

Nurturing Faith in Nepal

In a nation that has experienced drastic changes in the last 70 years – including the end of hereditary rule, the development of a parliamentary system, and a ten-year Maoist insurgency – the Nepal Military Police Christian Fellowship (NMPCF) is nurturing and deepening the spiritual lives of Christians who serve, or have served, in Nepal’s armed forces.

Less than 1.4% of Nepal’s citizens are Christians, and in this predominately Hindu nation those believers can experience negative repercussions because of their beliefs. Despite that, and a ban on proselytization, Christianity in Nepal is growing rapidly – and the military Christian fellowship (MCF) is also growing as the number of believers in the armed forces increases.

In November ACCTS staff members Rick and Melissa Ryles, along with volunteer Leslie Santee, accompanied Nepalese MCF leaders to help establish a new chapter in one city, encourage believers in other locations, teach at a marriage seminar, and participate in the MCF’s annual meeting. In each location, MCF leaders and the Ryles’ emphasized the important role MCFs have in empowering military believers and local churches. MCF Coordinator Chiranjivi Sharma reports: “Colonel Rick Ryles...highlighted that we need to have regular spiritual food to increase our faith; a one-time visit to a church in a week is not enough. There is a need...to meet and encourage and exhort each other to help each other grow.”

In Kathmandu, over 75 soldiers and family members attended the 13th annual NMPCF celebration. Rick shared how he came to faith in Christ and his belief in the importance of international military ministry. Melissa also addressed the group, as MCF Coordinator Sharma shares: “Melissa was touched by the humility of the women participating in the fellowship and encouraged them to continue to participate and encourage each other. Ms. Melissa shared from the book of Proverbs and emphasized the important role women play in their families.”

The MCF’s five-day marriage seminar, run by Cru Military Ministry with co-hosting by ACCTS and MMI, highlighted how men and women react to different situations and how to manage conflict in family life. “We realized that, since we started to run this training, people have started to open up and we have been able to provide some guidance and support,” Chiranjivi shares. “We also discussed different role models existing in different cultures and society and the need to

follow the best model from the Bible...We have already been invited by several MCF members to provide training and coaching to the new young couples.”

Praise God with us for the growth of the MCF in Nepal and the encouragement that ACCTS staff members have been to this group. Pray that the MCF will continue to expand around the nation as its leaders identify military Christians and help them grow in Christ.