and to others, to be regular in remitting their annual contributions. Each boy costs us 4 rupees a-month, or £4, 16s. a-year. If that be a sum too great for any one Sabbath-school to give, the sum could easily be made up by two or three schools in the same neighbourhood joining together. I have also to appeal for help for our district schools. Each boys' school costs 10 rupees a-month (£12 a-year) and each girls' school 5 rupees a-month (£6 a-year). If a number of schools near each other united their efforts, they could

easily undertake among them the support of our district schools.

I have also again to appeal for subscriptions for the mission printing-press. Without a printing-press this mission can never be efficiently carried on, either in preaching or teaching. For want of it, I fear, we shall have to close the Lepcha schools we have, and can open no new ones. The only printed books we have in Lepcha are, a primer, Genesis, and the Gospels of Matthew and John. These are, however, now out of print, and the Bible Society at the end of last year sanctioned their being reprinted in Calcutta. A commencement was made with the Gospel of St John. It began to be reprinted last February. It contains in all 130 pages. Well, this is the month of October, and 16 pages have not yet been printed off. At the present rate of progress, it will take four years to finish it; and during all that time we cannot put any portion of the Word of God into the hands of a Lepcha. The difficulty will be the same with Nepaulese; and till we get a printing-press with Lepcha, Hindi (for Nepaulese), and English (for Roman-Urdu) type, we shall be hampered on every hand. I hope that our supporters, when they learn the nature of the difficulties in which we are involved, will earnestly bestir themselves to help us.

I often wish, as I think of the difficulties in which we are involved, that I could go home for six months to go round the congregations and Sabbath-schools of our Church, and address them face to face, telling them the facts of this mission. When we were in Gya, and appealed for subscriptions to build orphanage-houses, we got, without any difficulty, about £500. Now, we find it more difficult to raise £5 than it then was to raise £100; and yet this mission is far more hopeful, and far more interesting, than the Gya Mission was. If I had not been alone in this mission, I would now have asked leave to go home; and I feel certain that the congregations, and Sabbath-schools, and private members of our Church, would not let me come out without a printing-press, and as much type as was necessary to give the people of these hills the Gospel in their own language. We are liberally supported by the people of this district. Some of them (and these not members of our Church) give us monthly subscriptions of 30 rupees, or £36 a-year. Why then are we helped so sparingly by the members of our own Church, in whose name we work? If we missionaries are ready in your service to risk our health and our life, surely it is the duty of the members of our Church to furnish us with the means of making our work as efficient as possible.

Everything at present hangs on a single thread—my health and my life. Is it right to have such an important mission in so precarious a position? Our Church is pledged to conduct this mission in an efficient manner, and to occupy the whole of the Darjeeling district. Let therefore every member of our Church who reads this, and who wishes well to this mission, bow down on his knees before God, and ask Him, for Christ's sake, to send out to our help two ordained missionaries of our own Church, men full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.

And now, in conclusion, let me address the ordained ministers and licentiates of our Church, and the students in our four Divinity Halls, on the alarming want of missionaries in our Church. While sad reports reach the mission-stations in India of the want of money for mission purposes, still sadder reports come of the want of men. Now, this last want can be remedied only by you. If our missions are ever to prosper, and to be blessed of God, from your midst must come the agents to accomplish it. Within the past few years, our Church has been in such sore dis-

APPENDIX C

LIFE-HISTORY OF GANGA PRASAD PRADHAN

As contained in "Ordination of Ganga Prashad Pradhan, How He Became a Christian," Darjeeling Kalimpong and Sikkim News (Mission News), Darjeeling, September 1901, 246-249.

Registered No. C. 125.

Church of Scotland Eastern-Himalayan Missions,
DARJEELING KALIMPONG AND SIKKIM NEWS.

IN SEPTEMBER 1901.

Thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee
and whatsoever I command thee
thou shalt speak

Jer. I 7

ORDINATION OF GANGA PRASHAD PRADHAN.

HOW HE BECAME A CHRISTIAN.

On the 4th of August there was ordained to the ministry of the Church one who is well known and much respected by both Christians and non-Christians throughout the whole district, Ganga Prashad Pradhan, the Nepali Translator of the Holy Bible.

As his history is of interest, we have noted down here a few of the steps by which he was led to Christ. He was born fifty years ago in a little village in the country of Nepal. His parents were evidently well-to-do and much respected people of the caste called Newar, one of the highest castes in Nepal. Ganga's mother died when he was quite young. His recollections of her are those of a woman deeply religious according to her lights and a marvel of vigour and energy in all she undertook. It is no doubt from her that her worthy son inherits these qualities which are so marked in all he has to do. His father was a farmer tilling land which, according to the custom of the country, was practically his own. The father had learned to read from the Brahmin pundits and had taught his eldest son, but never took any trouble with Ganga whose work lay mainly in the fields. The elder brother, with that roving instinct which is so common to these hill folk, came into Darjeeling, then a small place which was be-

ginning to offer attractions to young Nepalis in the shape of work on the tea gardens which Europeans were opening out on the hill sides. On one of these gardens, one called Ging, Ganga's elder brother got employment as a "Bahidar" or native writer. His duty was to keep the accounts in the native character and act as a sort of secretary to the coolies as well as to the planter. Evidently this was much to his liking, and Nepali-like he saw here opportunities for furthering the interest of his family as well as his own. He therefore sent word to the village in Nepal asking his father to come to Ging and join him on the plantation. This the father did, taking with him young Ganga, then a boy of ten years of age. For nine years after this Ganga laboured as a coolie on the tea plantation, earning his day's wage and growing up to manhood. His father and brother carried on their work as writers.

This brings us to the year 1870, when in the providence of God, Mr. Macfarlane was led to start the Mission of the Church of Scotland in the Eastern Himalayas. The first house which Mr. Macfarlane rented was one just above the tea garden of Ging. He visited among the gardens and asked the managers to allow any likely boys to come to the school he had started. The manager of Ging told his coolies of Mr. Macfarlane's

wish, and among the first lads to desire to learn with the "Padri Sahib" (the minister) was young Ganga Prashad. His stepmother however had an objection. He was a lad whose salary was an important item in the household exchequer. And she asked pertinently, "If he goes to school, how will there be enough for us to eat?" So for a little the lad's desire reached no further. However, Ganga as not one to be balked in any plan which he considered would be of use. So on the 4th of July, 1870, his nineteenth birthday, he ran away from home and presented himself as a pupil to Mr. Macfarlane. He was enrolled and commenced his studies. But his parents were not going to let him go like this, and day after day the step mother came weeping and the villagers came beseeching that he should have nothing to do with this new teaching. So much did this affect him that within a month he had run away from school and returned to his father's house. The month with Mr. Macfarlane had revealed to that wise man that here was a lad who would be yet a credit to him. So he followed up the wanderer and came to the house to have a chat with the parents on the subject. They told him of their difficulties as to supporting their son if he went to school and thus received no salary from the garden. Mr. Macfarlane then and there offered to take the lad and himself find his support. The upshot of this interview was that on the 2nd of November Ganga entered Mr. Macfarlane's school as a paid scholar.

Now regularly in school, the young man soon learned to read and write. In addition to these elementary lessons he was present at Bible classes and himself was soon able to read the Word of God in Hindi, a language allied to his own. In the course of a year, Mr. Macfarlane, in need of a teacher in the school, appointed Ganga. In the third year of his studies with Mr. Macfarlane, Ganga had reached this truth at least that an idol is nothing, and, though not yet a Christian even at heart, he was honest enough to refuse to offer worship to that which he did not believe. It must have been a solemn scene that day in the year 1873 when the young man dared to tell his people that he could not join them in their feast. Up till

this he had had misgivings as to his duty. He had, like many others, accepted this festival as, what it really is, more of a family gathering than a work of religion. Now he saw that he must dissociate himself with the rites that his people had carried out for generations. The youth hangs apart and refuses to eat the meat offered to idols. Then the old father, decent old man, asks why, and Ganga, not yet himself a Christian, tells them what he has learned of the true God. They attempt not to argue the matter theologically. The Nepali creed is an easy one. Their main thought of religion is that this an affair of caste. And the answer Ganga gets is "We cannot have our families broken up in this way." Still he holds out. They beseech him by the love they bear him; and family ties are strong amongst these hill people. Still he says "No" and appeals to God's book. They tell him they do not know what is in the Shastras, their religious books; but this is their custom. The scene ends in weeping parents and a weeping yet steadfast child.

"From that date," says Ganga, in telling us of his history, "from that date I began to observe Sunday: and to go to Church and prayer meeting regularly." The Bible class he had always attended. Thus things went for the best part of two years, during which he began to pray. One day he reflected "Why do you pray? You are not a Christian," and from then he stopped praying. Then another voice spoke in his heart "Why do you stop praying? You cant live without praying." "Still," he says talking of this time, "I had no wish for Baptism." As he went on reading the Bible, which he says he found "very precious, especially the New Testament," one verse, he says sank into his heart, "what profit is it if a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul." He began to see the danger of being without Christ. One prayermeeting night—it was the first of December 1874 Ganga's mind troubled him so much that he determined he must leave Darjeeling and be baptised. He felt he could not be baptised in the midst of his people but baptised he must be. Coming from the prayermeeting he spoke to no one but went to his own room and there felt very ill. A fellow

student, Surjman, now an elder and a catechist in Darjeeling, came to the room, and the two lads began to unbosom their hearts to one another. Surjman had been three months in the Mission School. He had left the old orthodox Hinduism and become a Sadhu, a sect of reformed Hindus. But he acknowledged that he had no rest in Sadhuism. He too, wanted to become a Christian but was afraid. To them came a Eurasian orphan, John Collis, whom Mr. Macfarlane had brought with him from Gya, and the three spoke of the difficulty. They decided to go to the plains from which John had come but could do nothing till the fifteenth, pay day, as they had no funds.

That night, after receiving their salaries, they went out by a window, left the Mission compound, and walked ten miles down the hill. They left behind them letters telling why they had fled. On, on they walked—there was no railway in those days nearer than about 160 miles from Darjeeling. At one resting place the fugitives came across a Goorkha soldier returning to Agra. They found he belonged to Kurseong and with him they threw in their lot. On the tenth day they reached Caragola and had decided not to go to Calcutta, as they had thought of, but to make for Agra with the soldier. They found, however, their united funds would only take them to Allahabad, so to this station they booked their tickets. That night, Christmas night, they travelled and the next day reached Allahabad and bade farewell to their soldier friend. This man seems to have been much interested in them and left them his address, making them promise they would write and tell him if they were in difficulties and he would send them money. That night they slept in the Serai or Inn which the East always offers to her travellers. Next day, Sunday, they asked their way to the School. After wandering round Schools Hindu and Schools Roman Catholic, they were at last directed to Mr. Wynkoop's (now Dr. Wynkoop, Secretary of the North India Bible and Tract Society) of the American Presbyterian Mission. There they were interviewed by a native pastor to whom they told their story. The Church bells were just ringing, so in

they went to Church. Next morning they met the catechists and to them told their desire to be baptised. It was decided nothing should be done till Mr. Wynkoop, then on tour, should arrive. On the last day of the year he came back. Till then they lived in the Mission compound. On the first day of the year Mr. Wynkoop called them after service and heard their story. He decided to write to Darjeeling and ask Mr. Macfarlane about them: and meantime told them to wait in Allahabad. In a week the reply came back that the story they told was true, that Ganga should be baptised, but that Surjman, who had only had three months' instruction, should be put on probation. Thus, says Ganga "On the 24th of January 1875, in the Mutthigunj Mission Compound Allahabad, in the American Presbyterian Church, I received baptism from the hand of Mr. Wynkoop." Meantime he had been writing letters to Mr. Macfarlane: and Mr. Wynkoop had also been urging the the hill lads to go back to their own country. They said they were frightened for their parents. Mr. Macfarlane then wrote urging them to come back for his sake and Ganga now strong because he had confessed his Lord said he was ready to go back even amongst his people. A warm welcome they got from Mr. Macfarlane, and his sister and even his parents were kinder than Ganga had feared. Indeed latterly even his old father died, nominally a heathen, but confessing to his son that his hope was on Christ alone, and many of Ganga's friends have since followed his good example.

Once back in Darjeeling, a baptised Christian, Ganga was no longer allowed to remain a mere teacher. He was soon appointed a preacher, and began to help Mr. Macfarlane in the preparation of Christian booklets. This was soon followed by more definite translation work which led at last to that to which Ganga has devoted his life, the translation of the Scriptures into Nepali. At first, he made a rough translation with Mr. Macfarlane, but latterly when Mr. Turnbull took up this part of the work Ganga was appointed his assistant. Together they have translated the whole of the New Testament and much of the Old Testament as well. Almost

the whole of the New Testament is now in print, published by the Calcutta Bible Society, and is widely sold all over the hills of both English and Nepali territory in the Eastern Himalayas.

Such is a brief history of the man who was admitted to the ministry of the Church this month after almost thirty years of training and good solid useful work for Christ. Pray that his labours may be even more blessed in the future than in the past, and that by his preached word, his great influence even amongst those who are not yet Christians, and by the printed page which God has enabled him to have a hand in preparing, many of his fellow country men both on this side of the border and within the closed land of Nepal may be led to his and our Saviour Christ.

APPENDIX D

NEPALI-LEPCHA ORDAINED MINISTERS OF THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN PRESBYTERY / DARJEELING DIOCESE 1900-1991

DYONGSHI LEPCHA. Ordained Jan. 1900.

Former schoolmaster and catechist from 1870s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Sitong until his death in 1920.

NAMTHAK RONGONG. Ordained Jan. 1900.

Former catechist from 1870s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Mangwa and as first native pastor of Macfarlane Memorial Church, Kalimpong until his death in 1921.

TEMBA TSHERING. Ordained Aug. 1900.

Former teacher, compounder and catechist from 1890s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Kizom. Retired 1937; died 1940.

KANTU SINGH. Ordained Aug. 1900.

Former catechist from 1890s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served at Nagri.

JASBIR PHILIP. Ordained Aug. 1900.

Former teacher and catechist from 1880s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Kurseong, Mirik, Sukhia Pokhri and Jorebunglow. Retired 1927; died 1934.

GANGA PRASAD PRADHAN. Ordained 1901.

Former schoolteacher, catechist and Bible translator from 1870s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Darjeeling. Retired 1930; died 1932.

SURJAMAN HENRY MUKHIA. Ordained 1910.

Former teacher and catechist from 1880s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served in Kurseong until 1930, although formally retired in 1926; died 1931.

ANAMBO LUCKSOM. Ordained 1917.

Former compounder-cum-catechist from 1890s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served at Today. Retired 1937.

CHHIRING SIMICK. Ordained 1917.

Former catechist from 1910s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served at Dalapchen. Died 1952.

LACHSMAN SINGH MUKHIA. Ordained 1921.

Former teacher and catechist from 1870s, Headmaster of Darjeeling School, and head teacher at SUMI. Served in Sikkim and Kalimpong. Retired 1930; died 1940.

GORA SITLING. Ordained 1921.

Former teacher and catechist from 1880s. No examination for ordination in view of his long service. Served at Chhibo and Macfarlane Memorial Church, Kalimpong. Retired 1927.

KALU SINGH PETERS. Ordained [early 1920s].

Diploma from Saharanpur Theological Seminary. Served St. Andrew's Church and St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling. Resigned mid-1930s.

GYAN TSHERING SITLING (son of Gora Sitling). Ordained 1926.

Graduate of EHM English-language Divinity course. Served Macfarlane Memorial Church, Kalimpong. Resigned 1931 to join the Roman Catholic Church.

PAHLO TARGAIN. Ordained 1927.

Former catechist from early 1900s in Sikkim. EHM Presbyterian's course, but did not pass the exam. 1928 excommunicated.

CHHOTUK TSERING PAZO. Ordained 1928.

Former SUMI teacher. Graduate of EHM English-language Divinity course. Served Sikkim pastorate. Retired 1976; died 1978.

PASANG TARGAIN. Ordained 1933.

Former SUMI staff member. Partial EHM Presbyterian's course. Served Macfarlane Memorial Church. Retired 1972; died 1973.

JAMES LONGMAN. Ordained 1936 by UCNI.

Former Free Church of Finland Mission, pastor. BD from Serampore. Served St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling. Resigned 1943 and joined staff at SUMI, Kalimpong.

SUKHBIR RAI. Ordained 1939.

Former catechist from 1920s. EHM Presbyters' course. Served Pedong Pastorate, and Bom Basti church following his retirement in 1966. Died 1987.

MASIH DHOJ SUBBA. Ordained 1941.

Former teacher and catechist. EHM Presbyters' course. Served Kurseong Pastorate. Resigned 1951.

R.S. MOLOMMU. Ordained 1942.

Former teacher and catechist. EHM Presbyters' course. Served Kizom Pastorate until his death in 1979.

DANIEL HENRY MUKHIA (son of Surjaman Mukhia). Ordained 1947.

Former teacher from 1920s. EHCC Presbyters' course. Served at St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling, Kurseong, and Siliguri Pastorates until his death in 1984.

NOP TSHERING MOLOMMU. Ordained 1951.

Former teacher and catechist from 1930s. EHCC Presbyters' course. Served as EHCC Kalimpong District Superintendent; currently over Nimbong Pastorate.

M.S. TINGBO. Ordained 1951.

Former teacher and catechist from 1930s. EHCC Presbyters' course. Served Byong-Pakang, Jholong, Bhutan and Western Duars Pastorates; currently over Pakang Pastorate.

KRISTADAS MUKHIA. Ordained 1956.

Former Darjeeling Book Depot manager from 1930s. Served St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling, until his death in 1974.

SUBIT TSHERING. Ordained 1956.

Former WEC evangelist. LTh from Allahabad Seminary. Served as DHBS teacher and Mirik Pastorate; currently over Kurseong Pastorate.

D.D. PRADHAN. Ordained 1961.

Former teacher. BD from Serampore College. Served as EHCC Darjeeling District Superintendent, CNI Bishop of Assam Diocese, and Presbyter of Darjeeling Pastorate following retirement in 1987.

G.S. PRADHAN. Ordained 1963.

Formerly with the rail-way. Served Jalpaiguri Pastorate, as Director of the DDC Diocesan House; currently over Siliguri Pastorate.

RANJIT SAHARAJA. Ordained 1964.

Former EHCC catechist from 1950s. DHBS Graduate. Serving Rimbick-Kizom Pastorate.

MARTIN F. RAI. Ordained 1965.

GTh from Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur. Served with Jiwan Jyoti Prakashan, Calcutta Hill Christian Church, various Kalimpong pastorates and NE Sikkim Pastorate; currently in Sikkim.

PHURPA TSHERING SUKMIMU. Ordained 1967.

Former teacher and catechist in Gangtok. EHCC Presbyter's course. Served in Gangtok and South-West Sikkim Pastorate; currently in Chekung.

PALDEN TSHERING VONGMU. Ordained 1969.

Former catechist. DHBS graduate. Serving Chhibo and Sitong Pastorates.

BENJAMIN RAI. Ordained 1969.

BD from Serampore, and MTh from Methodist Seminary in Madhya Pradesh. Served Darjeeling District and JJP. Resigned 1973 to become Director of the UBS Bible Translations Centre, Shillong.

PANTHUK SINGH TINGBO. Ordained 1969.

BD from Serampore and ThM from Princeton Theological Seminary. Served as mobile pastor to Bhutan; currently in Sikkim.

MIKAHANG SUBBA. Ordained 1970.

Former SUMI staff and CE leader from the 1960s. EHCC Presbyters' course. Served in Kalimpong. Resigned 1975 and became a Presbyterian Free Church pastor.

S.K. MORAL. Ordained 1970.

BD from Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. Served in Duars, Chhibo, Mangwa, and Darjeeling Pastorates. Resigned 1987 and started Medical Ambassadors work in Darjeeling.

HEM DATTA SUBBA (great-grandson of Namthak Rongong). Ordained 1972.

Former lawyer. BD from Union Biblical Seminary, Yoetmal. Serving Kalimpong Pastorate.

KAMAL ANDREW RAI. Ordained 1974.

BD from Union Biblical Seminary, Yoetmal. Served a Duars and various Kalimpong pastorates, until he became Principal of DHBS in 1982.

LUCKY KARTHAK. Ordained 1977.

BD from Union Biblical Seminary, Yoetmal. Served Siliguri and Kurseong Pastorates. Resigned 1980 to become pastor of the independent Siliguri Church. Currently responsible for the Himalayan branch of Asian Outreach.

DAN SINGH LEPCHA. Ordained 1978.

DHBS graduate. Served Kizom Pastorate. Resigned 1980 due to theological differences.

KIRAN K. SHARMA. Ordained 1990.

BD from Union Biblical Seminary, Pune. Serving in Todey-Jholong Pastorate.

R.O. MOLOMMU. Ordained 1991.

Former teacher and catechist from 1980s. Serving Kizom Pastorate.

APPENDIX E

"The Closed Land of Nepal: A Modern Jericho"

An article by Katherine Harbord, ZBMM missionary in India, as contained in World Dominion, Vol. XVII, No. 1, NY and London: World Dominion Press, January 1939, 81-85.

The Closed Land of Nepal :

A Modern Jericho

KATHERINE HARBORD

THE 'Jericho' about which this article is written is the closed land of Nepal, an independent country whose border marches for five hundred miles with the northern border of India. About eleven years ago the writer was led to begin the investigation of this closed land by settling as a medical missionary in the village of Nautanwa on the border. The village not only has a large settlement of Nepalese (the only permanent one on the southern border), but also lies on a trade route through which hundreds of Nepalese pass to and fro into India, either for trade or for enlistment in the Gurkha regiments of the British Army. From this centre many contacts have been made with those of the interior, both by word of mouth and the written Word. Medical work opened doors, and trips were made into the land to attend special patients at the invitation of the Nepalese officials, during which many valuable contacts were made. Unless invited by high officials no English person is allowed to cross the border, and, apart from the British Ambassador and his suite, very few are allowed in. Even medical help is not always a passport ; at the time of the earthquake some years ago, the writer was refused permission to go to the help of the thousands of injured at the capital.

Why are the walls of this 'Jericho' so strong and the gates so firmly closed ? Firstly for political reasons. Undoubtedly the Nepalese are afraid that their independent country may become absorbed in the Indian Empire, and for a hundred years they have kept up this 'closed door' policy, combined with great friendliness both to individuals and to the Indian Government. The border is absolutely friendly, with a free coming and going of the Indians and Nepalese, and in one place the train actually crosses the border and runs some miles inland. This line is Nepalese-owned and English people cannot use it. The second

reason for the closed door is the determination of the religious rulers, Hindu and Buddhist, to keep out all other religions. These two forces at present are the walls of this 'Jericho.'

In this little country, 54,000 square miles in area, there are about six million people. About half of them are of the mountains, 'real Nepalese,' as we call them. They are a vigorous, intelligent, independent people, great fighters and full of fun and good cheer. The majority of the Churka soldiers belong to this class. They enlist in our army as mercenaries, and are most loyal and faithful, never mixing with Indian politics. In appearance they are rather Mongolian, but their language is derived from the Sanskrit group. The remaining half of the population are the 'plains people,' who live in the narrow strip of flat land at the foot of the Himalayas adjoining India. By race they are Indian (though they are Nepalese, not British subjects), and in language and customs are similar to the Indians living on our side of the border with whom they inter-marry freely. There is a constant coming and going of these people into India, and by living anywhere along the border contact is easily made with them. The 'hill people' only come into India along definite trade routes leading down from mountain passes to the interior. To reach them one must be on a trade route.

As of old, the walls of this modern 'Jericho' can only be brought down by prayer and praise and faithful obedience. It was only when Jericho was completely surrounded that the walls fell. Some years ago this was the vision given to the writer, and an appeal was sent out for prayer and workers (men and women) to staff each important trade route on the southern border. It was then thought that twenty-four to twenty-six would be sufficient. At present the European workers in border-stations number about seventeen, and of this number about six are working among Indians only, not Nepalese. At least another six men and four women are needed to fill the gaps. So far very few of those already working

have been able to study the Nepalese language, and if the country were to open to-morrow there are not more than four or five who would be ready to advance. The vision was, and is, that as soon as there is a band ready to enter when permission is given, *then* the walls will fall. Much has been done, but we are still only at the stage of making one circuit of the walls in a day; we are not ready to march round seven times. Who is ready to fill the gaps and close the lines that the walls may be surrounded?

To those whom the Lord is calling for this work I would say a few words as to how the fight has to be carried on. There are no towns along the border, only villages. This means living in a village, in an Indian house in Indian style, unless the Mission buys land and builds. I personally feel that this latter proceeding means that we should 'dig ourselves in,' and would be unable to advance when the time came. After living in Nautanwa for eight years in an Indian house, I would never feel happy to return to European standards, and have now moved on to my new station, Barhani (Nautanwa being staffed by others) and have started there in a two-roomed house in a row of Indian houses. One room is used for dispensary work, and the other as a living room. Dwelling in this way among the people, contacts are made at once with those around, and an immediate hearing is obtained for our message. The house is rented by the month, and one is free to move on as opportunity arises. The actual cost of living is a fraction of what it would be in a 'bungalow' station, and thus one is able to use the money the Lord sends for more urgent needs.

A point that I should like further to emphasize is, that it is not in every place that much contact can be made with the 'hill Nepalese.' We find that on some routes these hill people come down only during two or three months of the cold weather season. During the rest of the year the missionary is working among the Indian and Indian-speaking Nepalese 'plains' people from just over the border. Both languages must be

learned. I might add that this part of India is most densely populated and quite unevangelized, and that even if the missionary does not get into touch with 'hill Nepalese' all the year round, there is more than sufficient work to do among the surrounding Indian villages, where we always get a welcome, as well as among the Nepalese 'plains people' who cross over to the Indian side. My patients in Barhni last year were approximately five per cent 'hill Nepali,' forty-five per cent 'plains Nepali,' and fifty per cent Indian. I missed the Nepali season, owing to illness, but I have reason to think that the figures would be really fifty per cent hill people during the season. All the while the missionary is on the border he is 'getting known' to the people inside, and when the time comes for advance, there will be friends all along the way.

The number given of six men and four women is only the minimum needed to staff actual trade routes. These will not be sufficient to enter when the walls fall. In addition to these, workers could be used in several of the big towns in India (*i.e.*, Lucknow) where large numbers of 'hill Nepalese' settle as police, caretakers, and so on. Lately, an appeal has come for workers in a Nepalese settlement in Assam.

In conclusion, a word must be said of the west and east borders, both in the Himalayan range. The former has been worked for many years by the Church of Scotland Mission. For the latter we hope that all the important points on the boundary will be manned in the near future.¹

The seventeen or so workers mentioned as being on the southern border represent several societies, such as the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, the Raxaul Border Mission, the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade and others. A conference of border workers was held at Raxaul last

¹ The writer belongs to the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade, which hopes to open up more stations as the Lord gives workers. It is heart-breaking to feel that the walls are not yet falling because we are not yet surrounding them. Prayer, praise, and faithful obedience are the forces to be used. The first two are being used by many of God's faithful people, but what about the last?

THE CLOSED LAND OF NEPAL

spring which was a great inspiration and help to many. Twelve tribes of Israel, united in faith and purpose, were needed to bring down the walls of Jericho. Pray that we, too, united in this way, may soon see these walls collapse, that 'every man may go straight up before Him' in the Name of the Lord.

Are all who have heard the call obedient? If only one is refusing to hear, he or she is making the gap in the attacking forces. If all were obedient should we have to shut our ears to the call from Assam, and have to seek God's guidance as to how one worker, in failing health, can possibly work during this cold weather in two empty stations, two hundred miles apart? For ten years the call for workers has gone forth. It sounds again to-day. Who will hear and obey?

APPENDIX F

THE FREE CHURCH OF FINLAND HIMALAYAN MISSION AND THE NEPAULESE

Unpublished account by Miss Vappu Rautamaki, retired missionary of the Free Church of Finland, Himalayan Mission. Translated into English by Rebecca Scotson. TS dated 1994.

THE FREE CHURCH OF FINLAND HIMALAYAN MISSION
AND THE NEPALESE

BACKGROUND: FREE CHURCH REVIVAL IN FINLAND

The Free Church revival began in Finland at the end of the nineteenth century. After belonging to the Swedish kingdom for centuries Finland was ceded to the Russian empire in 1809 due to defeat in war. However, the country was granted autonomy and laws based on western legal concepts remained in force and the Lutheran State Church could continue to function. During the time of peace the economic, psychological and spiritual life of the country was revived. Close cultural contacts with the Sweden remained and international connections were made. As in other parts of Europe new idealisms gained a footing and also a spiritual revival began to affect Finland.

There were many revival movements within the Finnish State Church which arose predominantly among the rural population. Many of these movements were born through one particular revivalist. The Free Church movement was kindled from many different sparks which flared among young educated people in different parts of the country. Constantin Boije who belonged to the nobility has been referred to as the first Free Churcher. Through him the first Free Church communion service was held. Other founder members would include the sisters Hilda, Anna, Rosina and Alba Hellman who probably began their work even before Boije and whose purposeful activities led to the revival in southern Ostrobothnia. They, like Boije, had connections with evangelical Christians in other countries, mainly Sweden and England.

The Free Church revival was strongly influenced by Sweden but the main turning point is considered to be the Helsinki visit of the English Lord Radstock in 1878. He was invited by Aurora Karamzin, the lady in waiting of Alexandra Fedoranna, the Russian empress and benefactress of Finland. Educational advisor S.S. Salmensaari, the most noted historian and long-term leader of the Free Church, wrote on the significance of Lord Radstock's visit: "His visit had an important, if not decisive, effect on the strengthening of the Free Church movement, the establishing of the Finnish Free Mission and the registration of the Free Church of Finland" ("Suomen Vapaakirkko", Paiva 1957).

In 1917 Finland gained independence and in 1923 a law concerning religious freedom came into force. This was long awaited by Free Church members as it would enable the Finnish Free Mission to be registered as an official denomination.

At this time a statement of faith based on a 1889 confession was accepted. There it is stated:

3. In order to adhere to the principle of Christian fellowship as presented in the New Testament we present no other requirement than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and an outward profession of faith.
4. According to this we have formed into assemblies to fulfill biblical church life and to function according to and on behalf of our Christian convictions.

The Free Church statement of faith has emphasized salvation based solely on the grace of God and possessed by faith; the right of the believer to enjoy his salvation; and the duty Jesus gave to share the gospel to the unconverted. In the beginning the Free Church members were also inspired by the expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ.

The Finnish nation is small. In 1926 the population of Finland was 3,558,220 people and the Free Church had 2,614 members. In 1991 the population of Finland was ca. 4,500,000 and the Free Church had 13,652 members.

THE FINNISH FREE MISSION

The Finnish Free Mission was registered in 1889 and in the beginning the ministry took place in the local surroundings. In addition to sharing the Gospel with members of the own society, evangelizing work was done among sailors, people living in slums, women on the streets, soldiers (Also Russian ones), children, distant villages and towns, kindred nations within Russia, and so called forest Finns in Sweden and prisoners as far away as Siberia.

Free Church attendants became interested in foreign missions after Antti Makinen, editor of the Free Church of Finland weekly, returned from London. Antti Makinen was a student in 1883-84 in Harley College, which had been founded by Grattan Guinness and during this time he also became acquainted with Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission. Makinen was impressed by the children of the Taylor and Guinness families, in particular by Geraldine Grattan Guinness, who later became Mrs. Howard Taylor. Makinen's articles and speeches form the first spark for foreign missions of the Finnish Free Mission.

FREDERICK FRANSON AND THE FINNISH PIONEERS

In 1888 the Finnish Free Mission invited mission director Frederick Franson over to speak. He was Swedish-American and was often called "God's Torch". A young teacher, Agnes Meijer was one of his interpreters, who in 1891 became the first Finnish missionary in China with the China Inland Mission.

By this time, Lady Sigrid Gahmberg (born 19.2.1865) began to be interested in missionary work. When attending Franson's missionary courses in Sweden, she became friends with Susanna Hansen, who was a young widow. To prepare herself for missionary work, Sigrid functioned as an evangelist among Finns living in Sweden, and later on in the Finnish country-side. The day of departing for China approached but Sigrid was feeling unsure and the formerly so clear vision of work in China had begun to fade. One day she received a letter from Susanna Hansen, who was now in India. This exceptional woman had joined the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, which had been founded by Franson in the USA in 1891, and had left with her ten-year-old daughter Alfhild to work among the Bhutanese in Baksaduar in May 1895. In the 1860s the British had caused the area to be divided from Bhutan and incorporated into India. "Come and help me," wrote Susanna. She had taken ill and was soon

needing help with her pioneer work. She had been asking God for a fellow worker and felt that Sigrid would be the one God had chosen.

In 1895 J.F. Fredericksson had a mission house built in Baksaduar along Buxa Road in Chunabhatti village, but Susanna was the first actual missionary in the area. Her illness was serious and she died in Baksaduar while Sigrid was on her way to India. Sigrid received information about the death of her friend on arrival at Colombo port.

Sigrid Gahmberg - Alone but Undaunted

Sigrid Gahmberg accepted Susanna Hansen's invitation with the courage her family was known for and immediately began to get ready for the journey. The leaders of the mission were rather surprised: Miss Gahmberg was supposed to go to China! The newly founded mission could not support Sigrid as there were no intentions to open other mission fields at so early a stage because of financial reasons. Instead, Sigrid received funds for the trip from the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, based in the United States. The Free Mission did promise to send Sigrid the private donations and in 1895 she was sent out in the Free Mission annual meeting in Tampere. Everything happened so fast that even editor Antti Makinen, who was fond of missionary work, briefly mentioned in an edition published after the meeting: "a sister was sent out to Buthan" - even the name of the mission field was spelt wrong! Most probably Sigrid Gahmberg had to support her work mainly herself. One of the first donations stated in the Free Church of Finland Weekly was "one mark from a sister in Sakkijarvi" (a small parish now belonging to Russia).

Sigrid's first fellow worker was Anna Fredericksson, who was an American-Swede and sister of mission director J.F. Fredericksson. Sigrid devoted herself to evangelizing work among the Bhutanese in Baksaduar, close to the Bhutan border. The border still being open, she did many trips into the heart of Bhutan and through her letters and articles in the Free Church of Finland Weekly informed readers about the Bhutanese responding to the Gospel. Sigrid Gahmberg was an evangelist, a winner of souls. In the spring of 1900 she became ill and died in Ghoom, where she had travelled in order to get treatment. "Tibetans carried her to her grave, which had been prepared by Nepalese. This was Sigrid's own wish," wrote her Finnish fellow worker Hilja Heiskanen, saddened by the sudden death of her friend.

Klara Hertz on her way to Tibet

In 1896 teacher Klara Hertz (born 21.10.1863) was another Finn leaving for India without support from the mission. She insisted on working among Tibetans and despite objections of fellow workers, she decided to travel through Nepal to Tibet with Anna Massinen, who had arrived from Finland a couple of years later. November 2nd 1899 together with Kjenrab, a former Tibetan monk converted into Christianity, the three crossed the Nepalese border in Sukhia Pokhri and headed for Tibet. After six weeks Nepalese officials sent the Finns back to Darjeeling. Anna Massinen's diary remains as proof of the journey and it tells of their journey along the trade route far north. Village people were

extremely friendly to the travellers and sold them food stuffs. Klara and Anna

had a tent with them and sometimes they would stay at an inn. Anna took care of the sick she met. She did not speak any Tibetan at the time, whereas Klara could speak the language fluently. The bearers caused the most trouble, and when approaching the snow line they finally refused to go any further. Klara and Anna prayed constantly for the Nepalese they met and for the Tibetans they wanted to reach. According to the diary one can conclude that they walked in prayer.

Klara Hertz and Anna Massinen are possibly the first Finns to have been in Nepal to share the Gospel. On December 13th 1899 they returned to Darjeeling but after Christmas left for Sikkim and began missionary work in Lachen.

This is what Klara Hertz says about the Darjeeling area in her first letter to Finland: "Here one can behold vast teagardens high on the slopes and there are people from many nations, Nepalese, which are a small tribe in the mountains...Thousands of people crowding on the Darjeeling market every Sunday. Members of different nations can easily be distinguished by the way they dress and behave. They are all worshippers of false gods and must be won to Christ." (Antti Makinen: *Usko, toivo ja rakkaus*, 1897).

Klara Hertz used to preach in the Darjeeling market soon after arriving in India, first in English with interpretation into Tibetan, and after learning the language she preached in Tibetan. Through one of these open-air meetings Pasang Tenzing, a young Sikkimese man, became a Christian, and he later became an evangelist, teacher and support for many missionaries in Sikkim.

In the same year, Klara Hertz became ill in Lachen and had to return to Finland. In 1906 she returned to Sikkim and was in missionary work for the following fourteen years until 1920, when she died in Lachen.

Sigrid Gahmberg and Klara Hertz were the first Finnish missionaries of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission. Sigrid was also one of the first Finnish missionaries in India and one of the first women to work independently.

THE SCANDINAVIAN ALLIANCE MISSION

The Scandinavian Alliance Mission (SAL) was founded in 1891 in the United States by Free Church members who had moved to America from Scandinavia (*Svenska Missionsförbundet*). A Swedish revivalist, Frederick Franson, was an important member of the group and the inspiration for founding the organization was received from Hudson Taylor, as he sent a prayer request for receiving a thousand new missionaries to China in the following five years. In 1891 the new mission society sent out fifty missionaries from the United States to China. According to "*Skandinavian Allianssilahetyt*," a booklet published in Finland in 1907, within a year SAL had 125 missionaries on different fields in China, Japan, East and South Africa and India. It has been

said about the beginnings of work in India that one day in the beginning of the 1890s Franson and his friend J.A. Fredericksson were fasting and praying on the Rocky Mountains. The spiritual darkness of Tibet was particularly on their hearts and when praying, they realized that it was them that God was calling to work among Tibetans. The inspiration for working in Tibet spread, action was taken, and on March 9th 1892 nine missionaries travelled through Japan to India with J.A. Fredericksson as their leader.

Later the Scandinavian Alliance Mission had an American, Swedish and Finnish department and there were also connections with Denmark.

The Scandinavian Alliance Mission on the Himalayan Slopes

The first missionaries coming from North America were not permitted to go to Tibet and settled down in the Darjeeling area of northern Bengal, close to the border of Nepal and Sikkim. They acquired a house in Ghoom, about six miles from Darjeeling, which was situated along the road leading to the plains of Nepal, Sikkim and India and along the Darjeeling-Siliguri railway. The area had a well-known Buddhist monastery visited by Tibetan pilgrims, and a vast Tibetan settlement, and the population included: Sherpas, Thomis, Lepchas, Bhutias from North Sikkim, and Bhutanese and Nepalese people. According to the booklet "Skandinavian Allianssilahetytys," possibly written by Kaarlo Waismaa, the mission settled down in Ghoom for financial reasons: the cost of living was cheaper in Ghoom than in Darjeeling. Another reason, typical for Franson's movements, was that there were already other Tibetan missions in Darjeeling and Franson always wanted to go to areas where the Gospel had not previously been shared. A third reason for choosing misty Ghoom was its location on an important crossroads. In the beginning, the Gospel was shared mainly to Tibetan pilgrims and traders.

For decades, Ghoom was the main location for the mission, and from there the work reached the close surroundings and the Dooars area on the Bhutan border, where in 1895 the first mission house was built. This was located along Buxa Road, in Chunabhatti, Baksaduar. With permission of the Maharaja and help of the Queen, a school building was acquired in Cooch Behar rather unexpectedly; in 1894 the first workers, who were two women, travelled to North Sikkim to begin their work in Lachung, the permit granted by the British Political Officer of Sikkim; a couple of workers left for Garhwal on the western border of Tibet and finally ended up in Baltistan. Later SAL began work in Bhililand, close to Bombay. With its first stages as described above, the mission had an effect in Nepal, also.

The "Ghoom Bible" and Hymn Book

After becoming acquainted with the Tibetan language, the missionaries realized that the New Testament available in the West Tibetan dialect was not sufficient for Tibetans speaking the Lhasa dialect, for Sikkimese people, nor for travellers coming from Lhasa, with whom there were soon connections. The New Testament began to be revised in Ghoom with the assistance of the Calcuttan Department of the British and Foreign Bible Society. The committee had the following members: A.W. Heyde, expert on the Tibetan language and missionary of the United Brethren; J.A. Fredericksson; David MacDonald, Anglo-Sikkimese and converted into Christianity; and Kjenrab, previously a monk. Printing machines were sent to Ghoom from America, and leaflets and parts of the Bible were printed as the translation work progressed. The first piece to be printed was a hymn book, which was first published in several parts. The revising of the New Testament took ten years and the translation known as "the Ghoom Bible" was highly appreciated among language experts. This New Testament reached Tibet before missionaries did and had an important impact, as God's word always has.

Kaarlo Waismaa, a well-known composer of spiritual songs in Finland, translated popular songs into Tibetan, composed and arranged the music and published song books. The latest song book was printed in the printing shop of the Calcutta Baptist Church.

THE FINNISH ALLIANCE MISSION

Franson, like many of his contemporaries (among these Grattan Guinness and Hudson Taylor) believed that the return of Jesus was very close at hand. Inspired by this faith, Franson travelled around the world preaching the Gospel and encouraging people to participate in missionary work. During his visit to Finland in 1898 a Scandinavian Alliance Mission branch was founded for the evangelizing of Tibetans. The founders of the Finnish Alliance Mission were members of the Finnish Free Mission. The idea of "alliance" did not gain wide support in Finland and as far as is known, only the YWCA was interested in Franson's thought of ecumenical missionary work. During its first year of existence, the mission sent four missionaries to India. These were: preacher Kaarlo Waismaa (born 24.10.1869), his wife teacher Hanna Waismaa, nee Staudinger (born 21.11.1865), and evangelists Hilja Heiskanen (born 2.2.1866) and Anna Massinen (born 2.2.1868). Also Sigrid Gahmberg and Klara Hertz, who were already in India, later joined the Finnish Alliance Mission.

In Finland Franson encouraged women of the Free Mission into preaching work and to found the Women's Mission Society for the support of women working on the mission fields or at home. The society has been referred to as "the twin sister of the Himalayan Mission" and it has supported all female missionaries of the Free Church of Finland until this day. The Women's Mission Society was founded in 1900.

Four Pioneers

"One way of reaching Tibet is to share the Gospel in adjoining countries," wrote Kaarlo Waismaa in the Free Church of Finland Weekly soon after arriving in Ghoom. Surprising for the Finns was the mixture of nationalities, languages and religions in Darjeeling, and the fact that it seemed impossible to go to Tibet. But the Finns accepted the situation and began work in the same conditions the founders of the mission had begun theirs, with Tibet still being the goal. The missionaries first studied Tibetan and work mainly took place among the Tibetan population in Ghoom and pilgrims and traders and their kindred people travelling there. In addition to Ghoom, Finns later worked in Baksaduar, Sikkim, Pedong, Kurseong and Cooch Behar, but not in Baltistan and Bhililand, the other two fields belonging to SAL. (It was not until the 1970s that a Finnish doctor, Taisto Valta and his family worked in Bhililand.)

The group of Finns were also called "four-leaved clover" and their work took place as follows:

As Sigrid Gahmberg had hoped, Hilja Heiskanen became her fellow worker in Baksaduar. Their work had a promising start but in 1900 ended in Sigrid's early death. Hilja Heiskanen stayed in Cooch Behar for some time but in August of the same year she went to help mission director J.F. Fredericksson in Ahmedabad, state of Gujarat, where Fredericksson had begun relief work among people suffering from starvation. The work was hard and resulted in illness and the death of Fredericksson on 5 September 1900 in Ahmedabad. Returning from her difficult journey, Hilja Heiskanen brought with her 28 orphans whose parents had died of starvation. This is when Hilja's life work among children began. In Ghoom she founded a children's home called "Sparrow's Nest," which together with a connected school became one of the most important work fields of the Finnish Mission.

In 1914 Heiskanen had to give up her work. She died in Finland in the 1930s demented and lonely, and it was not until later that her life work was valued.

Before leaving for India, Anna Massinen was a well-known evangelist in Finland and had even experienced persecution. In January 1900, after a six-week trip to Nepal with Klara Hertz, the two women together with Kjenrab began work in Lachen. As far as it is known, the permit was granted by the British authorities. The King was for a long time under British control in Darjeeling and Kurseong, later on in Kalimpong. After Klara left for a holiday in Finland, Anna Massinen stayed on her own and continued to work despite great difficulties - she lived in an old shed for a long time. "Anna of prayer" gained the trust of the people, and C.J. White, the British Governor of Sikkim and respected Tibetologist, is known to have helped Anna in acquiring land. Brought up on a farm, in Lachen Anna began to raise potatoes and apples. She also founded a school and later a weaving school. The first person to become a Christian through Anna was a man called Nagchin.

In 1907 Anna married Edward Owen, who was British and had joined the mission. But on 28 October 1908 Anna died in Ghoom where missionaries had gathered for an annual meeting. She was buried next to Sigrid Gahmberg and Hanna Waismaa in a Christian graveyard outside the old mission house.

In 1899 Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa began to work among the Lepcha tribe in Ringim, Sikkim, where a small mission house had been built the same year, and work had been begun in 1894 by Swedish women workers. The Waismaa couple soon got started as they received competent fellow workers: Mathila Johansson, who was Swedish and experienced, and two native workers: Pasang Tenzing and Isaac, who was from Pedong and an ancestor of the contemporarily well-known Isaac family. Isaac's wife, Rebecca, also participated in the work.

Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa had two children and they received rather exceptional names: the daughter was called Risti (Cross) and the son Armo (Mercy). "We received these names so that even they would testify of the main points of the Gospel," told Risti, now an 80-year-old pensioner in Finland.

Both Kaarlo and Hanna were evangelists roaming from one house and village to another and sharing the Gospel. They founded a school in Ringim and planned an institution for Christian workers. Kaarlo also took part in translating the Old Testament in Ghoom and edited a collection of songs: the Waismaas had a lot of plans but things took a different course. Hanna Waismaa became seriously ill and on 2 April 1905 when stopping in Ghoom on her way to Finland, she had a stroke and died. Kaarlo returned to Finland with their two small children. After remarrying, in 1910 he came back to Ghoom for two years on his own. During this period he compiled a Tibetan spelling book and reader, and published some new songs. Back in Finland Waismaa was editor-in-chief of the Free Church of Finland Weekly and used the magazine as a means for making missionary work known. As a preacher, editor, Bible College teacher and board member of the Free Church of Finland, he has had a great influence on Free Church theology and inland ministry.

A New Century Begins

The early death of Sigrid Gahmberg (22.5.1900), the first Finn on the field, was a shock to everyone. But the same year Hulda Nordin (born 1873), a teacher, was sent by the Finnish YWCA. The following year Ossian Eklund (born 1876), a pharmacist, became Hulda's fellow-worker in Cooch Behar and Baksaduar and the two were later married. Their work field came to be Ringim after the Waismaas had left.

Ossian and Hulda Eklund had learned Tibetan and in Ringim they began to study the Lepcha language. They continued the nursing work the Waismaas and Mathilda Johansson had begun and which reached the nearby leper colony. Ossian and Hulda had three children, a daughter Nora in 1905 (still alive when writing this) and a son Bjorn in 1907 who died in 1941, and a daughter Beatrice born 1910. The family returned to Finland in 1908.

Edla Traskback (born 27.8.1876) arrived in India in December 1902. She was a gardener and worked for the mission for the longest period. Hanna Waismaa became seriously ill in Sikkim but did not want to return to Finland. Instead, she inquired in the Free Church of Finland Weekly whether there would be a Christian women who would like to come and look after her household in Sikkim. Edla Traskback was ready to go immediately! Kaarlo Waismaa having returned to Finland in 1905 after his wife's death, Edla stayed in missionary work for 57 years altogether. She worked on all the Sikkim stations but mainly in Lachen, and later in Ghoom and Baksaduar. She was a person of vision, courage, and initiative and she had an interest in a wide range of matters -- as a result, she had an important part to play in reaching Nepal.

The Scandinavian Alliance Mission and the Finns Depart

When the "four-leaved clover" arrived there was talk within the mission about the Himalayan field being overcrowded. This did not mean that there would have been a lack of space or not enough people to be reached but rather it referred to a lack of possibilities to establish permanent work among Tibetans living in India. There were permanent Tibetan settlements in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas but in addition to the Alliance Mission, many other societies were working among Tibetans. (Although many of these soon gave up!) Most of the Tibetans with whom there were connections were very mobile and traders often had a home in both Tibet and Darjeeling or Kalimpong. There were plenty of Nepalese in the area and they seemed to be open to the Gospel, but Fredericksson had agreed to work only among Tibetans and their kindred nations. The workers of the Alliance Mission had promised to concentrate on North Sikkim and Tibetans living in India and to leave work among the Nepalese to the Scottish Church Mission, and this promise was kept.

Franson and his followers wanted to avoid dogmatic conflicts and take the Gospel to those who had not heard it before. Many native workers found this principle difficult to understand and it did cause difficulty as different nationalities came into close contact in the centres of population and on the tea-gardens. As Tibet remained closed and the Nepalese language spread, by force of circumstance the mission began to touch the Nepalese. This was particularly so in the schools, where all children were accepted. Nepalese came to be the standard language of Darjeeling, originally part of Sikkim. In 1950 Nepalese finally succeeded Tibetan within the mission: Hellin Hukka-Dukpa was the last missionary to have studied Tibetan.

Ghoom became Nepalized.

North Sikkim was completely different to what it is today. It was sparsely populated and the northern villagers mostly led a nomadic life: each season they would roam with their cattle from one pasture to another. In 1958, for example, most of the Lachen population moved to lower areas for the winters. During the winter months, the village was almost empty and as a result regular Church life was slow to grow.

In 1950 the only road leading to India was still mostly one-way and led to the capital Gangtok. In the beginning, the workers had to walk or ride to Sikkim from as far away as Ghoom.

Sikkim was a small border province and had always interested its vast neighbours as many important pass roads leading from South Asia to Tibet ran through it. Tibet presented an interest to the great powers, too! As a result, foreigners were not wanted in Sikkim by the British government, by the Sikkim King, and even by Buddhist Lamas. At times missionaries and Christians in Sikkim were persecuted and it was very difficult to get residence, work or building permits for Sikkim.

Contacts with Baksaduar were difficult to keep up. In the beginning the connection between Siliguri and Alipurduar Junction on the Assam railway had no bridges: travellers had to be rowed across the streams. At the time Baksaduar was restless and was considered a rather dangerous area.

The facts mentioned above are some of the reasons for the "crowdedness" and for the decision of the Americans and Swedes to concentrate on other fields and leave the Himalayan work to the Finns. It was in 1906 that the Scandinavian Alliance Mission handed the work to the Finnish Alliance Mission.

In 1909 the Finnish Alliance Mission board transferred the responsibility of the Himalayan work to the Finnish Free Mission board. In actual fact, this did not affect any major change as the boards of both missions were composed of the same members.

The 1923 law of religious freedom enabled the Free Mission to be registered as an official denomination and was called the Free Church of Finland. The Church mission board and later the Free Church board and mission secretary took the responsibility for missionary work. The final name of the mission came to be the Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission.

THE FREE CHURCH OF FINLAND HIMALAYAN MISSION

Mathilda Johansson continued her work in Ringim and for a while her fellow worker stayed, too, so all Swedes did not leave the Himalayas. Signe Fredericksson from America still worked in Baksaduar and Edward H. Owen joined the mission in 1906.

Difficulties faced by the Finns

Once the Finns had the responsibility for the Himalayan mission the work continued much the same as before. But the increased financial difficulties became one of the greatest hindrances to missionary work during the pioneering years, when actually churches had not yet been born. The wars

made it difficult to send funds from Finland to India, and the work suffering

most was that in children's homes, schools, nursing and literature. The wars causing hard times for the Finnish Himalayan Mission were: World War I, War of Independence in 1918, Finnish Winter War in 1939-40, Finnish Continuation War in 1941-44 and World War II. Connections with Finland were cut off for long periods of time and the missionaries had to support themselves. They managed to do this by keeping boarders and summer guests and, for instance, pastor Eli Ollila bought a weaving machine and sold woollen clothes for people in Darjeeling.

When connections with Finland ended, many plans died, too, one of these being the educating of native workers. The hardest times were 1941-45 as Finland located in the middle of the great powers was considered an enemy of Britain. Two young missionaries, Arnold Hyttinen and Arthur Pylkkanen were arrested and sent to a concentration camp in Dehra Dun for several years.

The Main and Branch Churches

The Free Church of Finland was a considerably small supporting organization. When in 1923 it became an independent registered church, it consisted of 1,400 members and 45 assemblies. It did not only support the Himalayan Mission but also work in China and tribal ministry among kindred nations. In 1992 the Free Church of Finland had 13,812 members and 35 missionaries in 14 different countries.

In 1923 the Ghoom and Sikkim churches had all in all 138 adult members and 81 children. 2,500 patients had been nursed and there were six native workers. "There was lack of space in the school," a report concludes.

In 1989 the Himalayan Free church had 34 assemblies, 2,500 adult members and 60 native workers. Presently there is only one elementary school in Baksaduar, and the Free Church of Finland still pays the wages of two of the teachers.

Despite many difficulties, missionary work on the Himalayan slopes has progressed -- even in trials it has been God's work.

The Himalayan Finns

The dream of Tibet was inherited from Franson and together with the Himalayan Mission remained the responsibility of the Finns. Throughout the times, the Mission has only had a few long-term workers, some worked only for one work period and all could not even manage that. Until the 1950s one period of service was seven years long.

One of the workers taking the long road was Elin Kronqvist (born 7.1.1880). She attended China Inland Mission courses in London and arrived in India in 1906. First she worked in the Ghoom children's home and later at the different stations in Sikkim, the longest time being in Lachen, where she died in

1939. She was buried in the Lachen Christian graveyard next to Klara

Hertz and Ellen Petersen, a nurse who had died after only two years in Sikkim. Like other workers, Elin Kronqvist had to spend long periods on her own on distant mission stations.

In 1908 two new missionaries arrived from Finland: Anna Kempe (born 2.8.1877), a teacher; and Aura Karlsson, later Camm (born 25.7.1884), a kindergarten teacher.

Anna Kempe was sent by the YWCA and was a rather exceptional worker. She was not only a keen school teacher but also an evangelist. In 1923 she left the mission and became an independent missionary in Kurseong and Pedong. She spoke Tibetan and Nepalese and worked among both peoples. She also had an effect on the founding of a Christian church in Nepal. In the 1940s Anna Kempe returned to Finland and her work was continued by Signe Back, who belonged to a Swedish speaking Pentecostal church. Ragnhild Bjorklund (born 21.2.1907) came to help Signe Back while she was in Pedong, and afterwards became Riitta Siikanen's colleague in Ghoom. The church that was born in Ghoom became part of the Himalayan Free Church.

Aura Karlsson founded a kindergarten in Ghoom and similar kindergartens were later established on other stations, too. Aura married William Camm, who was British, and moved to England.

Mia Mann nee Lipponen (born 1881) was the principle of a school for the blind and in 1912 was sent by YWCA to Ghoom. Her contribution in developing the Ghoom school was important, but she too married a British missionary, W. Mann, and joined the Tibet Mission her husband belonged to. William and Mia Mann worked in Darjeeling and Pedong.

On the eve of World War I, in 1914 a young couple arrived in India: pastor Eli Ollila (born 27.5.1888) and his wife Sonja, nee Nickul (born 1885). Their work period was hard: World War I made it difficult to transmit information and funds from Finland and the 1917 Russian Revolution and the Finnish War of Independence made matters worse. The world-wide recession in the 1930s was difficult for Finland and its effect could be seen in the financial situation of the mission. As a result, social work had to be cut down. During World War II Eli and Sonja Ollila were even under house arrest! They worked on the Sikkim stations, in Baksaduar and for the longest time in Ghoom. Sonja Ollila was the school secretary, director of the weaving shop and children's home, and treasurer of the mission. At the time, Eli was the only male worker of the mission and travelled a lot. Despite his heavy work load, Eli Ollila studied the Tibetan culture in depth: he was an expert on Tibet.

The Ollila family had financial difficulties and the son, Olavi, had to work as a car handy-man and driver. Helvi, the daughter, went to school in Finland and was separated from her family for years. In 1946 the Ollilas returned to Finland.

The beginning of the 1920s seemed promising for the mission. In 1923 nurse Annikki Tunturivuo, later Eklund (born 1899) and pastor Juho Yrttimaa (born 1889) arrived in Ghoom. Annikki Tunturivuo worked mainly in Sikkim and Juho Yrttimaa in Ghoom. There with Eli Ollila, he founded a carding shop offering vocational training and work especially for men.

The following year evangelist Siiri Aartola, later Wikki (born 11.10.1899) and textile teacher Hanna Juureva (born 2.6.1880) arrived from Finland. Both had been taught Tibetan in Finland by Kaarlo Waismaa. Siiri Aartola had been active in young people's work and evangelism and when she became secretary of the Ghoom school, she brought with her new free-time activities for the students. Later Siiri Aartola was fellow-worker of Annikki Tunturivuo in Sikkim.

Hanna Juureva returned to Finland after a work period of 37 years. She was in charge of the weaving shops and with Edla Traskback of the children's homes in Ghoom and Baksaduar. Hanna Juureva was 43 years old when she first came to India.

In 1937 four new workers were received to the mission field: teacher Arnold Hyttinen (born 21.2.1909), pastor Arthur Pylkkanen (born 8.7.1907), nurse Elvi Makela, later Jokisaari (born 14.6.1909) and evangelist Astrid Virtanen, later Marklew (born 1917).

Arnold Hyttinen worked in Baksaduar for the rest of his life, except for the years spent in a concentration camp in Dehra Dun. He was a linguist and could speak twelve different languages. He used to make long evangelistic and book sale trips with native workers to Bhutan and to visit the Nepalese and other peoples living on the plains. When preaching he could easily switch from one language to another. After he was freed from the concentration camp, he began to translate the New Testament into Dzongkha, the official language of Bhutan, which was also spoken in Baksaduar. Hyttinen died on 15 September 1950 [sic] in Baksaduar.

Elvi Jokisaari and Astrid Virtanen were Elin Kronqvist's fellow workers in Lachen. After two years Astrid Virtanen married an Anglo-Indian Christian and left the mission. Elvi Makela was engaged when she came to the field, and got married in the United States after the Finnish Winter War began and Elin Kronqvist had died. In 1950 she returned to the field with her husband.

During these difficult times, it was believed that the Himalayan mission field would be closed altogether. Young workers were not encouraged to go to the Himalayas, although new workers were badly needed. It was not until the 1950s that new workers were received: first to arrive were pastor Olli Jokisaari (born 28.7.1917) and his wife Elvi, nee Makela; soon after came evangelist Oili Lappalainen (21.7.1917) and assistant nurse Hellin Hukka, later Hukka-Dukpa (born 23.3.1920); in 1955 came evangelist Vappu Rautamaki (born 30.12.1919); in 1958 came public health nurse Riitta Siikanen (born 26.10.1926); and finally Ragnhild Bjorklund (born 21.2.1907), a British citizen born in Finland.

Those arriving in the 1950s could no longer receive a work permit for Sikkim. Olli and Elvi Jokisaari continued their work in Ghoom; Oili Lappalainen and Hellin Hukka-Dukpa worked in Baksaduar, where Oili was in-charge of a weaving shop and Hellin took care of the sick; Vappu Rautamaki got a work permit for Baksaduar after Oili Lappalainen had left, but moved to Ghoom after a year as Olli and Elvi Jokisaari had by this time left the mission and moved to the United States; Riitta Siikanen got a work permit for Baksaduar to take the place of Vappu Rautamaki but later was located in Ghoom as mission secretary and in-charge of the work.

The following people worked for the mission in addition to the Finns: E.H. Owen and Margaret Doig, both British working mainly in Sikkim; Nanna Allebert, a Swedish teacher from the Orebro Baptist Mission. She later started independent work with Agnes Oden in Algarah, close to Pedong; in the 1940s Margaret Vitants, later Tharchin, a Latvian evangelist. After marrying G. Tharchin, a Tibetan living in Kalimpong, they began work on a children's home; and Florence Elcock, an elderly English woman, who later joined the Bakht Sing movement. May Isaacsson, an American-Finn worked in Lachen in 1930-32 but had to return to the United States for health reasons.

During 1895-1972 the Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission had 35 missionaries receiving their support from Finland. The number includes: seven Finnish men, one Briton, twenty-three Finnish women, one American, and the other foreign women mentioned above. Eight Finns died while working in the Himalayas. The Himalayan Free Church having become independent, the last worker to return to Finland was Hellin Hukka-Dukpa. She had worked in Baksaduar for 37 years and married Norbu Dukpa, a native pastor. The first Finn had begun work in Baksaduar, and that is where the last worker returned from.

The list does not include western workers working for short periods of time. It would be impossible to make a list of native, in particular, Nepalese workers. In the end of the 1950s Vappu Rautamaki and Riitta Siikanen were compelled to burn mission documents because the Chinese threat was felt strongly in the mission. Finnish citizens were advised to be prepared for evacuation. There were other warnings, too, and as a result it was considered best to destroy lists of names, which in the hands of the Chinese might have caused difficulty for the people concerned.

Mission Fields where Finns worked

During the time of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission the main mission stations were: Ghoom in the Darjeeling area; Baksaduar in Dooars, Jalpaiguri district; and Lachung, Mangen and Lachen in Sikkim. New locations for the work were born around each station: Alubaari in Ghoom; Bob and Soong in Sikkim; and Adama in Baksa.

In the following I will describe the work in each main station area, and its effect on the Nepalese.

GHOOM

The Darjeeling area, including Ghoom, consists of many different nationalities. The area first belonged to Sikkim but the borders have changed and each conqueror had left its mark. In the 19th century Darjeeling was a summer retreat, garrison and school town for the British. The Darjeeling railway and tea gardens increased the inhabitants' opportunities to earn money. There was a steady flow of immigrants particularly from Nepal. The natives, and most of all Lepchas, soon learned the Nepalese language and today the Tibetan and Lepcha place names are a mere reminder of the past. The urbanized Ghoom proved to be a hard ground for spiritual work.

Ghoom never experienced a time of great revival. In the beginning of the century some Buddhist monks converted to Christianity, the Gospel began to touch members of the Ihomi tribe, and at the end of the 1950s there was a movement among young people, but the local church has remained small. The Scottish Church Mission (now the United Church of North India) and Bakht Singh movement also had ministry in the area.

The mission has had two houses in Ghoom. The first acquired in 1894 was located along the Darjeeling road close to the railway station, in the bazaar. The Enfield site and buildings were bought from Keventer dairy farm for the children's home in 1909. When in the 1920s the old mission house was given up, a church was built along Senchal road in Enfield and it remains there to the present day.

Children's Home "Sparrow's Nest"

The children's home founded by Hilja Heiskanen has previously been mentioned when discussing the pioneers. The children brought from Ahmedabad were placed in Cooch Behar and Baksaduar and were transferred in 1904 to Ghoom. A school was founded in conjunction with the children's home.

Naturally, new children were received at the "Sparrow's Nest" and the children from Ahmedabad soon became like Nepalese. For instance, still found in the Himalayan Free churches are children and grand-children of Abraham and Johan Moore, the two eldest boys in the home, and the descendants have become completely identified with the Nepalese.

The intention was to give the inhabitants of the children's home as good an education as possible. The following is an example of a Brahmin family called Sharma: The husband, a Brahmin from Nepal, died tragically in Ghoom. His wife and five children were left without a home or money. Having become ill, the widow was compelled to sell her children into slavery - only the eldest son managed somehow to support himself. When the missionaries in Ghoom heard about the family, they hurried to help the widow, freed the children and

began to take care of the whole family. Before the mother died, she asked the Finns to look after the family. The eldest son ran away and cursed his mother, who had become a Christian, and the eldest daughter died, but the three younger children found a home in the Sparrow's Nest. After passing his matriculation exams James received theological training, David became a teacher, and Ruth became a doctor. Once Hilja Heiskanen brought Ruth for a holiday in Finland, and so Ruth Longman, later Sharma was possibly the first Nepalese to have visited Finland. Among other boys from Ahmedabad receiving higher education was pastor John Moore. His grand-daughter, nurse Dorothy Chettri, is currently working in the Ashram Bible School in Nepal.

In 1926 the Ghoom children's home work was cut back due to financial difficulties, but as early as 1930 Edla Traskback and Hanna Juureva transferred both the children's home and the weaving shop to Baksaduar. Boys raised there were the last actual children's home residents. In 1926 the field committee of the mission in Ghoom decided that orphans would be taken into care on all stations.

At times a hostel for Sikkimese youngsters functioned in conjunction with the children's home. They could not otherwise have continued their studies. In 1956 another small boarding hostel was opened in Ghoom and it had pupils from Sikkim and four from Baksaduar.

The Schools

Already in the initial stages of the work a small elementary school had been founded in Ghoom. In 1904 it had 42 pupils from different nationalities and religions. Hilja Heiskanen was particularly keen to get girls to study at the school and these would form separate classes.

The school founded in connection with the children's home became independent in 1910 and started to follow the official state curriculum. The principal was Karma Paul, a qualified Tibetan speaking teacher. He became a Christian in 1913 but later gave it up: he was later a professor at the University of Calcutta and a Buddhist Lama. He spent his retired years in Ghoom still teaching Tibetan, and his last Finnish student was Hellin Hukka-Dukpa.

Anna Kempe, Mia Lipponen and Karma Paul developed the school so that in 1917 it became an English secondary school.

In 1924 the school had 102 pupils and six teachers. Almost all the children voluntarily joined Sunday schools and other free-time activities. However, in 1925 the field committee decided to close the school and the reason given for this unfortunate event was the fear that government support, and non-Christian school inspectors, board members and teachers would have too much power. Many subsequent missionaries have been annoyed with this short-sightedness as the school would have served as a means of making contact with the families of the pupils, and the whole community.

The highly esteemed secondary school was replaced by an

elementary school, which in 1929 had seventy pupils.

The 1934 the school had to be closed after an earthquake destroyed the school building. The school began to function again the following year and the teacher was Mirjam Matti Rai, who had grown up in the children's home. 1939-46 were difficult times for the school and as a result the school work was often interrupted. In 1955 the school was reformed in co-operation with the Scottish Mission. The principal was Mr. Tarbula, a Christian Lepcha; the chairman of the board was a Finn; and the secretary was a Scottish missionary. In 1958 the school expanded into a secondary school and the principal was David Mangratee, who was also pastor of the Ghoom Church. The school had over 200 pupils and six teachers. Most of the children voluntarily joined the Sunday schools. When the mission left Ghoom, the school was taken over by the state.

Alubar school was closed down in 1926 but Sunday schools continued for some time later.

Industrial Ministry

During her long period of service, Edla Traskback had many new ideas and one of these was the industrial ministry. Weaving shops had, however, been founded already in Sikkim when in 1921 Edla opened one in Ghoom. It's function had been carefully planned: products were sold in a rented shop on the main street of Darjeeling.

When in 1924 textile teacher Hanna Juureva became Edla's co-worker, the weaving shop began to flourish: "I asked God what kind of products He wanted us to manufacture in Ghoom and He taught me. Suddenly I saw clearly the products we should make and so it all began," said Hanna about the initial stage of the work. Contrary to Sikkim, in Ghoom Hanna decided to use cotton yarn and taught the weavers to make products requested by Western clients, for instance table cloths, curtains, pillow cases, napkins and coffee pot covers. Hanna designed trendy floral and animal patterns and with a loom these were woven onto a cream-coloured base. These were a success!

Every year Hanna and Edla would take their products to Calcutta, rent a room in a Christian guest house and even advertise their arrival in the local newspaper. Earnings were used for the wages of the workers and the expenses of the mission.

A carding shop was also founded, and it was run by Juho Yrttimaa and Eli Ollila. Carding combs were sold as far away as Tibet and Nepal and these were inquired about in Ghoom even in the 1950s. Unfortunately, the carding shop had to be closed down because of conflicts within the mission.

In 1930 Edla Traskback and Hanna Juureva transferred the children's home and weaving shop including the workers to Baksaduar. But it was difficult to acquire new weavers and sell the products in Baksaduar, and in 1935 the weaving works were transferred back to Ghoom, where it was run by Sonja Ollila. When in 1946 she went to Finland, Edla and Hanna "returned from retirement" and again took charge of the weaving shop. In the beginning of the 1950s the shop was directed by Oili Lappalainen and Hellin Hukka-Dukpa, and with foreman Jonathan Chettri and some of the weavers it was transferred back

to Baksaduar.

The weaving shop offered both training and work for many Himalayan women, who without skill and jobs would have faced difficulty. The Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission is best known for three work fields: the children's home, the school and the weaving shop.

Hospital Work

"We had here a small but perfect hospital and an excellent doctor," Edla Traskback often used to say when thinking of the past in Karmala, a house close to the Ghoom mission house where she spent her retired years. Nursing had been the dearest work form for Edla. Edla Traskback was not a nurse but in her youth she had studied child delivery, natural healing and home nursing, and her old medical books are still reminding of her studies.

When Ruth Longman (Sharma), a girl bought from slavery and brought up in Sparrow's Nest, became a doctor in Ludhiana, a small hospital was opened in Ghoom, Enfield 1936[?]. Dr. Ruth operated successfully, especially on eyes. Once a week she received patients in Darjeeling. Edla Traskback was the matron. Pastor James Longman (Ruth's brother) and his wife, a trained nurse, took part in the nursing. Ruth left, but the work continued up to 1935 when also Pastor James left for Darjeeling and joined to the Scots Mission.

The Goal - a Congregation

According to Franson's view, anyone who confessed Jesus as Lord and promised to turn away from worshipping false gods, could be baptized and become a member of the church. But missionaries soon realized that Tibetans and others, too, first needed a trial time and thorough teaching. Usually, the aim was to teach every convert with literature in their native language to read. There was no literature in Bhutanese.

Because of many reasons mentioned above, church growth in Ghoom was slow. Many Tibetans who converted into Christianity later gave up their faith.

The Scottish and Finnish Mission lived side by side -- there was no intention to try and fish in each other's waters. The native Bakht Singh movement later reached Ghoom, also, and received new members from both missions.

In the 1950s Olli Jokisaari started joint Sunday meetings with the Scottish Mission in the Ghoom Church with speakers usually being from the Finnish Mission. Most probably his intention was to join the church with the United Churches of North India, a native church born from the Scottish Church Mission. The thought was ideal, but ended in the opinion of the Himalayan Free Church members: they did not accept the way of baptism method of the church concerned. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland favoured infant baptism whereas the Free Church of Finland favoured believers' baptism. An agreement could not be reached. When India became independent and young people joined the churches, the main goal of the missionaries was fulfilled:

churches became independent and registered as a native church.
A Prayer for Nepal

"Slavery has been abolished from Nepal," wrote Professor E. Saraoja, chairman of the Free Church of Finland mission board, in the Free Church of Finland Weekly on 3.1.1929. He continued; "Nepal is the neighbour of Sikkim, our mission field. It is still closed from preachers of the Gospel, but a great many Nepalese can be found elsewhere, where they can hear the Gospel. Many Nepalese are found in Sikkim, too."

An interest in Nepal had been aroused within the Free Church of Finland. From the beginning, the spiritual needs of this nation had been seen in the Himalayas. A clear view as far as Nepal could be seen from the windows of Ghoom's first two mission houses: there was a lot of intercession for Nepal.

For years Edla Traskback and Hanna Juureva prayed for Nepal to open up. They prayed with and for their missionary friends: Hilda Steel, Lily O'Hanlon, Jonathan Lindell, Robert and Gerd Bergsaker and many others. They sent many Nepalese Christians for short evangelizing trips over the border and as a result they were well aware of the situation there. They encouraged younger workers, also me, to get to know the situation in Nepal and to pray.

As early as the 1950s the Ghoom church had connections with Christians in Nepal. In 1963 the first Free Church of Finland missionaries arrived on their new field in Nepal.

BAKSADUAR - A GATE TO BHUTAN

Sigrid Gahmberg, the first Finn in Baksaduar, hardly mentions the Nepalese in her letters, although at the time there were some living in Lal Bungalow, an area close to the Baksaduar fortress.

After Sigrid Gahmberg had died, the work mainly remained on the shoulders of Anna Fredericksson, an American. When she passed away, the widow of mission director Fredericksson lived in the area for some time. She was now married to Mr. Dower, a British engineer. In the 1950s the Baksaduar people were still telling all kinds of stories about Sahib Dower.

According to Sisko Pentoniemi, author of the mission history, the Baksaduar mission station and buildings officially belonged to the Finns but in reality this has been forgotten and Scandinavian Alliance Mission workers looked after it until 1929 when Edla Traskback and Hanna Juureva moved there and began their fruitful work.

Anilas in Baksaduar

Edla Traskback and Hanna Juureva were not only in charge of the children's home and weaving shop, but also looked after the sick and began systematically to evangelize the nearest surroundings. Their closest fellow-worker was Magdalena, who was a former witch and who through Edla Traskback grew to be an evangelist. Magdalena remained faithful to her calling for as long as she lived. On an evangelistic trip in Bhutan, Magdalena's group met a young man who became a Christian. Later the man came to Baksaduar, received teaching from Edla, and was baptized: Stephen became an evangelist. He was the father of Ishmael Tshering, who lived in Ghoom, and Esther, who

trained to be an evangelist and is at present a shopkeeper in Bhutan.

The Finns received all kinds of guests in the Baksaduar mission house, people from both upper and lower classes passing along the Buxa Road. Through hospitality they even became acquainted with the royal family.

A time of great joy in Hanna's and Edla's life was a day in the summer of 1938, when several young couples were baptized in Adama stream and among them were Simon and Lea. Edla's natural remedies had healed Simon completely, who when first brought to the mission house was paralyzed. Both he and his wife became Christians and their eldest son, Norbu, was dedicated in their baptismal service. Norbu later became a pastor.

Edla's and Hanna's work was fruitful. The Chunabhatti village church grew and Bhutanese people were converting to Christianity in other villages, also. The school was run on a regular basis. In 1938 the elderly "anilas" received Arnold Hyttinen to help them and soon after they retired in Ghoom.

The Lone Worker of Baksa

Arnold Hyttinen did long evangelising trips to the surroundings, the plains and as far as Bhutan. He usually wore a Bhutanese costume and lived very modestly. The Baksa people called him Sahib Chung-Chung (tiny Sahib) because he was rather short.

Hyttinen had been studying Tibetan in Finland and after a few months was able to preach in the language. In Baksaduar he quickly learned Dzongkha, which is a related language. School work developed in his charge but there were few children in the sparsely populated area. Education was not always considered necessary; many fathers thought it was more important for children to herd cattle. As a result, Hyttinen's skills as a teacher were to some extent wasted. He had many plans which were all destroyed by World War II. Arnold Hyttinen was sent to a concentration camp in Dehra Dun for four years.

The Baksa mission house was built in 1894-95 on a peak at the edge of the village. The mountain wall was constantly eroded by earthquakes, heavy rains and earth slides. During Hyttinen's absence in Dehra Dun, Eli Ollila managed to get a travel permit for Baksaduar and understood the situation: He was compelled to pull down the buildings, although they were still in good condition. When Hyttinen returned from Dehra Dun he had lost his home and even the church had been torn down. He began to lodge in a modest side building, which did not even have a fireplace. Windows were taken from the demolished house, but otherwise the building was a mere shed. This did not seem to worry Hyttinen but he was more concerned about the spiritual lives of the Christians in the village. Many had given up their faith and a local Lama had made the sons of Christian families join his school. Among these was Norbu Dukpa. The work seemed to be in ruins. In July 1948 Hyttinen began a forty-day fast. By the end, his strength had waned and he died in the arms of

Simon Dukpa. Possibly before his imprisonment he had begun to translate the New Testament into Dzongkha. Parts of the work have been lost and only Mark's Gospel has been published, in 1970, by the title "Toivon tie" (Way of Hope).

The death of Sahib Chung-Chung was a shock to the villagers. A telegram was sent to Ghoom, where Edla and Hanna were in-charge of the work at the time; there were no other workers in the mission. They could not go to Baksaduar but Mr. Winward left instead. He arrived the following afternoon and buried Arnold. "Sahib Chung-Chung died for our sakes, he loves us," said the Buddhist leader of the village at the missionary's grave.

Margaret Vitants, later Tharchin, and Florence Elcock came to Baksaduar temporarily. Oila Lappalainen and Hellin Hukka-Dukpa, new Finns arrived in India in 1950, brought the weaving shop with them to Baksa after completing their language studies. In 1954 Oili Lappalainen had to go to Finland because of an illness, but Hellin, or Ani Chung-Chung (tiny anila), continued work until she retired. The reason for her nick-name was that villagers thought that hellin, who was also short, was Arnold Hyttinen's sister.

A New Mission House

Oili Lappalainen was in-charge of the weaving shop and Hellin began regular dispensary work. Plans for a new mission house arose immediately. The initial building stage was slow as a solid foundation had to be laid first and wood had to be cut in the forest and carried to the building site. Hellin was in-charge of the work and the house was completed in 1956.

Later Hellin had a school built, which currently has two teachers, and still in 192 she travelled from Finland to supervise the construction of a new church.

Three young men, Norbu, Thomas and Andreas left Chunabhatti to go to Bible school. When they returned to serve their home church a new work period began and this has born fruit in Jalpaiguri district. Ten new churches have been born through the work of these brothers and other Christians, too. The Word has also had an effect on the other side of the border, where many young people had moved to study or to work. A beautiful church was built in Jaigaon, on the border of Bhutan. In 1957 Hellin Hukka married pastor Norbu Dukpa.

The Tibetans

The dream of evangelising the Tibetans came true in an unexpected way. Following the flight of the Dalai Lama, a flow of refugees journeyed to India over the mountains through Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. The Baksa fortress, which had formerly served as a political prison, now became a refugee camp. Suddenly the Baksa bazaar was full of Tibetans: there were high Lamas from the Sera monastery, nuns (ani's), civilians, families and soldiers. The commander of the refugee camp was an Indian colonel but his closest man was

Sikkimese, who could speak Tibetan and who was a close acquaintance of the mission. He knew the Finnish Mission well since he was educated in Ghoom Mission school. His name was Lobsang Tshering and he opened the camp to the mission. Our first visit to the refugee camp was an unforgettable experience.

Hellin Hukka-Dukpa and the whole Baksa Church was suddenly offered a possibility to share the Gospel with the Tibetans -- something that had been desired for so long. Hellin had been taught Tibetan by Professor Karma Paul in Ghoom. Now the skill came into use, as during the following ten years she constantly had Tibetan patients with whom she could talk and lead them to Christ. Already in the beginning of her work a Tibetan Lama, Gelong, had become a Christian through her. This man is currently working among Tibetans in Kathmandu. Now for the Finnish Mission had opened a longed for possibility and Hellin Hukka-Dukpa could make the dream come true.

Baksaduar is Nepalized

In November 1955 I rode for the first time from Buxa Road railway station to Chunabhatti. Close to the station were some shacks supported by high poles - nothing else. Buxa Road twisted up the woody terrain towards the mountains. The road became steeper after the Suntalabar police station: it forked into a wide road leading to the bazaar and into a narrow terraced riding path heading towards Chunabhatti. There were only a few buildings close to the police station and thick rain forest covered the rising slopes.

I spent a year in Baksaduar as Hellin Hukka-Dukpa's co-worker, after which I moved to Ghoom. When returning to Baksa for a visit, I noticed that an opening had been cleared in Suntalabar. During my following visits I saw how it gradually expanded and some shacks had been build there. "Nepalese," I was told.

By 1969 a Nepalese village had grown in Suntalabar. In 1979 it had expanded, and in 1985 the Himalayan Free Church meeting room was located there. A church had been born in the settlement and the worker was Nicodemus, a former magician but now an evangelist. He had become a Christian through Hellin Hukka-Dukpa's patient work and preaching.

When I lived in Baksaduar, the Church had only one Nepalese member: a peddler called Markus. The dispensary's patients were mainly Bhutanese and they would arrive all the way from their homeland. The Nepalese, who lived in Lal Bangalow, close to the bazaar, only seldom came to ask for our help. When I returned to Baksaduar in 1985, the Church had many Nepalese members. They would visit the dispensary and the mission house, and even Hellin could speak some Nepalese! The songs Kaarlo Waismaa had translated into Tibetan were now in Nepalese. The picture had completely changed from the time in 1955 when I first sat in a Sunday meeting in Chunabhatti.

The evangelising work of the Bhutanese Church of Baksaduar has expanded to the Dooars area and as a result become Nepalised. Many of the young peole in the Church have moved to Bhutan.

Hellin Hukka-Dukpa returned to Finland after a work period of 37 years, but has visited Baksaduar several times, last in March 1993. Norbu Dukpa does not

want to give up work yet, although his family is waiting for him to come to Finland.

The Last Passport for Baksaduar

The last Finn to get a work permit for Baksaduar was public health nurse Riitta Siikanen and she arrived in 1958. She first spent two months in Landour language school studying Hindi and Nepalese, and later began her work in Baksa with Nanna Allebert, after Hellin had gone for a holiday in Finland. In 1960 Riitta Siikanen moved to Ghoom and Vappu Rautamaki having left, became the mission secretary and treasurer until 1972.

Riitta Siikanen's most important task was to see to the process of the Himalayan Free Church becoming officially independent. The new Church needed official measures, and rules and certain doctrines needed to be confirmed.

Native workers were now responsible for evangelism and this continued in Ghoom with the following workers: Ishmael Tshering, Samuel Chhetri, Timothy Dorje, Prem Kumar Rai, David Mangratee the school principal, and women evangelists Laila Chhetri, Esther Dukpa and Shanti Mary Chhetri.

In the 1960s the work Anna Kempe had begun in Pedong became the responsibility of the Himalayan Free Church. This was mainly because Ragnhild, the last Finn in Pedong, became Riitta Siikanen's colleague. Evangelistic work expanded from Pedong to Sikkim. Samuel Chhetri began work in Kurseong, and this spread to the surroundings. In Pedong there were Christians long before Anna Kempe went there as an independent missionary in 1924.

The facts mentioned above led to the growth of the ministry of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, the Finnish Alliance Mission, the Free Mission and the Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission and it became the responsibility of the national church in the Ghoom and Baksaduar mission stations areas.

The Future of Baksaduar

When in 1894 the Scandinaviain Alliance Mission built the Chunabhatti mission house and church, the Dooars served as the "gate" of the road to Punakha, the current capital of Bhutan. Relics of the lengthy border war between British and Bhutanese can still be found close to Chunabhatti: a massive stone watchtower with an iron door is a reminder of a belligerent past and the importance of the area. In the 1950s there was still a British graveyard for soldiers and the names on the gravestones were legible. The Baksa fortress was used as a political prison, where many Indian political leaders have been imprisoned.

Buxa Road starts off as a highway but in Baksa it turns into a riding track. In 1962 Bhutan's public highway was completed, and many other reforms took place in the country. It was hoped that the new road would run through Baksa, too, but this never happened. The current highway from India crosses

the border in Jaigaon, which is not far from Baksaduar, but is still far enough to make the former Bhutan gate an isolated and remote region.

Nowadays the population of Baksaduar is waiting its future with fear. Baksaduar no longer has the few services it used to have, for instance, border guards, who would have been important for safety and order. There has been a plan to make the Chunabhatti area into a nature preserve, "a tiger paradise," and as a result the homes and fields of the poor villagers would have no significance. "We should probably move away, but where could we go. We are not sure whether Bhutanese, our kindred folk, would receive us, and we are strangers on the plains. What would we do there?", wrote a farmer from Baksaduar. He, like the others, was used to looking after his orange trees, vegetable patch, small meadows, a couple of cows and a goat, as his forefathers had done for centuries.

Concern for the Baksaduar population has been caused by: the internal conflicts in Bhutan, restlessness of the border, increased robberies, reduced traffic connections to the mountain base, etc.

Despite outer difficulties, the Church and small Christian groups on the border are full of vitality and growing.

Perhaps the most important results of the almost 100-year-old ministry will not be evident until the future. The children of the Christian families in Baksa will have their own possibilities for living as Christians and channels of the Holy Spirit in their future location.

SIKKIM

The Sikkim monarchy is bordered by Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and India, and in 1887 came under British control. The country was governed by a Tibetan King, "Chogyal," but a British charge d'affaires had supremacy particularly over foreign policy. In internal affairs both the King and the British charge d'affaires always had to take the opinion of the Buddhist Lamas into consideration. Naturally, their opinion did not favour a "foreign religion."

When missionary work began, Sikkim had a population of 68,000. One of the problems in the 19th century were the Nepalese immigrants. The British supported and assisted their arrival for financial reasons.

Pioneering Women

In 1894 the first Scandinavian Alliance Mission workers, Signe Rasmussen and Amanda Larsson began their ministry in Lachung, which was a many weeks walk from Ghoom.

The women rented a house and began their work. During the cold months they, like the other North Sikkimese, moved lower down to a warmer area. For the winters, Mathilda and Amanda would settle in Ringim to do evangelistic work.

Like Tibetans, the Lachung population (Bhutias) were Laman Buddhists. They were descendants of Tibetan conquerors and spoke a Tibetan dialect.

In 1896 the first Christians were baptized in Lachung. From the start the Buddhist Lamas in the area had ordered a death sentence for those assisting missionaries. On one occasion, when two young men who had been involved with missionaries were going to be thrown over a bridge into the Teesta River, at the last moment an English road engineer hurried to the spot and saved the sentenced men. One of these became a Christian.

J.C. White, the prevailing charge d'affaires and expert on Tibet, supported the pioneering work of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission. In cooperation with him, in 1899 Mathilda Johansson founded the first weaving school in Lachung. Through White's initiative the missionaries planted an apple orchard. Their vegetable garden was the first in the village.

A mission house and school were built in 1903, and a church in 1910.

Earlier the mission had begun to construct a mission house in Ringim. This was completed in 1899, and besides Mathilda, the first Finnish inhabitants were Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa.

Lepers, and Songs in Lamp Light

Kaarlo Waismaa wrote in the Free Church of Finland Weekly from Ringim: "Missionary work faces many difficulties in mid-Sikkim, where the Bhutias (related to the Tibetans), Lepchas (natives) and Nepalese (immigrants living in warm river valleys) live side by side often in the same villages. There is a mixture of languages, and no literature available in the Bhutia and Lepcha languages. Work has mainly taken place among Lepchas and Bhutias as the Scottish Mission ministers chiefly among the Nepalese, but quite recently we have been preaching in all of these languages. Pasang and Isaac, an evangelist from Pedong, master the three languages, and also speak Hindi and English." (The Scandinavian Alliance Mission, Helsinki 1907)

Waismaa also mentions that a state settlement for lepers was located in the area and that many of the sick had received the Gospel. The first Christians in the Ringim Church were these "filthy" people, who had been excluded from society.

Waismaa was ready to preach the Gospel to all. On 24th February 1902 he wrote from Gangtok: "We are on our way to Sikkim and had a lovely time in Gangtok today. We had the possibility to testify about God's great works on several occasions in Tibetan, Nepalese and English. To get missionaries to work among the Nepalese! Most of the Sikkim population speak their language."

Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa were also learning the Lepcha language. "The Lepchas have a weak character, and that is why they have been oppressed by the Bhutias," said Waismaa.

Hanna Waismaa was an enthusiastic preacher of the Gospel. Her letters reflected a great anxiety for the souls of the non-Christians but also a concern for their every-day lives. She could see how poor hygiene caused many diseases, and she particularly wanted to give advice to young mothers in child care. But the Waismaas saw how the nation's modest life had a lot of good in it, and understood the importance of its many customs. "The cabins were filled with smoke, but this got rid of all the disgusting little creatures," wrote Hanna.

Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa, and Mathilda Johansson did door-to-door work with native workers. Kaarlo translated and arranged songs, which were learnt in "mini-meetings" in the evenings. A lamp was one of the most important equipments for evangelistic trips.

The Waismaas developed the school and took care of the sick as best as they could. Mr. and Mrs. Tjader, missionaries, began regular ministry and school work in Song in 1901.

Hanna Waismaa fell ill and in 1905 the family returned to Finland. They only made it to Ghoom: Hanna passed away and Kaarlo had to continue the journey with their two children.

Edla Traskback came to help the Waismaas in 1903, and immediately she began to study Tibetan. "It was incredible how soon Edla, who had such courage, learnt the difficult Tibetan language," said Hulda Eklund in 1962. She and her husband Ossian Eklund had worked in Ringim in 1905-1908. Edward and Anna Owen, nee Massinen, arrived next. They were married in 1907, but already the following year Anna Owen, a pioneer in Lachen, died during a conference in Ghoom. She was buried next to Sigrid Gahmberg and Hanna Waismaa.

Edward Owen later married Mathilda Johansson. They continued to work in Ringim until 1914. Klara Hertz, Edla Traskback and Elin Kronqvist stayed in Sikkim to direct the three mission stations, weaving shops and schools. In 1917 Klara Hertz founded a weaving school in Ringim.

Towards Tibet

In 1899, when the Waismaas journeyed 5,000 feet up to Ringim, Anna Massinen and Klara Hertz went to Lachen, which at the height of 9,000 feet was the northernmost habitation in Sikkim and a two-day journey from Ringim. When the first missionaries arrived, Lachen had a population of 400.

After hearing about the intentions of these foreign teachers, the reigning Queen had sent a message the village: "No one is allowed to have foreign teachers under their roof nor sell them any food." The order was obeyed. Klara's and Anna's only place of safety was an almost collapsed shack at a road side. The shack did not even have a door, and so they covered the walls with sheets. They lived like this for weeks. They soon ran out of food, and no one would sell them any more. One dark night, a hand of some unknown friend

appeared under one of the sheet walls and pushed in a piece of meat. This having continued for some time, Anna and Klara got to know this friendly man: Nagchin had visited Ghoom and heard about the "anilas" and their good deeds. Now he wanted to show kindness and take care of the visitors.

The villagers stayed away until one February day Anna's and Klara's glistening white washing made the village women wonder. The sheets and shirts hanging on the washing line were the cleanest they had ever seen. They came to wonder and inquire, and as a result the missionaries became acquainted with the villagers, and the Queen's order was forgotten.

After a year Klara Hertz had to go to Finland because of her illness, and Anna stayed alone in the distant village. She began to give school lessons and supported by an English charge d'affaires was allowed to have a school room, where she also lived for a long time. Anna began to grow apples, potatoes and cabbages, and in 1903 founded a weaving school in Lachen. After Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa had left, Edla Traskback came to assist Anna. They moved to the new mission house in 1907, although it was not completed until 1909. The Church was completed in 1911.

Spiritual work on the Tibet border was difficult. Among the first to be baptized was Nagchin, the first man to help the missionaries.

The missionaries had Tibet as their goal. A few of the most daring, like Franson and Edla Traskback, actually visited Tibet. Missionaries located in both Lachen and Lachung spent a lot of time meeting Tibetan traders and pilgrims: this was the only way to take the Gospel to Tibetans. During certain seasons, Tibetan nomads crossed the Sikkim border for greener pastures, and the Finns would take their tents and wander to the Tibetan camps to preach the Gospel. On one of these trips, Edla Traskback decided to visit Tibet riding a yak.

Persecution

The missionaries had experienced resistance in Sikkim from the start and in 1912 this turned into persecution. Madame Alexandra Neel, a French-Belgian explorer and writer, came to Sikkim. She became acquainted with the young King, settled in a Buddhist monastery in Lachen and began her fight against Christianity, missionaries and believers in Sikkim. All Christians in Lachen and Lachung were questioned before the King. The Lachen school was closed down despite the fact that during his several visits to Lachen and Lachung the King had come to greet the missionaries and encouraged them to continue their work.

Now the King had decided to expel the missionaries from the

country, and gave Madame Neel permission to question the Christians and persuade them to burn back to the Laman religion.

The hopeless situation had a surprising end: the King died unexpectedly and soon afterwards Madame Need was expelled from Sikkim. The new King, Tashi Namgyal, invited the Finnish missionaries to his coronation on 15th May 1916, and missionary work could continue - but not without difficulty. It was extremely difficult to receive work and residence permits for Lachen and Lachung.

In 1920 Klara Hertz died in Lachen.

New Workers

A new stage in the Ringim ministry began when in 1923 Eli Ollila received a work permit for the area. The mission house was located along the Tibet Road and because of earthquakes had been rebuilt lower. As a result it was now distant from the centre of population. Even the mission weaving and elementary schools were located along the new road, and so Ollila decided to build a new mission house in Mangan.

While Eli Ollila had left for Sikkim, Sonja Ollila had stayed to look after the Ghoom school for another year, and came to Sikkim in 1924. The Ollilas were also in-charge of work in Lachung, and frequently visited Christian groups born all over the country. Eli Ollila founded a small Bible school for Sikkimese young men. Among his students was Palden Tenzing, who was the long-term, spiritually mature pastor of Mangan. When in 1926 the Ollilas were on holiday, native workers were responsible for the Mangan work. Native workers had a crucial role in Sikkim, especially in Mangan. Among these workers, who were diligent and knew the Bible well, were: Isaac, Pasang, Tshering, Thargel, Thrinlay, Palden, Singa, and the women evangelists Esther, Vasti and Nordro. In the beginning of the 1920s, Annikki Tunturivuo, later Eklund, and Siiri Aartola arrived in Lachung. They opened the weaving school, which had been closed down during the persecutions, and started an evening school for working boys. Nursing continued even more effectively than before. In 1928 Siiri Aartola had to return to Finland for health reasons. Elly Petersen and May Isacsson worked in Sikkim for a short period.

In 1938, returning from holiday in Finland, Elin Kronqvist brought with her four new workers, and out of these Elvi Makela, later Jokisaari, and Astrid Virtanen became her fellow workers. Astrid Virtanen stayed only for a short time. Elvi Makela participated in nursing and studied Tibetan. It was her duty to look after Elin Kronqvist on her death bed in 1939. After Elin Kronqvist was buried next to Klara Hertz, Elvi Makela was the only Finn in Lachen. At the time a war was about to break out in Finland, and connections would be cut off with India, and so in 1941 Elvi Makela decided to go to the United States.

Margaret Doig, a Scot, was working in Lachung. Her diary "Pages from a Missionary's Diary" was published in Finnish.

After Elin Kronqvist died, work in Lachen had begun to decline.

Margaret Doig and Arthur Pylkkanen, who had moved to Mangan, assisted the work from their own stations, but continuing the clinic, weaving shop and evangelistic work was too hard for teacher Thrinlay to manage by himself. "There are no Christians in Lachen," Hellin Hukka-Dukpa was answered when applying for permission to begin dispensary work in Lachen in 1950. There were, of course, Christians, but the strange situation had made them afraid and even Thrinlay became depressed because of all the difficulties the mission had to face. I spent December 1957 in Lachen among Christians, and was the last Finn to have been there.

In 1940 pastor Arthur Pylkkanen came to work in the Mangan Church. He had been pastoring a church in Finland for a long time, and had the abilities needed in Mangan at the time. Together with native workers, he travelled to distant villages and looked after the sick. In 1942 he was sent to a concentration camp in Dehra Dun and returned to Mangan after the end of World War II. Despite his illness, he decided to set to work again, but in August 1948 was compelled to go to Finland for treatment. In January 1950 he returned full of new plans and hopes: young Finnish workers were arriving, and would possibly be helping in Sikkim.

After Margaret Doig had died, Arthur Pylkkanen was the only missionary in North Sikkim and was in-charge of the work in Mangan, Lachung and Lachen. Despite the rainy season, he set off for an inspection trip to the mountain villages and 15th September 1950 arrived in Lachung with the Nepalese Singa. Following an earthquake, a flood washed over Lachung and swept away buildings and people, also the mission station buildings and gardens, evangelist Singa, and Arthur Pylkkanen, the last Finnish missionary in Sikkim. Many other Christian villagers were also washed into the Teesta River.

After the Flood

The faithful pastor, Palden Tenzing, continued his work in Mangan. After Arthur Pylkkanen had died, fund-raising for a new church in Mangan began. Pastor Palden donated a site - the church was built a rather long way away from the mission house. The construction took a long time, as Pastor Palden also died. His place was taken by Nathanael, a Tibetan from Ghoom. After him came Jonathan Lepcha, who was from Mangan, and his work continues even today. In 1992 a new, spacious church was completed in Mangan, designed by a Sikkimese architect. The church bell Arthur Pylkkanen had brought from Finland serves as the only reminder of mission times of the past. The church has grown, is vital and has a wide-spread evangelistic ministry. Tibetan songs have changed into Nepalese, and the women most probably no longer wear their Lepcha costumes. The highway has changed the lifestyle of the entire Sikkim country.

A Final Attempt

Hellin Hukka had just arrived on the field in 1950 when the information of Arthur Pylkkanen's death reached Ghoom. Hellin Hukka and Nanna Allebert

were given the task to travel to Sikkim and investigate the situation. They visited

all the stations, met Pastor Palden and other Christians, and applied for a work permit for Lachen, which they did not receive. They were, however, given the possibility to do school and hospital work in Mangan, with the condition that they would concentrate purely on social work and not preach. Hellin would have gladly used this possibility but the Swedish Nanna did not accept the offer: she wanted total freedom in her work. Hellin was young and had just arrived in the country, so she could not accept the task. Her work field later came to be Baksaduar.

The latest accounts from Sikkim have been encouraging. The Himalayan Free Churches have inherited the mission's vision of evangelism. Now is the time for harvest.

Signed: Vappu Rautamaki
Translator: Rebecca Scotson

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APPENDIX G

LIFE HISTORY OF DR. BAHADUR SERENG

Name: Bahadur Sereng. Born on 4th June 1904 at Namli Busty, below the famous Rumtek Monastery, East Sikkim, about ten kilometers away from Gangtok. His father was the headman of the village. From his grandfather's time they were the landlords in the area. The family had seven children - five sons and two daughters. He was the third child after the eldest sister and an elder brother. He started his schooling right in the village and after the primary education he went and got admitted in Class five in Pakyong. While studying in the very class he felt a desire to see new places and ran away from home. He found himself in Darjeeling. He started doing odd jobs and during such time, maybe during 1920-21 (he is not sure of the exact time), one Mr. Millright (not sure of the exact name and family name), a retired army officer, met him and asked him to join him. My father obliged and worked as a servant boy in his house. While at Eden House in Darjeeling he met one Salvation Army missionary, Mr. Juggs or Jwks (not sure of the spelling), and he took him to Nelphumari, in Rangpur District of present Bangladesh. There even when he was not a Christian Mr. Jwks used to ask him to help him in teaching the night meetings, Sunday School classes, etc. in the Reformatory School run by the Salvation Army. Later he was taught to preach the Word of God. The things moved on and on and in 1928 he got baptized under the flag. He says he felt greatly honoured on that occasion as Colonel Aramdram was present on the occasion. He used to read the Bible from sometime past, but now he started reading it in a regular and systematic manner. In 1934 he went for a Bible Training in Calcutta at 38, Dharamtala Street for one year and amidst training the great earthquake of 1935 took place and [he] was sent to Bihar for relief duties.

In between 1928 and 1934 while he was in Nelphamari he did Medical Course by correspondence in Calcutta and completed and [was] awarded an M.D. in 1934.

The relief work went on for three months. When back at Calcutta he used his time and talents in different places in both medical and preaching assignments. Towards the fourth quarter of 1934 he visited Darjeeling where he met Rebecca and was engaged with her during that same trip.

In 1935 he came back to Darjeeling and started working with a private company named Snow Peak Insurance Company. He started attending the St. Columba Church and later took full membership in the same church. Later in the year he was selected one of the elders of the church. In 1935 he got married. He continued working as an elder and recording secretary of the church till the end of 1940. When the Second World War broke out the foreigners had left and at the same time the Pastor also left so from 1940-1945 he served as the Honorary Pastor of St. Columba Church.

The former Pastor had left as there was no fund coming and he had not received his salaries for seven months, on top of these there were taxes, etc. to be paid.

During his Honorary Pastorship many new activities were started. To help the poor and the war stricken people [a] poor fund was started. The Laymen's Union started and systematic house visiting [was] introduced. While donation boxes were distributed to affluent families for the poor fund, tithe was preached and introduced. For raising funds membership fees were collected. Temperance was one of the subjects of discussions. [He] spoke often against alcohol and smoking, etc. While there was resentment from different groups and individuals, on the other side there was growth on different fronts. The fund started growing and within four years all the debts, government taxes, municipal taxes were paid. The poor were helped. Rs. 3,000/- worth of War Fund notes [were] bought in the name of the church. The present cemetery was too congested so a new cemetery in Singamari, North Point was started.

...

During all his Christian life he had been doing studies about the types of baptism. He had read about the process of baptism in different denominations and had been studying even the Bible. But through God's Word he was convinced that adult baptism was the will and command of God. He had shared this view in the sermons and discussed with the friends and put this his conviction before the committee and the church could not agree. There was difference of opinion as the church wanted to keep child baptism the rule of the church. So in 1945 he willingly resigned from the honorary Pastorship. Though for a few later years the church and its emissaries kept urging him to return to the ministry he could not compromise his conviction. Lastly he had to say "two cannot walk together unless they agree". Since that time he never went to the church and also was not a part of it.

He had an unfailing conviction about the family altar and he had given importance to this factor of christian life. After coming out of the church he intensified this and every morning and evening there were sessions of Bible class and teaching in the family. This was carried on for [the] next 15 years without fail. Once in awhile the people from the church used to visit and also Jehovah Witness people visited the house. Even the Roman Catholic priests were interested thinking that the family without the church fellowship might be lured to them.

During this period the family happened to come to the fellowship of the Pentecostal friends. It was only by accident. His cousin was sick for a long time and some non-christians suggested trying the prayers of some of the christians. The WEC missionary Mr. Alfred Adam and his friends came and prayed for the sick. Though he was not healed yet their way of worship and teaching impressed him very much. They enquired whether it was possible for them to have cottage meetings in the house and in this manner the fellowship grew.

Meanwhile after leaving the church he concentrated in his medical practice and other business. He had all along been a member of the Communist Party of India and even worked with them for three years as a secret record keeper. Immediately after the Independence the party was banned and the communists were arrested all over India and he was one of them. In 1949 in one of the pre-dawn operations he was asked to accompany the police to the police station. The severe result was that he lost all the business licences, residential accommodation, movable and immovable properties and even the cash at the house and bank accounts were seized and freed. He was kept as a political prisoner for one year and got released only after or during the great Darjeeling Disaster as the authorities were not in a position to save the lives of the convicts and prisoners should the jail be destroyed. He was only advised to report once a week to the local police station for [the] next three months.

After getting released he had no place to accommodate the family and so he had to take the family to the in-laws' place. [We] stayed with them for the next two years and in 1952 the family shifted to a rented house in North Point. After his full acquittal in 1952 he started visiting Sikkim with two purposes in mind. First to earn the livelihood and support the family which was quite big, and also to keep himself away from the communist friends because he had been ruined by them. He toured all over Western and Southern Sikkim carrying his medical apparatus and medicines, and continued [to do so].

Meanwhile he had already accepted the Lord Jesus as his personal Saviour and Lord and so on the 16th September 1962 he got baptized by immersion. Then the real work started. He started carrying the tracts and started preaching as his heart was burdened very much for the lost souls.

About coming into Pentecostal faith he says [that] having played some vital role in the Salvation Army and also in St. Columba's Church, while being acquainted with the truths of God but not being able to practice in these churches the urge was even stronger to seek the truths. While seeking the real truth [he] kept himself and the family away from the church and the christian world, only maintaining the family altar. Because of the sickness of his cousin he had come into the acquaintance of Mr. Adam, as said earlier. During their [Adams'] teachings and in other times he used to discuss and argue often for certain points of the christian faith. He also discussed with them about the baptism as he himself was baptized as a Salvation Army believer and Mrs. Sereng as a member of the St. Columba's church. But later [they] had agreed and both of them had immersion baptism, as said earlier.

David Mangratee, who was Mr. Adam's coworker, later became his [Sereng's] son-in-law, and naturally has family relationship. Through [Mangratee] some connections were established and helped the ministry.

....

After his baptism he had started preaching the gospel in real earnest and also carried on practicing medicine. But as the pressure from the Lord's work was heavy, he gave up his profession and gave full time for the ministry. He had started in a small village but it grew fast and it was all over Sikkim. Walking on foot he had started [and] his vision grew to Singtam, Ranipool, Pakyong, Rongeli, Ramphoo, Jorethang, Gayzing, Kaluk, Legshep, Soreng, Sombaray, Dethang Malli, Majhitar, Basi Ilaka, Namthang, Buge Khola, Bermaik, Makha, Namchi, etc. He was the pioneer of this work and almost all the present leaders from Sikkim are the fruits of his ministry and preaching. It is such a vast number of workers and pastors and evangelists it is difficult to name them. Some of the present leaders like Samuel Lepcha, Daniel Bardewa, Nathaniel Rai, Zachariah Rai, Reuben Rai, Stephen Subba, Lazar Khaling are a few among many.

In between 1962 to 1984 he had baptized over 2,000 people mostly from non-christian background.

About the workers: In the beginning 14 workers were financially supported by T.L. Osborne Foundation. Meanwhile 16 honorary or partially supported workers were there. They were given assistance by Himanchal Christia Sangatee. 1972 onwards 8 workers were supported by the World Missionary Evangelism.

In 1973 a home was started for the children. They were helped in a big

way. Out of these children some are young leaders and others are the youth leaders in their churches. A number of them are in government jobs and some are in real good positions. Most of them are in teaching profession.

The active ministry came to a halt in November 1984 due to a stroke.

The next phase of ministry started. It was counselling, exhorting and encouraging and teaching people from the bed he occupied. Even here people were saved and a church in Namchi was born. There were disharmony in the churches because of the aspirations of different people and at the same time some outsiders had entered with the intention of starting their own churches from out of the members from the local churches. So the bed ministry helped in teaching them and because of this a reunion movement has taken place and some of the individuals and churches who had left the Himanchal Christia Sangatee have started seeking readmission into the Sangatee.

The striking aspect of his life of ministry has been that he engaged himself in some sort of jobs and even for the ministry he never took a single paise as his salary. Since 1935 to 1984 he did not accept any salary for the ministry he was engaged in. In 1973 when the home was started the World Missionary Evangelism started giving him US\$ 20 as an allowance.

He says his story is always incomplete without expressing some of the things about my mother. Name: Mrs. B. Rebecca Sereng. Maiden name: Rai. She was from an affluent family, renowned as one of the rich families of Darjeeling. [She] was a weak child. She studied in Kalimpong Girls' High School and in 1932 two girls appeared for Matric Examination. This was the first time that the girl candidate had ever appeared. She was one of the two. After marriage in 1935 she became a constant help to her husband. She was a heart patient from the beginning. She was a real homemaker. Education of the children and maintenance of the family was her responsibility. She is and was a strict disciplinarian.

She is a great Prayer Warrior, active sharer and engages easily in sharing [her] testimony and also the gospel. She managed and still manages to provide donations to different organisations and also to individuals.

All these were possible because of a miracle that took place in her life in 1960. She was a heart patient as said earlier. She was so weak that she could not even walk ten steps forward. She was confined to the room for [a] long ten years or so. From her bed and from the room she used to manage the family, the discipline and studies of the children and also the prayer and family altar. In 1960 she had fallen very sick and after struggling for two months during which time she could hardly eat anything. One early morning she asked all her 10 children around her bed and also her husband. Then she talked to the children all that was necessary and almost the departing instructions. She said her time had come. Lastly she asked for prayer and he [my father] and all the children prayed with tears and crying. Later he closed the prayer committing her in the Lord's hand and asking Him to give her peace even in death. But the Lord had a different will. No sooner the AMEN was pronounced [than] she had a delighted face and asked for food. It was surprising to everybody as she had not taken food for many days as she could not eat. Thinking that was her death wish, she was given a cup of milk and a slice of bread and she took these without any problem and asked for more. She was given another cup of milk and two slices of bread and she took them too and got up to everybody's surprise and announced that she was healed, and she came out of the bed. It is a miracle indeed because there is no trace of heart problem for [the] last thirty-two years.

She was an active help to him in the ministry. She taught the ladies and went up and down the hills of Sikkim on foot. When the first church was being constructed she was one of the many providing physical labor. She carried stones and other materials up the hilly track on her back.

She had a stroke in 1971 and is in bed since then. But her zeal and prayer life has not been confined there. Even when the body is simply sinking and eyes are failing and ears are getting harder you can simply hear her voice mingled with sobbings and tears early in the morning while the world seem to be enjoying the morning hour sleep.

Typescript by Sam H. Sereng, based on a series of interviews conducted in Namche, Sikkim with his father, Dr. Bahadur Sereng, 22 December 1992

(The following paragraphs were added by Sam H. Sereng in a handwritten letter to the author, 11 Jan. 1993):

...[My father] wanted me to add the following when I visited him and Mother on the 7th of this month:

He had been a brave soldier of Christ all through. He was a straightforward person and because of that he had been attacked four times in his ministerial life, both from within [Christian circles] and without. Twice he was attacked by Christian ministers, because he had not allowed any fleshly thing they had indulged in. He was physically harmed. Then twice by the outside people because he had been preaching among people of Buddhist background.

Then for his unforgettable experiences, once in Western Sikkim and again in Northern side of Western Sikkim bordering Nepal he had to ask people to melt the ice for baptism. So he says in one of these occasions he had to be in water for longer than expected and when the baptism was over he had been numb waist downwards for over half an hour.

....

APPENDIX H

WILLIAM CAREY'S ABORTIVE MISSION TO 'BOOTAN'

C.B. Lewis, "A Brief History of Some of the Stations Formed by the Baptist Missionaries at Serampore: Bootan," in *ORIENTAL BAPTIST*, Vol. VIII (Calcutta: J. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press, 1854) 114-117. Quoted in its entirety by permission of Reginald G.S. Harvey, General Director of the Baptist Missionary Society, Oxon, UK.

The spiritual destitution of the inhabitants of Bootan awakened much compassion in the minds of Thomas and Carey very shortly after they settled in the district of Dinagepore; and as early as October, 1795, they urged the Society in England to send Missionaries there. Their peculiar interest in this country may probably be traced in the fact that some of its stupendous mountains are visible at Moypaldiggy, where Mr. Thomas resided. Who can doubt that those distant, snow-clad heights were often gazed at by our first Missionaries, with a strong desire and fervent prayers for the speedy evangelization of the people who dwelt beneath them? There was also much in what they had heard concerning Bootan, which led the Missionaries to regard it as a peculiarly eligible field for the proclamation of the gospel. For example:--there would be nothing to apprehend from the jealousy of the British Government, for Bootan lay beyond its borders; the people, too had no caste to hinder them from receiving the truth; so that it might be hoped that the word of the Lord would soon have free course and be glorified there, if it could only be once introduced. Then again, if Missionaries were stationed there, they might, from their nearness to the Dinagepore district, maintain frequent intercourse with Moypaldiggy and Mudnabatty, and thus secure whatever assistance was necessary to their comfort and support in the great undertaking.

In March, 1797, Thomas and Carey fulfilled a long cherished desire, by making a journey to the borders of Bootan, when they were very kindly received by the Subah of Bhot-hat, who interchanged presents with them, and formally acknowledged them as his friends. They were not able to ascend the hills as they intended; for this could not be done without the sanction of the Deb Raja, whose palace is at Tassisudon, and the Missionaries could not tarry. They, however, preached in many places, by means of an interpreter, and were greatly cheered by the attention which was given to their message. The Subah promised to supply them with two persons competent to instruct them in the Bootani language, and they left Bhot-hat with sanguine expectations of being able soon to commence a mission there. The Subah afterwards wrote to Mr. Carey, who fully intended to pay another visit to him, and to penetrate further into Bootan; but circumstances prevented him from accomplishing this purpose.

After the seat of the Mission had been removed to Serampore, opportunities of communicating with Bootan were of course very few. Still an ardent wish to establish a Mission there was entertained by Carey and his associates. In August, 1803, Mr. Marshman wrote, "We cannot help looking towards Bootan with a wishful eye;" and in 1805, a definite plan for translating and printing the Scriptures in the Bootani language was drawn up for publication. It was not, however, until the year 1808 that any decisive steps were taken

towards commencing a Mission there.

We have already related the great difficulties which beset the Missionaries at Serampore upon the arrival of Messrs. Chater and Robinson, and have seen how these led to the Mission to Rangoon. When a field of labor had thus been provided for Mr. Chater, the brethren consulted as to where they might with greatest advantage secure a station for Mr. Robinson. Having ascertained that there was no prospect of finding a settlement for him within the British dominions, they deliberated concerning the possibility of obtaining an entrance for the gospel into some neighbouring country; and at length submitted to Mr. Robinson's choice, the following places as eligible for missionary stations;--Bhot-hat, Assam, and Arracan. Mr. Robinson was at this time at Cutwa, assisting Mr. Chamberlain in his arduous labours there; but he prayerfully considered the proposition made to him, and at length made choice of Bhot-hat, gladly embracing a suggestion of the senior Missionaries that Mr. William Carey should be invited to accompany him. At the beginning of April, 1808, therefore, Mr. Robinson and his family removed to Serampore, and on the 19th, the two brethren commenced their journey to Bootan. They proceeded to Barbari, a village in the Company's territories, not quite twenty miles from Bhot-hat, when they were informed that a civil war had broken out in Bootan, and that they could not with safety advance further. Having by careful enquiry satisfied themselves of the truth of these statements, they were compelled to abandon their purpose, and returned to Serampore.

The unfavorable issue of this journey did not alter the determination of the Missionaries; and, on the 24th of January, 1809, Mr. Robinson left Serampore again, with the intention of forming a station, not within, but near to the borders of Bootan, hoping that in this way the language might be acquired without risk, and preparation made for carrying the gospel into the country as soon as a favourable opening presented itself. Mr. Robinson does not appear to have cordially approved of this arrangement; and, after he had left Serampore, he was much inclined to avail himself of some proposals made to him by two gentlemen in possession of indigo factories near Malda, that he should take up his abode with one of them as a Missionary. The disposition of the British Government to interfere with Missionaries was now somewhat abated, and Mr. Robinson had reason to believe that he might labour with good prospects of success among Bengalis, whose language he had now well acquired. His wishes were, however, overruled; and he was urged by the brethren [sic] at Serampore to proceed without delay to Bootan, and commence the Mission there. The motives, which led them thus to oppose his settlement in Bengal, are clearly exhibited in the following extract from a letter written at the time by Dr. Carey:

'I consider the work of translating the Scriptures as one of the first duties of a Missionary, and as laying the foundation of the future prosperity of the church in any country. I see, however, that there are but few sustaining the Ministerial character, and even the Missionary character, who have abilities or industry enough to do it, and even among them there are some who cannot so far separate themselves from what is called civilized society as to engage in it. I believe brother Robinson has abilities for it.'

In regard to such stations in Bengal as had been offered to Mr. Robinson, Dr. Carey in the same letter expresses his conviction that, owing to the jealousy of the Government, they could be occupied to a great, 'and perhaps to much greater advantage' by 'a native brother, or a Portuguese, or Armenian.'

It was, therefore, because they regarded Bootan as a post of great importance and high honor, that the Serampore brethren were so desirous that Mr. Robinson should occupy it; and, yielding to their wishes and arguments, he again resolved to proceed with this Mission. Mr. William Carey had, a few months before this, settled at Sadamahal; but when Mr. Robinson reached that place on his way, Mr. Carey consented to go with him, and assist him in the arrangements it was necessary to make with the Bootan officers at Bhot-hat.

They reached this town on the 30th of March, and were very hospitably entertained by the Katma, or governor. Presents were interchanged, and the missionaries were formally acknowledged as friends by this official, who, however, could not sanction their proceeding into the interior of Bootan, and gave them no encouragement to settle at Bhot-hat; but told them he should be glad to see them occasionally, and that they might come to the market whenever they pleased. It does not appear that he had a clear understanding of the object for which they sought access to the country. Having a few days before obtained the promise of a place for building at Barbari, the missionaries returned thither. Mr. Carey soon left for Sadamahal, but Mr. Robinson commenced erecting a bungalow for the reception of his family, and confidently anticipated the speedy attainment of the objects of his mission by learning the Bootani language and securing the confidence of the people. In a few days, however, exposure to the sun brought on a very severe attack of fever; and he was obliged, as soon as possible, to retreat to Dinagepore, leaving his bungalow to be completed in his absence by natives. As soon as he was able to undertake the journey, he returned to Serampore to bring away his family; but owing to many hindrances arising from sickness, he was not able to set out on his journey back to Barbari until the 1st of November, and the family were not settled in their habitation before the latter part of March, 1810. Mr. Robinson then began to seek for some one able to instruct him in Bootani, but without success; though he applied to the governors of two towns in the neighborhood. Though discouraged in this respect, he regarded Barbari as a place very well adapted for missionary labor among the Bengalis, and was much cheered by the number and attentiveness of those who listened to the gospel from his lips. His labors were, however, soon interrupted, first by a violent fever which assailed him, and afterwards by the illness and death of Mrs. Robinson. This last heavy (blow) was very distressing:--the bungalow at Barbari was attacked by robbers, who despoiled it of many of the necessaries it contained. Mr. Robinson was therefore again compelled to visit Serampore, that he might place his motherless children under the care of the mission family there, and provide himself with requisite supplies.

On his arrival in September, the brethren at Serampore arranged that Mr. Cornish, an English member of the church at Calcutta, and a probationer for missionary labor, should accompany him to Barbari: and on the 29th of October the two brethren, having been committed to God in prayer, set out for their station. They reached it on the 19th of January, 1811, and immediately commenced their attempts to benefit the people around them, and to prepare themselves for usefulness amongst the inhabitants of Bootan; but only three days after their arrival a terrific disaster befell them. A company of about fifty dakoits, armed with spears, made their way into the bungalow at night. Mr. Robinson was attacked by some of the ruffians, and received several slight wounds from their weapons; but he succeeded in escaping and in effecting the escape of Mr. Cornish and his family, and they all hid themselves in the fields until the morning, when, on returning to the house, they found its contents plundered or destroyed, two of their servants murdered, and another severely wounded. In extreme distress, they set out at once for Dinagepore, which they reached with great difficulty on the third day. Here they were most hospitably entertained, and their wants were supplied by Mr. Fernandez and his family.

This calamity made it necessary to devise new plans for prosecuting the Bootan mission. Mr. and Mrs. Cornish returned to Serampore and afterwards removed to the neighborhood of Dacca, where they endeavored, with the aid of a native preacher, to make the gospel known. Mr. Robinson, however, did not yet abandon his design. He no longer wished to settle at Barbari, where experience had shown that life and property were unsafe, but earnestly desired to obtain permission to reside at some place within the boundaries of Bootan. This plan the brethren at Serampore strongly recommended. Mr. Robinson therefore dispatched a letter to the Subah of Chamarchi, a town situated among the Bootan

hills, asking permission to go there. His messenger was not, however, permitted to proceed with the letter. Mr. Robinson then himself set out towards Bootan, resolved to leave no means of obtaining an entrance into the country untried. He reached Bhot-hat on the 9th of April. The Katma was not there, and as it was evident to Mr. Robinson that nothing was to be gained by awaiting his arrival, he resolved to go forward to Minagari, about six miles distant from Bhot-hat. Here he found another Katma, from whom he endeavoured to obtain permission to proceed to Chamarchi, or even to settle at Minagari. He was received civilly, but assured that without the orders of a superior officer, neither the one thing nor the other could be permitted; and, after much fruitless conversation, he was obliged to return to Dinagepore, the Katma having promised that he would write to the Deb-raja, and solicit his consent to the Missionary's wishes. The reply of the Raja was forwarded to the Katma about a month after, and as it clearly conveyed a refusal to permit any Englishmen to settle within his dominions, Mr. Robinson was satisfied that nothing further could be done at present to carry out the desires of his brethren and himself. The brethren at Serampore, having been fully informed of all the measures he had adopted and their results, concurred in the opinion that the attempt to establish a Bootan mission must be abandoned; and it was afterwards resolved that Mr. Robinson should commence a mission to the island of Java.

The complete failure of this effort to convey the gospel to the inhabitants of Bootan must be looked up on with deep regret. Much time and money, and even life, which might have been profitably expended elsewhere, were lost in the experiment. But the brethren concerned in this enterprise did what they could; and it cannot be doubted that, in the great day, these abortive attempts will be graciously acknowledged by Him, whose glory they desired to promote.

Before we conclude this short sketch of the history of the Bootan Mission, we may mention a very pleasing occurrence which took place just four years after it was abandoned. We refer to the baptism of a native of Bootan at Patna, by Mr. Thompson, afterwards of Delhi. It was in November, 1814, that this poor man, named Kiaba, was brought to Mr. Thompson, and made an earnest request to be instructed in the doctrines of Christianity. He was about twenty-six years of age, of an exceedingly docile disposition, and very liberal and compassionate to the poor. He had been absent from Bootan about twelve months, but, having lived with people who could converse with him in Bootani, he possessed but a very imperfect knowledge of any other language. Such was his anxiety, however, to become acquainted with the New Testament that, with Mr. Thompson's assistance, he was soon able to read the Hindi scriptures, and he readily embraced the truths of the Gospel.

When Kiaba's determination to embrace Christianity was noised abroad, a Cashmerian, with whom he had been living before, made use of all the influence he could command to turn him aside from his purpose, and to induce him to become a Musalman. But all such efforts were in vain. Kiaba was stedfast, and afforded increasing evidence of his sincerity. In the beginning of April, 1815, therefore, Mr. Thompson, being fully persuaded that he had been made the subject of divine grace, baptized him. After this, Kiaba displayed much zeal for the conversion of the heathen around, and was employed as an assistant by the Missionaries at Patna and Digah for about a year, and then removed to Monghyr. After this we have not been able to trace his course.

Had the Bootan Mission been carried on to the date of Kiaba's conversion, it is probably that he might have rendered important service in it. As it was, we cannot doubt that the brethren regarded his conversion as a token that the Lord had not forgotten their work of faith and labor of love for the benefit of Bootan. May the day soon come when the many prayers offered for that country shall be fully answered, and its inhabitants be all brought under the influence of the Gospel of the grace of God.

APPENDIX I

Excerpts from Mission News, of the Church of Scotland Eastern Himalayan Mission, Darjeeling, concerning the Kalimpong Churches' "Mission to Bhutan":

FOREIGN MISSION TO BHUTAN

"Kalimpong Pardeshiyon Ka Mishan" is the title of the movement just begun within the Kalimpong Division to take the gospel to the people of Bhutan. It is a movement which we firmly believe, to be of God's Holy Spirit, and if this be so, it is the most important step ever taken by our Mission Church. Two of the catechists had been on an evangelistic tour and came back burdened with the thought of the great tracts lying around us as yet untouched by the gospel, and gradually the scheme of starting a definite mission, to be controlled and supported by the Native Christians, took shape. Those who are to help pledge themselves to do so in three ways -- by prayer, by their means, and by interesting others. No one is to give his pie or his pice unless he or she wish, and to put the mission on a true basis from the beginning, the rule has been laid down that all gifts are to be anonymous, in the sense that they are to be only known to a few trusted treasurers and to God. At first we expect only a small proportion of the Christians to help. They are as a whole not yet ready for such a movement.

No doubt a smile will cross the face of some at the thought of a handful of poor Nepalīs and Lepchas setting before themselves the task of evangelising a nation. If so, we believe it is a vain smile. The great things of the world are not accomplished by those the world account great; but by those great in faith...

Pray for this new mission. Pray that workers may be raised up. Pray for the people of Bhutan. The reflex influence of a successful mission on the life of our Native Church cannot be over-estimated. The monetary power at first is not likely to exceed the sum of Rs. 10, or at the most Rs. 15 a month, but this, we trust, will contain many consecrated mites, carrying with them power beyond that of mere gold or silver.

(January 1891, p.2)

KALIMPONG MISSION: A NOBLE EXAMPLE

A year ago the Kalimpong Christians determined to do what they could for the evangelisation of British Bhutan. In the meantime they have subscribed on an average Rs. 12/- per month. Part of this has been used in educating a Bhutia lad in the Normal School with a view to his going into Bhutan. But the lad tired of study and left the school. Now Sukhman, the evangelist, the pioneer Catechist of Kalimpong, has come forward offering to resign his position as Catechist (he is the best paid man in the Mission) and to go as the representative of his brethren to Bhutan. For his up-keep and for the support of his family who are to be left in Kalimpong he asks little help from the Christian here, and makes a condition of receiving that help that the givers remember him daily in prayer. At a Meeting held lately, his offer was enthusiastically accepted, and promises of Rs. 18/4/0 per month were made on the spot. Sukhman expects to start in July. In the meantime he is to visit every Christian Family and explain his plans. It requires courage and faith to undertake what he proposes. Perhaps some outside of the Native Church will like to strengthen his hands by praying for him.

(March 1892, p.8)

KALIMPONG MISSION: THE NEW MISSION TO BHUTAN

DEATH OF SUKHMAN, THE FIRST MISSIONARY

It is about 18 months ago since the Kalimpong Christians felt it to be their duty to do something towards the evangelisation of Bhutan. The education of Bhutia lads in the Normal School was thought to be the best beginning, but the lads proved unsatisfactory. When four months ago the way seemed closed, it was laid upon the heart of Sukhman, the first Catechist at Kalimpong, to offer to go. In April his brethren accepted his offer with enthusiasm and it was arranged that for three months he should visit the various congregations with a view to stirring up enthusiasm among the members. Instead of that, he was kept a prisoner in his own house for the three months through his wife's, his family's and his own serious illness. He was just able to move about again when the July Panchayat met -- the arranged time for the departure to Bhutan.

At this Panchayat the Missionary Spirit developed wonderfully. It was resolved to send a companion, and one was found ready in Jitman, of Nagrakata, who unknown to any but the Dooars Catechist had expressed a desire to go. These two represented the Paul and Barnabas of the Kalimpong band. Who was to be the John Mark? Several offered. The choice fell upon one Karnabir, a Kshatri, who was baptised before being sent forth. It was a memorable occasion when the Catechists in name of the Churches laid hands on Sukhman and sent him off as their representative to hand on the Gospel torch to the people of Bhutan.

Sukhman was to start at 9 A.M. on Thursday, 14th July. At 8 o'clock his wife was seized with severe choleric symptoms. He waited with her till she recovered and then delayed his departure till Monday. But at 6 A.M. on Sunday morning he was attacked with Cholera, and at 6 P.M. he died.

No loss could have been more severe on the young Church. Their high hopes and enthusiasms seemed dashed by this tragic stroke. But the cloud remained but for the moment. Sukhman when dying had said that only two things were on his mind -- the work in Bhutan, and his wife and children. The former he said, he knew, was in God's hands, and for the latter his brethren had already undertaken the responsibility. His was a happy death, happy in the strong faith of a loving Father, a mighty Saviour and a home beyond the grave. And now the brethren see that his work was like that of Moses to lead them to the border of the promised land, and they know that a Joshua will appear to take up the torch from the fallen brother's hand.

... He was the best paid man in the Mission service at Kalimpong, getting Rs. 30/- a month. But he generously surrendered that at the call of duty, and was going to Bhutan with the promise of no salary but only of such a sum as the brethren could send him for food and clothing -- leaving his family behind to be cared for by those who sent him forth. Truly Sukhman was a living epistle of Jesus Christ.

(July 1892, p.24-5)

MR. GRAHAM WRITES

The last of the original band of the native Church's missionaries to Bhutan passed away last month. (May) Sukhman (the Paul), died even before the expedition had set out; Jitman (Barnabas) died two years ago in the eastern Dooars, where a Scotch planter cares for his grave; while the body of Karnabir (the John Mark or servant) now lies in the Western Dooars. A typical trio of Gorkhas they were. Karnabir, with keen Aryan face, of the high Hindu Kshatriya caste; Jitman of blunter Mongolian features and of the Murmi or Nepali-Bhutia family, were akin in race and religion to our Northern Buddhist neighbours; Sukhman, a fiery Limbu whose ancestors worshipped demons rather than gods. Of the three, Karnabir was in Christian life the youngest and least experienced, though by far the eldest in years, having almost reached three score. After his colleagues were taken away, he led a wandering life, going about as a peripatetic visitor among the scattered Christian families in the Dooars up to the Assam frontier. He was a man of almost no book education. He could just stumble through a chapter of the Bible but he could lead in prayer and speak wise words. He will be missed by all of us. His manner was quaint and pawky. Not long ago we spent a month together itinerating. I shall never forget some notable and entertaining evenings round our camp fire, nor the sound of his voice in audible prayer, which more than once awakened me in the morning.

(Sept. 1898, p.32)

APPENDIX J

**EBENEZER EVANGELICAL LUTHERN CHURCH
RESOLUTION 13**

A resolution to begin a "Nepal Mission" among Santals.

EBENEZER EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH.

8th Ordinary Synod Meeting. November 14-16-1957.

Resolution No.13 - United Mission to Nepal:-

The General Superintendent read a letter from Mr. Oliver of the United Mission to Nepal, encouraging us to take definite steps towards beginning mission work among Santals in Nepal. Several applications from individuals offering themselves to go and work in Nepal as missionaries from our Church were presented. After giving due consideration to these Mr. Hopna Tudu was chosen to be our first missionary to Nepal. A Committee for the Nepal Mission under the Synod was constituted, member for 1958, being:-

1. Pargana Raska Murmu. (Convener)
2. Mr. Daniel Soren, Assam.
3. Rev. Jonas Hasdak', Malda, N.B.
4. Rev. K. R. Ghose, Bengali.
5. One member from the Boro C.C.
6. Mission Secretary, Rev. A.E. Stronstad.
7. Corresponding Member for Pakistan, Pargana K.C. Tudu.

After making this momentous decision to establish a Foreign Mission, Mr. Daniel Soren led us in prayer.

APPENDIX K

NEPALI POPULATION IN INDIA

STATE	NEPALI MOTHER-TONGUE	NEPAL PLACE OF BIRTH
Andhra Pradesh	3,051	1,923 (1,300 U)
Arunachal Pradesh	45,508	18,144
Assam	NA	78,268**
Bihar	20,197	146,539 (16,000 U)
Gujarat	4,790	4,535 (3,500 U)
Haryana	2,643	6,552 (4,800 U)
Himachal Pradesh	40,526	35,766 (7,800 U)
Jammu-Kashmir	2,468	2,061 (600 U)
Karnataka	5,565	2,888 (1,800 U)
Kerala	621	1,049
Madhya Pradesh	11,904	9,072 (7,700 U)
Maharashtra	23,428	21,244 (18,700 U)
Bombay	14,368	
Manipur	37,230*	1,734
Meghalaya	61,259	16,847
Mizoram	5,983	1,927
Nagaland	24,918	9,234
Orissa	7,755	5,126 (4,400 U)
Punjab	3,654	6,501 (4,900 U)
Rajasthan	2,758	3,071
Sikkim	210,813*(23,000 U)	21,627
Tamil Nadu	2,585	3,640

Tripura	2,190	491
Uttar Pradesh	29,570	99,792 (24,000 U)
West Bengal	711,584 (28,000 U)	57,744 (19,500 U)
Calcutta	20,217	
Chandigarh	641	1,596
Delhi	10,947	19,846

Source: 1981 Census of India, Table HH-16 Pt. B(ii) "Household Population by Language mainly spoken in home: Gorkhali/Nepali," in Series 1, Paper 1 of 1987; and Table D-1 "Population by Place of Birth: Nepal." Urban (U) figures rounded to the nearest 100 persons. *Limbu MT, separately enumerated, added to Nepali MT figures. **From 1971 Census of India, includes Mizoram.

APPENDIX L

STORY OF THE GURKHA STAY IN TIDWORTH

Rough draft transcript for tape recording made by James Kirk, ASR, dated 1964.

STORY OF THE GURKHA STAY IN TIDWORTH

by Jim Kirk

In the spring of 1962 the 1/6 Queen Elizabeth Gurkha Rifles and other Gurkha elements arrived in England from the Far East to train with the strategic reserve, which was then stationed at Tidworth on the Salisbury Plain.

In the advance party there was a Christian Corporal who had been converted whilst on leave through the ministry of Bakhta Singh at a convention in Kalimpong in N. India, several years before. Ong Tshering Lepcha was from Darjeeling but of Tibetan descent and had been a Buddhist, but with the work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit in the heart and life, no trace of Buddhist teachings and customs could be traced.

We had learned well in advance about the arrival of the Gurkha contingent to train in the U.K. and that the preaching of the Gospel to these men was forbidden owing to a tri-partite agreement with Britain-India-and Nepal. But whether it be right in the eyes of God to obey man rather than God, judge ye.

The Lord Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the Gospel to every creature, and why should we deny these brave men the Word of Life, who had fought so bravely for Britain over these last 150 years and fought in two world wars, and won many Victoria Crosses for gallantry and bravery.

No, they could not be denied the Gospel message, on account of our Lord's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, and on account of what we owe to them.

But how they could be reached with the Gospel message was the problem. When the Army authorities were contacted about visiting the barrack rooms, permission was refused, but I was told that any soldier wishing to visit me was quite at liberty to do so. I was reminded of a portion of scripture in the Book of Acts, where we read that Paul had his own hired house where he carried on his mission to the Jews and I felt that the Lord was quite able to do a similar work in Tidworth, as he had done in Rome.

The Gurkha soldiers come from the land of Nepal. Nepal is a monarchy and lies between N. India and Tibet, approximately 550 miles long and 100 miles wide. The language spoken by these men is Gurkhali or Nepali, and the religion is Hindu and Buddhist, but mainly Hindu.

The army teaches English to these men but so many are so backward in education that they join the Army unable to read or write in their own language, and I found that very few of these men could communicate in English, and those who could were limited in their vocabulary.

Ong Tshering I believe was the Lord's choice as an interpreter in reaching so many of these men with the Gospel. He was a very keen sportsman and not only keen but also a gifted sportsman. He played hockey, football and badminton for the regiment and was also on demand by some English football clubs. When he caught the vision of the spiritual need, he gave up his sport that he might give himself wholeheartedly to the spread of the Gospel.

It was wonderful how the Lord led us into contact with him. He had been working in the married quarters preparing them for the arrival of the families, and had witnessed to an English workman, who assisted him. Ong Tshering said to this workman, "I am a Christian, are you?" He replied that he was not a very good Christian but that his wife was, and invited him home to meet his wife one Sunday. This man and his wife were neighbors of Pastor & Mrs. Raddon, who had a niece who was a missionary in Nepal and home on furlough and knew

about SASRA. This family wrote to me giving the particulars of Ong Tshering and I was able to contact him in his barracks. When I went to his barrack room he had a large Hindustani Bible lying on his locker, and texts on the wall. This was the first indication that I was in the right room. It was a real pleasure to meet him, he was so radiant and full of the joy of the Lord, we were at once the best of friends. He was invited to the SASRA bungalow for Christian fellowship and hospitality to which he readily responded.

A conference week-end had been organized for the believers in the services on the Salisbury Plain in a Christian guest house near Salisbury. That weekend we had the pleasure of having Ong Tshering join us in Christian fellowship. On our return to Tidworth on the Sunday afternoon, we had the joy of being visited by two lady missionaries, Elizabeth Franklin and Jean Raddon, on furlough from Nepal. As the Gurkha soldiers and their families were interested in the cinema, the Army authorities laid on a Hindustani film show in the cinema in Tidworth each Sunday afternoon. As the SASRA bungalow stood on the main route to the cinema, they passed by in great numbers. From our door these two lady missionaries were able to get in touch with these Gurkha soldiers and their families. They were really amazed to find someone in England who could talk to them in their own native tongue, and soon began to gather round. Miss Franklin was not only able to talk to them about the Gospel, but had the pleasure of meeting some of her former pupils. She invited them into the bungalow for further conversation and hospitality, and she too in turn was invited to visit them in their homes. That Sunday evening we had the joy of seeing the bungalow filled. The two lady missionaries and Ong Tshering were able to have further conversations with them on spiritual matters. This was the beginning of many other opportunities of seeing our home filled two to three times weekly in this way over the next two years, with missionaries on furlough from Nepal and others being able to contact them with the Gospel message.

The second event of importance in the will of the Lord was the arrival in Tidworth of a missionary couple Ron and Mary Byatt also on furlough from Nepal. They had come to try to contact these men, but were unable to do so, not being permitted by the Army authorities. The husband knew about the work of SASRA and came to the SASRA bungalow. He was very gifted with their language and had compiled a hymn-book, having translated many English hymns into Nepali. Many of these hymns were set to Nepali folk tunes, and as the Gurkhas came to the bungalow they would sing these hymns with great gusto to tunes with which they were familiar. It became obvious through the leading of the Holy Spirit that they could be reached with the Gospel through the ministry of song.

The Lord in answer to prayer provided the money to purchase a secondhand tape recorder. These hymns were then recorded and were played with the windows open for the Gurkhas to hear as they passed by. This was a great attraction to them and resulted in many coming in to the bungalow to listen to these spiritual songs and to hear the Word of God. Ong Tshering too caught the vision and purchased a transistor tape recorder, then recorded the hymns which he played to the men in his regiment. The men would gather round the tape recorder in his barracks room to listen to the hymns, which they so much enjoyed. These hymns, they had been taught, contained the life story of our Lord Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. Ong Tshering would explain to them in great detail what it all meant. It was through the playing of these hymns that a real awakening of the Holy Spirit began in the hearts of so many.

The first real breakthrough amongst these men was Khim Rana, who had heard the Gospel in the Far East through Ong Tshering and had made a profession of faith, but his life bore no evidence of having been born of the Spirit. When he came to Tidworth, he showed little interest in spiritual things, but would come to the meetings if he was brought. We do not know what circumstances led to the change, but his life was radically altered by the work of regeneration and

set on fire for God. He took a stand for God in his regiment and requested to be baptized. Arrangements were made at Silver Birch Assembly Hall at Andover. A coach was hired as so many of his friends wanted to attend his baptism. The coach was filled and his friends were greatly impressed with what they saw and heard at the service. Many of these men, some from his own barrack room, at a late date came through to know the Lord, and were also baptized at Silver Birch Hall.

Where there is blessing there is usually testing and so Khim's faith was severely tested. The first of these was when on an exercise, when a number of Gurkha officers and men were assembled on an off-duty period, he was assailed from all directions for his faith in Christ, and continued to be so for almost a whole day. Karkhadhoj, one of his barrack room friends, got a bit exasperated with these taunts, and drew his kukri and said to them in Nepali of course, "Shut up or I will kill you; I too am a Christian." This was the first indication that Karkha had come through to know the Lord. He reminded me of Peter's zeal for the Lord in the garden of Gethsemane.

The second testing came when his wife deserted him and married someone else back in Nepal. This was a very severe blow to Khim and a heavy burden he had to carry.

The third testing came when he fell sick. He was troubled constantly with sores in his mouth and was repatriated to Singapore where he received surgical treatment, but made little progress towards complete recovery. Like Job, he was not only tested but was taunted by his Hindu friends about his God even while he lay so sick in hospital. I cannot recall to mind his exact words, but they were similar to those of Job, "Though he slay me yet will I trust him." Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

Khim had a nephew in the Gurkhas, but they knew nothing of each other's whereabouts. This nephew was posted to Tidworth and they accidentally met in the village of Tidworth whilst on a shopping expedition. They were delighted to meet one another, and Khim being on fire for the Lord, witnessed to his nephew on the street. He was interested to hear what his uncle had to say about Christ and asked his uncle if he was a Christian. The nephew then related to his uncle how he had learned about the name of Jesus Christ from a magazine he had read in Singapore - this magazine was in fact a publication of a false sect - and how he had had a desire to become a Christian not knowing what it meant nor how to become one. He had in fact written to his father, who is an officer in a Gurkha Regiment with the Indian Army, to ask his permission to be a Christian, but his father had flatly refused.

Khim brought his nephew to the bungalow for a talk on spiritual things. They went back to their respective barracks after a long session and later returned to the bungalow after the evening meal, when he spent most of the evening reading the Nepali New Testament. He returned the following evening for more instruction in the Bible, bringing two other soldiers with him. These three boys came through to the Lord and were baptized in the Silver Birch Hall, and took a definite stand for the Lord among their Hindu comrades.

Mukta Singh Rana became a keen Bible student and wanted to know where each place mentioned in the New Testament was on the map, and in a few weeks he had a well marked map and was familiar with the geography of the Holy Land. On moving to Singapore they had their own SASRA branch meeting and M.S. was Branch Secretary. M.S. eventually married Ong Tshering's wife's sister, also a keen Christian. His father attended the wedding, when he too was soundly converted.

As the numbers of disciples grew amongst the Gurkha soldiers, the demand for the Word of God also began to grow. But how to meet the demand for New Testaments in Nepali was the problem. The British and Foreign Bible Society in London were able to supply but a few. We were given an address by

them in India from which we could purchase the much needed supplies. We ordered 30 Nepali New Testaments at one time, but each consignment was so inadequate to meet the demand. In 1962 only the revised Nepali New Testament and Psalms was available, not the whole Bible, as the Old Testament was in process of being revised. When India gained her independence the Gurkhas had a choice to make between remaining with the British Army or joining the Indian Army. When many of these men became Christian and had in their possession a copy of the Word of God, they wanted to reach their colleagues in the Indian Army. The way those men chose to do this was by sending to their friends a copy of the Nepali New Testament.

A veteran missionary who had 26 years in India and was now working at the headquarters of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union, was invited to Tidworth to talk to these soldiers. He was amazed to see the grace of God at work in the hearts of these men and remarked that many a missionary would be glad to see a similar work of the Spirit of God going on in his station, and also that many a missionary had labored on the mission field for a lifetime, and had seen nothing like it.

At a missionary meeting in 1938 in the Usher Hall in Edinburgh, I stood to my feet when the appeal was given and offered my life to the Lord for missionary service in the foreign field, but war broke out in 1939, and closed the door where I was concerned to foreign missionary service. But in 1962 the Lord in his goodness brought the mission field to me.

With the Christian witness growing in strength amongst these men in Tidworth and the demand for the Word of God, Satanic opposition to the spread of the Gospel came through the Army authorities. One day the Gurkha Service Corps Company was paraded on the square and all Christians in the company were ordered by a Gurkha officer to step forward. This was a test of faith, at least to some, but not to all. But the Lord gave the strength and courage needed to those who were born again to step forward. It is not known what was said to the believers, but the others were told to have nothing to do with the Christians. Ong Tshering said this did more good than harm as it opened the door of opportunity for further talks to these men about Christ. Next day their lockers were opened and their New Testaments removed, and they were forbidden by the authorities to read their New Testaments. Ong Tshering being an older soldier, a stronger Christian and bolder in the faith, challenged the Army authorities on this very point, to show him in black and white from Queen's Regulations where they were forbidden to read their New Testament. When the authorities were challenged by Ong Tshering they could produce no such evidence. The boys came to the bungalow with their story and asked for counsel, and the counsel I was led to give was to pray, and to leave this matter with the Lord. We had a time of prayer together. The very next day they returned to the bungalow radiant and rejoicing, with the good news that their New Testaments had been restored. This remarkable answer to prayer greatly rejoiced the hearts of these believers and strengthened their faith.

There were many encouragements to faith, as well as testing of faith, and I would like to relate one other encouragement to faith which these men experienced. On one occasion a number of men went to the downs overlooking their barracks and gathered toadstools, thinking them to be mushrooms. These were brought back to the cook house, and the cook being just as wise as the men, curried these fungi, which they served with their evening meal. The net result was that within two hours the unbelievers were admitted to the Military Hospital Tidworth with food poisoning. The only individuals unaffected were the Christians who declared that it was because they had given thanks for the meal. The incident found its way into the national press and a very kind and thoughtful lady having read the article deposited a basketful of mushrooms at the guard room.

On the subject of thanksgiving these Christian lads were extremely

grateful to the Lord for the smallest token of His goodness to them. They would not drink a cup of tea, or take an aspirin for a headache without first of all giving thanks, and the thanksgiving too had to be in Nepali.

During the two years stay in Tidworth, twenty-four of these believers were baptized. There were others who had professed to come to the Lord but had not taken this step of faith. The Gurkhas not only heard the Gospel message but its power was demonstrated in the lives of those who truly believed, or in the language of Holy Scripture as we read in Hebrews chapter two, the Gospel was witnessed to in a two-fold way, first "by Word" and second by signs, wonders and miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

It is not possible to relate the story of each individual conversion, but I would like to say something of two other soldiers who came to know the Lord. The first was Nar Bahadur Shahi. He was a high caste Hindu and came from a very devout family. Long before joining the Army he was awakened by the Holy Spirit to a sense of a spiritual need, which his Hindu religion could not meet. On one occasion he went to see his pundit or priest to ask how he could find peace. He was told by the priest to go on a pilgrimage and perform other duties laid down by the Hindu religion, but still he could find no peace. He eventually joined the Army and was posted to Tidworth where he discovered that the only way to have peace with God is through the Blood of the Cross, and embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. Nar Bahadur was employed in the officers' mess and read his Bible at every opportunity, even behind the bar when on duty. He would read his Bible whenever an occasion occurred.

He was greatly persecuted by the officers for his faith in Christ, but he was fearless. They even threatened to write to his father, but Nar Bahadur still went on with the Lord. The definite stand which he took for the Lord did not hinder him in anyway in the Army. Recently he was in England on a Sergeant's course where he was given V.I.P. treatment and was able to come to Bielefeld (Germany) to visit us. It was wonderful to see him again and to have some first-hand knowledge of others who had come to know the Lord.

There are two main problems confronting these men when they come to Christ. First is marriage. Where could a Nepali Christian find a Christian wife in a land like Nepal which had been closed to the Gospel for so many centuries. Also, in Nepal marriages are arranged by the parents and in the case of Nar Bahadur, who was already married, on his return to the Far East was joined by his wife where he ran into more opposition, this time in the home from his Hindu wife, greatly opposing his new Master. He wrote to us requesting prayer for himself and his wife. He remarked in his letter how often on his return from a meeting in the evening his wife would have the door locked, and refused him entry.

The second problem is that if the Christian happened to be the eldest son, he is disinherited and is unable to perform the rights of the Hindu religion towards his ancestors, as head of the family, on the death of his father. The western mind unfamiliar with eastern customs is not quite able to comprehend the cost of a Hindu or Buddhist turning to Christ, but the Lord in His grace enabled these men to overcome each problem as it was encountered. Of these two problems, marriage is by far the greater and some of these young men are having to suffer much on account of the unequal yoke.

The last case of conversion I wish to relate in this brief account is that of Pirthi Lal. A number of Gurkhas were sent to Aden on an exercise and while there Pirthi sustained an injury to his right hand in an accident and had to be repatriated to the Military Hospital in Tidworth for treatment. It was while he was there that he was contacted with the Gospel. My wife's sister, a missionary in Nepal, was on furlough at the time and she was asked to go and visit him as he could talk no English. The severity of the injury was such that it was beyond complete recovery and he had to be medically discharged from the Army.

It was however while in Tidworth he came through to the Lord. After his

conversion he had a consuming desire to read for himself the Word of God, but as he could neither read nor write it was a severe handicap to him and a great trial. The Army authorities had done their best to teach him to read and write on several occasions, but Pirthi was unable to take it in. But with the miracle of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, Pirthi was completely changed. He came to the bungalow daily where my sister-in-law taught him to read and to write in the Nagri script. The Nepali the Army teaches is the Roman script, but as all publications in Nepali are printed in the Nagri script, including the New Testament, this meant that if Pirthi was to benefit, it was in this script that he had to learn to read and write. This he accomplished in a few weeks, to the amazement of all who knew him, which I believe was a real work of God. On being discharged from the Army he trained at a missionary medical center in Nepal and today is in full-time service for the Lord as a medical orderly in a village dispensary.

We have told you a little of the beginning of the story. Only eternity will reveal the end. We hear from time to time about many of these boys who are now back in their villages in Nepal as missionaries to their own villages with the blessing of the Lord upon their labours. We did learn from one missionary who had visited a village in East Nepal and found a lot of interest in the Gospel as the result of the witness of one of these men. We have heard of others who are witnessing in their villages, but in the teeth of much opposition. The boys like to go to the missionaries for Christian fellowship and encouragement involving sometimes two to three days' walk. Some of these boys are advised by the missionary not to associate too much with them as that would only result in further persecution.

May I conclude this brief account by saying that when the time came for them to say "Good-bye" to us, it was a most unforgettable experience. They came to the bungalow one by one to say "Good-bye", which they found so difficult. All that some could do was to lie on the settee with tears rolling over their cheeks. They were so much at home with us during their stay in Tidworth, and made use of the bungalow as they would their own home. We found each one to be kind and generous and most thoughtful. It could be said of each of these boys, as it was said of Nathaniel by the Lord Jesus, "Behold, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile."

I wish we could tell you of other precious souls who came to the Lord in Tidworth and are still pressing on in the service of God at great cost. Your prayers for these boys will be much appreciated.

APPENDIX M

NEPALI CONSTITUTION AND LAW CONCERNING RELIGIOUS RIGHTS

CIVIL CODE

"Nepal Penal Code," NEPAL GAZETTE, Part IV, 17 Sept. 1956:

Chapter 16: Crime with regard to religion

Prohibiting Conversion from Hindu religion to an irreligious Creed,
Clause 26:

- 1) None must purposely spread or preach foreign religions, such as, Christianity, Islamism, etc., and must not convert anyone of Hindu race with the purpose of trespassing into the traditional religion of Hindu race in the Kingdom of Nepal. Those who commit such things and those who convert or are converted into the said religions are guilty.
- 2) If one attempts to spread religions or to convert any one as stated in sub-clause (1) of this clause, he is liable to three years imprisonment. If the perpetrator of this crime is an alien, he will be expelled from the country. The person who has attempted to take a foreign religion, will be fined one hundred rupees. If he has been already converted, having completed the course of imprisonment within one year, he must join the untouchable class of the Hindu race."

1963 revision. A complete revision of Nepal's laws, the MULKI AIN [National Law/Civil Law Code] came into effect in 2020 [1963], published by the Ministry of Law and Justice, HMG of Nepal.

As stated in the Rising Nepal (Tribhuvan D. Bhatta, "Mulki Ain Ninth Amendment: A Timely Change," 24 Dec. 1986, 2), this is "the nation's prime legal repository...a comprehensive code."

"About Discipline," Part 4, Section 19, Article 1, p.223-224:

- 1) No person shall propagate Christianity, Islam or any other faith so as to disrupt the traditional religion of the Hindu community in Nepal, or to convert any adherent of the Hindu religion into these faiths. A sentence of imprisonment for three years shall be awarded to any person attempting to convert another. In case conversion has already been effected, imprisonment for six years shall be awarded to the person converting another. If the case is against a foreign citizen he shall, in addition be expelled from the country. In case any adherent of the Hindu religion converts himself into any of the above-mentioned religions, he shall be imprisoned for a maximum period of one year; and if he is a foreign citizen, he shall, in addition be expelled from the country.

In case only an attempt has been made to be converted, a fine of Rs. 100 shall be imposed. In case conversion has already been affected, it shall be invalidated, and such person shall remain in his Hindu religion.

1992, a new Civil Code was instituted in Nepal, published in the NEPAL GAZETTE, Part 2, Section 42 (Kathmandu: His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 2049). The law concerning "Religious Freedom" was amended to read:

Section 3, (A)

1. No person shall propagate any religion in a manner likely to undermine another religion, or convert any one into another religion. In case he has only made an attempt to do so, he will be punished with imprisonment not more than three years. In case he has already converted any one into another religion, he shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than six years. If he is a foreign national, he shall be deported from Nepal after completing such sentence.

(B)

- 1(a) In case any person does anything which undermines any religious place or religious function, he may be punished with imprisonment for not more than three years, or with a fine of not more than Rs. 3000.00 or with both.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL

1962 Constitution: THE CONSTITUTION OF NEPAL (Kathmandu: His Majesty's Government of Nepal, 2019 [1962]):

Part 3 "Fundamental Duties and Rights"

14. Right to Religion -- Every person may profess his own religion as handed down from ancient times and may practise it having regard to the traditions.
Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another."

1990, a new Constitution. CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM OF NEPAL (Kathmandu: Ministry of Law and Justice, HMG Nepal, 2047 [1990]).

Part 3 "Fundamental Rights," Section 19. Right to Religion:

1. Every Person shall have the freedom to profess and practice his own religion as coming down to him from perennial past with due regard to the traditional practices. Provided that no person shall be entitled to convert another person from one religion to another.
2. Every religious community shall have the right to maintain its independent existence, and for that purpose to manage and protect its religious sites and trusts.

APPENDIX N

EMIGRANTS FROM NEPAL, VIA CALCUTTA TO BRITISH AND FOREIGN COLONIES 1876-1917

<u>Colony</u>	<u>Years of Emigration</u>	<u>Total Emigrants</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Mauritius	...1876-1910	612	
Brit. Guiana	...1876-1917	2,540	
Trinidad	...1876-1917	2,641	
Surinam	1877-1916	610	mostly from 1889
Jamaica	1878-1916	447	mostly from 1898
Fiji	1882-1916	2,207	
Natal	...1876-1911	1,328	from 1902 for mines
Guadalope	...1876-1885	85	77 males
St. Lucia	1878-1885	7	6 males
St. Vincent	1879	2 males	
Grenada	1884	2 males	

TOTAL EMIGRANTS FROM NEPAL		9,230	

Source: ANNUAL REPORT(S) on EMIGRATION FROM THE PORT OF CALCUTTA TO BRITISH AND FOREIGN COLONIES (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1876-1920).