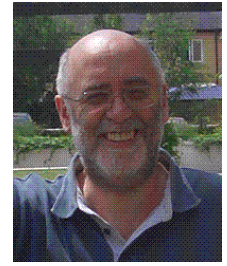




www.leprosymission.org.uk

Chris in Bangladesh



Issue 2

March 2008

PLEASE PRAY FOR

The Leprosy Mission Bangladesh as they continue to minister to the needs of the thousands of people affected by leprosy in the country.

The DBLM Hospital in Nilphamari in the North West of the country. This centre of excellence is continuing to transform the lives of patients with leprosy. Providing rehabilitative surgery, and community based rehabilitation and education.

The Country and people of Bangladesh - that men and women of honesty and integrity might be raised up into positions of authority in the government.

Me - that I might continue to work effectively and in a caring and supportive way with my TLM colleagues and for my Bangla language tutor; who has got a lot of work to do.

Some more pictures on Chris' website
www.havenfunerals.com/news.html

Chris Wickenden is working for the Leprosy Mission Bangladesh for a year. He is helping build the capacity of the local staff in the areas of Finance and Accounting. If you would like to contact him by email you can do so directly to chrisw@tlmbangladesh.org. He would be pleased to hear from you

Its Different

I had never traveled outside Europe so coming to South East Asia has been a real thrill as . Compared to England, many things are different. The climate now (March) is pleasant. Today its 86° F . In England where its also Winter, the temperature is 51° F and its raining. Humidity can rise to over 98% in the summer which makes it feel very sticky especially where I am in Dhaka. Most Bangladeshis eat with their fingers. I've tried, but find it hard and too slow!

Traffic and general congestion in Dhaka is well known worldwide. Rickshaws, like this one, proliferate although this one was unique and more expensive because it had a horn and a bell. The Bangladeshi diet is principally rice, dhal (usually made runny



enough to drink; from chick peas, onion, garlic and spices) and curried meat or fish—if you have enough money to buy it. There is a nationwide shortage of rice, partly due to last Autumn's cyclone and this has increased the cost of this staple food significantly; hitting

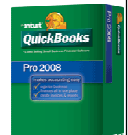
the poorest in the country hardest. 2 or 3 powercuts a day would be fairly average as the creaking electrical infrastructure seeks to provide enough power for everyday needs. There are about 3.4 million people living in slums in Dhaka.

This figure is increasing daily with migration from the low-lying and vulnerable south of the country. 40% of those are living below the hard-core poverty line which is currently defined as about 70p per day. Begging is very common and some of the deformi-

ties displayed, heart-rending. Most Bengalis are perhaps 5'5" or so. At 6'4", I tower above them in a crowd like a Giraffe; causing much amusement! Bangladesh is a Moslem Country so the Christians mostly go to church on a Friday. That took some getting used to!

Starting work

I am - I hope - starting to make a contribution to TLM's work here. I'm using some of my accounting skills to help develop the finance teams capacity to maximise the benefits of a modern suite of accounting software. I am also helping the rewrite TLMs accounting manual - a wonderfully stimulating and exciting task ! I am involved with the implementation of TLM's intranet site which I'll tell you more about soon ...



Promotion prospects in tatters after just 2 weeks ...

The Leprosy Mission has been "... born and cradled in prayer" so said the founder Wellesley Bailey in 1917. Here in Bangladesh each day starts with prayer which is attended by all the staff. Each business meeting starts and finishes with prayer. Recognising the centrality of prayer within the organization some of the staff from all over the country went on a guided retreat at the

HOPE centre about 40 kms north of Dhaka over the last weekend in February. It was a good time and we re-examined the truths of our faith and were led in our studies by the Rev W Lies (sic).

Apart from the spiritual aspect, the weekend helped me to get



to know more members of the TLM team as well as enjoying a Bangladesh theme park next door to the HOPE centre. As part of the recreation activities we had a table tennis tournament. I beat my boss, the country director! How good an idea was that?