

# Alan and Megan Barker

## On the Road Again.

May 2022



[www.bmsworldmission.org/ambarker](http://www.bmsworldmission.org/ambarker)

Bob Dylan. Canned Heat. Willie Nelson. They all wrote a song with that as the title and there's probably more! We often quote the title to each other as we set off on our travels, which seems to be a regular part of our lives. It's not always strictly 'on the road', as there's often air travel involved too but we like to say it anyway! Since our last newsletter we have been 'on the road again' and we definitely will be soon as we head to the UK at the end of June for a period of Home Assignment.

We were grateful for the opportunity to visit family in Vietnam over the Easter holiday. Vietnam has been tightly closed during the covid times but it opened fully without notice and so we took the opportunity to go over Easter. It was great to see Rhys, Tete and Wesley and to finally meet Eli! Our daughter, Gemma and her two children, Louane and Billy, were able to join us from South Korea too. We had great fun!



Megan has also been 'on the road again' within Nepal. She went to Pokhara to attend a meeting of the Association of Nepal's Occupational Therapists (ANOT) and then went on from there to Surkhet. You will remember that we used to live in Surkhet, and Megan has been invited to continue supporting the rehabilitation work as it is restructured and new staff are appointed.

In the photo she was assessing the use of new 'Made in Nepal' standing frames recently delivered. As well as advising the therapists there, she attended some meetings about how to develop the service and keep it going into the future. After a week back home in Kathmandu, Megan was off to Pokhara again to continue her support of Dorothy, the young Nepali Occupational Therapist that BMS supported through OT school. At the same time Megan joined a team who are designing a 'Nepal-friendly' wheelchair – one that can be built and maintained locally and can withstand the rough rural roads and paths. Mostly wheelchairs are imported to Nepal, but they are not designed for 'off-road' conditions and are expensive to maintain. Her time in Pokhara included a trip outside of the city to test the chair in a rural setting. It is hoped that this will form a basis for making wheelchairs in Nepal from local materials that would then be locally repairable. Something Megan has for many years been praying to be developed.



While Megan has been on the road, Alan has been working on some interesting projects to support rural communities in remote parts of Nepal. One of the projects is to set up an emergency medical response team in a hilly area that has very few paved roads where they are seeing increasing numbers of road accidents. The area is also susceptible to landslides in the monsoon season and the effects of climate change means the area is seeing an increase in the chances of such disasters. The hospital where the team and equipment will be based is very remote and yet does an amazing job with the limited resources it has. This project will give the hospital a boost in equipment and staff which will benefit the people in the area who have little access to health services apart from the hospital for regular and emergency situations. A recent example of this was related to us: a young lady began to bleed heavily about a week after she had given birth prematurely at home to her second child. Her husband had to carry her on his back, and with their 9-year-old daughter carrying the newborn, for the 4-hour walk to the nearest road. They then had to wait for a bus to pass by and take the 11-hour journey to reach the hospital. They left the house at 8pm and arrived at the hospital at 7pm the next day. The hospital staff swung into action and saved the lady's life.



Megan heads off into the hills again in June, when she returns to Surkhet to support the therapists in the rehab department in the clinic there and also meet with management to look at future strategic development.

And then at the end of June we will definitely be on the road again, as we head to the UK for a period of Home Assignment. July will be exciting as we will be together as a whole family for the first time in four years. Since that time, we've gained 4 more grandchildren! We'll all be meeting up in Colchester at Carl and Lisa's, our son and daughter-in-law's. With 8 adults and 7 children it's going to be a real house full and we're so looking forward to it!

The rest of our time on the road in the UK looks like this:

4-9th July Attending BMS conference in Hoddesdon, Herts.

(12th Meetings at Baptist House, Didcot)

16th July Centenary Baptist Church, March, Cambs. Social event.

17th July Great Shelford, Cambs. Morning service.

6th August Carleton Rode Baptist, Norfolk. Social event.

7th August Attleborough Baptist Church, Norfolk. Morning service.

11th August Mountsorrel, Leics. Evening housegroup meeting.

14th August Barrow-upon-Soar, Leics. Morning and evening services.

(17th to 19th Meetings at Baptist House, Didcot)

21st August Hitchin churches, Herts. Morning and afternoon.

23rd August Lancaster Baptist Church, Lancaster. Social event

28th August Leven Baptist Church, Scotland. Morning service

31st August Aintree Baptist Church, Liverpool. Evening event

If you are in the area at any of these times, you'd be most welcome to come along to one of the services and say hello!

Thank you for your interest in reading this newsletter and for your ongoing support.

Look forward to seeing many of you soon

Alan and Megan