

Church Matters

Keeping a link with the Sydney congregation



Living and Sharing the Gospel

May 2016

Connect Camp is back! 1-4 July at *The Lodge* in Belgrave, Victoria.

Our young adults retreat is a time to unplug, reflect, and encourage each other as we rest in the beauty of God's love. If you're in Year 11 or above we would love to see you there! Catch up with friends, share in worship and discussion, and create memories on our favourite weekend of the year!

**CONNECT
CAMP 2016**



Places are limited so please email youth@gci.org.au to register your interest. Those who register will be sent an application form and further details in the coming weeks.

Taking the Big Step

What better reason for the Sydney congregation to have a special after-service afternoon tea on April 9, than to celebrate an engagement. **Zane Garratt** and **Eilish Sullivan** cut a celebratory cake, made for the occasion by **Kate Everson**, while enjoying the well-wishes of the church at this special time.



A slide show by Zane's mum, **Ruth Garratt**, introduced Eilish's family: parents **Peter** and **Narelle** and her two sisters, **Nicole** and **Heidi**. Enjoyment of tennis and golf is shared by Zane and Eilish and figured in their meeting, followed by their first date in June 2012. The important proposal came earlier this year. All our church members wish the couple God's blessings for their future together.

John Biswas wrote:

The Nurse's Assistant Program: We have been operating since 2003 for young women in Bangladesh. A total of 450 students received Nurse's Assistant training. All these students were chosen from small villages regardless of their religious background. 40 students per batch, two batches per year. Of the Nurse's Assistants who completed the training, 90% are now employed in different nursing homes and hospitals in the cities and some of them are working in their respective village based clinics.

Bangladesh

Before receiving the training, they had been living a hopeless life and were a burden to their families. But after completing their training, they are now employed and have become living witnesses for Jesus among these people.

The approximate cost is US\$150 per Nurse's Assistant student to complete the 3-month course. This includes their books, travel cost, lodging, etc.

The Sydney and Wollongong congregations have trained many of these Nurse's Assistants over a number of years. From this year's budget, another AU\$2,500 from Sydney and \$500 from Wollongong have been sent for this purpose.



Buduburam

\$3,300 has been sent for the educational fees of the children and young people in the Buduburam congregation.



Nepal Medical Clinic

Rod Matthews wrote:

On our recent trip to Nepal, we visited the medical clinic that **Deben Sam** established some years ago primarily to serve the very poor workers — in the brickyards and on the streets. Deben has recently had to move the location of the clinic after the owners requested them to vacate the premises after the earthquake of last year because they wanted it for their own purposes. Fortunately, they did force him out immediately. So Deben has had to find new premises.

In the meantime, Deben has also been concerned about the long term sustainability of the clinic when it has been entirely dependent on funds coming from overseas.



So Deben, who is visionary plus has a good business head, has conceived of the idea of trying to make the clinic self-supporting by moving it closer to the metropolitan area where it can also service residential areas, where they can sell medicines and offer a basic medical advice practice charging those who come in off the street as they will expect. At the same time, he will run a mobile medical clinic which will go to the brickyards at an appropriate schedule and timing and continue to provide the very poor with free medical services as before. His intention is that the profit from operating the clinic in a higher traffic area will eventually cover the cost of the mobile medical clinic and ultimately the entire operation will be self-supporting.

To this end he has located a much better facility, in a respectable street (which, to our amazement, was being laid with new asphalt when we were there, unlike what we saw happening on any other street in Kathmandu!). As expected, the rent is higher. In the longer term, Deben says that the clinic will need to hire an additional pharmacist (they have one now) to cover longer work hours, a medical assistant (not as highly qualified as a doctor) to have available for medical advice during opening hours, and an additional part-time doctor (he has one now, for one afternoon a week), and additional funds to stock the facility with medicines and then to supply to mobile clinic when it goes to where the poor are working. Naturally this raises the monthly costs quite a lot, with the main financial pressure being during the development phase as its location becomes known and the passer-by business builds.

In the transition Deben will need funds to continue to clinic for the next quarter (April to June). Sydney has \$2,500 for Nepal left in this year's budget and combined with another \$1,500 from the Australian Mission Fund will fund the transition stage.

The photos give a perspective of the new location. In the photo opposite are Deben's sister who is receptionist/administrator, his brother who is doing a medical course and when completed Deben hopes he will staff the clinic as a medical assistant, and the employed pharmacist.



Books to Bible Society



More resources for pastors have been donated by the Sydney and Wollongong congregation to the Bible Society to assist overseas pastors.

Burundi



Last month we mentioned the money sent to purchase land in Burundi. These photos show a group of leaders after a workshop on leadership, a congregation and the land proposed to be purchased.



"OH, MRS. WAGNER, 'YE OF LITTLE FAITH!"