

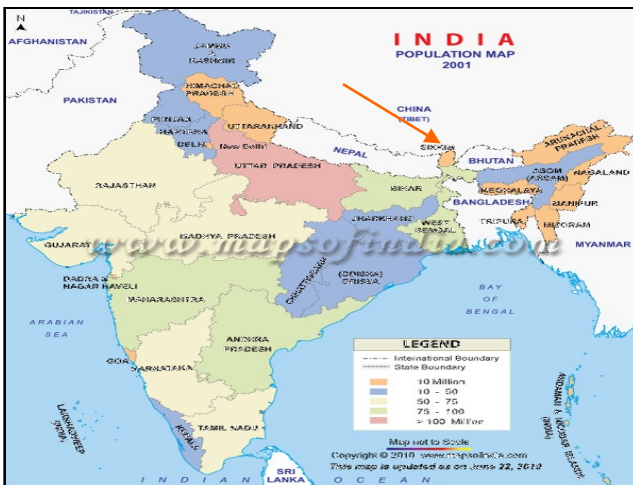
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CHALLENGES ON THE FRONTIER OF THE KINGDOM SIKKIM, NORTH EAST INDIA



Just a little over a month ago, September 8th, an earthquake of 6.8 magnitude struck the Himalaya Mountain region in northeast India. India's second smallest state, Sikkim, with a population of 607,688, took the brunt of the devastation. With 2,447 square miles it is only a little larger than Delaware, yet it has 28 mountain peaks, 21 glaciers, 227 high altitude lakes, 5 hot springs, and over 100 rivers and streams. The people are Mongolian and the vast majority is engaged in primitive agriculture. On the map Sikkim is pictured as the tiny gold colored state just east of Nepal and west of Bhutan (at the tip of the arrow). When we heard of the earthquake and of the thousands who had lost their homes Scott Richards, who is presently in India, and I were determined to do what we could to help.

HERE IS SCOTT'S REPORT:

"Here are some of the photos I took of the earthquake work in Sikkim and in Darjeeling. Much of Sikkim is cut off from the outside world by landslides, and the government has used helicopters to reach interior villages. We were able to visit one village, called Na-ji-tam, after a two-hour drive and a walk up the side of a mountain on stairs the people have built to negotiate the mountains. Several homes in this village were severely damaged, but only one or two were made totally uninhabitable. We handed out blankets, coats, scarves, rice, beans and oil to five homes in that village.



"Rather than have people come to us we took the goods to their houses in the village. We did this to avoid any kind of crowd that could possibly become difficult to control. The people were happy to get the assistance, and I believe that we can go back in the spring and preach. God willing that is my plan. In two days at Na-ji-tam I climbed at least a 1000 steps, which means I also came down a 1000. This next picture shows the distribution of some of the goods from the steps of the building used by the Darjeeling congregation.

"In the district of Darjeeling we visited a village called Dahje where there were eighteen homes that were damaged beyond repair, and unlike in Sikkim they have gotten almost no assistance from the state or federal government. They were very happy to get the assistance from the church of Christ. The church building our brethren use was also badly damaged, and has many large cracks in the walls. Brother B. B. Rai's son, Tarun Rai's home was badly damaged. When we finished in Dahje we went back through a small town called, Mirik.

"In that place temporarily I left the two students, Amit Rai and Colin Martin, who had come with me from the school in Guwahati. This I did in order for them to distribute the remaining blankets and coats to several widows near the church house. In total we distributed 100 blankets, 100 coats, 55 bags of rice, 22 lbs of oil, along with beans. These things went to about 70-80 homes in Darjee-



Distribution of Goods from steps of Darjeeling meeting place



Preaching from steps of meeting place

from each village came to the building at different times. We never had more than thirty people at the building at any one time. All went quite smoothly, and while it was a small scale effort it helped elevate the church in the eyes of the local people. There was even an article in the local paper about the effort which gave credit to the church of Christ. In His Service, Scott”

A VEHICLE TO AID THE PREACHERS TRAVELING TO REMOTE VILLAGES

The vehicle seen here is built by the same company that builds the Mahindra Farm Tractor, which is sold in the U.S.A. and is said to be the most widely sold tractor in the world. This pickup is called a Valero Camper and is a rugged four wheel drive machine



that carries six people easily in the double cab. We purchased it in Guwahati for \$12,500 to provide transport for student preachers to go into the outback and preach in the villages. Classes meet five days a week from 6:00-11:30 a.m. with an hour break from 8:30-9:30 for breakfast. This means they have a long weekend from Friday at 11:30 until Sunday evening. Since the Northeast Bible Institute moved from Shillong in the mountains to the plains of the Bramaputra in March we have been sending students by bus to various places to preach among new congregations and teach them to break bread each Lord’s day. These churches lie more than a hundred miles out. The area is rural, many roads are undeveloped and the churches are widely scattered, so students find it difficult to obtain local transportation; thus the pickup will be used to take a half dozen

students and six bicycles in order that they can be dropped in various locations, spend two days evangelizing on the bikes and be picked up on Sunday afternoon. The two students (trained drivers) shown with Scott will take turns driving the truck, Andrew Chetty and Colin Martin. Scott Richards works fulltime with the school in Guwahati.

OPERATION BRINGS BACK HAPPY SMILE

These two pictures show one of the six young women in the school, Nalin Engtipi, who is 25 and from the Karbi tribe. When she came to the school at Guwahati back in April her left eye pulled to the left, but now both eyes match and her face really lights up. We thank God that she could have an operation and thanks to Bryan Pitts one of our guest teachers, who is from Woodbury, TN and Scott Richards who provided the funds for the operation.



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