ISSUE 49 | DECEMBER 2015



of life for all in a transformed Nepali society

Flowering

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# Dear friends,

A TREE COVERED IN BLOSSOM is a sight we normally associate with spring rather than autumn. But in Nepal the wild cherry tree blossoms at this time of year, as temperatures drop and the evenings get shorter, a welcome reminder that beyond winter lies the warmth and fruitfulness of spring.

In this edition of **UMNews** we continue our theme of hope and a future and focus on flowering hope. In the book of Jeremiah, God says to the exiled people of Israel "...I know the plans I have for you, ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29.11). It is interesting to look back at what was written in our earlier reflections on this topic. Shortly before the earthquakes hit, I wrote in our May edition that hope is fragile and can easily be dashed by setbacks and failure, but that strong relationships built over time and through diversity are a key to nurturing hope. God knew our future then,

and he knows our future now. We can never expect to understand why God allows such suffering, but we know that God has been with us through this challenging time, and our experience has certainly been that our relationships with each other, with our partners (both national and international) and with the communities we serve have been strengthened through this time of adversity. We also hold on to this promise that the plans God has for us are good, plans to prosper us and give us hope and a future.

Despite all the emphasis on projects in development, the process of transformation is in fact much more organic. New initiatives arise out of relationships, with partners and with communities, and as these initiatives are nurtured over time, they give rise to signs of hope that indicate that these initiatives will produce real transformative changes in the future. These signs might be raised awareness about mental health issues (*page 7*), or churches (*page 5*) and people of different faiths (*page 6*) working together in unity.

My hope is that these stories will inspire and encourage you, that out of adversity and challenges, true hope can flourish. Just as the wild cherry tree blossoms in difficult times, let us also be signs of hope in the midst of challenging circumstances, as we put our hope in Christ.

**MARK GALPIN** 

Executive Director

Produced by: the Communications Team, UMN Editorial Team: Vijeta Manaen and Lyn Jackson Design: Phil Rawlings and Ramesh Man Maharjan Cover Photo: Ramesh Man Maharjan © UMN 2015



**TO A GROUP OF PEOPLE SUFFERING** poverty and injustice under the tyranny of the Roman empire, the apostle Paul writes: "Hope doesn't disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts." (Romans 5:4-5) The kind of hope Paul talks about here springs from the soil of insecurity, exclusion and lack of resources. UMN's Integral Mission (IM) work focuses on sustaining and nurturing hope in people who have had to live with scarcity of resources, anxiety about an unpredictable future and fear of persecution. The hope it creates in them doesn't only help them to survive, but enables them to thrive; it's a hope that says they can have the vision of a hopeful future for their family and society.

Our work aims at enabling churches in Nepal to explore how they can be "salt and light" in their surroundings, while they continue to practise their faith. IM doesn't bring in a lot of money and big projects, but through a series of capacity building activities helps the community to identify and access useful resources that are within their reach for meaningful development initiatives.

UMN partner associated churches are not only serving their members but are reaching out to others in service as they conduct hygiene camps, provide income generation opportunities, manage savings groups, conduct HIV awareness and provide scholarships to poor children. One example of a sustainable hope is that of Chandra BK, a Dalit woman from Bhawanipur, Rupandehi. "Our rice is white, like the rich people eat, and our clothes are



clean, like other people wear," she said with confidence, after a tube well was installed in her village to provide clean drinking water. This small initiative of a local church helped break the generation-long problem of this Dalit (so-called low caste) community having to depend on unsafe and unclean water.

"For good work, we don't always need big money, crowds of people and educated leaders," says Khagendra Magar, a church leader who has mobilised an entire village to build flood embankments. There are other church leaders who are seeing hope flower in their communities, as God's love is poured out in the hearts of people and transforms society.

DIVYA KHANAL Integral Mission Team Leader

# What is Sanoysanoyai?

#### SANGSANGAI (TOGETHER)

is the Nepali term used for the Church Community Mobilisation Process manual that UMN's Integral Mission team launched in 2012. It opens opportunities to bring the church and the community together. The Sangsangai process takes

them through a long journey of learning, sharing and growing which allows meaningful interaction with the rest of the community. This manual enables the church to read, understand and apply the biblical teachings in relation to their wider community and its welfare.

Churches are not community development agencies; nor are they NGOs. Often, churches do not see the need to get involved in development activities. This attitude makes it difficult for churches to understand and accept that they are placed in society to be leaders of community transformation. On top of that, the Nepali church is still relatively young and small. So the Sangsangai approach proposes to build the capacity of the local churches to become their own development agent.

In the last three years, 116 churches have taken part in the *Sangsangai* training process and 66 young leaders have been trained and mobilised as community facilitators.

Social issues that were not given much priority before are now becoming part of the church's ministry agendas: team work, microfinance, environmental cleanliness, youth leadership, advocacy and income generation.

## BY NEPALI THEOLOGIANS,

**PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS** play a big role in shaping congregational thinking, so making changes in the curriculum taught by Bible Colleges is a good way to reach churches. UMN has been keen to introduce a curriculum on Integral Mission into colleges in Nepal for some time. We didn't want to push our own ideas though, or use something written elsewhere, but rather to encourage Nepali theologians to develop something unique that would suit the local context.

Over the years, UMN and Micah Network Nepal (MNN) have organised a series of workshops for theological educators teaching in Kathmandu-based Bible Colleges. These have built their capacity in various aspects of Integral Mission, including peacebuilding, HIV and AIDS, the causes and impacts of poverty and the church's responsibility, disaster preparedness and response, and advocacy.

Participants of the workshops have themselves expressed the need for an Integral Mission Curriculum for their theological institutions. As a result, a collaborative approach was adopted and a writing team was formed - the Integral Mission Curriculum Development Team (IMCDT). The team, along with UMN and MNN, has worked for a year and completed their first draft.

At last, the Integral Mission Curriculum – designed for the theological institutions by Nepali theologians – was launched jointly by Steve Collins (Tearfund Nepal), Dr Mahendra Bhattarai, (chairman of Micah Network Nepal and member of the UMN Board), Bishop Narayan Sharma (Believers' Church Nepal), and Hon Lokmani Dhakal (Member of the Constituent Assembly), on 5 July 2015.

# for Nepali colleges



Steve Collins, Dr Narayan Sharma, Dr Mahendra Bhattarai and Hon Lokmani Dhakal launch the first draft of the IM Curriculum.

Dr Mahendra said: "This was the task of the church, and we always wanted to bring all the theological institutions together to do it. We have proved that Nepali theological educators can do a lot if they work together. We don't need to always copy and paste materials developed by others in other contexts. The work done by IMCDT is the first of its kind in Nepal, and maybe for many Asian nations."

In closing the programme, Bishop Sharma prayed that the curriculum would be a blessing to the church in Nepal, and an example for other nations.

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# INTERFAITH **PEACE NETWORKS**



in . ter . faith adjective of, operating, or occuring between persons of different belief systems

AFTER SEVEN YEARS of debate and delays, Nepal has recently adopted a new constitution. Celebrations in and outside Parliament marked this historic event, and Nepalis dared to believe that a more stable future lay ahead. But protests quickly broke out as well. One of the issues is that the new constitution does not acknowledge Nepal as a Hindu state. Calls to remove the term "secularism" from the new constitution and to revive the Hindu state wording were rejected, which triggered protests by Hindu activists in Nepal.

In the midst of political, religious and cross-border conflict in Nepal, a small network in Sunsari has been working successfully to maintain peace and harmony among religions and ethnic groups. UMN's Interfaith Peace Network has helped bring increased mutual acceptance and respect between people of different faiths. Recently in Sunsari, before the new constitution was made official, the local Interfaith Peace Network organised a press conference and experienced very positive participation from the community and the local press. At this press conference, the interfaith religious team leaders highlighted one of the values of the network – secularism – and this was accepted well by the participants.

Bimala Shrestha of UMN has been working closely with the Interfaith Peace Network in Sunsari for the last eight years. She says: "I have seen this network grow; it has come a long way and has been accepted and respected well by the community, the government offices and the media agencies."

Interfaith harmony is a fragile flower though; suspicion between religions is still high, and becomes entangled with ethnic and political agendas. Please pray for these groups, as they seek mutual understanding and tolerance in the face of increasing pressures.

# dignity in

**UMN HAS HAD A LONG HISTORY** in promoting mental health in Nepal, and has made many valuable contributions at national and local levels. Now, awareness about mental health is blossoming across the country.

World Mental Health Day was celebrated throughout the country and UMN was a part of this celebration both at the central level and in clusters. This year's theme for World Mental Health Day was Dignity in Mental Health. People with mental health conditions should be able to live a life of dignity but have been victims of ill-treatment. Stories of people with mental illnesses being locked up, subjected to constant neglect, abuse and violence, deprived of the right to make decisions for themselves, denied access to general and mental health care, education and employment, and being prevented from participating fully in the social life of their community abound.



A rally for World Mental Health Day organised by a UMN partner CEAD in Doti. The women in blue saris are the female community health volunteers.

For the last three years, UMN has been working to increase access to mental health services as part of primary health care. Our activities have focused on service strengthening, stigma and discrimination reduction and efforts in advocacy.

It is very encouraging to see our partners in the clusters participating actively in World Mental Health Day celebrations. This has further educated people in the community on mental health issues. People recovering from mental illness were encouraged by being given fruit, clothes and a Dhaka topi (traditional Nepali caps) in some clusters. Rallies, radio jingles, interviews with media personnel and interaction programmes with government health authorities were organised by UMN partners in order to ensure a better understanding of mental health issues.

SHRISTEE LAMICHHANE Programme Manager – Health



**SO MARY GAVE BIRTH** to her firstborn child, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, for there was no guest room available for them. Luke 2:7

The village was two days' walk from the hospital. Sarita's' family had carried her down from the mountains to her parents' house for the birth, because it was close to a Health Post – just in case. Tradition saw her as "unclean", so she wasn't allowed in the house, just into the stable. She made herself a sleeping place in the hay.

And there her little boy was born. But things didn't go well; the placenta didn't come out, and she was bleeding badly. The family called for the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM), and as I was visiting her, I came as well. It was frightening, an emergency so far from the hospital, but the ANM was trained and had some medicines. We set to work.

But when we asked for warm water, bowls and cloths, they looked at us in silence. If they brought anything from the house to the birth place, they were convinced that sin would come upon their family. Frustrated, I told them: "It is never a sin to save a life. Sin will come upon you if you don't help your daughter to survive!"

> Still silent, they brought what we needed. We got the placenta out, washed away the blood, wrapped the little one in cloths and put him close to his mother's warm body. It was just before Christmas, and very cold. I'd had the most amazing Christmas experience ever!

That was seven years ago. Today, there's a Birthing Centre in that very village, and the road to the hospital is just two hours away. Things are definitely improving!

KRISTEN BØHLER Okhaldhunga Community Hospital

\* Not her real name



Traditional practices and distance still put women and their babies at risk in rural parts of Nepal. UMN and its partners are working with communities to change things, but it takes time. This year, UMN has been working with 11 Birthing Centres, providing equipment and helping train staff to assist women like Sarita.

This year at Christmas, remember how Mary, a frightened teenage mother, gave birth to her precious Son in a stable. We'll use your Christmas donation to UMN to help make childbirth easier and safer for women in Nepal.

#### SOME SAMPLE COSTS

A toilet and placenta pit for a Birthing Centre:	USD 2,600	GBP 1,700	EUR 2,300
Training for a Female Community Health Volunteer (FCHV):	USD 50	GBP 32	EUR 45
Birthing equipment, including a delivery bed:	USD 1,325	GBP 865	EUR 1,175
Kerosene heater:	USD 345	GBP 225	EUR 305
A set of warm clothes for a mother and baby:	USD 50	GBP 32	EUR 45

Tulsi Khadka is a pioneer – she has been a Female Community Health Volunteer for 25 years, one of the first batch trained in Nepal. She is standing beside the placenta pit at the Birthing Centre in Khirsen village, Doti. Tulsi estimates that the Birthing Centre undertakes 30-40 deliveries per year, and she directly helps in 10-12 of them, as well as providing counselling and visiting pregnant women and new mothers in their homes.



**RURAL FARMING IN NEPAL** received a major setback as a result of the earthquake. Farmers lost livestock, crops and food stocks. In North Dhading, 98% of houses were severely damaged and up to 80% of seed stocks were lost. Grains and cereals are normally stored inside the house, and were mostly buried when houses collapsed. The loss in the southern VDCs of Dhading is less but still significant.

To ensure longer-term food security UMN has recently distributed seeds and tools to farmers, to allow them to plant for the coming season and to ensure food stock for the family. UMN is working through local partners: HIMS Nepal, Namaste Nepal and PRAYAS Nepal. Composite vegetable seeds, wheat seeds, and super-grain bags were distributed to all the households in the five VDCs (three in the north and two in the south).

#### **SEED OF HOPE**

**MY NAME IS SAMUEL TAMANG** from Akthali, Jharlang. I am now 21 years old. This earthquake has brought a lot of sorrows to my family. My father passed away long ago, and this earthquake took my mother too. Now I am left with two sisters – Karuna and Buddhi.

My mother was the main support for the family after our father left us. Now that she is gone, our lives have been brought down like the houses from the earthquake. I feel so helpless and can't think of any way out. My house is in ruins. Alone I can't do anything to clear it out. Labourers charge NRP 1,000 (USD 10) per day and I would have to provide them with their meals too. I have no income; I haven't been able to study past Grade 10, but even with all these difficulties I am sending my two sisters to school so that they can get good education.

After the devastating earthquake, the rain brought more havoc to our village. We were in danger of landslides, so the whole village has moved and set up a temporary camp. The place is near the forest; the leeches are a menace, and it's hard to move from one place to another. Fortunately, we have received some emergency aid, both food and non-food items, from different organisations, and NRP 15,000 (USD 150) from the government.

I am not sure how much more help we will get. What happens after the relief materials run out? This question haunts me all the time. My mind is running round and round: how can I reconstruct our home and continue my sisters' education? The farmlands have broken up due to the earthquake and water sources have gone dry, so the lands have been left barren. Some of the villagers are planning to relocate themselves, but I don't have that option.

When UMN's partner HIMS arrived with seeds and tools, some hope dawned on me. With the tools and seed provided, I am planning to farm my land again. Our village is good for vegetable growing, so if everything goes well we will be able to generate an income. This time it was only material support, but next time we hope for training and livelihood support. I will be the first one to join if any programmes like these come to my village, and I'll urge others to join too! Around 90% of the houses in Jharlang were completely destroyed by the earthquake. Along with their homes, families lost livestock, food stores and seed grain, and agricultural tools.

**AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE**, education for nearly one million children in Nepal was in jeopardy, with over 24,000 classrooms devastated. Now, children in Nepal have begun their classes again, many of them outside in the open.

Radha Kadel, Principal of Janchetna School in Pida, Dhading shares: "When I came to the school a few days after the earthquake, I cried. The walls were gone, and most of the furniture was under the rubble. I was shocked. When we finally started running the classes, the children would scream at every aftershock. I kept telling the children that the big earthquake is gone and that we are safe. I spent a lot of time talking to them and listening to their stories from the earthquake."

UMN and its local partner work with 34 schools in two VDCs, Pida and Madevsthan in South Dhading, where 26 schools are damaged. After the

earthquake, UMN felt an urgent need to set up replacement Learning Centres for the 26 schools.

Schools reopen after the guale

> According to the District Education Office and Disaster Response Committee's initial assessment, the number of Learning Centres needed in these 2 VDCs was 33. But after the second quake (May 12), the number went up to 44.

Learning Centres for most of these schools have been set up now. A lot of involvement and co-operation from the community is needed during the construction. For some of the schools the construction work has been slow because of the remoteness of the school location. Some schools are several hours walk up narrow trails, and the only way to get the materials up is to carry them.

Slowly but surely, we will see more and more kids back at school.





#### **EUROPEAN CONFERENCE**

Beautiful surroundings, fantastic company and stimulating interaction characterised this year's European Nepal conference held in Rehe, Germany. Jointly hosted and organised by INF UK, UMN and Forum Wiedenest, 120 people of all ages from a variety of countries came together to listen and pray and get excited about what God is doing among Nepali people in Nepal and around the world. Plenary sessions focused on what it means for us to have "Christ at the centre" of our lives and work, and seminars included updates on work among the Nepali diaspora, the work of United Mission Hospital Tansen, and UMN's earthquake response. A particular highlight was a Nepali worship and communion service. Make sure you don't miss the next one!





@umnnepal #UMN



#### youtube.com/umnepal

#### **GANDAKI BOARDING SCHOOL JUBILEE**

Gandaki Boarding School (Pokhara) celebrated 50 years of educational achievement recently, culminating in a happy reunion of former staff and students on Sunday 11 October 2015. UMN facilitated the founding of GBS as a boys' school in 1966 and it was fitting that the key UMN driver for the school, Mr Howard Barclay (just short of his 90th birthday), was present on the occasion. As well as delivering a stirring speech, he was felicitated by the Chief Guest Dr Som Lal Subedi, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Nepal. UMN's Executive Director Mark Galpin commented that UMN is delighted to have been associated with GBS over the years. He wrote: "On this occasion, we offer our hearty congratulations, along with our prayers that many more years of service to Nepal lie ahead of this prestigious institution. We are proud to have helped found the school, and to have been associated with it for many years. With its commitment to excellence and integrity, GBS remains a lasting legacy for Nepal."

You Tube



While Howard Barclay was in Nepal, UMN took the opportunity to honour him in advance of his 90th birthday and organised an afternoon tea with UMN staff and some old Nepali friends.



#### **"BECAUSE I AM A GIRL"**

October 11 is the International Day of the Girl Child and this year's global theme was "The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030". To mark this celebration, UMN's Health Team members Nalome Rongong and Kanchan Shrestha participated in the Because I am a Girl Marathon on 11 October. They bagged 10th position in the 5 km open marathon. More than 1,000 participants ran to express solidarity and commitment for girls' education and protection. As Nepal recovers from the devastating earthquake, it is in this crucial moment that we join forces to ensure the process of recognising the needs of adolescent girls and promoting their holistic growth and potential.



#### Flowering Hope | UMNews



SHARE UMN'S HOPE FOR THE FUTURE WITH FRIENDS BY SENDING THEM A UMN CALENDAR!

Twelve engaging photographs show how UMN's work is bringing "A hope and a future" to individuals, families and communities in Nepal. Features special days, Nepali holidays, and lots of room to write notes. Calendars fit into an A4 envelope for easy postage.

#### GBP/EUR 4; USD/AUD/CAD 6 (postage extra)

#### Price within Nepal: NRP 150

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- Email communications@umn.org.np
- Order online at <u>umn.org.np/store</u>
- Write to us at PO Box 126, Kathmandu, Nepal.



31 JANUARY 2016.



I OFTEN SAY UMN IS MY SECOND HOME. It seems like I just came yesterday, but I have spent two decades here. I was recruited in 1992, as a Motivator/Assistant Trainer at the Rural Development Centre, Pokhara (RDC). Then, women carried water from long distances and public taps lacked maintenance. So RDC, with a paradigm shift vision, recruited two women for water system maintenance, a so-called "men's job". The experience transformed me from a city-dwelling teacher to a rural community development facilitator. I saw poverty, discrimination and injustice in the communities, but the most wonderful thing was empowering people and providing hope for a better life of peace, justice and dignity. Currently, I am engaged as the Peacebuilding Team Leader, with a diverse experienced Nepali and expatriate staff.

I have adapted myself to accommodate with changes in my roles and responsibilities. Through the years, I have also witnessed positive changes in people and communities where we work. UMN is a living organism. It has to grow, develop and change according to the needs of the country and its people, and so do we. We often hear that change is good, yet we struggle with it. Some of us don't like it because it questions our comfort zones and expectations, leaving us insecure. But the Scripture says that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven. It also promises that the Lord will teach us the way we should go, instruct us and advise us.

As a pinch of salt provides flavor to a dish, a handful of our work in the community can guide the nation towards the fullness of life we have envisioned. I am thankful to God, my family, UMN colleagues, teachers, mentors, friends, and every individual who has been a part of my life; shaping me to be the person I am now. Each one has a special role to play to make me powerful and revived spiritually and physically so that the oil in my lamp never dies out.

BAL KUMARI GURUNG Peacebuilding Team Leader

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**PRAISE GOD FOR** Gandaki Boarding School's 50 years of service to the people of Nepal! GBS graduates grace many professions in medicine, law, education, health, politics and development. The GBS ethic of "giving back" has shaped many lives and had a lasting impact on many communities.

It has been seven months since the devastating earthquake in Nepal. The country is still recovering and is now confronted with additional challenges (a blockade along the Nepal-India border, leading to an acute fuel crisis). As winter approaches, people will have to face the bitterly cold months in flimsy temporary shelters with a very limited supply of fuel (cooking gas and timber). Pray for UMN's Dhading Disaster Response team, as they begin to put rehabilitation programmes in place.

The border blockade has led to severe shortages of medicines in health posts and hospitals. UMN's hospitals in Tansen and Okhaldhunga are beginning to drop below optimal minimum stocks of some drugs. Fuel for generators is also a big concern. Pray for the hospitals' management during this difficult time.

Pray for UMN's 2015 batch of Nepali interns as they start a new chapter in their year-long learning experience with UMN. Each of them will now spend three months in a particular cluster, which will give them a first-hand experience of development work at the community level.







#### UMN'S CROSS-CULTURAL TEAMS

provide opportunities for suitably skilled

expatriates to work with Nepali colleagues, sharing technical skills and demonstrating God's loving concern for all people, particularly the poorest and most vulnerable.

Expatriate team members do not receive a salary or remuneration from UMN directly, but are self-supported volunteers, or supported by a sending mission or church in their home country. If you are interested in any of these (three listed below) positions, or if you would like to ask about other opportunities for service in UMN, please contact Valerie Lockwood at <u>expat.recruitment@umn.org.np</u> to learn more. Send your CV or resumé with your email.

#### **PRIORITY NEEDS**

**COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR** – to work as a team player writing articles, editing case stories and publications, preparing text/brochures for an international audience. Excellent written English, proven ability to write creatively, advanced proof-reading skills required. Background may be in journalism, media, English teaching or fund-raising/advertising.

LEARNING, POLICY AND STRATEGY ADVISOR – required to strengthen UMN's small but expanding LPS team. In the upcoming strategic plan (2015-20), UMN will put a significant emphasis on learning throughout the organisation and, along with a passion for learning, we need skills in one or more of: research, technical writing, monitoring, evaluation, learning systems, knowledge management and programme design.

GENERAL SURGEONS AND ENT SURGEONS – for United Mission Hospital Tansen, to deal with both elective and emergency surgery and to teach and mentor junior Nepali doctors. Flexibility, the ability to work in a resourcelimited setting and an interest in teaching are required. For visa purposes, applicants must currently be registered with the national regulating body in their own country. Long-term applicants preferred.



#### FRIENDS OF UMN IS A REGULAR MONTHLY GIVING PROGRAMME



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Commit to a regular monthly gift, through your debit or credit card. The amount is up to you. UMN will send you an e-receipt each month, and an annual statement for your records. You will also receive UMNews four times a year, and occasional email updates and prayer requests.

Regular donations like this are very helpful for us – they give us some certainty about income, and allow us to budget more effectively. We can make firm commitments to our partners when you are committed to us!

Visit <u>umn.org.np/friends</u> and follow the prompts to sign up as a Friend.

Promote **UMN's Christmas Appeal** in your church or fellowship group.

Read or tell Kirsten's story "Born in a Stable" (*page 8*) and invite people to give. We can send additional "giving envelopes" like the one inserted in this edition of **UMNews** if you wish. Email communications@umn.org.np with your request.

#### HOW TO GIVE...

Make out a cheque or money order payable to United Mission to Nepal. Make a note indicating how you would like your donation to be used. Post it! (to: UMN, PO Box 126, Thapathali, Kathmandu, Nepal)

Jell others

Use your credit or debit card and give via PayPal.

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- So to www.umn.org.np/page/give-paypal and follow the instructions and you will be redirected to the PayPal page.
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### AS LONG CHRISTMAS AS THERE'S CHRISTMAS TRULY BELIEVE THAT HOPE IS THE GIFTS WE'LL GREATEST OF THE GIFTS RECEIVE





Fullness of life for all, in a transformed Nepali society

UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL

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