

Coffee mornings once a quarter at DSBC after Morning Service. Manipur Evenings if & when invited.

Manipur News *December 2019*

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A visionary strategy for Emmanuel School

In order to develop an intelligent and practical strategy for an institution such as Emmanuel School, it is necessary to know the Education system of Manipur and how the schools are run. With this informed knowledge we should be able to delineate clearly what it is that we are aspiring to achieve through the school project, the time scale and how to realise the vision. This will spur all those who are involved with the project into action towards the common objective.

There are a good number of schools funded by the Central Government but run by the State Government. For reasons which will become evident, the vast majority of schools in Manipur are owned and run by individual families or societies. The circumstances which brought about so many private schools are two-fold: (i) Need of the community; and (ii) Business outlet. Emmanuel School falls into the first category.

As well as the appointments of the teachers, the financing of the government schools are in the hands of the State Education Department. This creates a loop-hole whereby the system attracts not only the best available candidates but the appointments are on the basis of the amount of bribe! Once they have secured their appointments with the guaranteed fat income, the teachers are not accountable to any authority. This means the so appointed teachers do not even have to attend classes. Because of this, parents will send their children to State schools only as a last resort! The demand for educating children in private schools will continue for the foreseeable future. Emmanuel School has a great future provided that the standard continues to improve and is maintained. How do we go about achieving this?

This is a vicious circle. In order to improve and maintain the school standard we need to recruit trained and qualified teachers. With limited income from student tuition fees it is without a doubt a tall order. If we fix the rate of tuition fees in line with adequate salaries for teachers, most of the rural children can't afford to pay the fees, negating the very principle on which Emmanuel School has been founded! On the other hand, unless we recruit good teachers, there is very little prospect of realising the vision of the school. It means therefore the solution is to find extra source of income from elsewhere. Right from the beginning of the school project, the mutual understanding between the Manipur Charitable Trust in the UK and Emmanuel School Society in Manipur has been that the former would provide the essential infrastructure and the latter would be responsible for the day today running of the school. Though the school is for the benefit of all children in Manipur who accept the Christian ethos of the school, the initiative for and the task of raising the extra income has to come from the residents of Haipi. This will be the main assignment for me during my next visit to Manipur, to address the need and challenge the whole village – the Village Authority, the Board of Deacons and the Women's Society to rise to the challenge. With a positive response to this, the future of Emmanuel School should be secure!



Above: Primary School Progress.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

As we go through life we find it is full of challenges and joys. Getting updates on the leadership role that Joanne has at Emmanuel School epitomises that and we give thanks to God for her work.

Some of the pictures of the new Primary Block show the progress, even in the rain! You may have noticed that we are not yet up to the roof level. This has been due to a number of factors which have gradually been overcome. Wouldn't it be good if in 2020 we could at least get the walls and the roof completed. So our vision for 2020 is to 'Raise the Roof' of the Primary Block. And our prayers and money raising focus for the next 12 months is on achieving that.

Maybe the idea of 'Raising the roof will inspire you to organise a local event not only to raise funds but also build relationships in your community. The event could just be a morning where you invite your neighbour for a cup of tea to organise a sandwich tea in the garden (when it is dry and warmer?) or you could pray for the school, the Trust and Joanne. Everything helps.

May God bless you and those you love this festive time, that the joy that only He can give will raise the roof of your home.

God bless you.

Keith

In Memoriam

We say goodbye to our friend Lionel Ray Thompson, who passed away on 27 September 2019. Ray was the Chairman of the Manipur Trust since the trust's registration in 1988 till his move to Hailsham in 2001.

An update of Emmanuel School from Joanne Kipgen

Dear friends,
I hope you and your families are doing well. I always seem to have to begin my updates with an apology, which must be growing old by now! So much seems to keep happening here – it's relentless living in a village community. However, I continue to covet your prayers and support more than ever.

After the first week of June we finished our 2nd out of 4 lots of internal exams and were ready to close for summer break. Here, in rural Manipur, our holidays are mainly governed by the agricultural calendar.

While villagers hoped and prayed for the monsoon to begin as they planted and transplanted their paddy, I took the opportunity to travel back to the UK for about 3 three weeks. To see my family and friends again was heart-warming and with all the variety of food available to me, I didn't waste time regaining my weight - returning to Haipi fat or as they would say here, 'healthy'!

When I returned, everyone was still waiting for the rains to start properly. During the first week of July, my cousin Nunnem (who lives in Delhi with her husband and two young boys), organised for a prayer team to come to Emmanuel School and Haipi plus some other areas of Manipur. The team was made up of some super prayer warriors – a group who go to places such as Kashmir and the Middle East and prayer walk. They prayed down a storm in Haipi and for the school. A real sense of freedom came afterwards and new doors have been and still are continuing to open up.

School restarted in on 8 July and the following week my co-principal, Neijou, handed in her notice due to needing time to look after her own health and at that time also her mother's, which we have been continuing to pray for. We wish Neijou all the best in whatever she endeavours to do next.

In August we began preparing our Classes IX and X students for a debate: 'Is there life on other planets?' Along with another local school we mixed up teams 'For' and 'Against'. It was brilliant to see their giving opinions, researching their own facts and theories and all in their 2nd or 3rd language of English.

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Several of our students are dealing with alcoholism or other problems in their families and this is something the local church finds very difficult to address. A number of young fathers in particular have died from alcohol abuse – it is very much an area which needs prayer. Another, a Hindu Class IX student gave his life to Christ, saying he had been thinking about it for some time and after hearing from LiveJam, was convinced by their testimony. I will be keeping in touch with these boys and am hoping for follow up from them at some point, so please pray for this. explains why it has been a while since I paused to write an update. I think the last time I communicated with most of you I mentioned beginning our school year with eight new teachers and enjoying some teacher training/team building.



Anokhi & Gauri (1st row 2nd and 3rd from right) employed by UNESCO and are from Mumbai

The next major opportunity was for our staff . . . UNESCO (the education branch of the UN) along with the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace, had planned a workshop in Imphal under the banner of their 'Youth Waging Peace' campaign. There were only 23 places available, so I encouraged the staff to apply hoping one of us would be successful. It turned out that five of us have now completed a total of four days training and are now certified to go into other schools across Manipur. The content was very relevant for us, in terms of lining up with our vision and values at Emmanuel School. It is also relevant in the context that we work in, among communities scarred and wounded by tribal conflict – where years later, tensions remain tangible and one has the potential to ignite a lot of trouble. Our aim is to break cycles of violence in our communities, beginning in the classroom – promoting discussion, unity, valuing each other's opinion, using kind words – finding better ways to discipline than using a stick. And it can all begin with a smile from the teacher. As Ambassadors of Peace, we have our work cut out, even within our own school – where we have followed up so far with two hours of training. But if we persevere, the rewards would be beyond our dreams and our school campus.



Emmanuel School Olympic games

Last week we celebrated the happy occasion of our School Sports Opening Ceremony. Mr Thangpilun, (in charge of sports) spent many late nights, organising a fantastic four-days

sporting events. Many students who struggle academically were excited to be a part of the school. We have four house teams – red, yellow, blue and green, competing against one another. It was encouraging to see each team constructing a bamboo camp for their operation base, using their ingenuity and practical skill. In the opening ceremony, the house teams staged march past in the presence of two invited guests –Capt. Harikrishna and Pu Thangminlen (Ex- MLA), who jointly hoisted the school flag.

We are nearing the end of the year, and there are many things for me to do in preparation for next year. So please pray that God would bring teachable teachers who have the passion for their students and can think in a broad way. We also need to order good text books and work on curriculum, including our extra-curricular activities. Ideally, we need teachers with multiple skills – music, dance, drama, art, sport, gardening and so on. We need to offer viable alternatives for a range of careers, so developing these activities is crucial.

Another important area for development is building a strong and trusting relationship with parents. Throughout the year we have tried to take every opportunity to invite them for various events and will continue to do so as we aim at maximum participation of the community. Our teachers are mainly only qualified through their own teaching experience which is simply not good enough. They need good, sustained support in order to serve our students. I'm continuing to seek God about for help in how to build a structure for the school which will have longevity and will keep all who work there accountable and supported.

Joanne Kipgen

Joanne's Requests :-

For those who pray

- Health of our students and teachers physically, mentally and spiritually
- To build strong relationships between parents and other members of the community
- For teachers to grow in passion for their job and compassion for their students
- For God to provide the right new teachers for next year
- For networking within and outside Manipur – protection against any harmful connections
- For teachers who are skilled in the arts and other areas to pass on their enthusiasm to the children

For those who would like to help practically

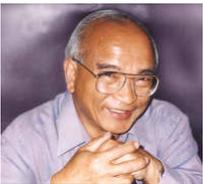
Our school requires students to pay minimal tuition fees, which we then use for teachers' salary. However, about 80% of students cannot afford to pay regularly – some have not paid since January. As you can imagine, it is a struggle for us to pay teachers each month. Some of these parents are misusing their finances, but others are simply unable to afford the fees even though they are low and our teachers are getting a salary which is difficult to live on even here. There are many genuine cases where students either orphaned or have only one parent – and most of them have many siblings too. I would therefore like to make an appeal for child sponsorship, which for a day pupil would be about £110 a. year.

If you feel you would like to support us in this way please do let my mum, Muriel, know. Her email is:
murielkipgen@btinternet.com.



Emmanuel School Teachers with Muriel

Kai's Report



Once again it is that time of year when we take stock of our activities concerning the school project in Manipur and of fundraising in the UK to see completion of the much needed purpose-built Primary School. As mentioned elsewhere, they had to have the work put on hold during the summer when they ran out of funds. In September we were able to send £20,000 and with the arrival of the money they have since resumed work where they left off. They hope to put up the roof before Christmas. Now that the monsoon months are over we hope to see the work picking up.

As in previous years we had a successful as well as enjoyable **Summer BBQ** on Saturday, 13 July. Apart from fundraising, it gave us the opportunity to greet our supporters, a number of whom we hadn't seen during the year. And for our own family it was time of family reunion – from Glasgow in the north and Portsmouth in the South. We raised £538.55 on that day, not counting some generous cheques contributed towards construction of the Primary School building.

I am somewhat disappointed to report that Neijou, Co-Principal, handed in her notice on grounds of health and personal matters. So the burden of running the school has fallen on Joanne – a great challenge for her in view of an educational system quite different from what she has been used to in England. However, it is encouraging to note that the teachers and staff are behind her, giving all the support that she needs. There is a keen sense of team spirit and cooperation amongst the teachers. Because of this Joanne has been able to introduce a number of extra-curricular activities in the life of the school.

The acute problem that the Emmanuel School Society and the Principal are facing at present is recruiting trained and qualified teachers, in particular for core subjects – Maths, Physics and English. In the past it was quite easy to find teachers from the valley surplus educated people. However, with the founding of many NGO's and a rapid increase of private schools in Imphal, it is now quite difficult to find trained and qualified teachers to teach in schools away from the Capital city. The advantage of teaching in Imphal is that they can earn extra income from private tuition in the morning and evening. One practical solution could be if some retired teachers in the UK were willing to train existing teachers at the school. If somehow we could impart good education to the current students of Emmanuel School, the likely dividend would be that some of them might come back to teach at their *Alma Mater!* It is worth noting that this has already happened.

The undeniable fact is that if we are to raise the standard of Emmanuel School, we have to find a way of attracting good and qualified teachers. Equally undeniable is the fact that we must somehow find the means to match the pay scale of state school teachers. This is a particular challenge for me and Emmanuel School Society - how to address the problem the teachers are facing at present.

Despite the difficulties that they are facing, the Principal and the teachers are in good spirits. They are having their year-end exams in the first week of December, which will be followed by some extra-curricular activities, Christmas and the long winter holiday.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

The staff, Teachers & pupils of Emmanuel School. The search for more Christian teachers, The pupils' sponsorship scheme. The Trust Committee in the UK and for me as I try to achieve as much as possible during my visit to Manipur early in 2020.

*“For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called
“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6
A very Happy Christmas And Blessed New Year*

**For further information please contact The Manipur Trust, 12 Worcester Rd, Hatfield AL10 0DX
Tel No 01707 885 223 or Email murielkipgen@btinternet.com**