

CLC Mission Helper Nepal Travelers' Handbook



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Nepali Culture and Etiquette

Visiting Nepal for the first time can be intimidating, especially if you are not aware of the **cultural differences** that make Nepal so unique. Nepalis often treat foreigners with much respect as honored guests, and are usually very understanding amid cultural mistakes. The following guidelines explain some cultural differences that can help you adapt and enjoy your time in Nepal.

A Respectful Culture

Nepal remains **a traditional society** governed by strong family values. Although in larger towns youth may have Western dress with a modern, cosmopolitan outlook, they remain traditional in many ways. Common values exist amid diverse social, religious and caste customs.

Nepalis are extremely **hospitable** and helpful to visitors – sometimes to an almost embarrassing degree. You may respond by bringing your host flowers or a small gift, even though this is not an Nepali custom. If you face delays, inefficient services or bureaucracy, it is far more efficient and Christ-like to be firm and polite than to lose your temper.

Respect for elders is very important. An elder is anyone older than you or who is in a higher position, such as ministry leaders, pastors, missionaries and your team leaders. One way to show respect for your elders is to stand up when they enter the room. It is normal to reserve front seats for leaders; if there is no available chair, the younger person should give their seat to the elder. During meal times, please reserve the ends of the table for them. Please don't sit there unless you are asked to by a leader. In Nepali culture, it is also respectful to walk beside or behind your leaders.

Meeting People

The **traditional greeting** in Nepal is *namaste* (pronounced "namastay") when meeting or parting. The palms are pressed together, raised towards the face, and the head is bent slightly forward. In Telegu, the language spoken in Andhra Pradesh the typical greeting is *wandanalu*.

The **Western handshake** is also widely used, though most of the men and women we will be working with still prefer to greet visitors with the traditional *namaste*. Unless a woman puts out her hand first, men do not shake hands with a woman.

Using first names only can be taken as overly familiar, so it's best to **address new acquaintances** as "Mr.", "Miss" or "Mrs."; when greeting other Christians you may address them as "Brother" or "Sister".

Nepalis will think nothing of asking **personal questions** within minutes of first meeting you, so don't take offense if a stranger asks you your age, whether or not you are married or where you are going. Such questions are seen as nothing more than being polite and showing a normal friendly interest in a new acquaintance.

Body Language

The feet are considered the lowliest part of the body, and shoes are treated as unclean. People will usually **take off shoes** before entering a house. Placing feet up on the furniture is considered bad manners, as is touching someone inadvertently with your feet. If you are sitting on the floor, as is often the case, try to keep your feet tucked underneath rather than stretched out, and avoid stepping over people.

The head, on the other hand, is thought to be a person's spiritual center. An older person may bless someone younger by touching his or her head. Some Christians in Nepal have a difficult time understanding why some men from the West have long hair. To them, short hair is a sign of their commitment to Christ.

Living in close quarters with family and neighbors gives Nepalis a different sense of **personal space** than many Westerners are used to. If you find yourself crowded or jostled, particularly while traveling, be as tolerant as you can, since space is often at a premium.

Suitable Dress

Nepalis tend to **dress conservatively**, keeping the body well covered. In small towns, most women wear a *sari* (a long decorative cloth wrapped over the body) or a *salwar-kameez* (drawstring pants, shirt-dress and head covering outfit also called a *Punjabi suit*). In cities, jeans, skirts and t-shirts can be common among the younger generation.

Please wear modest clothing. Ladies, avoid wearing short skirts, shorts, tight fitting pants, tank tops, sleeveless tops, sheer garments or anything that might attract unwanted attention. Loose fitting skirts and pants are the most acceptable. The men we will be working with typically wear *Docker* type pants and button down shirts. The women mostly wear the traditional *Sari* or *Punjabi*.

Table Manners

In most of Nepal, people eat with their **right hand only**, normally without utensils. Eating with your left hand is considered impolite. The left hand is reserved for the duties that are taken care of in the restroom.

Most of the time you will be provided eating utensils. There may be times when you will not be given a fork or spoon to use. **Eating with your fingers** can take time to learn but it is the best way to enjoy traditional Nepali food. If unsure how to eat a particular dish, don't be embarrassed to ask. Sitting on the floor for meals is common and, in the south, banana leaves are often used instead of plates.

1. With your right hand fingers, mix a little rice with some curry on your plate.
2. Scoop up a small amount with your fingers.
3. Lean over your plate and put the food into your mouth.
4. A water bowl and towel is often provided to wash your hands after the meal.

It is common in Nepal to hear someone **burp** after eating. This tells the cook that the meal was satisfying and enjoyable. Please do not feel offended if you hear someone burp without saying, "excuse me". Also, please understand that you are not at all expected or required to follow this custom.

Do not feel that you have to eat all the food that is prepared for you. Simply explain to your host that Americans do not typically have a large appetite and that you would prefer a smaller portion. If you are polite they will certainly not be offended.

Gifts, Money and Beggars

It is best that you **do not give money to others**, even as gifts.

Be sensitive when handling money in front of others. Never reveal large amounts of cash at one time from your purse or wallet. Rather, take out a little, then if that is not enough, reach in and take out some more. Remember that though it may not seem like much money to you, it may appear to locals as a lot. It is usually best to carry only enough in your wallet or pocket for your daily expenses. Keep the bulk of your money in a money belt or in the hotel safe. Never leave your money in your hotel room, even if your suitcase is locked.

Be sensitive when you shop. It is difficult for our native brothers and sisters to see American Christians purchasing or carrying items whose cost would feed an entire family for a year or more. If possible, please purchase expensive items only at the end of the trip. You will have an opportunity for gift shopping in Chennai on the last day before departure.

As a foreign visitor in Nepal, you will get more attention from **beggars** at city traffic lights, markets, and outside places of worship. Although a persistent beggar is very difficult to refuse, visitors who give money to one will soon find themselves surrounded by a throng of beggars. Be especially careful of being pick-pocketed in the confusion. The best strategy is to ignore them until they leave you alone. Although when one is moved with compassion it is certainly not forbidden to help the needy.

In Church

In congregational settings, you will often see **men and women** sitting on separate sides of the church. This also applies during meal times. Please make sure you sit in the proper place, according to your gender. If you are unsure where to sit, simply observe the natives and follow their example. Most often, you will be given a place of honor at the front of the church.

Remember to **take off your shoes** when entering a church or someone's home. This is traditional custom in many Asian countries.

The women in Nepal typically **wear a head covering** with their Sari dress during prayer, and sometimes throughout the worship service. It is a good idea for the women of the group to bring along a shawl or scarf for this purpose. Men may wear button-down shirts and casual dress pants.

If you are in a church that has **chairs** to sit on, please try your best to **sit up straight** and do not slouch or put your feet on the chair in front of you. Nepalis regard the church building as a sacred place where they go to hear about the Lord.

Communication and Relations

Though Nepal is often viewed by foreigners as being a noisy culture, foreigners are also viewed by Nepalis as being loud and obnoxious. Independence, self-assertiveness, and other American values

are not held in high esteem. As guests in this land, remember to respect your hosts' culture. Too often, westerners do not have a sense of their surroundings, especially in public places. While in Nepal, please **do not talk or laugh loudly**. Respect leaders when they are speaking or making public announcements. Try to be aware of your surroundings, and follow what the natives are doing.

In Nepal, **people may stand very close** during conversation. When in a church or when traveling, people may sit very near to you. This is quite normal. Do your best to adjust with your surroundings. You will also see men holding hands with other men in public. This should not be seen as a homosexual act but simply part of the very close and friendly attitude of the Nepali culture. If you are a man, do not be surprised if one of the Nepali pastors or young men attempts to hold your hand as you are walking along.

When **addressing people in Nepal**, especially elders, it is impolite to use their first name alone. Please be sure to precede a believer's name with "Brother" or "Sister".

In Nepali countries, **certain statements have meanings** that foreigners often misunderstood as criticism. For example, an Nepali may tell you that you look tired or sick or point out a blemish on your face. This is only meant to show that they care about your health. Someone may say to you that you look fat, which does not mean that you are overweight but instead is a complement that you come from a good family that takes care of you.

There are some **subjects of conversation** that would be unwise to discuss while in Nepal, such as dating, politics, divorce, sex, homosexuality, and movies. Avoid sarcasm. These all may lead to great misunderstanding. Please make sure that you avoid these topics in general conversation, during public speaking, and when sharing from God's Word.

Most of the time you will be communicating through a **translator**. Please keep in mind that certain words in the English language do not always translate directly into the local language. Therefore, one sentence in English, may take up to five sentences of the local language to translate the meaning well enough for the people to understand.

Please **be careful when you encounter different customs** from your own; do not laugh or make jokes. Though they may not show it, the natives can be deeply hurt by this. Try your best to understand and appreciate their culture.

When talking to people, please **do not use Western slang** such as, "cool", "awesome", "dude", "whacked", "tight", "stoked", "cheesy", "wicked" or other words with double meanings. This may work within the Western culture where it is immediately understood. However, outside of the West, it is neither understood nor able to be translated.

Many Nepalis **learn English by watching television**. Words they hear on TV may be repeated because that is all they know. You could hear a word said that may offend you. Please keep in mind that many Nepalis are not aware of cuss words or their negative meaning. They might use one as an exclamation only because they heard it on TV.

Most believers in Nepal **abstain from cinema movies, drinking alcohol, and smoking**, so mentioning viewing a movie, or drinking a beer or wine, or smoking may be misunderstood.

Please be considerate if you brought snacks to eat in public. In Nepal, it is only right to **share food with those around you**. Eating in front of someone without offering anything is considered rude.

Please **do not eat beef jerky** in public – cows in Nepal are considered holy and sacred by the Hindu people.

One of the best things to do while you are in Nepal is to **get to know Nepalis** by talking with them. Ask them, "What is your name?", "Where are you from?" and "What does your father do?" Asking questions like these mean that you care enough to take a personal interest in them.

When giving and receiving things, such as food, money and gifts, please remember to **use only your right hand**. Using your left hand would be impolite in this culture since it is often used, along with a jug of water, in place of toilet paper.

It is common for **foreigners to feel strange** when people stare at them or intently watch what they are doing. However, this is nothing more than mere curiosity and should not cause you to be afraid or uneasy. Make sure that you **smile a lot and say hello** to people whenever you see them. Nepalis are a very happy people for the most part and appreciate a happy face. 😊

Nepalis are of a very **helpful nature**. Please do not feel strange if someone, like your host, tries to help you by carrying your bags or insists on doing something for you that could be easily done by yourself. To them, it is a privilege to assist you. It is better to accept their generosity with a thankful heart.

If a stranger asks what you are doing in Nepal, be careful and discreet. Tell the truth that you are simply here to visit Nepal and for security reasons **do not mention ministry names** or contact information. Share that you are touring the country with your group and mention places of interest that you have visited or plan to visit.

Male-Female Relations

The roles of men and women in Nepali society are different from those in the West. Men sit on one side and women on another in church and believers' meetings. It is culturally inappropriate for a woman to greet a man first by shaking his hand; allow the man to greet first and if he feels comfortable shaking your hand, he will. Otherwise, just smile and say, "Praise the Lord."

If someone of the **opposite gender** asks you to pray for them, please do not lay your hands on them directly. Instead, you may stretch out your hands toward them as you pray.

Even when joking, please **be careful not to touch** the opposite sex. Even small things, like patting someone on the shoulder or playing with someone's hair, could be misunderstood in this culture.

You should also be aware that **public displays of affection** between couples is disrespectful in Nepali society. Conversely, it is acceptable for people of the same gender to hold hands in public, only as a cultural sign of mutual friendship.

How to Be a Blessing as a Visitor

Pray. There is no greater preparation for this journey. You will be challenged spiritually, emotionally and physically by what you see and experience. Have a morning prayer in your heart, "Lord, help me to be open and willing to learn what you are going to teach me today." Share needs with your group and pray together. God is with you!

Take time to observe what the Lord is teaching you in the midst of your busy day. Record these things so you will not forget them when you go back home.

"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break." Expect changes and delays in itineraries, dinner times, departure time, meetings, etc., due to weather, strikes, unavoidable circumstance, and the typical "Nepali time." It is better to stay flexible and continually ready for change. Walk with an attitude that chooses to praise God in all things.

Be willing to give up rights and convenience for the sake of others. Allow the Lord to build you together as a team. You are not in Nepal for your own selfish gain but to allow the Lord to use your lives for the furthering of His kingdom.

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

1I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. 7But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Ephesians 4:1-7

Seek to serve one another and the brothers and sisters you meet.

Ask your leader if you are ever unsure about something. Most mistakes are made unintentionally due to lack of information.

Be punctual! It's your responsibility to find out when and where to assemble for the next meeting. If one person is late, the whole team could miss a flight, causing major complications since it could be a full day or more before the next available flight out.

Do not go off on your own. Check with your tour leader before splitting the group. Never go anywhere without someone knowing where you are going and when you will be back.

Please keep your room clean and your things arranged properly each day.

Teaching and Preaching

When sharing **the Gospel** in Nepal here are a few things to keep in mind.

1. **Simplicity** is the key since many people here have no idea who Jesus is.
2. **Do not use slang** words or expressions.
3. **People will listen** to you and respect what you are saying because you are a foreigner and you are considered an expert in your field, so please know that your words carry a lot of weight.
4. **Do not be discouraged** if some of the people you are teaching do not seem to believe what you are teaching them. Remember, the important thing is that they were able to hear the Gospel. Remember the promise from God that His Word will not return to Him void. You can be sure that the Lord will continue to work in their heart. What you have shared with them will not be forgotten.
5. **Do not** include derogatory remarks about the Hindu religion or customs in your teaching and preaching. It is best to simply teach and preach God's Law and Gospel and let the individuals come to their own conclusions about the falsehood of Hinduism. The local pastors will be able to follow up after we have come and gone.
6. **When teaching through a translator**, remember to use simple, short, and complete phrases. Try to avoid words or expressions that would have no meaning in their culture or daily lives. Example: don't use an illustration about driving a car or buying a new TV since most of the people we will work with have no opportunity to do either of these things.

Health and Cleanliness

For extensive information on travelers health and vaccinations please visit the website for The Centers for Disease Control at: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/nepal.aspx>

Please **do not touch animals** on the street or anywhere else. Many of them carry diseases. If a dog or any other animal bites, please inform your group leader immediately. Don't be afraid of the many harmless geckos that often climb room walls and prey on mosquitoes. Keep your distance from the monkeys because they can be quite aggressive if approached.

If possible, **bathe** at least once a day. This will help prevent illness. Use baby powder to keep dry.

Bathing using a bucket may be another interesting challenge for you. Here are a few tips to help you in the process:

1. Fill the bucket with water and use the small plastic cup to **pour the water over you**. Make sure that your hair and body are completely soaked in water but do not allow water in your mouth or ears – this can cause illness or infection. Women with long hair should bow their head and hair down to pour the water away from their ears.
2. Use soap and shampoo to **lather yourself** well.
3. **Rinse off the soap** and shampoo by using the plastic mug to pour water over you.
4. **Scratches and scrapes** can lead to a bad infection. Clean them well and keep them covered.

Food and Drink

Please make sure that you **drink plenty of bottled water** even if you are not thirsty because your body can become quickly dehydrated. Bottled water should be frequently available from your leaders and hosts.

Tap water is unsafe for drinking, brushing or rinsing. Drink and brush your teeth only with bottled water. If you develop stomach or intestinal problems such as diarrhea, a likely cause was drinking impure water.

Make sure water bottles are sealed before opening. Always order cold drinks without ice, since ice is often made from local water.

Hot tea and coffee are okay to drink and are usually served with milk and sugar already added. If you are allergic to milk or cannot have sugar due to a medical problem, please inform your leader.

Do not assume foods are okay to eat; always check with the leader. Be careful to not eat raw vegetables or uncooked food. Try to eat freshly cooked foods and beware of food that has been left sitting around for a long time. Do not eat fruit that cannot be peeled, such as grapes and apples. Do not eat food given to you by strangers. Your host will normally let you know of food you should not eat. Many places along your itinerary prepare safe meals specifically for your visit.

In case of illness:

1. **Advise your group leader right away so he knows when the sickness began.** Do not be embarrassed (**diarrhea will be a part of your trip to Nepal**) and you will most likely not be the only one with a problem. Your host is prepared to assist you when aware of the need.
2. **Prevent dehydration.** Replenish lost fluids by drinking plenty of fruit juices and bottled water. If you feel dehydrated, ask your host for re-hydration fluids.
3. **Limit food intake** to hot tea, soups and bananas. As your appetite returns, follow with bland crackers and dry toast. Then try simple baked foods.
4. **Take non-prescription medication.** Your host may have some available or can take you to a pharmacy to buy some.

How to Avoid Traveler's Diarrhea



ONLY drink purified or **sealed bottled water**, hot beverages, and fresh 100% fruit juice.



DO NOT drink or brush your teeth with **tap water**.



DO NOT consume **non-pasteurized milk** or dairy products.



ONLY eat fresh **fruits that can be peeled** like bananas and oranges.



DO NOT eat **fruits that you are unable to peel**.



DO NOT eat **uncooked vegetables**, including salads.



ONLY eat food that **arrives hot** and is well cooked.



DO NOT eat **undercooked or raw** meats, fish, or shellfish.



DO NOT eat foods sold by **street vendors**.

Jet Lag

Jet lag is a physiological disturbance experienced by air travelers on flights across different time zones. It affects the body's internal clock, disrupting sleeping patterns, eating schedules, and body temperature. Increased noise levels, changes in atmospheric pressure, low humidity, and stress are all influences.

The body will naturally readjust its biological rhythms to the new schedule and environment after a period of time, normally one day for each time zone crossed. However, there are some steps you can take that will lessen the effects of long periods of travel and shorten the time required for readjustment:

1. **Prior to departure, adjust your sleep patterns** to fit those of your destination if your schedule permits. Go to sleep and get up an hour earlier or later each day until your pattern begins to approximate the one you will have at your destination.
2. **Avoid a last-minute rush** by packing and finalizing details well ahead of the day of departure. Reducing unnecessary stress will improve your energy level and help your body adapt.
3. **Wear comfortable and loose-fitting clothing** during long flights. This improves blood circulation and resting ability. Wear comfortable shoes that can be easily loosened or removed in case your feet swell.
4. **Drink plenty of fluids**, such as fruit juices and water. Try to drink one glass of water for each hour of flight. This will help counteract the tendency of pressurized cabins to cause dehydration.
5. **Regulate caffeine intake wisely**. Caffeine speeds up body functions and contributes to dehydration but might be helpful to avoid drowsiness during daylight.

6. **Avoid alcoholic beverages** on the flights.
7. **Avoid foods with high levels of salt or sugar**, such as sodas, snack foods, and desserts. Salt increases fluid retention, causing more swelling of your feet, and sugar will decrease your blood-sugar level after the initial rise. Also, avoid heavy foods or overeating that will consume more energy for digestion.
8. **Eat potassium-rich foods**, such as bananas. Water loss from perspiration, etc., depletes the potassium in your body.
9. **Exercise by stretching and walking** at least five minutes every hour when the fasten-seat-belt sign is off. Exercise will keep your blood circulating and prevent blood from pooling in your legs and feet, causing swelling or dangerous blood clots.
10. **Try to fully relax and sleep if possible**. If the flight is not full, look for multiple seats to stretch out. Sleeping when dark and staying awake with minimal napping during daylight can help your body to adjust to the destination's time zone.

Applying for your Nepali Visa –

- Visas will be acquired at the airport in Kathmandu. You will need \$40 in cash that is easily accessible when we arrive at the Kathmandu airport.

Travelers Health Insurance –

You are required to have a traveler's health insurance policy to participate in the Mission Helper Program. This policy will cover any health problems, injuries, or accidents that may occur while in Nepal. This policy will also cover evacuation from Nepal in the case of a serious illness or injury. The company that is recommended is **International Medical Group - IMG. The Patriots Travel Medical Insurance** policy provides adequate coverage. The insurance is relatively inexpensive. *(For example – a 30 year old male can get a \$500,000 policy with a \$100 deductible for 30 days for \$65.)* Go to the IMG website to get a quote and to buy your policy on line. www.imglobal.com/coverage/patriot/ Once you have bought your policy, send an email with your policy number and details to the Mission Helper Trip coordinator so that he can keep a record of the policy information in the States in case of emergency.

NOTE: FOR GROUP MISSION HELPER TRIPS THIS WILL NORMALLY BE HANDLED AND PURCHASED BY THE TRIP COORDINATOR. (Check with coordinator to make sure)

Travel Information

Voltage in Nepal is 230V, unlike 115V in the west. To operate electric devices, both a voltage transformer and a plug adapter must be used. Note that some computer A/C adapters are labeled "Input: 100-240V"; in this case, a separate voltage transformer is not required. It is strongly recommended that a surge protector be used for electronic devices.

Photography at Nepali airports is prohibited.

Always carry your passport with you. You may be asked to show your passport when entering certain areas of the country. Keep your passport, money, camera and other valuables close to you at all times. Never leave your bags unattended.

Always watch your luggage, especially if you allow a porter to carry your bags. Know your bags and watch carefully as they are loaded and unloaded.

Exchange money only at airports, hotels and banks to avoid receiving counterfeit bills. Units of Nepali currency are the *Rupee* and *Paisa*. One Rupee equals 100 Paisa. In 2011, the U.S. Dollar (US \$1.00) exchanges for approximately 72 Nepali Rupees.

Save all exchange receipts. These are required for re-converting unspent money when departing Nepal. You will not be able to exchange Nepali Rupees outside of Nepal.

The customary **tip for a porter** who takes your baggage to your room is: Rs. 10-20/- per bag.

Tipping of **taxi and rickshaw drivers** is not customary. It is best to negotiate cost of the trip before you leave and expect an attempt to re-negotiate the price once you arrive. **Do not pay more than the price you agreed upon** before you got into the rickshaw or taxi.

In Nepal, **traffic runs in the opposite direction** as in the United States and **pedestrians do not have the right of way**. When crossing the street, first look to the right and then to the left. Cross the street only when you are sure it is safe. Vehicles will not stop for you!

When walking at night, it is wise to bring a friend and use a flashlight.

Hotel room security varies, so never leave any valuables or money in your room while away, even if hidden.

Arrival Instructions

Arrival and Departure Card for Foreign Nationals

Before landing in Nepal on your international flight, you will be given a required form to fill out. This *Arrival and Departure Card* requires an "**Address in Nepal and Tel contact No.**". The customs officer desk has approved listing a hotel as a contact. Since we will be visiting multiple places in Nepal we will use the hotel that we will be arriving to and departing from. Please use the following information on the *Arrival and Departure Card*:

The Trip Coordinator will have an address for you when you arrive.

For security reasons, **never list or mention church body or pastor's names**, contacts, or addresses.

Deplaning Procedures

International Airports have two lines for arriving International passengers, the Red Channel for those declaring goods for duty, and the Green Channel for those who have nothing to declare. Once you deplane, proceed to the baggage claim and **customs/immigration** via the Green Channel line. Ensure your passport and *Arrival and Departure Card for Foreign Nationals* is ready for customs officers. When going through customs be very careful not to say too much about your reason for coming to Nepal. When the customs agent asks the reason for your visit, answer truthfully that you are here to visit Nepal with a group. **Do not tell the customs agent that you are coming to Nepal to spread the Gospel or to do mission work.**

U.S. Embassy Emergency Services

The American Citizen Services Unit provides emergency services to Americans in the event of death, arrest, illness, missing persons, destitution and other circumstances. Services provided are limited.

Website: <http://nepal.usembassy.gov/>

Phone Number: 977-1-400-7266 and 977-1-400-7269

Journaling and Reporting Guidelines

One of the most important parts of your trip experience is expressing the personal impact the trip has had on you. Sharing it with others will help others to see the incredible opportunities and open doors that the Lord has shown to you on your trip. **Personal websites, blogs and email lists** make communicating more simple, convenient and up-to-date than ever before. You will have access to the Internet most days. I would suggest that you make use of e-mail or blogs to journal your experience. A personal, hand-written journal will also provide a long lasting memento of your journey.

Please remember that **persecution in Nepal** is increasing and Christian organizations are being watched with scrutiny by many anti-Christian groups. Because electronic methods of communication can easily be forwarded or viewed without your knowledge, your trip experiences can be observed by anti-Christian extremists in Nepal and cause **problems for the missionaries** on the field.

Therefore, as you report about your trip using a website, blog or an email list, please consider who else may be reading it, acting wisely to protect our Nepali brothers and sisters. Please refrain from mentioning specific names or places. This may seem a little extreme but excerpts from Pastor Todd Ohlmann's 2001 Mission Helper Trip report have been quoted in a derogatory manner by an anti-Christian website. You can see this example at: <http://www.hinduwisdom.info/ConversionII.htm>



The Flag of Nepal

Established on Dec. 16, 1962, Nepal's flag consists of two united pennant shapes; it is the only non-rectangular national flag in the world. In the upper segment is a moon with a crescent attached below; in the bottom segment appears a stylized sun. The symbols are for different dynasties and express a hope for the immortality of the nation. The crimson and blue colors are common in Nepali art.

About Nepal – From the BBC website:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1166502.stm

With its ancient culture and the Himalayas as a backdrop, landlocked Nepal has a romantic image. It is nonetheless one of the world's poorest countries, and is struggling to overcome the legacy of a 10-year Maoist insurrection.

Until Nepal became a republic in May 2008, it had been ruled by monarchs or a ruling family for most of its modern history in relative isolation.

A brief experiment with multi-party politics in 1959 ended with King Mahendra suspending parliament and taking sole charge in 1962.

Democratic politics was introduced in 1991 after popular protests, but was marked by frequent changes of government. The last king of Nepal, Gyanendra, twice assumed executive powers - in 2002 and 2005.



Maoist rebels waged a decade-long campaign against the monarchy, leaving more than 12,000 people dead and 100,000 people displaced according to UN figures.

When King Gyanendra's direct rule ended under public pressure in April 2006, the rebels entered talks with the parliamentary government on how to end the civil war.

A peace deal was agreed in November, although the Maoists continued to press for abolition of the monarchy. Parliament agreed to the condition in December 2007, and the Maoists emerged as the largest parliamentary party after elections in April 2008.

The monarchy was abolished a month later, and a Maoist-dominated government took office in August. The Maoist-led coalition government disintegrated in May 2009, and was succeeded by another coalition excluding the Maoists.

Nepal has been at odds with neighbouring Bhutan over the repatriation of thousands of Bhutanese refugees of Nepalese descent who fled violence in Bhutan in the early 1990s.

Nepal has a flourishing tourism industry, but faces problems of deforestation and encroachment on animal habitats. Most of the population depend on agriculture, and the UN estimates that about 40% of Nepalis live in poverty. Foreign aid is vital to the economy, and Nepal is also heavily dependent on trade with neighbouring India.

FACTS

- Population: 29.8 million (UN, 2010)
- Capital: Kathmandu
- Area: 147,181 sq km (56,827 sq miles)
- Major language: Nepali
- Major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism
- Life expectancy: 67 years (men), 69 years (women) (UN)
- Monetary unit: 1 Nepalese rupee = 100 paisa
- Main exports: Carpets, clothing, leather goods, jute goods, grain
- GNI per capita: US \$440 (World Bank, 2009)
- Internet domain: .np
- International dialling code: +977

After Returning Home

Very often, when just returning from a foreign country, we find ourselves judging or looking down on others. This is only because our view of the world has been changed by what we have seen and experienced. However, it is important to keep in mind that others have not yet seen or experienced what we have. We should instead **be a window through which they can see what God is doing in Nepal** so that through our life they will also be challenged to reach the lost world with His love.

Much of the information for this travel guide was adapted and used by permission from Gospel for Asia publications.

Suggested Packing List

Clothing –

- 2 or 3 pants/skirts (remember that the women should wear very loose fitting clothing)
- 3-4 shirts (Casual, cool and light fabric, no words or confusing graphics. I bring button down short sleeve shirts)
- Undergarments
- Sleep and lounging around the hotel clothing (*modest shorts and t-shirts*)
- 1 pair of sturdy hiking shoes and one pair of sandals.
- Good socks
- Handkerchiefs (For wiping sweat from your weary brow and blowing the dirt and dust from your nose)
- One set of nice clothing for worship services (men...bring a tie and a collared shirt)

Toiletries –

- Soap and shampoo
- Deodorant
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Body powder
- Feminine hygiene needs
- Small towel (some of the hotels do not provide towels)
- Toilet paper (one roll, take the tube out and smash it flat for easy packing. You can buy toilet paper once we get there but don't count on finding it in restrooms)
- Eye contacts needs (I have heard that contact care is very difficult in Nepal due to the pollution and dust in the air—BRING YOUR GLASSES)

First Aid Kit –

- Aspirin, Tylenol
- Insect Repellent
- Thermometer
- Band-Aids
- Diarrhea medicine
- Laxative
- Dramamine for motion sickness (only if this is a problem for you)
- Eye drops (there is lots of dust and pollution in the air, I use eye drops a lot in Nepal)
- Cipro (a multipurpose antibiotic. You can probably get a free sample from your doctor)
- Anti-fungal spray for athletes foot or other types of "itch"
- Any prescription meds you need
- Antiseptic, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide
- Chapstick

Miscellaneous Items –

- Journal, pen/pencil (I strongly encourage everyone to keep a daily journal. You will appreciate it if you are asked to give any presentations, it will be handy when you pray for those you have met, and it will be the best memento of your trip for years to come)
- Playing cards
- Books (plan on doing a lot of reading)
- Travel book for Nepal
- Bible

- Safety pins
- Camera
- Address, e-mail, and phone # list
- Money belt (you can pick up the ones that fit around your waste and tuck under your pant at Walmart for a few bucks)
- Wallet that you can carry in your front pocket for spending money and ID
- Backpack/daypack – invest in a good one for trekking in the mountains
- Alarm clock (battery travel)
- Travel sewing kit (plan on losing a few buttons when you have your clothes laundered)
- Electric Outlet Transformer (Small, inexpensive adapters for blow dryers, curling irons, shavers, etc. are available at Walmart.)
- Small flashlight and batteries
- Credit Card (you will be able to use this in London or for cash advances in Nepal, but don't count it)
- Snack type foods (I usually bring some candy bars, granola bars, gum, hard candies, and beef jerky)

DO NOT FORGET –

- Passport and necessary visas
- \$40 in cash – easily accessible upon arrival at the Kathmandu airport for the Nepal Visa
- Money – new, crisp, clean, no-writing, mostly \$100 bills
- Teaching materials and notes

Packing Tips –

- Carry-on luggage – I pack enough clothing for 1 day. I also pack my outlet transformer, a few snacks, teaching notes, Bible, pen, reading book, flashlight, medications, journal, laptop, and anything I don't want to be without if my luggage gets lost.
- Checked luggage –
 - Currently you are allowed TWO (2) checked bag with a weight limit of 50 lbs
 - Currently, you are allowed only ONE (1) carry-on bag small enough to fit in the luggage compartment above your seat. I take a roller bag. **You can also take an extra purse, briefcase, or daypack.**

NOTICE – **PACK LIGHT!** Try to fit everything you need into ONE small/medium suitcase!

- Some of you will receive an extra suitcase to check in. This suitcase will contain craft materials, clothing donations, books, etc. This extra suitcase will be given to you at the airport in Chicago or possibly in Eau Claire before you leave for the airport.