



Waiting for the Winter to end

Nepalis around us celebrated the end of the winter last week... it doesn't seem to have happened.

Our Austrian friend Gabi, who is helping us here in Nepal for 3 months, came to our house wearing 6 layers of clothes, still freezing... I guess, we still have a little while to go yet. We will just keep our fleeces and down jackets on... especially indoors!

This winter is especially hard as there is almost no gas available for heating or hot water. We just carefully use the bit of gas we have, for cooking. Amazingly our gas bottle is still going after 5 months, even though normally it lasts only 3 months.



Waiting for open borders between India and Nepal

Petrol is available on the black market. It has almost become normal to buy it that way. The price per litre has finally dropped from about 3-4 pounds to 2 pounds... This is still ridiculously high for one of world's poorest countries. We cycle when at all possible, which has the added benefit of warming us up. Cooking gas is still very hard to get... people queue for days to get half a bottle, and even lengthy queuing doesn't guarantee anything: Our Didi stood in a queue for kerosene all day long but she was number 634 in the queue and they ran out before they got to her number, and she returned home empty handed.



Waiting for the electricity...

With so little gas, everyone is trying to cook using electricity. However, we have now 13 [or more] hours of power cuts each day. In addition, the infrastructure is breaking down as they are overused. A transformer for our street broke down on Christmas eve just as our guests were arriving. A quick bike ride to a local shop, where I could still buy some pre-cooked chicken, saved the meal. And then it was candle lights anyway!!! ;-)



We so enjoyed celebrating Jesus birthday, His coming and bringing hope to a broken world, joy and light in the darkness! Our Didi joined us for celebrating with the church family on the 25th of December which was a lovely surprise.

Later that day, James and I were invited to our landlord's son's wedding.... Two big celebrations and two big Dal Bhats in one day!!!

Waiting for patients

The last ear camp was a bit different. It was held in Pokhara at INF's newly opened Ear Hospital. It's a huge blessing to have this beautiful place and to be able to treat patients who come from far and near. The Camp itself was quieter than normal for various reasons. But things are now changing fast and it's hard for Doctor Mike, Ekadev and the team to keep up with all the work! What a blessing to have such a hospital in the community. I remember one man with his severely disabled child sitting in front of us in the out-patients examination room. He said: "I always had to travel to Kathmandu with my little daughter for tests and treatment. Now I just have to walk a few minutes. My wife



would have never managed to look after our girl as I am off to 'Arab' next week. Now she can continue to come to the ear hospital for speech therapy and advice whenever she needs it."

One young man sat in front of us, very discouraged and upset. He had lost his hearing in the last few years. He had lost his hope and joy. Similarly a very bright young lady, with severe hearing loss, came. She received a powerful hearing aid and we were able to encourage her. She is studying by herself, as she was laughed at, at school. It's such a joy to encourage these young people and to show them, that there is hope. To offer operations, speech therapy and also counselling. One morning we had five kids from a children's home who all needed operations. What a difference it made for the children, to have a dry ear, to be pain free and to be able to hear better too. May the hospital continue to be a place of hope, healing and joy for many.



Waiting for our visa

INF received general permission to continue functioning in Nepal, but now we are still working through the ponderous process that approves the Project Agreement that details exactly what INF can do over the next five years and how many Visas we allowed to apply for. This means that since the previous agreement expired in early Dec we have no official Visas – they are “in process”. This is OK for the time being, but we really don’t want it to go on too long...

Trekking, night busses and Dal Bhats

We so enjoyed getting out of the big smoky city over new year. Walking up a 4,000m [12,000foot] high mountain top, enjoying the sunshine, gorgeous views... 6 days in the mountains is one of the best “anti-stress” therapies. A bit more stressful was the 18 hour long night-bus to Surkhet where we visited many old friends and enjoyed a picnic with the INF programme there. Back on the night-bus to good old Kathmandu... And back to “normal” daily life. The journeys were a bit of a shock to the system but the break does help us to keep going now in this not so easy season of cold and daily life challenges!



David: The last few days David and his class mates spent time building a recycled-paper-brick maker. These paper bricks are for the local community to help people cook during the fuel crisis. David loves these kind of projects and would happily swap that for writing assignments.

Tom: Coding and programming is Tom’s new passion besides reading lots. Sport is a fairly low priority for him right now...

Katie: Katie loves school. She does her work in her time... slowly but surely and very carefully. She loves art and sports and really enjoys playing with a couple of close friends.

Sam: He really surprised us by walking so amazingly well for 5 days! He is our little trekking Babu. ;-) Now back to learning the ABC and numbers, which he is ok with but wouldn’t be his first choice.



Waiting for Shelter

In Gorkha and the surrounding area, the devastation of last April’s earthquake is now being compounded further as the winter deepens – freezing temperatures mean that for those still living under plastic sheets next to their broken homes, the rain, hail and now snow are truly life threatening.



INF and some of our Christian partner organisations have continued to try and help the people living in these areas, providing blankets and warm clothes to over a thousand homes.

Still holding out

The Communications Dept, that James leads, still has two vacancies that we can’t fill. This puts huge extra pressure on the other three full-time staff and two part-timers. Despite these gaps I [J] still feel that we are doing a pretty good job helping to tell the story of what God is doing in Nepal through INF –

new materials are constantly being produced including the new INF website [www.inf.org] that should be going live in just a few weeks’ time.

Waiting....

Is hard... you are unsure... you don’t know what is coming next, you don’t know the outcome. Waiting is never fun! We are also waiting for news from two of our colleagues who are very ill. Waiting for the phone to ring and email to arrive... not knowing the outcome....



The bible talks a lot about waiting... People waiting to hear God’s voice, to experience His intervention etc. And waiting before God our Lord which will give us peace, strength and hope.

Prayer and Praise

Thank you for praying through the mentioned things. Thank you for writing and for encouraging us. Thank you also for the lovely parcels and cards you sent over Christmas! We really love and appreciate them!

With lots of love

James & Sandra + David + Tom + Katie + Sam



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