

Number 28, September 2010

UMNNews 

United Mission to Nepal

Daring to Hope





Dear Friends,

Restoring broken relationships is at the heart of God’s mission in this world, and UMN’s work in Nepal. Despite a remarkable resolution to the civil war a few years ago, violence is still on the rise and has become a legitimate and accepted way of influencing others – whether politically, communally or domestically.

Although a relatively new area for UMN, Conflict Transformation and Peace Building are at the heart of UMN’s work today, as we operate both at the community level (e.g. with conflict-affected widows in Rukum) or at the national level with the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction. My prayer is that as you read the remarkable stories in this newsletter, you too will “dare to hope” for Nepal and its people.

Mark Galpin
Executive Director
UMN



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A peace rally in Nepal on World Peace Day



Conflict - Opportunity or Obstacle?

The Global Peace Index 2010 ranks Nepal 82nd out of 149 countries. After years of armed conflict, Nepal continues to suffer from various social tensions. The wounds are deep, and the nation needs healing. Conflict is quite normal and unavoidable, a vital source for social change in every society. But when conflict turns violent, it becomes a problem.

It is also a major development issue: poverty and injustice feed the anger which leads to conflict. Violent conflict may in turn deepen poverty and injustice. Whether we like it or not, unknowingly, conflict has become an integral part of our lives: maybe in our

relationships, politics or in the sharing of resources and power.

Jonathan Goodhand, a senior lecturer at the University of London, says we can either choose to ignore conflict and work around it, or we can choose to work within situations of conflict, looking for ways to effectively and safely reduce poverty and prevent harm. We can choose to see conflict as an opportunity, or an obstacle.

UMN's 56 years of experience working in development has shaped its strategic choice to work in Peace Building. Helping our staff and partners to build confidence and to come out of their safety zones to deal with



difficult areas of our lives has been our initial focus. We plan to build on this work, increasing impacts through trauma healing, community mediation, interfaith peace work, child rights and gender empowerment.

*Bal Kumari Gurung
Peace Building Team Leader
(Acting)*

Read about Bal Kumari's recent study success on page 10.



Participants enjoy interactive activities during workshop



Daring to Hope?

Joe Campbell Reflects

Not long after I arrived in Nepal in 2006, I was asked to make a short presentation to the UMN technical staff. I outlined the challenges in moving from violence to peace, and suggested that while this journey was painfully slow (as judged by experiences from my own country, Ireland), nevertheless conflicts are started by people and people can and do end them when the conditions are right. There is no magic wand or golden bullet. At the meeting's morning tea break, an experienced staff member spoke to me quietly but firmly: "Joe, this is the way we in Nepal have been for generations; we are always fighting, and we will never be at peace."

Now, looking back after four years, a quick and uninformed analysis might suggest he was right.

But significant progress has been made.

- A peace agreement has been signed and slowly, very slowly, is being implemented.
- There have been elections, the first in 10 years, which were judged by international observers as free and fair.
- Over 4,100 young people, judged by the UN to be under age, have been released from Maoist cantonments and are undergoing a rehabilitation programme.
- A Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction has been established, with 200 civil servants implementing, albeit very slowly, various other strands of the peace agreement.
- A Master's programme in peace studies has been established at a university in Kathmandu.
- More and more NGOs and INGOs are implementing peace programmes.

Other realities are, however, becoming clear to everyone.

A good friend of mine usually tells peace workers and politicians that for every year of conflict, a country needs 10 years of peace building and healing. I am inclined to agree. When an army, traditionally used to protect and defend a country from external danger, is used against its own people, the goal of reconciliation recedes further into the distance.

Occasional but on – going outbreaks of violence and disturbance are really development in reverse, as scarce resources of people and money are diverted away from important programmes to deal with the new emergency. A peace agreement negotiated by a handful of political elites is important, but is a very shaky foundation on which to build a lasting and just settlement. Peace needs also to be built from the bottom up by our own partners, civil society and the faith community.

So, will a new Nepal be born in the coming years, or are we destined for a constant cycle of stale political in-fighting?

In many respects, peace building could be called hope building. UMN has a key role to play with its partners and the Christian community in bringing to birth the new society described by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 2: 11 – 22. Here, barriers of race, ethnicity, caste and gender are broken down. Our partners' development programmes are critically important, but they remain only that, development. When our conflict transformation officers, working with their cluster colleagues and partners, enable those programmes to reach across traditional political, caste and gender barriers, new and respectful relationships and attitudes are slowly developed. This is bottom-up peace building.

When a Dalit woman and a high caste man work together in a mediation team to help resolve a local dispute over water, we know their relationship and view of one another will change forever as they model the new Nepal.

When men become aware of their attitudes and make changes in how they relate to women, then something exciting and lasting is happening.

When our forgiveness programme is taken by the church into the wider society, and people experience the healing which comes from giving and receiving forgiveness, then the new Nepal is coming to birth.

When our Interfaith for Peace programmes in the Dhading and Terai clusters enable diverse faith leaders to call their people to standards of tolerance, respect and confidence in diversity, then faith becomes a unifying and unstoppable movement for change and good for everyone.

None of this is easy. It's slow, long-term work. But we owe it to God, to the children of this wonderful country and to all the people of Nepal to work as if it all depended on us, and to pray as if it all depended on God.



*Joe Campbell
Formerly Conflict
Transformation Advisor*

Joe and his wife Janet have just completed their four-year term in UMN, and have returned to the UK. Read about their contributions on page 10.

Building Peace in Nepal

Some highlights of UMN's Conflict Transformation team's work over the last three years:

Jesus, Justice and Peace workshops – helping church leaders think broadly about gender and family violence. This workshop helps participants accept the problem and its hurts, and attempts to change attitudes and behavior in the church.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation workshops – releasing individuals and families from unfounded guilt and bitterness. Twenty-five workshops have been conducted throughout Nepal with more than 800 participants. These workshops have built a core of Christians committed to work for peace.

Exposure visit to Ireland – Joe Campbell led a delegation of Nepalese politicians, including the Minister for Peace and Reconstruction, Hon. Chemjong, to Ireland in September 2009. In April 2010, a group of six civil servants from the Ministry of Peace attended a training programme in Northern Ireland.

Interfaith Network for Peace – tackling growing tensions among faith groups in Nepal. UMN is working to establish relationships, respect and understanding among different faith groups through this network. Ten participants from five faith groups attended a week-long Interfaith Programme in Gujarat, India.



Fun sessions during the making of the "Hero Book"



Healing the "Hero Book" way

Have you ever thought of making a book about yourself? "Hero-booking" is a great way to deal with personal challenges, and helps people better understand and respect each other. Anyone can "hero-book" - even you!

We proved it when a group consisting of staff from partner organisations, child club members, school teachers and even a headmaster all spent seven days drawing and painting, writing and story telling, singing and dancing. It was amazing to see how engaged even serious adult professionals became in the

creative process of making a book about themselves. All worked and shared together, despite a wide range of ages, gender, ethnicity, caste and social status.

The twenty selected participants travelled from all over Nepal. They each made a book about their lives, leading them to self-reflection, problem-solving and the healing of past painful experiences. One participant worked through violence experienced during the national conflict, while another chose to focus on the challenge of living with HIV and AIDS.

The training was facilitated by Kopila Nepal, a Nepali NGO and UMN partner, that has used the "hero book" process successfully in several districts of Nepal. Our group of "hero-bookers" will use this process with school children, child clubs and the community groups they work with.

We can all be heroes – when we face the tough issues of life, and share openly with others.

*Charlotte Shristi
Peace Building Advisor*



A family displaced by the flood in Sunsari



Workshop with village women

The Chicken or the Egg ?

She took my hand in her thin, wrinkled one, pointing to my silver rings. Before we began our discussion with this small group of women, she made it clear that she expected a roof, a toilet, and possibly some cash. Unfortunately, this is not what we came bearing!

We brought these flood – affected villages something less tangible – help to regain peace of mind, and skills to work effectively toward common community goals. Together with Partner Mobilisation Centre (PMC), we hoped to reach out to six different villages in Sunsari in five days. We introduced simple exercises to help villagers deal with their unresolved trauma from the

flooding that displaced them two years ago. And we introduced a participatory meeting process to help them make decisions that will benefit the whole community.

We asked difficult questions, like: “Why aren’t you cooperating to use the stretcher UMN provided to get sick people to the hospital?” Besides the material difficulties, we explored the anxiety, discord and mistrust that were making it hard for these villagers to secure their basic needs.

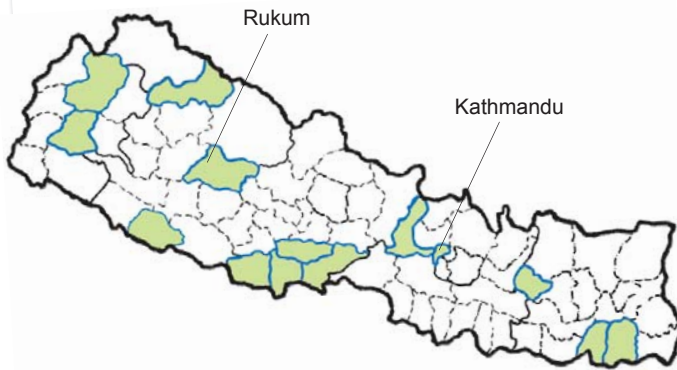
Some remained set on their goal of immediate aid, but others said: “You are the first to teach us these things.” Some of the women attended a second

time with the next day’s group. These women rarely get a chance to meet together, let alone make decisions about community issues. But they caught the vision - excitedly discussing how to support each others’ families during sickness and food shortages. We hope to continue this work in the coming year, and are looking for ways to integrate it with livelihood creation.

That way, there could be chickens and eggs, and perhaps roofs and toilets as well!

*Charlotte Shristi
Peace Building Advisor*

Cluster Connection



RUKUM

Region: Hilly region, Mid-West Nepal
Population: 44, 507
Life Expectancy: 51 years
Team Leader: Durga Prasad Upadhyay
Number of staff: 7
Number of partners: 8



Development needs:

- Sanitation and hygiene
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Safe drinking water
- Transportation

Meet Durga

I started with UMN almost three years ago, as a leadership trainee. I feel blessed to have been living and working in Rukum for the last two years as the Cluster Team Leader. My wife and our three-year-old son Simon Peter live in Kathmandu, and I manage to travel about four times a year to the city to spend time with the family.

Life in Rukum seems normal now, unlike several years back when killings and shoot-outs were ordinary news. However, peace is still fragile. Women and children who have witnessed the war still feel insecure. People still carry hatred and hurt inside them.

However, it is encouraging to see how UMN's Peace Building work has made a difference. About 200 widows participate in activities

like income generation, peace education, and forgiveness and reconciliation teaching. Though small, it is a good start. I see hope – hope that things can be different.

The story of Rukum is our reality, and living and serving in Rukum is a privilege if you are aligned with this hope.

Gospel – as deed. That's where my satisfaction lies.



*Durga Prasad Upadhyay
Cluster Team Leader
Rukum*

Fighting Poverty, Together

On a sunny hillside in Rukum District, a group of women in bright cotton saris are working in a field – a commonplace scene. But this is a remarkable group of women.

Each one is a widow, and most lost their husbands suddenly, violently.

In 1998, Rukum District was the flashpoint of the violent insurgency that plunged Nepal into 14 years of virtual civil war. So many died. Police, Maoists, party activists, public servants... and ordinary villagers. Their wives and children were left to fend for themselves in a society too poor to afford social security, and too damaged to provide communal support.

Around Rukum, they say that, if first thing in the morning you see a widow's face, you will have bad luck all day.



A group of widows in Rukum



Rukum

A small group of Rukum believers established the Christian Society Development Corporation (CSDC). They wanted to serve the most vulnerable, the ones Jesus would have noticed and cared for - the widows. In partnership with UMN, CSDC brought these women together in groups, and helped them rent small fields to grow crops. This year, they've made a good profit, and are using it to start small enterprises, pay off debts and send their children to school.

But more than this, CSDC has helped them find a unity of purpose that brings together women from both sides of a terrible conflict to begin community healing. As one woman put it: "Now we can join together to fight poverty and discrimination, not each other."

*Lyn Jackson
Communications Director*

Please pray

- For the widows you have read about, as they undertake a long – term income generation project of essential oils production. For this to succeed, they need patience and commitment.
- For good health, peace and harmony in these conflict – affected communities.
- For Durga and his team, especially those who are away from their families for long periods of time.

Congratulations Bal Kumari !

Bal Kumari Rai Gurung graduated from the Pannasastra University of Cambodia on 15th July with excellent results. This two-year Masters course in Applied Conflict Transformation Studies is a unique programme blending practical work, research and theoretical studies.

UMN would like to congratulate her on her success.

Bal Kumari is currently the Acting Peace Building Team Leader in UMN.



Book Release

UMN Conflict Transformation staff have produced a Nepali workbook in the non-formal education format titled Community Peace Education. The aim is to challenge and change attitudes and actions about personal and community conflict, as well as being a reading and writing educational resource.



The workbook highlights issues from home, school, faith/interfaith, human rights and trauma healing.

The Campbells say Goodbye to Nepal

Joe and Janet Campbell joined UMN in September 2006. After 20 weeks of language and orientation, Joe began his role as Peace and Reconciliation Advisor and Janet was Expatriate Pastoral Support.

In January 2008, Joe became Lead Advisor in Conflict Transformation. Janet's job title changed to Expatriate Coordinator - Staff Care and Support in 2009, reflecting her wider role in supporting all staff.

Joe and Janet have both made an enormous contribution to UMN's work these last four years, as well as being involved in other community roles. Joe will be particularly remembered for his work at government level and for coordinating an exposure visit for Nepali government officials to Ireland to discuss peace issues.

Quilting for Peace

A quilt is the perfect way of showing how small, individual contributions can be brought together into a beautiful and harmonious whole. Nepal's Peace Quilt was designed as a symbol of shared national commitment to peace by AIN, the national association of INGOs. Each square carried

thoughts, concerns and a message of hope from various organisations working on peace building. Two of UMN's partner organisations in Dhading and Rupandehi contributed squares to the quilt, with meaningful messages and drawings. The quilt was unfurled from the Dharara, an ancient tower from

which important proclamations were traditionally announced, on Nepal's National Day of Peace, 21st November 2009.



Forgiveness and Reconciliation

UMN's practical seminars on Forgiveness and Reconciliation have helped to bring about inner healing in the lives of many individuals and communities. This DVD gives a taste of the workshops, and comes with a discussion booklet. It has been used in workshops across Nepal and also in Sudan, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Australia, Cambodia,

Philippines, Burma, England, Scotland and Ireland. More than 600 copies have been sold and distributed so far.

View this DVD on our website www.umn.org.np

To get your high resolution copy of this DVD, contact

communications@umn.org.np

Price: Euro € 5, US dollars \$ 6.5, pounds £ 4 (plus postage)

Running time: 13 minutes



Keep them breathing !

Monsoon is snake bite season. Each year, a few patients at Tansen are bitten by poisonous snakes, causing paralysis. The paralysis will wear off in time, but the challenge is to keep the patient breathing in the meantime. In the past, we would do the breathing for the patient by hand. Last summer, we set up a small two-bedded

ventilator room with donated ventilator machines, and our staff received training. This July we had two such patients – one a teenage girl, who came in a very critical condition. She was on the ventilator for 10 days. Later, she was joined by a man in his sixties. Both patients did well. We breathed a sigh of relief!



Teenage girl (to the right) the day before discharge after 3 weeks in Tansen hospital

Shhh! Library in Doti

Usually libraries are quiet places, but we'd like to shout about this one ! Recently, UMN helped set up a library at the Rampur Higher Secondary School (RHSS) in Doti. RHSS has been a UMN partner for the last two years, but the local people see this as their own project, and are very proud of

the quality and maintenance of this library. Mr. Suresh D.C, a government employee, recently donated Rs 20,000 (USD 270) from his personal account to the library. This has been very encouraging, and has further enhanced the feeling of ownership of the locals around RHSS.



A Strategy for the Next Five Years

UMN's new Strategic Plan (2010-2015) is receiving its final touches. The main elements have been identified, and cluster teams are constructing plans based on the specific needs of the individuals and communities they work with. "There is enormous need across Nepal, and we are confident that our new strategic plan will help us work alongside our Nepali partner organisations to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised groups gain more direct benefit from our work," says Grenville Hopkinson, UMN's Strategy Director. Watch out for more in the next issue of UMNNews.

Join us

For 56 years, the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) has been working with the poor and marginalised people of Nepal, passing on relevant skills and helping to develop sustainable organisations, especially in rural areas. There is still a great need for experienced expatriate volunteers to work in teams with Nepalis to encourage and train local organisations as they seek to positively impact their communities. Is God calling you to join us in this work?

If you are interested in any of the positions below, please contact Anne Penn at expat.recruit@umn.org.np to learn more. Please send your CV with your email.

Needed Urgently

All Advisor posts involve mentoring, coaching and training Nepali staff and partners

HEALTH ADVISOR:

[\(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas\)](#)

Basic health care – it's everyone's right, but so many families and communities in Nepal suffer needlessly because they can't access even the simplest services. If you're a health professional, could you make a contribution in this vital field?

- Are you being called to use your expertise to help to improve health care in Nepal?
- Do you have experience in working in Public Health in a developing country?
- Can you provide support and coaching to Nepali Advisors and Officers in our Health Team?
- Do you have experience in developing programmes and funding proposals related to women's and children's health?
- Can you ensure timely and effective planning and reporting?
- Do you have a degree in Medicine, Public Health or Nursing?

EDUCATION TEAM LEADER

[\(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas\)](#)

Education is one of the key ways in which the barriers of poverty and disadvantage can be broken down. Children and adults in Nepal are hungry to learn, but so many miss out. UMN's Education Team needs a leader with creativity and vision. Is this you?

- Have you a vision for ensuring that everyone has access to relevant education?
- Can you help partners promote the value of formal and non formal education?

- Do you want to contribute towards improving the quality of education in rural areas of Nepal?
- Do you have experience in promoting practical and alternative education?
- Do you have a degree in any discipline plus postgraduate education training?
- Do you have experience of formal and non formal education, preferably in a cross-cultural setting?
- Have you also teacher training or educational advising experience?

ADVOCACY/CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISOR

[\(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas\)](#)

While rich nations squabble about carbon credits and emission targets, the poor in countries like Nepal are already suffering the effects of climate change. Now is the time to speak up for their rights, and help them build a viable future. Could you play a vital role in this important task?

- Do you seek to integrate advocacy into all aspects of development work?
- Are you interested in advocating for measures to alleviate the results of climate change in Nepal?
- Do you have qualifications and extensive experience in advocacy – community mobilisation, human rights, legal or public policy work?
- Can you work to enthuse our staff and partners in all of these areas?

HIV/AIDS ADVISOR

(Kathmandu-based with travel to other areas)

As in so many countries, HIV/AIDS poses a terrible threat to people and families throughout Nepal. UMN's partners are working in HIV/AIDS education, prevention, advocacy, and community and home based care. Could you provide assistance and advice?

- Do you have a degree-level education in a health or social work related field?
- Do you have experience in the field of HIV/AIDS, preferably in a cross-cultural situation?
- Are you able to encourage and enthuse our partners in this work?

Please visit www.umn.org.np for more information about opportunities to serve in UMN.

UMN Calendar 2011

"Fullness of Life"



12 stunning photos in UMN's 2011 Calendar show how UMN and its partners are helping the needy people of Nepal build healthy and fulfilling lives.

An ideal Christmas present for friends and family. Buy one for your church pastor as well!

Size: 21 cm by 28.5 cm

Price: € 2.5 Euro, \$ 3 US Dollars, £ 2 Pounds Sterling (exclusive of postage)

Make your order today by emailing to:
communications@umn.org.np

Who's Who?

Lyn Jackson

"Once upon a time, there was..."

Everyone loves a story. There's nothing like a good story to connect with people, to catch their interest and convey a message. Good communication is about good story telling.

Lyn Jackson has been telling stories for years – first as a primary school teacher, and more recently as manager of TEAR Australia's communication and education work. Lyn has just joined UMN as Communications Director, keen to tell the stories of UMN's work in Nepal.

This isn't Lyn's first stint in Nepal. From 1999 to 2002, Lyn served UMN as Education Director, managing education projects from Karnali to Kathmandu. A lot has changed since those days, in UMN and in Nepal. Things are done differently now, but UMN's commitment to serving the people of Nepal in the name and spirit of Jesus has never wavered. And people's lives are still being changed as a result.

These are stories worth telling!



Pray

Pray for Nepal

Pray for stability, for an end to the disruption of protests and strikes. Pray for the election of a new Prime Minister, one who can lead all parties effectively towards a new constitution.

Pray for UMN

UMN's 5-year agreement with the Government of Nepal expires on 25th November. Negotiations are well underway for the new agreement. Please pray for those involved. Pray that the agreement will be signed in good time. Pray especially that free visas for all expatriates will again be granted.

There are many vacant expatriate posts now, and coming up in the next year. Please pray for the right people to fill these important positions, and that God would touch the hearts of people that He has chosen to come to Nepal.

Also pray that UMN will continue to be able to recruit and retain the appropriately skilled, experienced and committed Nepali and expatriate staff we need to fulfill our Mission and Vision.

You can't do much without money. Pray for the Funding Team, as their work continues to grow at a time when there will be significant furlough and holiday absences during September, October and November.

Pray for UMN's Learning Review and Staff Get-Together from the 25th-29th October, and also for the UMN Board Meeting on the 11th-12th November. Pray for preparations for these, and for the safety for all who will be travelling to them. Pray that all three meetings will be productive, stimulating and challenging for all involved.

Pray for our Clusters

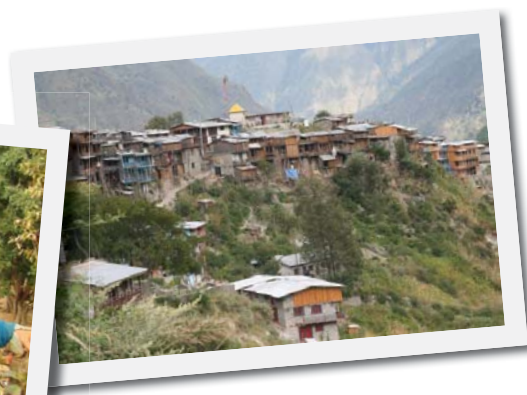
Pray for an end to the unstable political situation triggered by the on-going cross border conflicts around **Sunsari** and for the safety of our staff as they travel to these areas to work in the communities.

Occasionally, political parties and even government line agencies ask for donations from cluster staff, "requests" which

sometimes come with threats. Recently Madhu, the Cluster Team Leader in **Bajhang**, was discreetly approached by a political party member for such a donation. We praise God that Madhu was able to deal with the situation very well. Please pray for God's wisdom and security for the clusters in these difficult situations.

The staff and the Team Leader in **Dhading** are about to embark on visits to partners in their working locations during September. Pray for safe travel. Pray that they would be able to maintain good relationships with all stake holders.

Staff in **Mugu** face many challenges, as it is one of the most remote districts where UMN works. Pray for the staff working there, who are often away from families for long periods. Staff turn-over has been a concern for quite some time. Pray that staff will be encouraged and motivated, as they see their work benefiting others.



Give

Help us continue to build peace and hope in Nepal. You can support our reconciliation work, direct your donation to Rukum, (our featured cluster- see page 8) or give to our general fund.

Please indicate your preference when you donate.

DONATE ONLINE

www.umn.org.np

Give via credit or debit card from anywhere in the world. *For U.K. donors, this site offers tax-efficient giving.*

INTERNET BANKING & MONEY TRANSFER

Set up a payment or monthly standing order to transfer funds.

UK & EUROPEAN CURRENCIES

Pay to: **United Mission to Nepal**

Sort Code: **60-91-99**

Account Number: 10078177 (Sterling account)
10615512 (Euro account)

US & NEPAL CURRENCIES

Transfer or wire to:

**Standard Chartered Bank Nepal Ltd.
Kathmandu**

Account Number:

Swift Code: SCBLNPKA
01-0488798-51 (US\$ account)
01-0488798-01 (Nepali Rs account)

** All undesignated gifts will be used as needed.*

OTHER OPTIONS

Contact fin@umn.org.np

- For advice on leaving a bequest to UMN
- For instructions for UK tax-efficient giving by post
- To designate your gift for a certain cluster or area of work*

MAIL DONATIONS

Post directly to Nepal

Make cheque to *United Mission to Nepal* in Euros, Sterling, Australian, Canadian or US \$

Mail to:

Finance Team (28), UMN
P.O. Box 126
Kathmandu, Nepal

For tax-deductible donations in the U.S.

Make cheque payable to
*"Hospitals Revitalisation Program
UMCOR #982168"*
with a note that it is **FOR UMN.**

Mail to:

Cherian Thomas, MD
Executive Secretary, Health and Welfare
Global Ministries U.M.C.
475 Riverside Drive, Room 330
New York, NY 10115

Via Interserve Australia

Mail to:

Mrs. Marlene Stewart
Finance Officer, Interserve
P.O.Box 231, Bayswater VIC 3153
17/653 Mountain Hwy Bayswater, Australia

*Make cheque payable to
"Interserve" with a note that it is for UMN*





Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is despair, let me sow hope.

St. Francis of Assisi



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