

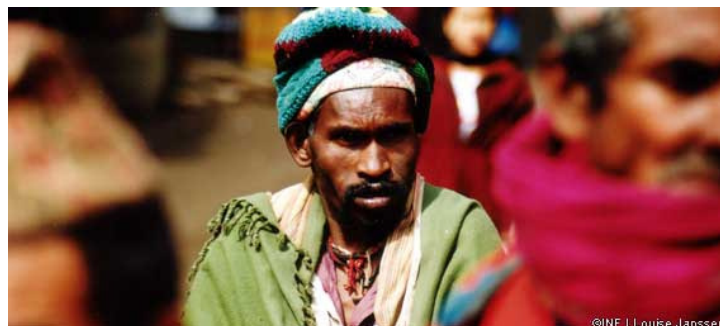


2 week Summer Prayer Team 2009

Location: Nepal
Partner: International Nepal Fellowship
Dates: 28th Aug – 13th Sept 2009

Country Information

- Population: 28.2 million (UN, 2007)
- Capital: Kathmandu
- Area: 147,181 sq km (56,827 sq miles)
- Major language: Nepali
- Major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism
- Life expectancy: 63 years (men), 64 years (women) (UN)
- Monetary unit: 1 Nepalese rupee = 100 paisa
- Main exports: Carpets, clothing, leather goods, jute goods, grain
- GNI per capita: US \$340 (World Bank, 2007)
- International dialling code: +977
- Politics: Historic elections in April 2008 led to abolition of centuries-old monarchy
- Economy: Civil strife wrecked the economy and Nepal is dependent on aid; tourism is a key foreign exchange earner



With its ancient culture and the Himalayas as a backdrop, landlocked Nepal has long been the destination of choice for travellers in search of adventure.

One of the world's poorest countries, it is striving to overcome the legacy of deadly 10-year Maoist rebellion.

Until Nepal became a republic in May 2008, the country had been under the sway of an hereditary monarchy or ruling family for most of its known history, largely isolated from the rest of the world.

A brief experiment with multi-party politics in 1959 ended with King Mahendra suspending parliament and taking sole charge. Democratic politics was introduced in 1991 after popular protests, but it was extremely factionalised with frequent changes of government. The last king of Nepal, Gyanendra, twice assumed executive powers - in 2002 and 2005.

Meanwhile, Maoist rebels intent on setting up a communist republic waged a decade-long campaign against the constitutional monarchy. The rebellion left more than 12,000 people dead. The UN said 100,000 people were displaced. Its envoy said the use of torture by government forces and rebels was routine. When King Gyanendra's direct rule ended in April 2006 the rebels entered talks on how to end the civil war. A landmark peace deal was agreed in November and in early 2007 the Maoists joined an interim government.

The Maoists withdrew from the government in September, demanding abolition of the monarchy. Parliament agreed to this condition in December, and the rebels rejoined the government. The Maoists emerged as the largest party in parliament following elections in April 2008, and the monarchy was abolished a month later. A new Maoist-dominated government finally took office in August 2008.

Nepal has been at odds with neighbouring Bhutan over the repatriation of thousands of refugees living in



