



**Australian
Lutheran**
World Service
60 Years of Love & Care

Thank you!
HAITI EARTHQUAKE
Lutheran response:
\$528,435

Monday 24 May

I don't know how to tell you this story.

That's why I've sent you the three photos enclosed, and will simply let Bimali share with you what happened.

Bimali is the lady with the sad eyes. She's a Dalit from Nepal. In the Hindu caste system Dalits have been regarded as 'untouchable'. Many can't use the same taps or crockery as other castes, or even enter their houses.

This is how people with leprosy were treated in Jesus' time.

What makes Bimali's suffering worse is she is also Haliya. These are people so poor they had to borrow money from landlords to survive. The landlords charge 60% interest, which poor people can never repay. Instead they're forced to work as bonded labourers (Haliya) for the landlord - basically, slaves.

As Bimali told me her story, I couldn't help thinking about these words from Isaiah 58:

**"Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke
of injustice, and let the oppressed go free.
Share your food with the hungry..."**

In a moment I'll share how you can do exactly that through ALWS. For now though I invite you to just listen to Bimali:

"My mother died when I was 11, and so my father then made me be married. My husband was 18.

I feel so bad when my mother is not there, and I am worried about my life.

When I was 16 I had my first child. My husband and I became Haliya when he borrowed 6000 Rupees (around \$100) to pay for the treatment of his brother who was sick.

My husband goes to plough the land for the landlord, and did extra ironsmith work repairing tools to barter for food. I went as a labourer to another place.

We had to tie together the legs of the children and leave them in the house. When I returned from work their clothes were filled with urine and stools.

I cannot express in words how this made me feel as a mother. I was weeping every day that I had to do this to my children. But there is nothing else I can do."

At this moment Bimali broke down, and sobbed and sobbed.
I asked if she wanted to stop, but she wanted to say more...

"One day my husband was ploughing the land, and he died in the field.

I held the funeral ritual. As soon as I finished, the landlord came to me and said I must work to pay the loan because my husband had died. I feel a real pressure, but there is no choice. I have to work.

I work to pay this loan for 22 years.

Later there was Haliya group formed by the Lutheran. They support me to go in the legal process. When they held the case the landlord pressured us, but the Government decided to dismiss the debt. Because of interest, the loan was now 20,000 Rupees (\$300).

Then I am free."

When you hear someone bare their soul like this, the pain is so raw it's hard to know what to do.

I simply told Bimali there were people in Australia who cared about her. That in our Christian faith we respond to God's love by loving our neighbour. What's more we're taught the poor are the most precious. And the oppressed most important...

... and that those who are now last will be first.

There were 50 or more people gathered around - all Hindus, Dalit, 'untouchables'. After I'd spoken there was silence for a moment. Then the people started clapping. And smiling. And laughing. It was like God reached out and touched their hearts.

I can't explain what happened, or what will become of it.

What I do know is that we've got big plans to help these kind of people right across Nepal. In fact we've promised support of \$350,000 for these projects over the next 12 months. It's a ministry that follows almost exactly those words from Isaiah 58:

'Share your food with the hungry...'

This is the practical hands-on help of supporting families to become self-sufficient.

Think pigs, chooks, goats, mushroom farms, hot-house tomatoes, small shops... also school supplies, toilets, even corrugated iron to put roofs on houses!

'Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice...'

At the same time we empower people like Bimali to fight for their rights and win justice.

These people have been oppressed for generations. The good news is progress is starting to happen. Laws are changing. Bonded labourers are being set free. Young people are motivated to demand better for their community. We must build on this.

As always, we step out in faith, and simply put the needs of these people before you.

I understand not everyone can help every time, and that there are many calls on you from across the church and community. Yet if your heart is touched by what has happened to people like Bimali, this is your chance to do something.

**Simply use the Action Slip to mail your donation,
phone Jen on 1300 763 407 or donate at www.alws.org.au**

If you want proof of the difference you can make, pick up the second photo I've sent you - Chanakala, the lady in the checked red top standing alongside her flourishing crop. Chanakala had suffered just like Bimali. A bonded labourer, utterly poor, without hope. Now, after receiving Lutheran support through a Savings Group, her life is transformed:

"Now we grow so much. In winter there is cauliflower, cow-peas, cabbage, pigeon-peas, radish and lentils. In summer there will be pumpkin, okra, tomato and sweet-corn. I have also harvested 150 kgs of potatoes. Before, I did not grow these crops, because I did not know they were good for children. This garden provides us vegetables all year round, and I no longer have to buy at the market. We even have excess to sell.

I am a member of the group and it is easy to take a loan. I plan to extend the vegetable farm, and raise goats and livestock. I have also started a small shop at the front of my house.

Now we are free, and no one can bind us to do work.

I expect a good future, and that my grandchildren do not have the difficulties I have had. I want them to have higher education and become a doctor or teacher.

I say thank you to the people in Australia who support us. I am very happy and give you many, many thanks. This is the greatest religion when there are people who are helpful and co-operative and care about families like ours."

This is the life transformation you can achieve for people who have been treated as 'untouchables' and slaves.

**Simply mail the Action Slip, phone 1300 763 407
or donate when it suits you at www.alws.org.au**

When you do, you help make sure children like Rambha, Manisha and Nanna – the children in the third photo – will no longer be regarded as ‘untouchable’. You help set them free from injustice, rejection and oppression.

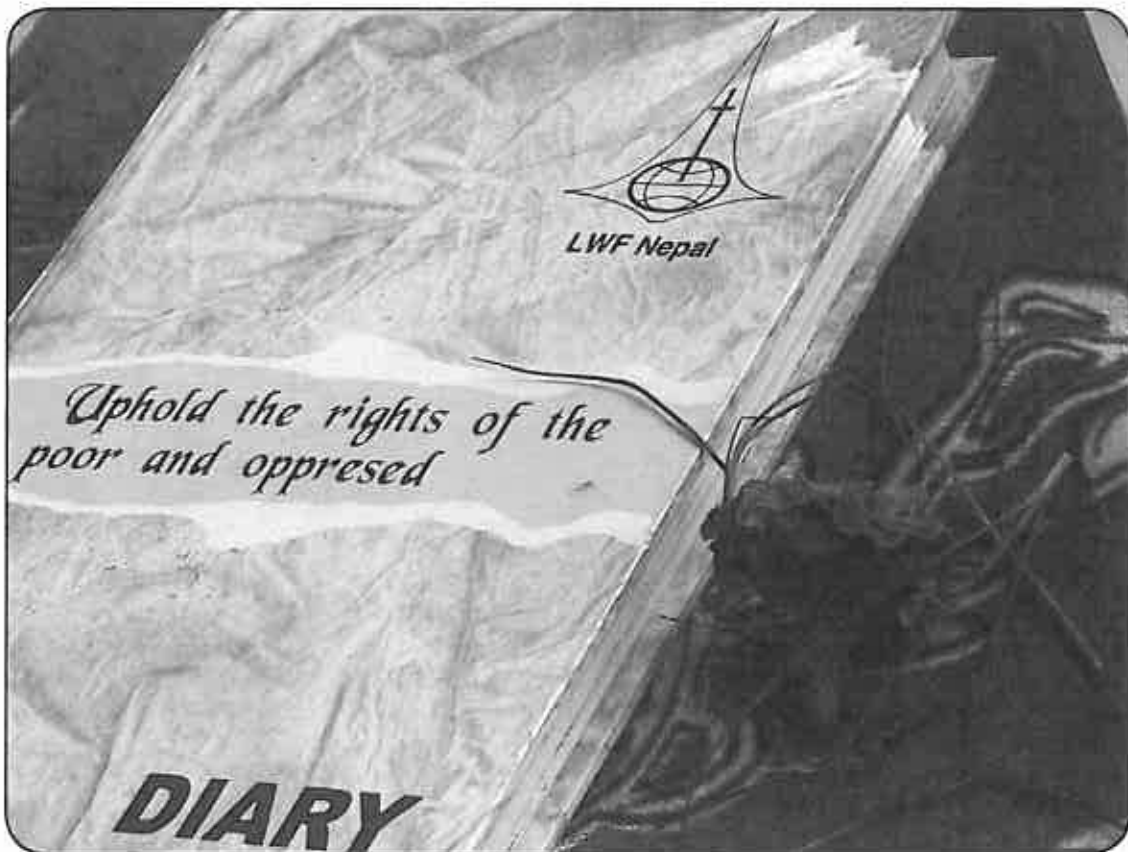
I realise this is a long letter, and that what I’ve shared with you isn’t easy to hear. Thank you for listening. I pray these people will touch your heart as they touched mine.

Your brother,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jonathan Krause', enclosed within a large, stylized circular flourish.

Jonathan Krause
- for the ALWS team

PS: This is a world - and a Lutheran ministry - many people know little about. If you’d like us to visit your church or school or Ladies Guild or men’s group and share more, just ask! Contact Jen on 1300 763 407 or alws@alws.org.au and she’ll arrange things with you. Thank you again for caring!



Every Lutheran World Federation Nepal staff member carries a diary like this. While we may smile at the spelling of 'oppressed', we can be inspired by the passion these people have for those they serve.

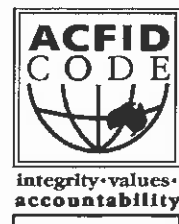
"The kind of fasting I want is this: remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor."
- Isaiah 58:6,7a

Your donation will support projects to help the poor and oppressed in countries like Nepal. The amounts shown are examples of the kind of help you provide. Any money received in excess of country needs will be used where it is needed most.

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