



United Mission to Nepal
1954 - 2004

FIFTY YEARS IN GOD'S HAND

Blessings of the past — Visions for the future

FIFTY YEARS IN GOD'S HAND

1954 - 2004

Blessings of the past

Visions for the future



Edited by
United Mission to Nepal

“I have come that they may have life,
and that they may have it more
abundantly.”

John 10:10



यूनाइटेड मिशन टु नेपाल

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Nepali version available in 2004
© United Mission to Nepal 2003

ISBN 99933-759-5-0

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Printed in Nepal by Jagadamba Press

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P R E F A C E

Dear Friends/Readers,

It is a great privilege for me, as the Executive Director of United Mission to Nepal (UMN) at the time of its 50th Anniversary, to write a short message at the beginning of this Anniversary Book.

I trust that in reading this book you will be amazed, encouraged, and humbled but most of all I pray that, in reading this, you will be drawn closer to God Himself who we know is able to do so much more than we can ask or think. He does this working in and through us by His great power.

All the contributors to this book have, in unique and diverse ways, been involved in those parts of the history which they have recorded for us. They have each played their part in the creation and continuance of UMN, making it what it is today, sharing in the joys and the excitement, as well as

the pain and the discouragements. Just as for many of you, their experiences have formed the foundations for UMN upon which we have been able to build. I hope as you read 'the story' you will be able to relate to some of the events, the people and the scenes recorded here; indeed, many of you will have contributed to some of them.

But the real story is God's. The Triune God: creating, caring, restoring, forgiving, comforting, redeeming, leading, guiding and empowering. The God, who alone will bring this story to its completion.

"To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

Jennie Collins, Executive Director



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have given of their time, talents and skills in the production of this Anniversary book.

First of all, thanks must go to the writers – to Norma Kehrberg, whose extensive research and time commitment produced the history part of the book. To Suresh Raj Sharma, Rajendra Rongong, Renu Rajbhandari for taking time in the midst of busy schedules to put their reminiscences on paper. And to Stefan Östman, who not only got the book project up and running but also wrote the section about UMN in the future. The results of their efforts are evident as you read.

Then there is all the background work of proofreading, typing, layout, graphic design, liaising with the printers etc, to

which the UMN Marketing Team has committed countless hours of work. So thanks to, Stefan Östman, Shanti Sara Lepcha, Ellen Collins, Sigrun Grahm, Khim Kandel, Sudipta Dutta, Ratan Ale, Hasta Gurung, Rishi Ram Paudyal, Andy Collins, Arun Shahi and Heather Williams. Bishwa Pandey and Betty Young also gave invaluable assistance.

Thanks too, to the many, many UMN staff - Nepali and expatriate, past and present - whose dedicated service over these past 50 years has made this story possible. And over and above all, we acknowledge the grace and goodness of God who has kept us in His hand.

David McConkey



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I N T R O D U C T I O N

United Mission to Nepal has reached the respectable age of 50 years – half a decade of pioneering initiatives and undaunted endeavours, and also of deepening and developing relationships across cultural, national and religious boundaries. The aim of serving the people of Nepal in the Name and Spirit of Jesus Christ has remained the same over the years. The lives of innumerable individuals and communities throughout Nepal have become more abundant, and many UMN workers have themselves experienced transformation in their lives through God’s love, in the process of serving others.

UMN was born in the fifties as an unprecedented experiment of co-operation between mission organisations from different parts of the world and from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds. Many were sceptical,

but the model of a United Mission proved successful. It grew quickly in terms of member organisations, personnel and projects, and it soon became a model for similar initiatives in other countries. United Mission to Nepal has continued to initiate and model new approaches in mission work throughout its history. The current Change Process demonstrates that UMN wants to keep moving, keep reinventing itself, listening to what God wants it to focus on as it takes new steps towards the future.

This book is a tribute to UMN and the thousands of Nepali employees and hundreds of expatriate workers who have contributed to its work since it all began 50 years ago. Norma Kehrborg gives a picture of UMN’s history, from the early treks into the unknown country that opened its doors to the



outside world in the fifties, to the developments in the nineties and the turn of the century when a changing political and social context offered new challenges to UMN. Rajendra Rongong, Suresh Raj Sharma and Renu Rajbhandari, all three respected leaders in Nepali society, give their perspective on UMN's contribution to Nepal, from a Nepali and personal point of view. Finally, Stefan Östman gives a glimpse of the "new UMN", emerging from the Change Process as a different organisation shaped to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

They all point to the importance of co-operation and partnership, of humility and unselfish commitment to service, based on the conviction that God loves Nepal and its people. The title of this book, and the slo-

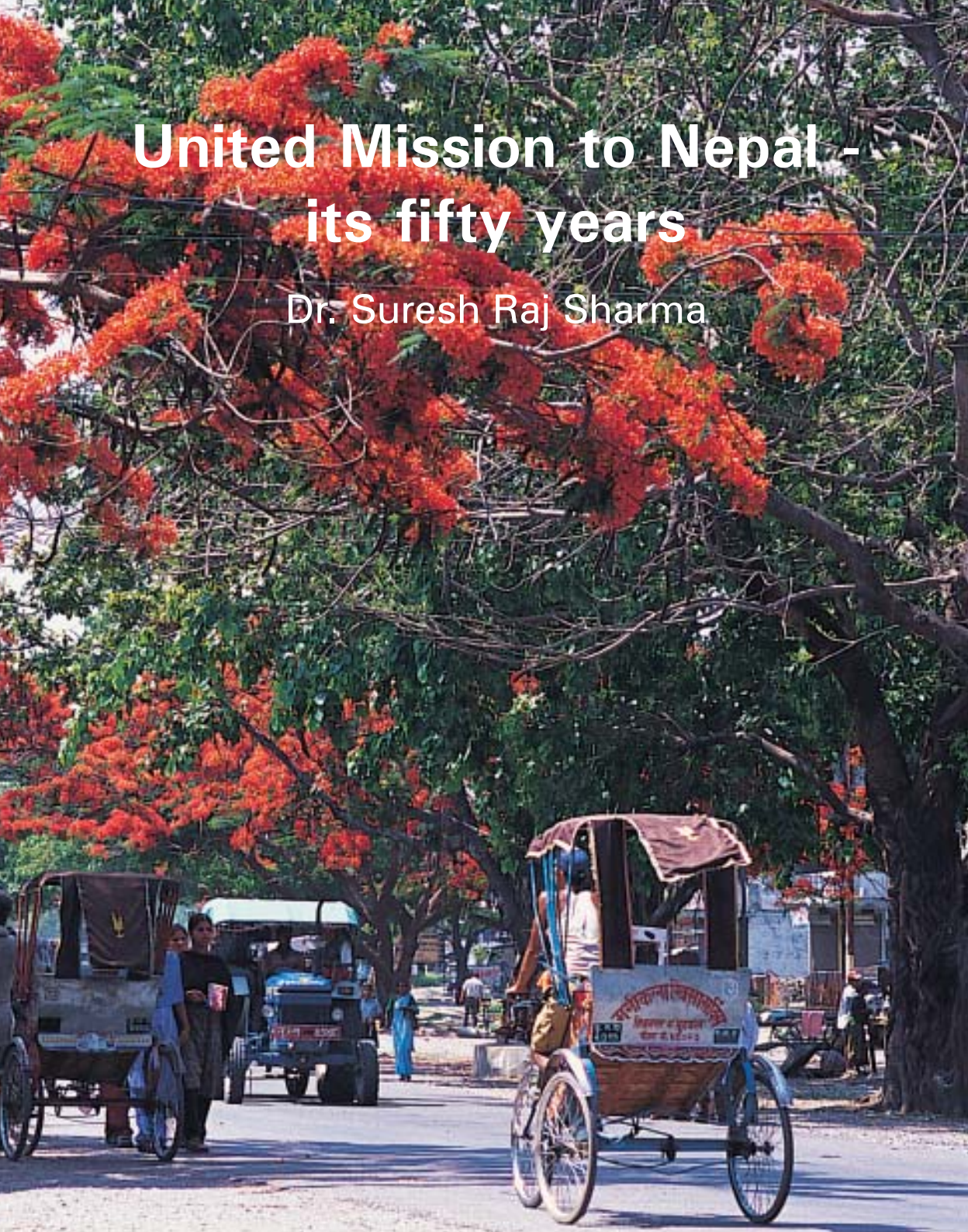
gan for UMN's 50th Anniversary, is "50 years in God's hand". The book wants to give a small taste of what this has meant over the years. UMN has seen great success, but also faced many obstacles and problems throughout its history. In the face of difficulties that may at first have looked insurmountable, God has showed his faithfulness, love and care, keeping the organisation in His mighty hands. But UMN has also been a *tool* in God's hand, which God has used to share His love with the people of Nepal. He has done so in the past, is doing so today, and through new approaches, structures and methodologies, it is our prayer that He will keep doing so in the future.

Stefan Östman



United Mission to Nepal - its fifty years

Dr. Suresh Raj Sharma





Students at Karnali Technical School, Jumla

The United Mission to Nepal, in my personal opinion, is probably one of the most experienced and effective INGO groups in Nepal. They entered the scene when it was most needed, with noteworthy contributions in the fields of education, health, micro-hydro projects and community development. Perhaps the missionary zeal kept them going relentlessly, or they just wanted to serve a group of people who desperately needed their service. They came to Nepal when the infrastructure base was meager. Most of the projects or sites they worked at did not have roads, electricity, telecommunication or skilled workers. The first most benefited population now appear to be people from Okhaldhunga, Tansen, Gorkha and Lalitpur for receiving health services when such services virtually did not exist in Nepal, except in the capital. They served the areas for almost five decades

with utmost care and dedication. A great service was indeed provided by doctors, born and trained in highly developed countries, working alongside Nepalese doctors, to a community, which had no knowledge, no resources and no access to any kind of medical services for the kind of illnesses they had. The people in UMN have indeed proved to be excellent managers. When Nepal had no important physical infrastructure to boast of, they managed to deliver services with the little expertise they had. Quite naturally, finding qualified people willing to work in areas where the sanitation standard was very poor, a communication system was almost non-existent, where modern technology had not even arrived, and funding resources were to be spent in the area where a technical base was non-existent – whether we talk about skills or energy or management – it was, indeed, a tough job to begin with.



Apprentice at Butwal Technical Institute

Following an ancient proverb, to give the future to the people, one of their first initiatives was in education. At UMN there was a predominant thinking (there still is) that unless secondary education and vocational skills are imparted to the people in such a way that they would confidently take up higher education or be eligible for an enterprise, no efforts at a higher level would work. It was in tune with this philosophy that their initial activities focused on establishing schools and technical institutions.

In the forefront of helping the Nepalese education system with quality improvement there are many good examples. The establishment of Amarjyoti Secondary School in Gorkha and the Gandaki Boarding School in Pokhara are excellent examples of model schools for rural and urban areas in Nepal respectively. The graduates of these schools

now form the backbone of intellectual strength of Gandaki Zone. UMN seconded teachers to the secondary schools of Gorkha, too, thereby helping the entire school education to improve in quality. Mahendra Bhawan Girls' School, similarly, helped girls to receive good quality education with moral values at an affordable cost. All these examples really tell about the success stories of the UMN initiatives for quality improvement in the Nepalese school system.

The creation of Butwal Technical Institute (BTI) has changed the economic map of Lumbini Zone. The institute has empowered the entrepreneurs of that belt through the creation of an industrial base, industrial motivation and apprenticeship-type skill training. BTI has been one such programme, which has excelled both in industrial and

human resource development. The Butwal Power Company, the micro-hydro turbine production, manufacture of trusses and electrical poles are the major industrial activities to bring this area to the forefront of quality industrial products.

Karnali Technical School (KTS) has been another exemplary development to energise the youth force for development of the realy remote areas. The school, in its 15 years of project period (1980-1994), has contributed immensely in bringing the local unskilled or unemployable youth to be highly versatile skilled workers or technicians of the entire - rather backward - mid and far-western hill belt. The KTS-trained construction workers, health workers and agriculture workers have indeed been the backbone of technical manpower not only in districts of Karnali but have also extended to the hill districts of Bheri, Seti and Rapti zones. The most remarkable achievement has been the empowerment of women now serving in various health posts, community health programmes and agriculture related activities. The school really has helped the Karnali zone to catch up with other development areas by at least 50 to 100 years.

The assistance provided to Kathmandu University is a model on how tertiary

education could be strengthened with UMN support. The university has been given support in the construction of the first science block, in providing financial support through scholarships to the needy, and with secondment of high quality experts in areas where such people were in extremely short supply. This has helped the institution to move forward immensely in a short time. They provided experts in computer, electro-nics and electrical and mechanical engineering and in management, etc. UMN's contribution has been of extraordinary importance to this young university for making its programmes qualitative and dynamic.

The efforts made by UMN through non-formal education to provide literacy by imparting skill development, particularly in Dailekh district, have been a highly successful feature. There seems to be a new sense of consciousness in the people of this region now. What people most require is a way to help them better their socio-economic status.

All these efforts were coupled with a high degree of dedication and an enthusiasm to excel. What UMN has done for the needy in Nepal has proved to be praiseworthy. In some sectors they were the pioneers, and in some their participation led to better results. □

Not just a light bulb

Two residents of Galyang tell of a hydropower project that changed their lives and their community.

“We had a problem before electricity came to our area. As my sister and I crouched down on the floor to do our homework by the dim light of the kerosene lamp, our eyes would sting from the smoke. Our tears made it difficult to read. Sometimes the flame singed our hair when we bent too close.

When neighboring villages received electricity, we wished we could have an electric light bulb to study by too. Then one day, our dream came true. UMN’s Andhikhola Hydropower Project brought light into our darkness. When we installed electricity in our little house our hearts became happy. Our eyes do not smart in pain anymore. It is important to say that UMN did more than simply turn on the light switch. The project also conducted non-formal education classes for adults who could not read or write, thereby bringing the light of knowledge and awareness into our community as well.”

— a young woman



“When UMN started to construct a hydropower plant here, the situation was miserable. Our farming practices relied completely upon the rain, and once the rain dried up, our land saw no water for months. We were able to grow only maize and millet, and even then our harvest was meager.

Then the project proposed using the excess run-off water from the power plant to irrigate our fields. We are very grateful to UMN for helping us build canals. It was hard work, but well worth it. When the irrigation waters began to flow, enthusiasm and excitement flowed as well. Today this is the best land around! Now we can plant rice, wheat and maize on the same land, and our production has grown by two-thirds. Many of us grow vegetables as well. Furthermore, we now have safe drinking water. Half the reason for our improved health is the clean and easily accessible water.

It is true that electricity has improved our lives greatly. But without the added benefit of irrigation and drinking water, electricity alone would not have been such a valuable thing. UMN did even more by coordinating a land redistribution scheme that brought land to the landless and by establishing an enterprise development program that created small business opportunities. We are thankful that this type of development has come to our community and that we actively participate in it. We are blessed.”

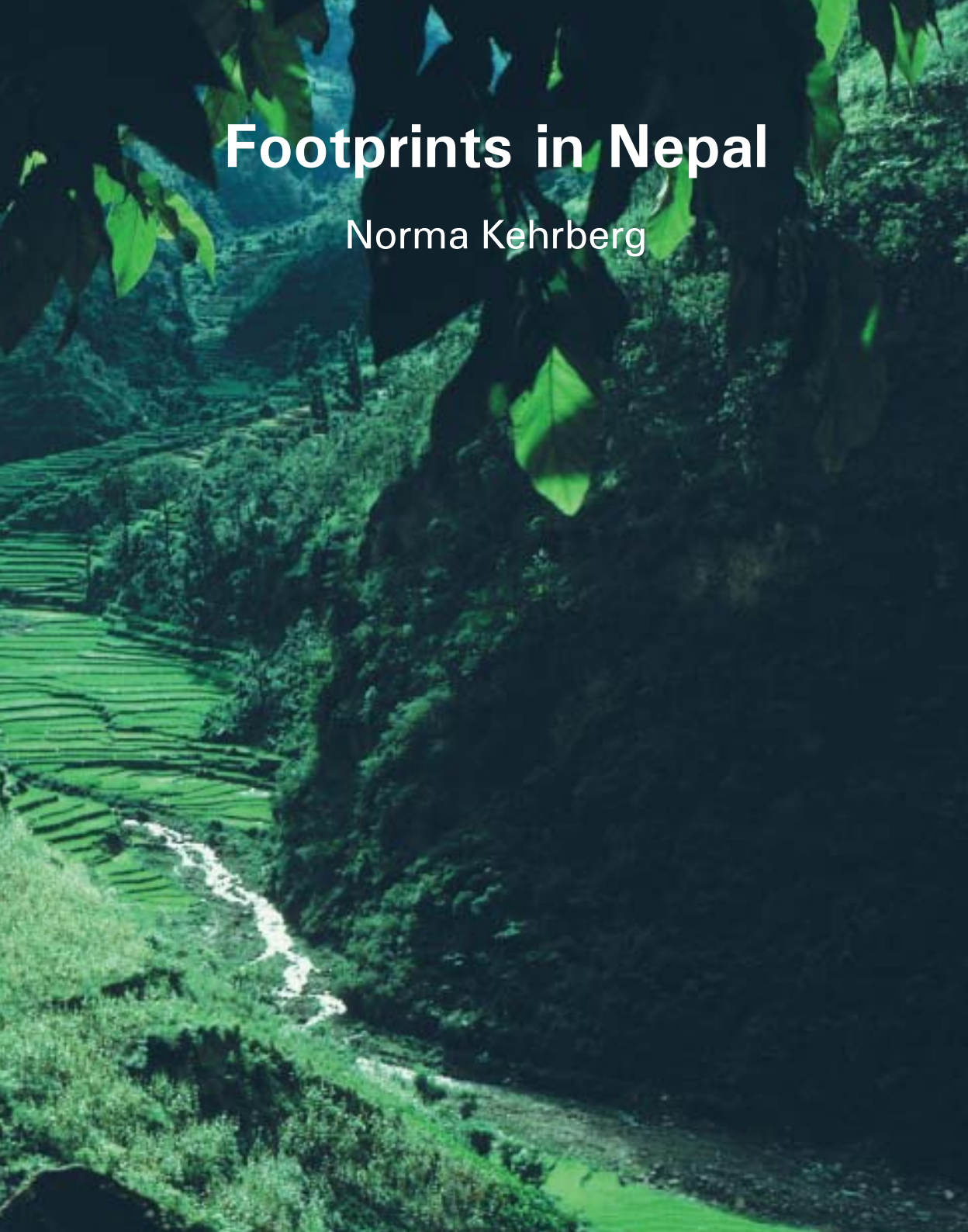
— a farmer

Compiled by Andy and Ellen Collins



Footprints in Nepal

Norma Kehrberg



The story of the United Mission to Nepal has been told and retold. At each passing milestone it is repeated and its telling has been in the many languages of those who have come from differing countries to live and work with the UMN. This history is a rich mosaic of mission groups from around the world, each with their own language, theology, culture and philosophy, drawn together by a commitment to work with the people of Nepal in the Name and Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Nepal is a small landlocked country nestled among the southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains. Bordered by India and the People's Republic of China, Nepal is about 500 miles long and 100 miles wide. The geographical borders include four regions: the plains, called the Terai, adjoining India; the terraced rice fields of the mid-mountains where the majority of Nepal's subsistence level farmers live; the hilly region once covered with forests; and the high Himalayas that include Dhaulagiri, Annapurna, Machhapuchhre and the highest mountain in the world, Mount Everest.

With its wall of Himalayan snows on the north and its malaria infested border on the south, Nepal was not an inviting place in the first half of the 20th century. Circumstances of geography and political rule made life difficult for the Nepalese. There were neither schools nor medical care. Ordinary people, close to 95% of the 13 million

population in 1954, survived at subsistence level. Children were born, and too many died. A puppet king occupied the throne and those who challenged the ruling elite were imprisoned, went underground, or lived outside Nepal. The beautiful and picturesque land was traversed by barefoot people trudging miles every day carrying heavy loads supported by slings across their foreheads. Surviving was not easy, and life expectancy was less than forty years.

The few travellers from outside who were allowed to enter Nepal were profoundly affected by the people they met and the conditions in which they lived. Nepalese who crossed the border into India came in contact with mission workers who, learning of the conditions of the people, yearned to enter Nepal and work among its people.

That goal seemed impossible because, until the early 1950s, Nepal was a closed country into which foreigners and Christian missionaries were not permitted. Nearly two hundred years earlier, Prithivi Narayan Shah from Gorkha conquered the smaller kingdoms dotting the hillsides of Nepal and unified the country. Whether for political or religious reasons, the Gorkha king expelled the Capuchin fathers working in Nepal at that time. From 1759 onwards, Christians were not permitted to live in Nepal, or even to enter.

But God had a different plan!

The Opening of Nepal

In the late 1940s, an enthusiastic science teacher and noted ornithologist at Woodstock School in India, Dr. Robert (Bob) Fleming, requested permission from the Government of Nepal to enter the country to study the birds of the Himalayas. Permission was granted and on October 31, 1949, Bob Fleming and Dr. Carl Taylor, joined by Robert Bergsaker and Harold Bergsma from Woodstock School, began a three month trek into the mountains of Nepal. They visited Butwal, Tansen, Baglung, Tukuche and Pokhara. On their trek, Carl Taylor treated sick Nepalese whom they met along the route. The group was deeply affected by the needs of the Nepali people, and on their return to India told others about the conditions they had found. Their words were persuasive, and plans were made for a second expedition in 1950-51. These plans were delayed for one year due to political unrest and the revolution in Nepal which brought King Tribhuvan, the present king's grandfather, back to Nepal as the rightful ruler.

In June 1951, after King Tribhuvan regained power and nearly eighteen months after the first expedition, Ernest Oliver¹ of the Regions Beyond Mission Union and Dr. Trevor Strong² from Duncan Hospital at Raxaul requested permission to enter Kathmandu Valley. They had been encouraged to do so by Nepalis who, injured in the fierce fighting in Birgunj during the revolution in early

1951, had received treatment at Duncan Hospital. Trevor Strong and Ernest Oliver came with the purpose of seeking permission to enter Nepal to work as Christians among the Nepali people. Krishna Shankar Joshi, communications officer for the government of Nepal on the border on the Terai (and father of long time UMN staff, Komal Shankar Joshi), assisted them in getting permission from officials in Kathmandu for their visit.

Ernest Oliver and Trevor Strong had permission to stay in Kathmandu Valley for only two days before walking back to the Terai. Whilst in Kathmandu, they met with government officials and openly shared their desire to work in Nepal because of their Christian faith. Upon receiving some encouragement, from the officials, to work in Nepal, they asked if they would be able to share their Christian faith if they came to work in Nepal. They were told that they could not preach. The discussion continued and they asked if they could respond to questions about why they had come to work in Nepal. They were told that they could respond. Lastly they asked what would happen if a Nepali wanted to become a Christian and were told that it would be very, very difficult for that person.

For almost fifty years prior to the opening of Nepal, Christians in India had worked among the Nepalese who came across the borders. These independent Christian workers in



Trevor Strong at the Chisopani Ghari check post on route to Kathmandu in 1951

India formed a loose-knit group called the Nepal Border Fellowship. At different locations in India along the border, they learned the Nepali language and culture. They also became acutely aware of the deplorable living conditions of the common Nepali people.

At Raxaul, the only railhead bordering Nepal, Duncan Hospital was established to meet and treat Nepali people who crossed the border. Similar mission work was located at Nautanwa and Rupaidhia across the border from Sunauli and Nepalganj. Services provided in the dispensaries, schools, and hostels led to friendships. In Raxaul, relationships were formed with some of the Nepali officials who later assisted in the establishment of the United Mission to Nepal.

In December 1951, with King Tribhuvan firmly on the throne, there was a second

bird expedition into Nepal. For six weeks medical clinics were held in Tansen where over 1500 people received modern medical care for the first time. When members of the bird expedition met later in Lucknow, India, there was a "soberness settling upon them. For up in the hills there had been laid like a yoke upon them a firm request that they go into Nepal and establish medical missionary work."³ They had been urged by influential Nepalis who assisted the bird expedition to start medical work in Nepal. Having experienced the needs of the people first hand, they were committed to seek permission to work in Nepal.

After the meeting in Lucknow, Bob Fleming sent a letter to His Majesty's Government of Nepal requesting permission to start a hospital in Tansen. Fifteen months later, a letter came to the Flemings in India. Dated



Bob Fleming , Bethel Fleming and Carl Friedericks

May 18, 1953, it was written by Shri K.A. Dikshit, Assistant Secretary, Department of Foreign Ministry in Kathmandu. His Majesty's Government had granted permission for a hospital in Tansen and women's welfare clinics at various sites in the Kathmandu Valley. The permission was given to Bob Fleming's Methodist mission in India, but the Methodist Church in India knew that the response could not be theirs alone. An invitation was quickly extended to Christian missions working along the border of Nepal inviting them to join and work together in a united way in Nepal.

The faith mission groups, which had been working and praying for the people of Nepal for almost fifty years, wanted to be a part of this chapter of God's work in Nepal but expressed their concern about how they, as independent evangelical missions, could

possibly work with large mission boards of the United States such as the Methodist and Presbyterians. The Presbyterians whose personnel had participated in the bird expeditions, said they would not enter this work at all if other mission groups were not involved. The Methodist leaders in Delhi were also convinced that the only way to accept this opportunity to enter the formerly closed country where Hinduism was protected was to enter together in the unity of Jesus Christ.

There was another important element in the development of the United Mission to Nepal. In Darjeeling in northeast India, Nepali Christians as citizens of India prayed for the "doors of Nepal to be opened" so that the Gorkhali people could hear the word of God. These Christians were poised to leave their homes, ready at any time to immigrate to Nepal to help develop the country and to

build the church. Many had forefathers who tried to immigrate to Nepal earlier but had been barred from doing so because they were Christians.⁴

The return of indigenous Christians to Nepal from India led to the establishment of the church in Nepal. During the organization of worshipping fellowships by local Christians, the expatriate mission workers were invited to join in worship. Without the indigenous church, expatriates, because of a need for communal worship, would have organized their own worshipping groups which would have changed the dynamics of the work of the mission in Nepal.

Three diverse strands came together to initiate a unique movement of God's work in Nepal: bird expeditions linked with medical care in the Himalayas, a vision and call to those working along the border of Nepal in India, and the return of indigenous Christians to Nepal to share the Gospel. They were united by the desire to live among and assist the people of Nepal. These diverse strands came together to found the United Mission to Nepal on March 5, 1954. The instrument used by God to make it possible was the songs of the birds that had first beckoned Bob Fleming to enter Nepal.

In late 1953, even before the mission was officially founded on March 5, 1954 in Nagpur, India, Dr. Bob and Dr. Bethel Fleming, a physician, left for Kathmandu

with their children to set up the maternity clinics. In Nagpur, Guiding Principles for the new mission were established. Six months after the founding of the mission, eight mission groups became charter members and entered into a covenant relationship to work together in Nepal.⁵ Differences in denominational creeds and ecclesiastical structures, languages and social customs, national identities and characteristics were left outside the borders of Nepal. These diverse people entered Nepal determined to learn how to work together within a new mission context among the Nepali people.

The Dikshit Letter

The letter from Shri K.A. Dikshit to the Flemings dated May 18, 1953 served as an agreement between the government of Nepal and the mission for the first five years of the mission's existence. This letter identified four conditions for work.

1. All expenses for the establishment of a hospital in Tansen and the Maternity Welfare Clinics in Kathmandu are to be borne by the mission.
2. The staff for the centers and for the hospital should be drawn from the Nepalese citizens as far as possible and they should be properly trained.
3. The hospital at Tansen and the Welfare Centers in Kathmandu should be handed over to the government of Nepal after five years.

4. Distribution of medicine and treatment of patients should be free.

This first official government communication also identified three partners in the work: His Majesty's Government of Nepal, the Nepali people and the expatriates of the mission. From the outset, this unique relationship in which the partners were intrinsically bound together enabled the mission to work. Key concepts of the mission work were also contained in the Dikshit letter: government permission for all work, training and development of the Nepali people to work as staff, and the turning over of work to the government.

From the earliest General Agreements of 1960, 1969, 1975 and continuing through to the last signed General Agreement of September 2000, the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) upholds these earliest principles: permission for work from the government, preference for Nepalese in staffing, and acknowledging the rights of the government to own and dispose of all work. Since the beginning, a key understanding of the work was to not "hold on" or build up centralized institutions but to be in a servant ministry by divesting of property and programs - turning them over to the people of Nepal.

This practice is reflected in the reports, documents and letters related to those occasions when various mission endeavors were changed or closed due to unanticipated

government regulations: cessation of agricultural work in the Gorkha Project in July 1971, ending UMN management of schools when the New Education System Plan was adopted in 1972, and closure of the Buling Arkhala Rural Development Program in August 1984 due to the lack of a signed agreement and local opposition. These events are not recorded or remembered as a breakdown in trust or relationships; they were perceived as challenges for the mission to find new ways to work in accordance with the plans of the government which were also evolving. These endings and beginnings were treated as new opportunities. Although the changed plans gave rise to some expressed disappointments, the founding principle of the mission continued - to work together with the government of Nepal and its people in the development of their country.

In the early days of mission work, Nepalese with Indian citizenship immigrated to Nepal to be a part of the development of Nepal and, for many, to establish the first church in Nepal. Simultaneously, in Nepal, mostly men in the early days were invited to join in the work of the mission. They first joined as cooks, gardeners, packers and shippers and often doubled as liaison workers in relationships with officials of the government. Later the Nepalis became the project directors of mission work and, perhaps more importantly, went on to new careers as leaders in government, medical institutions,

and other community service work.⁶ Some of the Nepali staff continued working with UMN until their retirement. Shambhu Kunwar, one of the earliest employees of the mission, worked in the central services of UMN for thirty-eight years before retiring in July 2002.

Nepali staff who joined the work of the mission in those early days learned “on the job.” Many of them moved from job to job as they increased their skills and filled more essential posts. Men and women of Nepal, from all walks of life, joined to learn and work for the development of Nepal. The Gorkha Community Service Project which began 1957, aimed not only to train teachers but also to train “headmasters” of village schools in the mountains. Leadership roles were to be in the hands of the Nepalis as headmasters of village schools, program and project leaders and as the directors of the UMN initiated private companies. The directive in Shri Dikshit’s letter to employ, train and turn over work to the Nepalese was always a part of mission consciousness, even though at times there were lively discussions in the board meetings concerning what “Nepalization”, a term often used, really meant.

At one point in the life of the mission, over 2500 Nepali staff were employed in various roles in the mission and the companies. The story of the United Mission to Nepal is a complex one. Whose story is it? It is the

story of the people of Nepal, openly and graciously allowing expatriate-based Christian missions to join with them in the development of their country. It is also the story of God at work in Nepal throughout all levels of society including the Nepali Christian church.

First Five Years

Before the Guiding Principles of the United Mission to Nepal were formulated and adopted on March 5, 1954, Bob and Bethel Fleming and their family had already packed up and trekked to Kathmandu. Bethel Fleming and her daughter trekked over the mountains from India, and Bob Fleming and his son trekked through Nepal from the east collecting more bird specimens. The family rejoined around Christmas in 1953. The task was to find a place to live and begin work. Immediately after Christmas, they searched for a place to set up the maternity clinics. Issues - finances and personnel - that concern new mission beginnings today seemed far from their mind. They truly believed that “God would provide”. On January 7, 1954, the first patients of the maternity clinic were seen in Bhatgaon, now called Bhaktapur. Shortly after this, on February 15, 1954, the maternity hospital in Kathmandu was opened. This was located in half of the Teku cholera hospital. Later, maternal and children’s welfare clinics were opened in Gokharna, Kirtipur, Banepa, Thimi, Sangu and Bungmati villages.

When the USA-based Presbyterian Mission Board was convinced that this mission would be a united mission, they gave permission for Dr. Carl Friedericks and his family, who had been working in India, to go to Nepal to establish a hospital and begin medical work in Tansen. In June 1954, after the official papers were signed, Carl Friedericks flew over the hospital site in Tansen in a DC3 airplane. There was no air strip in Tansen, so he, like all the other passengers had to land on the Terai near the border with India. Carl Friedericks and his family then walked the 17.6 miles to Tansen where, in September 1954, medical work began in a rented house.

There were no trained medical staff so Carl Friedericks selected local Nepalese from Tansen town and trained them as assistants to do simple lab work, help in the treatment of patients and learn the use of medicines. During the first eight months the Friedericks were the only expatriates in Tansen but, living in the bazaar quickly brought them new Nepali friends. By the end of the first year they had a small expatriate team of two doctors and two nurses, one of them was Ingeborg Skjervheim from Norway. Sister Ingeborg arrived in Tansen on December 25, 1955. One day later she brought the first maternity case from the bazaar to the hospital for delivery, a practice she continued for thirty-three years. By the end of the second year, the expatriate staff had increased to twelve including Odd Hoftun,



Ernest and Margaret Oliver in front of their home and office

an engineer from Norway who arrived to build the hospital.

During the first years of the United Mission to Nepal, Ernest Oliver was the Executive Secretary.⁷ Personnel and finances were limited. Ernest Oliver lived in India so communication between him and the workers in Nepal took a long time. Some of the early workers described the work as wonderful chaos and complete dependence on God. The Flemings had to return to the United States in mid-1954 in order to visit churches to raise funds and share the news of this new united mission. Their return to Nepal



Daftan Sada, Winnie Sandberg, Prakash Rai and Balmar Gurung working in the maternity clinic laboratory

was delayed for two years due to the illness of their son, Bob.

While the Flemings were away, no medical doctor was available to run the clinics. Locally based skilled personnel were non-existent and, somewhat desperately, urgent requests were sent to missions in India to loan skilled medical personnel to enable the work to continue. Pioneering and resourceful medical workers came to Nepal in 1954-55, willing to cope with the challenges and hardships involved. Many of these short-term people stayed on in Nepal.

Nepali staff who worked with the mission in those early years have vivid memories. In 1954, Prakash Rai, at the age of 19, left his home in Darjeeling, becoming the first Nepali to immigrate from Darjeeling, India, to work with the mission in Nepal. (Daftan

Sada arrived one day later.) Prakash was assigned to become a lab technician at the maternity clinic in Kathmandu. It was his first day in Kathmandu, he was alone and did not know anything about his surroundings or the strange ways of the expatriates. He missed the meal call, left the cholera hospital at night without food, and on his way home bought an egg from a local shop which he ate raw. This strange beginning did not dampen Prakash's enthusiasm for his new venture. He worked as a lab technician with the mission for 15 years and continues to live with his family in Nepal as the founder and principal of a private school for poor children in Pokhara.

From 1954 until early 1957 medical activities were the only sector in which the united mission worked. However, that was soon to change.



Jonathan Lindell, soaking the foot of a villager

In 1956, Jonathan Lindell, who was later to become the first resident long-term director of the United Mission, gave up his work in the USA to come to Nepal. In one of his reports that year he wrote that his assignment was two fold: "1) find a location in the country to start a community service project and 2) define and describe the project to the government and get permission to conduct it." Lindell spent nine months visiting the mountains to select the site, and made 70 trips to the government offices to describe, explain and negotiate an agreement. At the end of nine months, permission was given for a Community Service Project located in Gorkha district, the historical seat of the country of Nepal. Work commenced in May 1957.

In Jonathan Lindell's earliest days in Gorkha, he wrote about the incredible beauty of the

mountains of Manaslu, Himalchuli and Boudhanath as seen from the ridge of Amp Pipal. He described the friendliness of the Nepali mountain people; he agonized over the realization that mountain children had no opportunity to attend school, and he saw that the work had to respond to the medical needs of the people of the area. He also lamented on his personal lack of skills in carpentry, cooking and providing health care. His letters to Evey, his wife in Kathmandu, included frequent requests for information to improve his cooking skills, especially in baking bread. He also wrote about setting up the first shelf in his tent which made work much easier. From the beginning, Jonathan Lindell worked in a team, first with Ron Byatt (UK) and Shillingford Mukhia (Darjeeling, India) and, one year later, the team was joined by Martha Mukhia, Sunhang and Una Sodemba,



Becky Grimsrud with a patient at Amp Pipal dispensary.

Surendra Murial and Margaret McCombe (Ireland).

The initial target of the Community Service Project in Gorkha was to establish a central school in Amp Pipal where selected students would be trained as teachers. The approved plan was to open district schools run by village management committees under the leadership of headmasters trained at the Amp Pipal School. The schools and teachers would be supervised by the mission's teacher training programme. Dozens of teachers were trained and placed in the fourteen schools under this program. The school at Luitel, begun in 1961 and developed as a high school, soon held a premier place in education in Nepal, with many of its students taking top honors in the annual school leaving examinations for the country.⁸ Mission management continued in the

Gorkha Schools until the inauguration of the New Education System Plan in 1972 when all schools were placed under the national education program.

As part of the Community Service Project, a dispensary staffed by two expatriate nurses and four Nepali staff was set up in a village house. One might say that all staff, even the expatriate nurses, were involved in "on the job" training: the expatriates were sometimes pressed into service for care of animals, e.g., assisting in the difficult delivery of a goat, and the Nepali staff learned basic nursing and lab technician work. The clinic was always full of patients and the clinic would remain open each day until the last person was seen, sometimes late into the night. Dr. Helen Huston, a Canadian, came to Nepal from India in 1960 and, after two years in the UMN hospitals at Tansen



Luitel High School in Gorkha District.

and Shanta Bhawan, the mission hospital in Kathmandu, moved to Amp Pipal in March 1963. Helen Huston was the first full time doctor in Amp Pipal and served there until her retirement in 1992. In 1969, she oversaw the building and movement of the dispensary to a newly constructed 15 bed hospital a short distance down the mountain from the Amp Pipal ridge. The hospital was run by UMN until 2001.

Agriculture and animal health work was the third part of the original Community Service Project of Gorkha. There is little cultivable land in Gorkha. Small plots of land, sometimes no more than seven by ten feet, would be carved out of the mountainside along the walking paths as farmers struggled to grow food to feed their families. Agriculture work was started as a way to assist the farmers in the Gorkha area to increase

their crop yields and food production, even though it was quickly discovered that the villagers of Nepal are some of the best farmers in the world. Through many years of experience, farming methods were developed in the harsh environment of Nepal, and those methods coaxed maximum crops out of the less than hospitable land. Records of the early meetings show that the mission workers, expatriate and Nepali, were encouraged to go and learn from the farmers, find out from them what works and, if possible, find ways to enhance their efforts and at all times utilize whatever resources the government has established.

The agriculture work expanded when a veterinarian surgeon, Dr. Adolf Leue from Germany came to live and work in Gorkha. It was observed that village farmers often welcomed the care and advice for their animals



Elizabeth Franklin with Queen Aishwarya at Mahendra Bhawan's silver jubilee in 1982

as much as, if not more than, the health care of their children. Animal survival was often the key to family survival.

The agriculture program included a small demonstration plot and training program in crop, vegetable and fruit production. This program was located near the ridge of Amp Pipal village. Seeds, some insecticides, as well as rat poison, were made available locally. Vegetables were always seasonal. Just when one could no longer tolerate another day of cabbage curry, beautiful cauliflower would arrive from local fields. After 30 days of only one vegetable, another variety was harvested. Each and all were welcomed by the expatriates who worked and lived with the village families.

The Gorkha agriculture and animal health program ended officially in 1970 but aspects

of the early days of agriculture work in Gorkha continue through the improved fruit trees and vegetable crops in the area. Services for animal health was carried on by those staff members who were trained in veterinarian services. In addition, experience gained in agriculture work in the Gorkha Project was shared throughout other mission projects by Nepali and expatriate staff.

At the same time that the community service program was being negotiated for the Gorkha project, Elizabeth Franklin, originally from U.K., moved to Kathmandu from Kalimpong in North India to start a school for girls. In Darjeeling, while she studied the Nepali language, she became acquainted with Nepali teachers domiciled in India whom she encouraged to go to Nepal. There were many difficulties, but the Nepali teachers from Darjeeling and Elizabeth Franklin never lost faith in



Girls at Mahendra Bhawan did all boarding duties themselves

their goal. Having failed to receive permission to open a school in Bhaktapur, they moved to Kathmandu and finally received permission to open a school there. They found a landlord willing to rent his house at Sano Gauchar, on the outskirts of Kathmandu, in which to start the school. In 1958, the first full year of operation of the school, there were six classes with 102 students and seven teachers. The school was called Mahendra Bhawan Girls School and became the country's first high school for girls. The caliber of education impressed parents of all social and economic groups. It was a boarding school and all students ate and lived together. Even the upper-class families were eager for their daughters to attend Mahendra Bhawan despite the fact that the girls were required to share cooking and housekeeping duties, something many of the upper caste girls had not been expected to perform in their homes.

Mahendra Bhawan became known for its vigorous sports activities in addition to its academic excellence. Elizabeth Franklin had a vision for the girls to have a well-rounded education and so arranged for them to be bused to a nearby swimming pool to learn how to swim - an activity unheard of for girls in those days. In the beginning, Elizabeth Franklin was the only expatriate at Mahendra Bhawan: she worked with a Nepali team which included Jeremit Rongong, Dhanmaya Shrestha and Maichang Gurung. The relationship between United Mission to Nepal and Mahendra Bhawan Girls High School continued from 1957 until the adoption of the new education plan in 1972. From 1973 to 1988, under government appointed administrators, UMN provided expatriates as teaching, hostel and nursing staff at Mahendra Bhawan, always in small numbers. Following the phase out



Nuchheman who worked at headquarters for 34 years

of all UMN staff at Mahendra Bhawan, scholarships continued to be provided to worthy and needy girls. In 1998, two teachers from UMN again began working at Mahendra Bhawan in a seconded relationship. One of them, Helen Voreland Eikeland was born and raised in the Gorkha mountains of Nepal.

Administration of UMN

In the first five years, functional areas were established that have been the main components of UMN work for nearly 50 years: health, education, technical and industrial development. An agriculture and animal health program had its origins in the early days of UMN work in Gorkha, Okhaldhunga, and subsequently in health outreach programs. Agriculture, in those early years, was not considered a separate function of

UMN work. In the late 1980s, this area of development was consolidated administratively to form the Rural Development Department.

Betty Young, from Ireland, the first resident administrative person in UMN Headquarters in Nepal and currently the UMN archivist,⁹ describes the sixties as the most exciting time of the mission. UMN headquarters was established in Kathmandu in 1959. Central administration of UMN consisted of one room with a bed and packing crates. The bed served as a desk for Ernest Oliver and the boxes as a writing table for Betty and the late Nuchheman Maharjan, the first employed Nepali. These were also dynamic times for the government of Nepal as it continued to develop its overall plans for the country and brought the various line ministries in health and education into a



Jonathan Lindell with Nepali students

cohesive plan for development. Even though the implementation did not always work out as planned, the UMN, joined wholeheartedly in the centralized approach, and desired to be a part of the country's plans rather than developing its own. Sometimes this resulted in long waits for permission for new work. When permission came, there were no major celebrations. More often than not, there were prayers of thanksgiving and those from outside Nepal who had been called and committed to the new work quietly set out with their Nepali colleagues to begin.

In the midst of all this activity the mission became more united. In the beginning, the individual mission workers who had been assigned to Nepal looked to their own mission bodies for spiritual and financial support. However, when Jonathan Lindell

became director of the UMN in 1960, he worked to truly make it a united mission. Personnel and finances of the member bodies were "signed over" to the central administration. Following language school, the new mission workers were assigned according to their specific skills and according to the analyzed needs of the various programs of the mission. Funds coming in to the central administration of UMN from the member bodies were then designated from the central administration to the places of most need.

Technical and Industrial Development

In 1957, Odd Hoftun was building Tansen Hospital. During that time, he made frequent trips up and down the Tinau River gorge to secure skilled workers and building



Odd Hoftun (left) and Francis Sauer at Butwal Power Company

supplies from India. The fast flowing Tinau River convinced Odd of the vast potential in Nepal for hydropower development; he saw the similarities between Nepal and his own country Norway in the possibilities for hydropower and small scale industry. He was also painfully aware of the need for skilled technical workers. Even as Tansen Hospital was being constructed, Odd Hoftun envisioned a technical school where young Nepali men (and women from 1992) could learn the training skills needed in the development of Nepal. He also saw the potential for utilizing some of the more basic tunneling techniques used in his native Norway to harness the power potential of the rivers of Nepal.¹⁰

After many changes in plans and location, permission was granted to develop a technical school on the Terai, accessible to roads

which were being developed. Legislation was passed in 1962 which in turn enabled an agreement to be signed in 1963 with His Majesty's Government of Nepal to develop Butwal Technical Institute. The agreement stated that Butwal Technical Institute "would by example, training, work and advice encourage the growth of industry and stimulate industrial leadership". One of the goals was to produce goods needed in the development of Nepal and encourage individuals and firms to start similar businesses. The agreement included the construction of the first hydropower station in Nepal using basic labor intensive tunneling techniques pioneered and used in Norway. Whilst the original agreement was tied to the UMN General Agreement, there was an understanding that 15 years would be needed to accomplish its objectives. (In 2003, Butwal Technical



Crates of equipment shipped by sea from Norway to Calcutta, by train and truck to Butwal

Institute continues as the only apprentice training institute in Nepal and is still related to UMN.)

After the agreement for the institute was signed in 1963, the site was quiet for six months until the work began in 1964. During those quiet months, Odd Hoftun returned to Europe to raise funds and secure equipment, and the UMN issued an appeal for the skilled expatriate workers who were needed to initiate the activities if the extensive goals of the institute were to be realized.

Soon after Odd Hoftun's return to Nepal in 1964, 176 tons of equipment landed at Calcutta port. The equipment was sorted and repacked into 244 crates and packages and shipped to Nautanwa near Butwal. Some of the items weighed five to ten tons.

Only those acquainted with the shipping, forwarding and custom intricacies of India and Nepal can truly appreciate the ingenuity, skill and patience needed to get all the equipment to the site in Butwal, never mind putting it all together again to productive use.

But the equipment did arrive. It was soon in place and construction started on the 1 megawatt (MW) hydropower plant. It took ten years to fully complete and was handed over to the government in 1979. The commitment made by UMN in its first agreement became an integral part of industrial work in Nepal. This commitment, to develop Nepali leadership skills and capacity building in industrial development was realized with the formation of Butwal Power Company Pvt. Ltd. (BPC) in 1966, where a partnership was formed with UMN in which experts participated in the formation and development



Rural Electrification Program

of businesses and companies able to support development. Thirty years later, these companies have built power plants providing 70% of Nepal's available electric energy and stimulated growth across the energy sector.

During the early years of the Butwal Technical Institute, the first batches of trainees developed their skills in constructing buildings and shops to be used by the program. Production units then included wood-working, welding and sheet metal fabrication, a machine shop, auto mechanics garage, an electrical department, a saw mill and diesel pow-

er. In the institute, many of the skills needed for a country's development were "works in progress". The apprenticeship program that was set up to train individuals in skills needed for the development of Nepal and its industries bore fruit. When Butwal Technical Institute celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1989, 238 individuals had successfully completed the apprentice training and many of them had gone on to establish their own businesses. Some of these successful business enterprises resulted in the closure of units of the institute as they were no longer needed. Simon Pandey was one of the longest serving Nepali staff at BTI, first joining in 1964 until he resigned his position of Director of BTI in 1990.¹¹ During term time, the trainees lived in hostels and returned to their village perhaps just once a year at Dashain, the time of the major Nepali festival. UMN expatriates were hostel parents and many relationships were formed. At least one trainee became a Cabinet Minister.

Out of these early production units, the Division of Consulting Services (DCS), later renamed Development and Consulting Services, emerged in 1972. DCS was initiated to provide research and design expertise in the fields of biogas, hydraulic ram pumps, roofing tiles, and cross flow turbines, among others. With an expanding industrial base, new companies were started during the 1970s. These included the Gobar (manure) Gas Company (1977), Butwal

Engineering Works (1977), Himal Hydro (1978), Butwal Wood Industries (1978) and Nepal Hydro and Electric in 1984.

This was a time of great activity in Butwal. The first non civil engineer was recruited to design agricultural equipment which could be made in the Butwal Engineering Works and which would be useful for Nepali farmers. The product which was developed that appeared to have the best chance of success was the production of biogas plants. These plants were built at farm sites and were fed a mixture of manure and water that produced methane gas used for cooking and for light. Mainly built of masonry, the early plants incorporated a steel gasholder as well as gas stoves and fittings that were made by Butwal Engineering Works. In 1975, the first commercially built biogas plant was constructed. Over the decade of the 1980s, research and development in biogas was undertaken which resulted in the formation of the Gobar Gas Krishi Yantra Bikash Pvt. Ltd.

On the completion of UMN's involvement in biogas work, a two volume book entitled "Biogas Challenges and Experience from Nepal" was published in 1985. In the year 2000, there were more than 50 companies building gas plants in Nepal and over 100,000 have been constructed.

In 1975, the Civil Engineering Department expanded to include architects and general draughting. Rural equipment was developed



Tinau dam completed in 1977-78

and produced cross flow turbines, using the available hydropower in the country to drive rice hullers, flour mills and oil expellers and later electric generators.

Another area of work was the development of the Butwal Plywood Factory in 1974. As there was difficulty in getting permission to cut trees, the Butwal Plywood Factory grew their own trees; however, even then when the trees were mature enough to cut, the vital permission was not granted. This eventually led to the closure of the Butwal Plywood Factory.

Twenty-five years after the development of industries in Butwal, home businesses in the form of mills, methane gas plant construction companies and building tiles manufacture could be found in remote villages in Nepal. In one area on the Terai, business names such as "Hallelujah Tile" and "Gloria Mill" were found.

During the 1970s, so much activity occurred that it was difficult to keep up to date with the various company names and products. The leaders of the technical units worked to keep the development of the companies on track which involved the government, the directors of the companies, and the UMN. Development required holding and managing shares, and there was not a lot of experience of this in the mission community nor in the country as a whole. The early days of the companies did not result in much capital gain; any gains that did accrue to the UMN, a principal shareholder in the beginning, were reinvested into the development of that company.

External observers who came to Nepal in the late 1970s were familiar with mission involvement in the development of churches and church organizations. However, they were perplexed over a mission whose goal was to turn over all work to the government; they had even more difficulty understanding the work of the United Mission in developing, managing and holding shares in private companies! However, the working

model provided innovative strategies for the fulfillment of UMN's mission.

Butwal Power Company continues in 2003 as one of the industry leaders in hydropower development in Nepal, especially in rural areas. As it was building the first power plant on the Tinau River, it was formed into a company. Since that time it has constructed a 5 MW power plant at Andhikhola in Galyang, Syangja District (1990), a 12 MW power plant in Jhimruk, Pyuthan District (1994) and contributed significantly to the 60 MW power plant in Khimti, Dolakha District, this last plant being completed in July 2000. Another significant company to develop out of the Butwal Technical Institute and to become a leader in the industrial sector is Himal Hydro and General Construction Company. Himal Hydro is often the first choice for general construction in Nepal and is always sought after for its skills in tunneling, now accepted as an essential skill for the construction industry and particularly hydropower in Nepal. Apart from the above mentioned hydropower plants, Himal Hydro built a number of other plants including a 2 MW Tatopani (1991) and 4 MW Modi Khola (1999). Five years after the completion of the Jhimruk Hydropower plant, UMN involvement in the community continued through the Jhimruk Industrial Development Centre Pvt. Ltd (JIDCO), supporting agricultural initiatives, vocational training, skills development and community development in the area.



Turbine casting at Nepal Hydro Electric

Part of the work of the companies was skill development, capacity building and economic market stimulation. As the commercial sector developed, it became clear that some of the companies had achieved their development aims and they were closed. Others have flourished because they have a unique contribution to make and all are under Nepali leadership and management. Part of the capacity building aspect of the United Mission's involvement in companies in Nepal has been the transfer of shares and company ownership. This somewhat seemingly simple procedure is complex within the political and financial context of Nepal and has often taken one to two years to complete. A recent example is the privatization of BPC. As part of the agreement for the Jhimruk Hydropower Project in the early nineties, Butwal Power Company shares were transferred from

UMN to His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG/N). When the company was privatized in 2002, HMG/N received the sum of almost Rs. one billion (\$12.6 million) for the national budget.

Industrial development in Nepal through the UMN was mainly concerned with hydropower development and larger scale industrial programs. However, when it appeared that many of the industries that were originally initiated by UMN had come under Nepali leadership, new efforts were made to assist development in Nepal at a micro-enterprise level.

About the time of the official inauguration of the Khimti Hydropower plant in November 2000, a new effort was emerging from the Engineering and Industrial Development Department, called the Enterprise Support



Entrance gate to Shanta Bhawan Hospital with Susan Rongong Sada, staff nurse, January 1956

Program. This Enterprise Support Program which was officially launched in October 2001 built on the Enterprise Development Program in Galyang which operated for seven years, particularly in developing fresh orange juice pasteurization and bottling. It also assisted in setting up several successful small enterprises which are still operational.

The Enterprise Program assists those seeking to develop new businesses by assessing the need for their product and its potential in Nepal's business environment. The Program also provides training in product development and marketing by networking with NGOs and the Government's Department of Cottage and Small Industries. Its goal is to provide expertise and advice to Nepali people thus helping them explore better ways of making a living and becoming entrepreneurs.

Expansion of Health Activities

In the first fifteen years, the desperate need for medical care in Nepal resulted in the development of a variety of medically related programs. Within a few weeks of the beginning of maternal health care in Bhaktapur and Kathmandu, the need for expanded hospital services became apparent. In Kathmandu, an old palace was identified as a site. Its ballrooms were renovated to become wards and the trophy room was used as the x-ray department. When the hospital was opened in 1956, it was named Shanta Bhawan, the house of peace, and served as a mission hospital until 1982. In 1983, the mission divested itself of sole ownership and management of this mission hospital in Kathmandu and, with government permission, built Patan Hospital to serve as a district hospital for Lalitpur District. Patan

Hospital opened under a new agreement with the government and a new management board comprising of directors appointed as representatives from the government, the community, and the mission.

In Bhaktapur, where the medical work of the mission had first started, a 20 bed hospital was opened at Surjabinayak in 1960. It served as a hospital for the area and also had a community outreach program. It remained a mission institution until 1974 when, according to plan, it was amalgamated into the larger government hospital in Bhaktapur. There was no desire to continue a competing institution in a resource-deficient country and society.

During the first eleven years, locations were identified that were to serve as the focus for UMN work for nearly 50 years. In addition to Kathmandu, Gorkha, Tansen and Butwal, there were concerns for the people of eastern Nepal. Mildred Ballard (UK), who had been associated with the Nepal Border Fellowship, had met many Nepalese from eastern Nepal and felt a commitment to serve this area. From 1956-58 she took an extensive tour to survey the needs of the people; on her return she made suggestions for the development of potential health programs. Unfortunately she died before she was able to return to Nepal and help implement the plan, but her vision for health work in the eastern part of Nepal resulted in a dispensary in Okhaldhunga, a three day

walk into the middle mountains. Permission came for this work in 1961, and Dr. James Dick (Scotland) led the first medical team. The dispensary, affectionately known as the "Dick Dispensary", continued into the late 1960's, until new buildings were constructed to serve as a hospital in the early 1970s.

In those early years, work started by the UMN evolved and concepts emerged which formed the patterns for development for most of UMN's 50 year history. As work started to address one need, other needs would surface which had to be considered in order to support the basic concern. This was most apparent in the work of the hospitals. If you are operating a hospital you need nurses. There were very few Nepali nurses and those that existed were already employed.

The Shanta Bhawan School of Nursing began in 1959 and, along with the teacher training program in Gorkha, became an "on the job" training program. The nursing program started with midwifery and a three year nursing program within Shanta Bhawan Hospital. Accrediting exams were not available in Nepal so the nurses took their exams in Patna, India. In those days there was a stigma attached to touching and caring for patients of every caste; these early nursing students were extraordinary women who disregarded this stigma. In the early 1970s a sister of the queen became a student at a nursing campus. Although she never



The first class to graduate in 1962 from the Nursing Campus

practiced nursing professionally, she set a significant example that led to greater respect for the nursing profession.

In 1972 the Nursing Campus became a part of the New Education System Plan under the Institute of Medicine of Tribhuvan University, and this has continued to the present day. Bishnu Rai who retired at the end of 2001, was in the first graduating class of nursing students and became the first Nepali campus chief at this institution. At the time when the campus became associated with the Institute of Medicine, standards for nurses were raised. Students were expected to do practicals in the hospital but would no longer be involved in “on the job” training. During Bishnu Rai’s tenure, students of the campus achieved the highest honors academically and their services were sought by all sectors of

Nepal’s medical community. The time came when all the mission related hospitals were adequately staffed by well trained nurses. In the 1990s, the Lalitpur Nursing Campus started a 2 year bachelor’s degree program while continuing their highly successful three year basic course.

In the early years, hospitals were feared because they seemed to be a place to come to die. Gradually hospital staff and patients learned from each other. Medical and nursing staff participated in outreach programs where they learned about community needs and community members began to realize that coming earlier to the hospital resulted in better outcomes.

UMN started outreach clinics early in its history, providing mobile clinics in various permanent places, to receive and care for

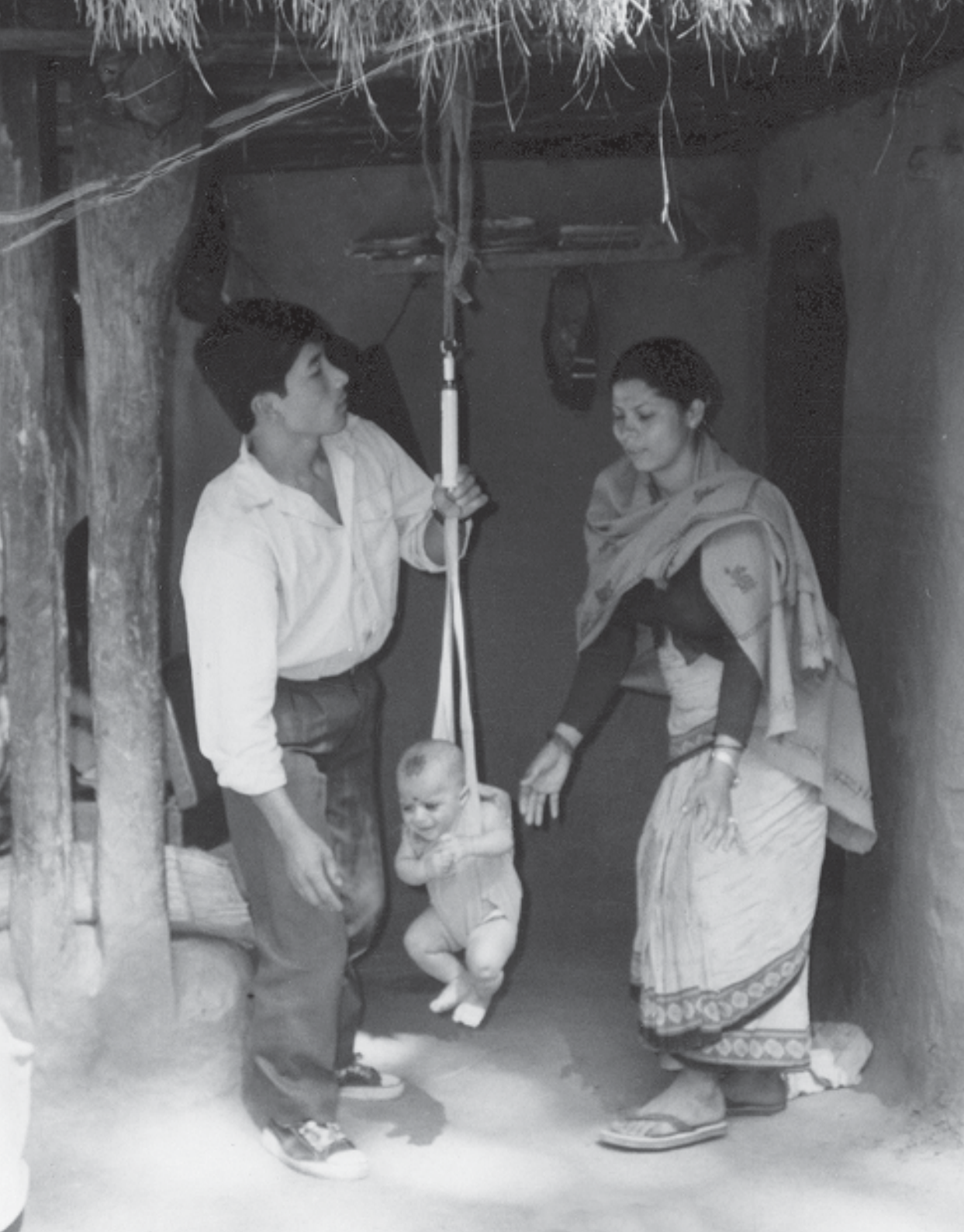
those who came, and by placing nurses in select locations. Gwen Coventry, a nurse from Australia, arrived in Nepal in 1959. For eight years, Gwen served in various capacities with Tansen Hospital but kept looking outward to the community. In 1967, along with colleagues, she responded to a request from villagers in east Palpa, the district where Tansen Hospital was located. This team lived among the village people, opened a dispensary, and began teaching community members about their health. Later the district boundaries changed as did the parameters of the project evolving into a project in Nawalparasi that functioned until 1984.

In the early 1970s, health workers in Kathmandu became interested in those who did not attend the clinics, and especially in the high death rate of infants and children. In the early 1970s, the infant mortality rate for Nepal was nearly 250 deaths per 1000 live births. The deaths of their children were expected by the village families; to them it seemed little could be done. However, that did not satisfy the concerned health workers. They wanted to know why the children were dying and whether these deaths could be prevented using the available resources. Thus in the early 1970s, significant changes were made in the outreach programs of the hospitals. The changes came through the efforts of Sanfrid Ruohoniemi, a long time hospital administrator in Nepal, and Dr. Noboro Iwamura, a public health doctor from Japan who had worked in Tansen for

ten years. Jointly they recruited a mother child specialist from north India, Dr. Mona Bomgaars.

Several factors converged which ultimately led to significant changes in the delivery of health services in Nepal. Drawing upon the collective wisdom of the Nepalese and expatriate health personnel, the group analyzed the causes of death among children and identified preventive measures that could be done in the community with the available resources. Out of that analysis a community health team approach emerged which changed the concept of district clinics from curative centres to promotive health centres. These centres were staffed by nurses serving 5-6 villages in the surrounding areas with women volunteers from the villages working with them. The nurses lived in the villages and became a part of the village community. The promotive health centres were located in each village panchayat building, the panchayat being the local governing body of the village. All the equipment and medicines for the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Clinics, as they were called, were stored in one rather insignificant wooden box in the panchayat house. It contained a measuring board, a weighing scale, Vitamin A/D capsules, folic acid, iron tablets and self-retained mother and child records.

Together the team discovered that the most common causes for the deaths of children were events during the birth process, diar-



rhoea, pneumonia and malnutrition. These diseases and many others could be prevented by vaccines. Early feeding practices of infants were an important part of the solution. A program was developed that incorporated these elements: women volunteers from the surrounding villages; appropriate level medical interventions; immunizations for communicable diseases; education for family planning; iron and folic acid tablets for pregnant women; antibiotics for the treatment of pneumonia; identification of and use of oral rehydration solution for the treatment of diarrhoea; weighing and measuring the children under five to ascertain if they were thriving; identifying first stage malnutrition called "runche" in Nepal; and the development of a weaning food called Sarbottam Pitho which was made up of local foods using traditional cooking methods. Miriam Krantz, a nutritionist and long time worker with UMN, led the development of Sarbottam Pitho, a life saving food for children in Nepal.

The program utilized Road-to-Health Charts, designed to fit the height and weight norms of Nepal's children. All medical records were kept by the mothers in their homes, a practice that almost everyone predicted would not work, but did! The program also identified, worked with, and increased the skills of the traditional birth attendants in the delivery of normal births in the villages. Using appropriate medical interventions for women and children, this program, modest as it

was in external resources, saved thousands of lives of children under five.

The MCH work was not done in isolation from His Majesty's Government's Health Ministry. At all junctures, the appropriate section of the health ministry was involved, and local government health posts and health centres were included in the structure. UNICEF also became involved in the program. Messages were developed to reinforce positive health habits and were integrated into health education messages for tea stalls, movie theaters and as a subject in the official government Nepali textbook. In one generation, in all areas of Nepal utilizing these maternal child health activities, these approaches resulted in a reduction of the infant mortality rate from 250 deaths per 1000 live births in 1970 to fewer than 30 deaths per thousand live births in 2002.

Unfortunately, even today maternal mortality continues at an alarming rate. Efforts at reducing deaths of mothers with difficult pregnancies require a higher level of medical care than is available in 75% of the geographical areas of Nepal. The Safe Motherhood Program which was developed in the 1990s, often including former and present staff of UMN in leadership positions, is seeking to reduce the maternal mortality rate. However, real gains will not be made until appropriate obstetric care is available throughout the country.



Opening of a new water system in Ashrang

All hospitals related to UMN had extensive community health programs which continued to provide services for mothers and children but expanded to become mini-development programs. These programs included water resources development, solid waste management (sanitation), income generation, functional literacy classes for adult women, and forestry conservation. The names of the programs changed with the emphasis: Community Development Health Program in Lalitpur District, Community Health and Development Program in Palpa while others retained their original hospital related names Amp Pipal and

Okhaldhunga Community Health Programs. When it was determined that the services provided were no longer needed in the geographical area where they were located, they moved into new villages in the district or into adjoining districts in need. Twenty-five years after the Shanta Bhawan Community Health Program started, the service coverage had extended throughout all the villages in the district and began providing services in the neighboring Makwanpur District. This program over the years also increased its efforts in urban health, and in 1997 resulted in the establishment of the Yala Urban Health Program, specifically established to meet the needs of the urban people of Patan.

Achievements in the community health programs signaled the profound changes made in the health of women and children within the limited resources of Nepal. The community health based programs also supported the government of Nepal as it embarked on establishing a new integrated health program in 1974. The integrated program was initiated to address the health of the families in Nepal, utilizing a tiered system of health care based on village level workers referring to health posts and from these to district and tertiary hospitals. The government identified cadres of appropriate health care workers to fit the resources of the country; these included auxiliary nurse midwives, auxiliary health workers, and health assistants. They were trained and provided with the necessary resources

to care for the majority of health needs throughout the country. Traditional birth attendants, whose services were used by the Nepali people for centuries, were recognized and given appropriate roles and provided additional training.

To support this system, health training materials that incorporated appropriate health care concepts for each cadre of health care workers were needed. Nepali and expatriate UMN staff had major roles in the development of these materials and subsequently in the training of health care workers throughout the country. Under the School of Medicine established by Tribhuvan University there were new opportunities for the UMN to participate in this development of health care in Nepal.

Dr. John Dickinson (UK), Dr. Carl Friedericks (USA), Dr. Richard Harding (USA), and later Dr. Cynthia Hale (USA), were seconded to the Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine in its formation. John Dickinson recalls the lack of resources available in the earliest days of the Institute of Medicine. He and his children would go out in the night capturing frogs so that he could take them to be used in physiology classes the following day. (Not all the family members were happy with that effort.) Later, other expatriate physicians of UMN had visiting professor appointments and participated in the teaching and examination of medical and nursing students and post-graduate physicians.



UMN expatriate staff of the Institute of Medicine: Hisa Asaoka, Val Collett, Ken Snider, Cynthia Hale

Nutrition education was a major effort in the mother and child health programs. Feeding practices of children and nutrition for pregnant women became a part of all UMN related health programs and consulting services in nutrition were provided throughout UMN as part of a central health resource office. In order to make the program more effective in reaching a larger group of local people, concepts developed in the community health programs were used in the establishment of separate Nutrition Projects in 1993. The focus of the program, which was to be implemented district-wide, was to identify locally available food and feeding

practices from focus group discussions, determine the nutrition education inputs needed and work with the government health services in the area to make changes necessary in order to improve the health of mothers and children. The first project was located in Jajarkot District and also supported the UMN Non-Formal Education program in Jajarkot. Subsequent district wide programs were implemented in Rukum, Salyan and Dailekh.

As some of the basic needs of the health care sector were being integrated into a delivery system, it became evident that an entire class of people in Nepal existed without medical care, whose needs had to be addressed; people with mental health disease. Families had kept those family members hidden as a stigma was attached to those with mental health problems.

In late 1989 and the early 1990s, UMN initiated a Mental Health Program which involved the training of health post staff in various locations in mental health related diagnosis and treatment. This program was instrumental in the training of mental health professionals for Nepal. One of UMN's member bodies provided major resources for the development of the mental health sector, including the construction of buildings, training of mental health workers and providing services in the communities. UMN Psychiatrists, Dr. Chris Wright (UK) and Dr. Sarah Acland (USA) guided the program linking efforts of the Institute of

Medicine and the Ministry of Health in the development and expansion of mental health services in Nepal.

Looking back over the development of health in Nepal during the last 50 years, it is clear that UMN had an instrumental role in nearly every phase of health care delivery, always seeking to work with the government in its programs, sometimes helping to initiate new services such as in the Oral Health Program.

There are only about 100 trained dentists in Nepal, most of whom live and work in Kathmandu. Some of the first dentists were UMN expatriate workers who were assigned to work in hospital based units. Following a UMN tradition, the dental professionals of Patan and Tansen Hospitals began looking at ways to improve the oral health of the underserved population in the communities. From small tentative ventures, the oral health program grew to include scholarships for the training of Nepali professional dentists in South India and dental therapists in Canada. Health assistants and other health workers in the community health programs were trained to extract diseased teeth, perform scaling as well as providing dental hygiene education.

Research became a part of the program which included epidemiological studies of oral disease and a nationwide fluoride mapping survey among others. The Oral

Health Program was also successful in lobbying an industry in Nepal to provide fluoridated toothpastes. Within the hospitals, excellent cost-effective units were developed and for a time, a dental surgeon was available to assist with major oral surgery while training general surgeons to learn many surgical techniques.

Another area of work in which the UMN health services took the lead was in work with HIV/AIDS. The need to care for HIV/AIDS patients became a reality in the hospitals in the early nineties, with the hospitals setting policies in regard to the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients and implementing universal health precautions for all patients in UMN hospitals. This allowed hospital staff to care for patients without stigmatization. Screening for HIV in donated blood was incorporated into blood bank policies as soon as serologic tests were available.

It was also in the early nineties that a Christian woman and her family began services for women forcefully returned to Nepal after acquiring HIV/AIDS. It was a courageous program and inspired various units of UMN to begin sharing information about this disease, including a compelling workshop of the Advisory Group of Nepali Women that was dedicated to HIV/AIDS. Amp Pipal Hospital also focused on this emerging problem in Nepal as some women were abruptly returned to the Gorkha area

after acquiring the disease in Bombay. Amp Pipal then devoted one year to learn about HIV/AIDS in their communities and began plans to prevent and work with this disease.

These activities set the stage for the formal introduction of the UMN HIV/AIDS program which later was called SAKRIYA which means "active" in Nepali. This unit was organized to especially assist projects of UMN to assess the potential impact of this disease in their working area and develop an appropriate response. The Sakriya Unit, which started in 1997, works with the UMN administered programs to integrate HIV/AIDS prevention education and care into their ongoing activities. The educational component trains HIV/AIDS counselors and works to strengthen precautions for the control of infection in UMN-related clinical sites. They established a network linking HMG/N and other NGOs and developed and implemented a model employee policy on HIV/AIDS within UMN. Staff working with HIV/AIDS are highly motivated and are strong advocates in sharing information about HIV/AIDS throughout UMN and its allied networks.

Other new services included general practice (GP) residency programs in the hospitals, first initiated at Patan Hospital and later in Amp Pipal and Tansen. The general practice residency program was a part of the Tribhuvan University Hospital Program.



Village leaders of Pokhara with Howard Barclay (left) sign the deed giving land for the Pokhara School

Other post-graduate medical programs were developed by the university in obstetrics, gynaecology, surgery, pediatrics, and pathology and rotations in UMN related hospitals were provided. These relations enhanced the skills and service ability of the hospitals and provided an enlarged practical base for the newly graduated medical doctors now specializing in disciplines required by the country.

At each juncture of change in the health service delivery system in Nepal, UMN expatriate and Nepali staff were in place with training and experience to provide enormous services to the people of Nepal. The UMN role required sensitivity and willingness to change while always remembering that one of the goals of UMN was to work in Nepal under its terms and conditions. The UMN archive of reports, letters and documents

reveals that the societal and government changes that occurred were rarely regarded as a hindrance, but instead as opportunities to serve Nepal and its people.

Expansion of Education Activities

From 1957 onwards UMN continued to support Mahendra Bhawan Girls High School and schools in Gorkha including Amp Pipal (1957), Lapsibot (1959), Luitel (1961), Buddhasingh (1964), Maltigaira (1964) and Nawalpur in Harmi (1964). The Mahendra Bhawan, Amp Pipal and Luitel schools were established and run by UMN; the other schools received financial and administrative aid only. In 1965, Chiplete, Mirkot and Okhle Schools in Gorkha also began receiving financial and administrative aid from UMN.

As UMN's involvement in schools expanded, the government made sweeping changes in education that affected UMN and its work. In 1972 a New Education System Plan, which had been developed with the personal involvement of the Crown Prince (later King Birendra), was initiated. Under the new plan, direct ownership and management of all schools became the responsibility of the government. This act and subsequent ones required UMN to change its methods of involvement in education. Where before 1972, UMN had directly managed selected schools, it now reshaped and modified its role in education to fit within the government's plan. The history of the Gandaki Boarding School, its establishment and development, provides a good example of this changing role.

In 1965, a Citizens Committee in Pokhara asked the UMN to develop a high school for boys. The next year, following much discussion and prayer, Gandaki Boarding School (GBS), initially called Nepali Adarsha Madhyamik Vidhyalaya was established utilizing some of the principles established at Mahendra Bhawan Girls High School: classes were to be taught in the Nepali language, and boarding students would assist in cooking and cleaning duties and also be responsible for washing their own clothes. In the first year there were 50 students in four classes. The management of the Gandaki Boarding School was shared among three partners, the Citizens

Committee of Pokhara, the International Nepal Fellowship, and the UMN. UMN took the lead in providing the physical structure. The first classes met in thatched huts, gradually shifting to the newly constructed buildings as each was completed. Over the years, the building program resulted in an extensive compound on the northern edge of Pokhara which consisted of hostels, classrooms, science laboratories, a large library, an auditorium and playing fields.

To meet the needs of a primarily agrarian country, a vocational agricultural component was envisioned for the GBS curriculum. Accordingly in 1969, Larry and Phyl Asher (USA), having completed language school, went to Pokhara to develop the vocational agriculture course. This program included animal husbandry, and fruit and vegetable production using a plot of land adjacent to the school. An offshoot of the school's vocational emphasis was a Rural Youth Training Program, created to provide skills for those students who might not be able to compete in the rapidly changing academic environment. The plan offered incentive loans for small projects and helped to organize the first 4-H Club in Nepal.

GBS was one of the first schools to be transferred to the New Education Plan. At that time the school was administered under a management committee appointed by the Ministry of Education, with UMN having membership on the committee.



Visit by King Birendra to GBS in February 1979, with Brian and Beulah Wood

In the mid-1980s, another change occurred at GBS when the Ministry of Education upgraded the quality of instruction in schools and requested that GBS become a regional school. This request generated much discussion among UMN educators who felt that upgrading GBS in this way would increase the fees and make it less likely for the poorer students to be able to enroll in the school. However, Dr. Rajendra Rongong,¹² then principal of Tribhuvan University Laboratory School and one of the senior educators in Nepal, encouraged UMN to accept this invitation. Dr. Rongong said that students with an education of high quality would become the future leaders of Nepal and be in a position to influence all Nepal. Dr. Rongong envisioned that the students would not only secure a good education but also be instructed in ethical behavior.

In 1985 GBS became the first regional school in Nepal. Instruction of classes changed to English and one year later, in 1986, girls were admitted to GBS. From the mid-1980s onwards, student enrollment increased, and is currently around 600 students.

GBS has been consistently honored for excellence in academic standards as well as for extracurricular activities. Dr. P.V. Chandy from Canada, the current UMN expatriate serving as principal, has received numerous rewards on behalf of the school from the government and from His Majesty the King. In the beginning, up to 15 expatriates worked at GBS in the development of the school. In recent years, three to five selected teachers from UMN have assisted teaching primarily in English, mathematics or science.



Students studying science at GBS

To enable academically qualified but poor students to study at GBS, UMN has contributed hundreds of thousands of dollars for full boarding and tuition scholarships.

The designated scholarship funds have come from individuals and churches from around the world. Priority is given to students from the remote western mountain regions of Nepal as GBS' founding purpose was to provide quality education for students from this region. To recruit these students, a faculty team of two to three persons would walk into the remote mountain regions each year to meet children identified with potential for studying at GBS. These children take a short exam and children are chosen based upon the result of this exam and they are offered the opportunity to study at GBS on scholarship.

The sweeping New Education System Plan of 1972 also emphasized training in technical and vocational education to provide individuals with skills needed for the development of Nepal. In July 1980 a new agreement was signed between the government of Nepal and UMN to establish and develop Karnali Technical Institute (KTS) in Jumla. Jumla was accessible only by a once-a-week flight from Kathmandu during the non-rainy season. The alternative was a 16-hour harrowing bus ride through central Nepal to Surkhet, followed by a strenuous five day walk, crossing a mountain pass where the weather can change in minutes - not a trek for the timid! The first "pioneer" expatriates at Jumla often made the trip with their children before and after the school holidays, and, of course, the local villagers, even today make the trek regularly for trading, health care and meeting family members.



The completed KTS campus

HMG/N and UMN leaders decided that if this technical school was possible in Jumla, it could be replicated in most areas of Nepal.

Bob and Hazel Buckner (USA), leaving familiar surroundings in Pokhara where they had been working at GBS with Nepali and expatriate colleagues, took on a formidable task to construct the buildings for KTS. When the Buckners reached Jumla, their first challenge was to build a small hydropower plant to generate the electricity needed for running the saw mill that they were to build. Local Nepalese were trained in construction and work commenced on the first of the fifty planned buildings to be scattered on a hillside, located a thirty minute walk from Jumla bazaar. Classes could not wait for the construction of the buildings; as soon as Larry Asher, Principal of KTS arrived in Jumla in July (1980), classes began

in a rented house in the bazaar with sixteen students. The expatriate team grew to include staff from Ireland, Australia, Finland, the United States and other countries, and the Nepali team grew proportionately.

The four year course at KTS included theoretical and practical classes in construction, health and agriculture. KTS graduates became auxiliary nurse midwives and auxiliary health workers for health services, junior technical assistants in agriculture, and junior overseers in construction. A forestry and nursery program was developed for seedling production and transplantation to support the agricultural curriculum. Expatriate health workers and the health students assisted in government ante-natal clinics, immunization, and health education, as well as in the district hospital in Jumla. The overall program was locally



Practical forestry skills for students in the saw mill at Jumla

called the Jumla United Mission Project and was known by its friendly acronym, JUMP.

Administration of KTS was handed over to the government after the first five years of work, at which time a Nepali principal was appointed. UMN continued to develop the infrastructure and buildings for the KTS campus and to provide teachers to assist in the teaching program. This phase officially ended on July 21, 1995. UMN then withdrew from its main role in the building of the campus and signed a new agreement with the government to work with an enlarged Nepali team in the Karnali Community Skills Training Program (KCST). UMN continued to provide teachers to the technical school but KCST efforts were directed in building the skills of community members outside Jumla bazaar through

extension classes. The program activities included non-formal education, animal health training, distribution of improved vegetable seeds, assistance in the production and distribution of smokeless stoves, and limited assistance in renewable energy sources. The majority of the KCST team members were local Nepalis from Jumla District.

When the government assumed direct responsibility for schools in Nepal, the changing educational environment led to the introduction of the “seconded worker” concept in UMN. A “seconded worker” is one who is assigned by UMN to work within a Nepali institution. The first UMN person to work in this type of relationship, even before the advent of the New Education System Plan, was Ron Byatt assigned to Bandipur High School in Tanahun District in 1961. Official secondments include

a written agreement with the related institution and in some cases the host institution acquires the visa for the seconded worker. Thus, when the New Education System Plan came into effect in 1972, UMN expatriates assigned to schools in Gorkha, Mahendra Bhawan and Gandaki Boarding School became seconded workers. Secondments in Gorkha were made to Amp Pipal, Lapsibot, Luitel and Jaubari schools in 1972 and later to Makaising (1979-1988), Thalajung (1982-1988) and Namjung (1983-1988). Secondments in the Pokhara area were made to a small village school in Ryalechaur (1982-1987) and to the Pokhara Prithvi Narayan Campus (1982-1991) to assist in the training of teachers.

Seconded workers have also been placed in curriculum development, basic primary education, and library science at the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), as professors in engineering, education, and management at Kathmandu University (the first private university in Nepal), and at the Tribhuvan University, Institute of Medicine. Seconded workers need to be flexible, versatile people who are able to adapt to differing management and leadership styles within changing conditions. They see their role as that of helping others achieve their goals.

From the beginning of UMN's work some adult literacy classes were conducted, but the initial purpose was to enable the UMN

Nepali staff to improve their skills and thus their job competence. However, in the 1980s - as a result of new understandings in adult education gained through the development work of the brilliant Brazilian educator Paulo Freire - adult education programs took on a life of their own and were renamed non-formal education programs. In the UMN, literacy classes started in community health programs. Mother and child health, sanitation, and nutrition were some of the first subjects of the functional literacy classes.

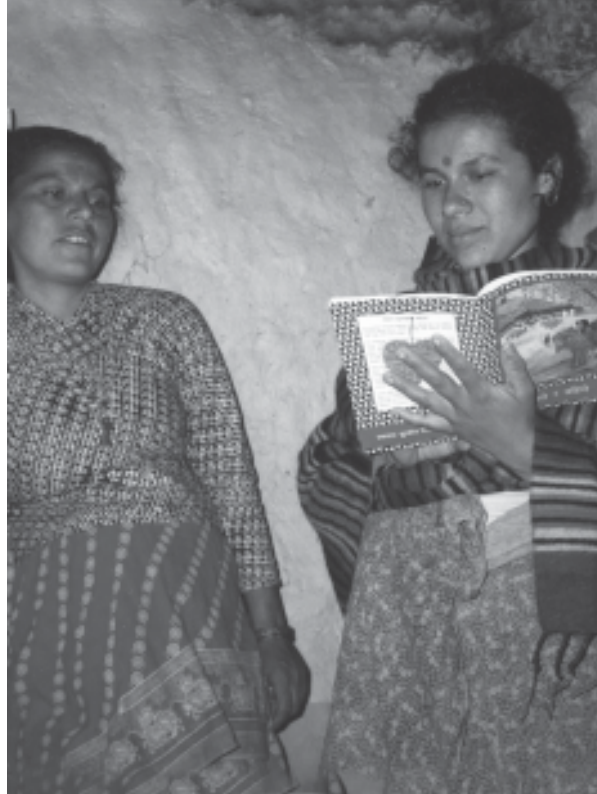
From 1980-1985, the Non-Formal Education Support Office established at UMN headquarters provided a consultancy service and developed a primer for non-formal education. Initially, classes were primarily conducted in the Gorkha and the South Lalitpur Community Health Programs, but soon almost all UMN programs developed active non-formal education classes.

The Support Office provided training and instruction in adult education methodologies, monitored and encouraged the workers and secured textbooks and supplies for the programs. The approach used was similar to the team concept found in community health programs. The health programs relied on women assistants and volunteers, similarly, the non-formal education program identified local villagers to be the "facilitators" to lead the classes. Often the facilitators were newly literate themselves.

The program used a textbook especially designed for adult learners called *Naya Goreto*. This text, developed by the government, utilized new understandings resulting from worldwide efforts in literacy. The facilitators were the teachers, motivators and managers of the classes. Adult women were the main participants and clients of the classes.

The effect was revolutionary for the adult village women. For the first time women were invited and encouraged by the community and political leaders, the project leadership, and - more importantly - by their husbands and mother-in-laws to join the classes. For many, it was their first opportunity to meet together in groups to learn, to share their concerns, and to develop critical thinking for making decisions for their families. The classes met six nights a week around smoky kerosene lanterns and began after women's responsibilities for their family were completed. The classes often lasted until 11 p.m. when the women would walk home, eat their cold rice meal, and clean up. There were few complaints.

The basic *Naya Goreto* literacy course was designed for six months; however, most UMN programs conducted the program for two to three years in each area. The program included lessons in child and maternal health, kitchen gardens, water resource development, latrine construction, nutrition and income generation. At any



New literates enjoy reading

one time in the 1990s in scattered villages, over six thousand adults were in classes six nights a week under the UMN programs in hundreds of other programs sponsored by the government and other international non-government organizations. The UMN programs were mostly off the road in isolated areas and initiated, implemented, and supervised by district staff.

Renewed interest in non-formal education programs identified the need for developing reading material of interest and relevance to adult women. Books were developed that



Non-formal classes help villagers to learn to read and write

included stories told by women in their own words, the stories illustrated with pictures and printed in appropriate sized text. The books were called the “Pipal Pustak” series, named after the popular pipal tree found throughout Nepal. They had attractive covers that were color coded to fit differing reading levels. Topics included child brides, mental health, fire, marriage, illness, trafficking of women, curses, and any experience that the adults wanted to share. Today, Pipal Pustak books in their colorful red, blue, purple and green covers can be found throughout Nepal wherever non-formal education programs are conducted.

In the late 1980s, community members from Jajarkot District requested UMN to begin program work in their district. A survey of educational and community development needs was carried out, following which an

agreement was signed with the Ministry of Education in April 1991 for UMN to provide a non-formal education program to cover the entire Jajarkot District. This was one of the least developed areas in Nepal, the district had a population of 120,000 and an estimated life expectancy of 50. The literacy rate district-wide was 14% and for women it was under 1%. At the time it was widely stated that only one girl from that district had ever passed the School Leaving Certificate examination.

The non-formal education program for the Jajarkot District was implemented in stages in different parts of the district and was to be completed within ten years. The majority of the program staff were local Nepalis, plus a few selected Nepali staff from outside the district, and up to three to four expatriates at any one time. The program was

based on classes in non-formal education, augmented with practical classes in kitchen gardens, latrine construction, water resource development and income generation. An attractive feature was an "Out of School" girls program that was designed to provide young girls without any prior education, the opportunity to study in a rapid learning environment that would enable them to join students at class three level in the government schools. The "Out of School" classes met in the early morning before the girls began work in their homes and fields.

In 1995, at the mid-point of the Jajarkot program, the literacy rate of women in the project areas had increased from 2% at the start of the program to 23% and for the men from 7% to 41%. Also in 1995, 700 pit latrines and 347 smokeless stoves were constructed and 220 water taps repaired, as well as 30,757 meters of walking paths. These improvements resulted from the 873 non-formal education classes conducted in 1995 with 3,454 participants. Due to the security problems in 1999-2000, this ten-year program was not able to complete its full schedule of activities in all areas of the district. It continued at a reduced level even in the security affected areas until its closure on schedule in July, 2000. During the life-span of the project, 11,486 individuals from 28 of the 30 localities in Jajarkot District had participated in the activities. At program closure, district leaders pledged financial support to some of the newly

designed non-government organizations (NGOs) that were being formed by "graduates" of the program. The closing ceremony in 2000 was long, lasting five hours! Everyone who wanted to speak was given an opportunity and almost everyone did so, including the villagers empowered through the non-formal education program.

As a result of the efforts in Jajarkot, two other non-formal education programs were established, and agreements were signed for Dailekh (1998) and Mugu Districts (1999). Each of these had its own distinguishing characteristics. The Dailekh Non-Formal Education program included functional literacy classes with a focus on women's empowerment in decision making for their communities. Micro-credit programs were also a part of the Dailekh program and were enthusiastically supported by the community women. In Mugu, the emphasis was on literacy training, primary school support, and awareness raising. The Mugu program also had a "mother-tongue" component for the Mugom minority speakers as a transitional stage to learn to read and write Nepali. In 2002 the first ever books in the Mugom language were published. The continuation of the non-formal education programs in Mugu and Dailekh were threatened in the years 2000-2002 due to the security situation that affected nearly all parts of the western region of Nepal, but work continued in different ways, thanks to good relationships in the local communities.

In the 1990s the government continued to upgrade Nepal's educational system. Under the Higher Secondary Education Board of HMG Nepal, a "Ten Plus Two" program was established that added two additional years to the basic ten years of schooling. The additional years provided education in science, teacher education, commerce or humanities and were intended to replace the intermediate campuses throughout Nepal. At the outset, most of the schools selected for "Ten Plus Two" were located in isolated rural villages as the program was designed to enable rural people to complete a higher level of education without having to migrate to an urban area. UMN joined the government in this effort and negotiated agreements to provide assistance in two schools, the first in Dullu in Dailekh District where work started in 1996, and the second school in Chilaunebas in Syangja District, a short distance off the road between Pokhara and Tansen, where work started in 1997. UMN provided assistance in teacher training, the development of the library, and seconded expatriate experts to work with the teachers and administration of the schools and to assist in a limited way to improve the primary schools in the area. Gandaki Boarding School also expanded to include a curriculum for the "Ten Plus Two" program and in 2001 inaugurated a College of Sciences on the GBS campus.

The original 1953 Dikshit letter stipulated the need for UMN to be involved in the

training of the Nepali people. In the early days, most of the Nepali staff learned on the job to gain the skills needed for their work. In 1967, a scholarship program was established to assist Nepali staff to upgrade their skills by ensuring that the staff received their regular pay while they attended classes. The expansion of the scholarship program began in 1971 when Dorothea Friederici (Germany) became the first full time secretary of the program. In 1977, it came under the Nepali leadership of Purshottam Nepali. By 1992, the Training and Scholarship Program's 25th anniversary, 2400 young people had been awarded scholarships and it was estimated that almost all of the nursing and paramedical staff in UMN hospitals, community health programs and the nursing campus had received assistance of some kind.

In the early years of the program, emphasis had been on assisting staff to secure the academic credentials necessary to fulfill government requirements for their work. Later, selected staff were identified for higher education studies, primarily in India but also in other countries outside Asia. Today, men and women who studied on UMN scholarships are found throughout Nepal in positions of leadership in government, private business, and international non-government organizations including UMN.

In the mid-1980s primary education scholarships were also granted to needy school-age children, particularly in remote

districts where UMN was working. In the 1990s, simultaneously with free primary education and decreasing resources for UMN scholarships, the focus of the scholarships was changed to give priority to girls, to those with disabilities and to children whose parents were in prison. The scholarship program rarely made headlines even in UMN reports, but it has profoundly affected the lives of those children and staff who were the recipients of the scholarships, and has also provided a major human resource benefit to the country.

In early 1991 UMN signed a letter of understanding with Kathmandu University (KU) to construct a two-storey science building and to provide expatriate teachers, short-term consultants, and limited funds for student scholarships. The letter of understanding has been regularly renewed and expanded. The first private university in Nepal, Kathmandu University was established in Dhulikhel, a small town outside Kathmandu Valley. Though expensive for private paying students, it has provided a high standard of education at the university level. UMN has contributed expertise in engineering and management sciences, and assistance in the Quality Education Project in partnership with the municipality of Dhulikhel.

From 1981 until 1992 UMN operated a small business school to meet the need for well trained secretaries in UMN. English classes were also provided. During its

eleven years of operation 356 students completed the course filling the secretarial needs for UMN and other selected organizations. In 1992, when private secretarial schools were established in Kathmandu to meet the local needs, the UMN business school was no longer required and closed.

Other areas of UMN involvement in education activities included expatriates working in selected professional disciplines within government programs. From 1984-2000, Helen Parsons (UK) provided assistance and consultancy in library and information services to UMN related institutions and in addition, perhaps even more importantly, to the Nepali Library Association and the Nepal National Library. A major focus involved working with the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) to develop job specifications and standards for para-professional library staff and to assist in course development in library science for CTEVT. In the mid 1980s, Christine Stone (UK) took on the task of developing textbooks and teachers' guides to be used in schools across the country. The innovative and interactive lessons and the teaching methodology were highly regarded by all educators who were truly motivated to assist students to not only learn, but learn how to learn. The teachers' training workshops were always full to capacity with eager participants.

Through the years, UMN provided help in the schooling of children of expatriates.



By 1993, KISC had a student body of 60 and started a normal curriculum rather than guiding individual correspondence courses.

Although this was an administrative support program, professional oversight of the program was lodged within the UMN education department. It was never an easy task: the children of the expatriates were from many different countries with differing languages and curriculum needs. Through the years UMN organized tutorial groups for children from ages 5-11 and the Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC) for children ages 11-18. Expatriate teachers were either provided by member bodies to UMN or were employed as direct hires to serve as educators for expatriate children. These teachers' gifts and willingness to serve enabled the children's parents to work in various capacities throughout the kingdom. At any one time there would be up to seven tutorial groups located in different geographical areas. It was a special challenge to find teachers qualified to teach the multi-cultural

tutorial groups who were willing to live in remote settings. KISC was jointly established, in 1987, by UMN and the International Nepal Fellowship. KISC offered a core curriculum for the first three years; in later years, older students could prepare for the International General Certificate Secondary Education exams at age 16. From 1998 the Advanced Intermediate Certificate of Education (AICE) (ages 17-18) was also offered for senior students.

UMN work in education was begun in recognition of unmet educational needs in Nepal: a teachers' training program in Gorkha, a school for girls in Kathmandu and a school for boys in Pokhara. Activities evolved over the years to meet changing needs in education as prescribed by the government of Nepal. As in other functional areas of UMN work, the changing priorities

of the government offered challenges and new opportunities. Sometimes a worst case scenario became a blessing in disguise. For example, with the institution of the government's New Education System Plan in 1972 some people in UMN thought that work in education would no longer be possible; however, the change identified opportunities for educators and others to work in seconded relationships in government programs, offering many new ways to share in servant ministry.

Rural Development

From the beginning of UMN's presence in Nepal, it was evident that agriculture and other rural activities would be integral to the development of the country. Nepal is an agrarian society. 80 to 85 percent of the population live outside the urban centers; they survive cultivating tiny plots of land on the steep hillsides. The limited amount of cultivable land has always been a problem, one now compounded by the growing population. In the late sixties the population of Nepal was 13 million; the national census of 2001 recorded it to be near 23 million. Unfortunately the land mass has not changed.

Within this setting, it was natural for UMN to be involved in rural development work starting with agriculture. The agricultural component of the Community Service Project of Gorkha "experimented with vegetables,

fruits, fodder grasses, grains, pests and diseases and these in relation to soil, seasons and weather. In the farmers' sheds, they worked with chickens, pigs, buffaloes and imported Israeli Saanen milk goats".¹³ The Gorkha agricultural program, always small but effective, was turned over to the government in 1970 to become a part of the Gandaki Agricultural Development Project.

Permission had been received from the government in 1961 to develop agriculture work in Doti and Okhaldhunga. Additional government permission was granted for work in Dandeldhura in Kailali District.

The program in Dandeldhura was in operation for only two years; when UMN staff left, no further personnel were identified and so the program closed. The program in Okhaldhunga, which was related to the work of the dispensary, was also unable to fully develop due to the shortage of personnel until after 1969-70. As the agricultural work in Amp Pipal was transferred to the zonal development program of the government, vocational agriculture activities expanded as part of the curriculum at Gandaki Boarding School (GBS). Other than GBS, from 1970 until 1978, there were no "stand alone" agriculture projects in the UMN. However, as the hospitals extended into the communities, rural development activities were incorporated into the community health programs, particularly in distributing water, providing fruit trees as incentives and encouraging villagers to plant



Work on irrigation canals, Nawal Parasi

vegetable gardens. Rural development activities were so widespread in the Shanta Bhawan Community Health Program that in 1983, a reorganization was necessitated. One component, the Community Primary Health Care Program, continued to focus on specific health programs, but the Community Development Assistance Program (CDAP) expanded its development assistance activities to include agriculture, animal health, tree planting to prevent erosion, food technology, clean drinking water supplies, latrines and simple village industries. Although the work was closely integrated into the health activities, the programs were man-

aged separately. In 1985 another organizational shift reunited the efforts under the name of the Community Development Health Project (CDHP) led by Shyam Krishna Ranjit, the first Nepali director of a community health project.

A similar pattern can be seen in the health outreach program in East Palpa. Although the initial program was to establish primary health care services, health education, and health training, Nepali and expatriate staff became concerned about improving the physical conditions of the villagers, with the result that programs in livestock improvement and drinking water systems were instituted.

This expressed concern for improving the physical surroundings of the villagers coincided with the inauguration of the Sixth Five Year Plan of His Majesty's Government and a new opportunity was presented in 1978 for UMN to be directly involved in agricultural work. King Birendra, addressing the National Development Council, introduced the Sixth Five Year Plan. His Majesty emphasized agriculture and industrial development to fully utilize the infrastructure developed in the Fifth Five Year Plan. His Majesty also stressed that development must be consistent with the rural realities, be responsive to the needs of the people, and should start in the minds of the people.

King Birendra was prophetic in his 1978 statement in which he foretold the direction

of rural work for the next twenty years. In order for the needs of the people to be met, the people themselves need to be involved in the identification of the problem and of the solution. This development philosophy, known by different names during the course of the next twenty years and under-girding all rural work in non-institutional programs of UMN, became a guiding principle of rural development programs.

In 1979, a proposal evolving out of the Community Health Program in East Palpa was drawn up for a Nawal Parasi Hills Development Project. Work began with programs designed to increase food and cash crops, promote fruit and vegetable production, encourage reforestation, plant nurseries, expand the goat, rabbit, and sheep programs, and explore ways to initiate small scale industries. During the five years of the program, the first community owned mills were established. These mills were powered by water turbines designed and built by UMN projects in Butwal. In response to a serious drought, a three month Food for Work project was created during which the villagers planned and constructed thirteen irrigation canals. The work generated great enthusiasm, and the district and local officials asked UMN to expand into other areas. For a variety of reasons, but mostly as a result of a change in the officials at the district level, the program closed in August 1984.



Animal Health Improvement Program

During this time, the Gandaki Boarding School was modifying its curriculum in vocational agriculture based on the influence of the New Education Plan. A plot of land adjacent to the school had been used for the students at GBS and for the Rural Youth Training Program. In 1981, it was leased to the Rural Development Division of the Economic Board of UMN for the development of agricultural activities within UMN. This effort known as the Rural Development Center (RDC), served as a rich resource offering support in consultancy services in animal health, horticulture, forestry and water systems. An extensive system of training and



Forest users group in Toplang in Dhading District with Bishnu Tripathi, UMN staff on left

practical classes was developed in programs called the Animal Health Improvement Program (AHIP), a Horticulture/Agronomy Program (HAP) and its support program in research (HASP), a Rural Income-Creation Program (RICP), a Tree Planting and Forestry Program (TREES), and a Water Systems Consultancy (WSC) program. Although the plot of land adjacent to GBS was the center, activities were located primarily in the villages with rural farmers and their families. The Horticulture Research Center was established in Tansen.

Under the industrial umbrella, the leadership initially focused on identifying ecologically sound technologies to increase food production utilizing the strengths of the rural farm families. The Centre's later efforts also included extension training activities conducted at rural sites. From 1994-2000, the Animal

Health Training program provided training to over 1000 village animal health workers. As women in the families care for the farm animals, women trainers were actively recruited. In the year 1999-2000, 50 percent of the training days were given to women. Also in 2000, one component of the Rural Development Center, the Animal Health Improvement Program, became an independent NGO registered with the government, though continuing to receive some support from UMN during its initial transition to independent status.

As the first hydropower plant on the Tinau River was nearing completion, a similar tunneling project for a hydropower plant was begun at Andhikhola in Syangja and Palpa Districts. A rural electrification and an economic development program were included. When completed, this project would provide electricity through the national grid to a

population of 100,000 rural people. Begun in 1982, the ten-year program contained a unique agreement in which villagers involved in the construction of the irrigation system could gain water rights. These water rights could then be leased to landholders or exchanged for land. In 1991, the plant began generating electricity.

Although the major goal of the program was the construction of the hydropower plant, an emphasis was also placed on working within the local communities. On site, developmental efforts included non-formal education classes, the formation of the Andhikhola Water User's Association which ultimately became responsible for the management of the irrigation program, and a land redistribution program. Excess water from the hydropower plant was directed to underutilized dry land where irrigation was needed to increase food production. The construction of the Andhikhola Irrigation Project (AKIP) was completed in May 1997 and handed over to the Andhikhola Water User's Association (AKWUA) on June 27, 1997 through the Department of Irrigation of His Majesty's Government.

The program to redistribute the land became more difficult as the completion of the project neared. Land is considered more valuable than gold in Nepal and this feature of the program was only beginning to be realized in 1999-2000.

In eastern Nepal, Satoshi Mori, his wife, and three children moved in 1987 to Umbu, a remote area in Okhaldhunga District. Satoshi was a Japanese professional agriculturalist, but his plan for working in Umbu was not to do things himself but to work through the existing village committees, helping them make the improvements they wanted in their village. During Satoshi's five year residence in Umbu, a community health clinic was developed, forestry users groups were organized, literacy classes were conducted, and animal breeding work established. The villagers organized a small farmers' group, through which each farmer received two goats following a model developed by an international organization whereby one offspring is given to another farmer. At the time that Satoshi and his family were preparing to leave Nepal in 1992, Satoshi stated that the model worked best at the beginning when he had no resources to share but simply lived and worked among the villagers assisting them in accomplishing their projects. When the goats were provided, the villagers then expected more from him. This lesson from Umbu became the central principle for more formal rural development programs in the 1990s.

From the east to the west, new opportunities in rural development arose. In Surkhet, a rural program came under consideration in 1980, however work did not begin until 1982. The location which was being considered for the program was one days walk

northwest of Surkhet in Kunthari Village. An assessment of the community was made prior to starting and this indicated that the program should include activities in animal husbandry, kitchen gardens, income generation and maternal child health as a part of the literacy classes. The organization and implementation of this project was carried out by the expatriate and Nepali staff without input in the planning phase by the participants. When it closed in 1993, the participants were involved in the evaluation of the project. The evaluation revealed that most adult women did not retain their literacy skills after classes ended at the end of the five year project, but many had sanitary latrines, kitchen gardens, small income generation projects, and sent their daughters to school. The evaluation also revealed that the program was not sustainable on its own without external resources and that the outcomes did not reach the poor and minority groups in the communities to the extent desired.

A forestry research center just outside Kathmandu Valley at Nisikot, funded and managed by US-AID, was turned over to UMN in 1990. The goal for this new project was to develop a community oriented forestry program that was responsive to the needs of the villagers. Called the Nepal Resource Management Project (NRMP), the program marked another turning point in the philosophical understanding of UMN's rural development programs. The program worked

with the local villagers to encourage, motivate, and stimulate them to make the project their own rather than having external experts plan what might work best. The work began in the Tamang villages at the top of the mountain above Barabesi on the Rajpath, the original road built to reach India from Kathmandu. The first step was to form forest user groups whose members participated in non-formal education classes, bringing local people together to learn to read and write, and also to organize and plan what they wanted to do in their villages. The village activities included the development of water systems and the formation of Forest Users Groups (FUGS). Bishnu Tripathi, Nepali program director, stated that a priority goal of the program was to "enable community members to gain the skills necessary for legal access to government forests in order to protect the forests and share the benefits." As NRMP evolved and matured it progressed through Dhading district, working with 24 different Village Development Committees (VDCs). By 1996, His Majesty's Government had turned over 29 forests to the Community Forest Groups as a part of the Nepal Resource Management Program. A high priority was given to developing leadership skills in women so that they would become full participants in the development of the community. The result was that, not only did women become full participants, they also became leaders.

In 1999-2000, 40 additional forest user groups received training to acquire the legal



Group discussion in Surkhet Project

skills necessary for the process of becoming responsible for managing the forests. In 2000, near the end of the five year agreement between UMN and the government, the Nepali staff of the project formed their own organization in order to continue working in this area.

A second site for the Nepal Resource Management Project was in Ramechhap District. The Ramechhap Program began in 1992 following the principles established for the program in Nisikot and in 1999 became an independent project. As at Nisikot, the operating vision at Ramechhap was that community members utilizing their own skills would manage their resources and gain the ability to solve their own problems. The project made linkages with other local agencies and ministries of the government to solve critical problems where their own resources were not sufficient.

In the 1990s, there was a shift in developmental theory, at least in verbalizing how communities learned and developed. This may not have been a new development theory but a restatement of lessons from work among local people. It also paralleled the words of the late King Birendra when he introduced the Sixth Plan. Rural development programs sharpened the focus of the community organizing concept in development.

Emphasis was placed on community resources rather than external resources. For some development workers, this concept seemed to increase the responsibility of already overworked and resource-deficient rural farmers; however, when managed well, it seemed to work. During the transition from one developmental theory to another, one situation occurred where the new non-resource-driven aspect of a program was tried in an area where their neighboring



Meeting of Advisory Group on Nepali Women

villagers had access to external resources. In the new program area, the local villagers were not interested in testing a seemingly unfair external theory; they wanted access to the same resources as their neighbors. The program was shifted to another location in western Nepal where the process received a positive response and positive results.

In 1993 in the Surkhet area, another rural development program was launched incorporating new understandings in community development which had been gained in previous UMN work in this area. The location was purposely in a different area from the previous Surkhet project. The focus of the new program was to enable the most marginalized groups to identify and solve their community problems through local leadership using local resources. The work was conducted in a staged approach in

which self-help groups were formed in the different Village Development Committees. Features of this program were replicated in a later program in Accham.

The decade of the 1990s also led to increased awareness of the special needs and abilities of women. UMN established an Advisory Group on Nepal Women (AGNW) that encouraged, lobbied, begged, cajoled and advocated for increased awareness of women's issues among the projects and programs of UMN and within other community groups. The formation of AGNW came at the time when women were joining the non-formal education classes in record numbers to learn and to discuss mutual problems together. Women became aware of their abilities and skills and started taking ownership of their work. All UMN programs had an emphasis on women's concerns, but the

rural development programs integrated this emphasis into their program work to a higher degree than occurred elsewhere.

One example was in Okhaldhunga which had a small rural development program from 1968-1970. After the construction of a hospital, community based work began, with drinking water as a high priority. In 1989, the management of the rural development program was separated from community health activities and became Okhaldhunga Rural Development Program (ORDP). This program began to construct community-owned gravity-flow water systems and had an integrated approach that included activities in forestry, agriculture, non-formal education and the establishment of farmers' and women's groups.

As an outgrowth of the rural development activities in Okhaldhunga, a coalition of women's groups came together to form a Rural Women's Awakening Society. It originated from women organized as a forestry protection committee, but these women did not stop with forestry - they became involved in the total needs of their community. They started adult literacy classes, built a mill, and started a drinking water project. They convinced other villagers to stop drinking alcohol; they began to advocate for women's rights. The group grew and registered as a Nepali NGO in 1998 and is presently working in 42 rural mountain communities in eastern Nepal.

In 1999, under an agreement with the government, the rural development department established a program in Accham District in the far west called the Community-Based Organizational Development for Empowerment (CODE). CODE was designed as a rural based community organizing program built on the expressed needs of the local villagers; it incorporated many of the lessons from other rural development programs. However, its location in the insurgency affected area of Nepal made it difficult for CODE to fully achieve its objectives.

The rural development programs brought increased awareness of the importance of listening to villagers, working with them at their pace, recognizing their orientation and meeting needs they identify.

Constitutional changes in Nepal in 1991 made it possible for Nepalese to form NGOs. As a natural outgrowth of the experiences in the organized rural development programs, UMN established a Non-Government Organization Support Project (NGOSP) in 1992 to assist local NGOs. Skills and leadership training were emphasized but no funds were involved in the consultancy program.

To meet the increasing needs of the locally formed NGOs, another unit called the Nepali Organization (NO) Unit was initiated in 1998 to assist community based organizations in the areas of leadership development

and resource mobilization. This NO unit also worked with NGOs formed by former staff of UMN, specifically the SAHAS-Nepal (Group of Helping Hands) formed in 1999 in Okhaldhunga, and the NGOs formed from the Dhading and the Accham programs.

The NO unit has had successful working relationships with the Village Leather Training Association, a former UMN project that assists village leatherworkers to sustain their craft and to improve their economic income.

The NO unit has also worked with the Peace Rehabilitation Centre, an institution for women rescued from prostitution, and the Human Development & Community Services, a Christian NGO working in development. In 2002 the NGO Support Project and the NO Unit merged and became the "Partnership Programme".

Mission Hospitals through the Years

Through the years, the numerous projects and programs of UMN developed, evolved, closed or became part of government programs following the conditions as amended in the original Dikshit letter of 1953. The various twists and turns of mission involvement in the development of Nepal often make it difficult to keep accurate records of the myriad of details. The events were all consuming when they occurred, but often faded into the rich mosaic of the overall work. However, one constant presence throughout the years was the mission related

hospitals. Throughout five decades the hospitals expanded and thrived - even though at one juncture, Dr. Bethel Fleming, medical director of Shanta Bhawan warned, "We only have enough funds for three more days."

Health service activities comprise more than 50 percent of all the work of UMN; in these activities, the majority of the staff and the budget are connected with the hospitals. In 2000, hospitals related to UMN - Amp Pipal, Okhaldhunga, Tansen, and Patan - provided an estimated 20-25 percent of hospital-based coverage in Nepal. As there were only four mission related hospitals providing this high level of coverage, the mission hospitals were very busy and, as a result, many Nepali people have no hospital services.

From the beginning, the mission related hospitals were established to provide primary care: Tansen Dispensary (1954) became Tansen Hospital in 1957; Shanta Bhawan Hospital (1956) evolved from the Cholera Hospital (1954) and later became Patan Hospital in 1982; Amp Pipal Dispensary (1958) became Amp Pipal Hospital in 1969 and Okhaldhunga (initially a Dispensary) started in 1961. The premise of a primary care hospital is that the medical staff are prepared to provide the initial required care for any person presenting themselves, encompassing a broad variety of medical problems as well as providing educational and preventive



Amp Pipal Hospital

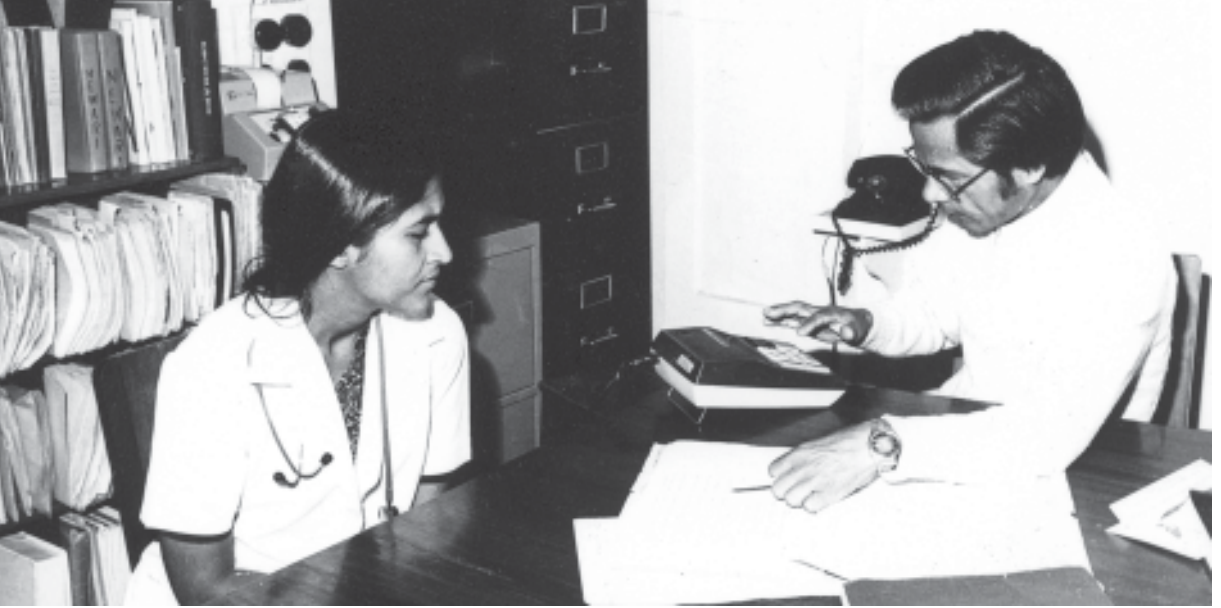
services. Following their growth to maturity each facility now provides services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

A second distinguishing characteristic of the UMN related hospitals is that from the beginning there was an integral relationship between the hospital and its community, usually established through an active community health program. This offered a two-way benefit: the hospitals were interested in keeping people healthy and avoiding disease progression, and the community health programs needed a referral base.

The UMN hospitals were also training centers. At first, they were involved in "on the job" training to secure the staff needed to run the hospital. Almost all of the mission related hospitals had lab and x-ray training courses simply to secure staff for their own

hospital operations. Later the mission was requested by the government to establish formal linkages in training. In Tansen this linkage was the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife (ANM) course which started in 1972; field training for Auxiliary Health Workers (AHW) in 1975, and in 1977, Community Medical Auxiliary (CMA) training. In April 2000, a Nursing Campus was established in Tansen under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) in physical facilities that had formerly been used for housing the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife course. In Kathmandu the Shanta Bhawan School of Nursing was established in 1959 to train nurses; later it was affiliated with the Institute of Medicine of Tribhuvan University and is known as Lalitpur Nursing Campus.

A history could, and should be written about each medical institution, its activities,



Dr. Neelam Adhikari with Mr. Bir Bahadur Khawas, both long term staff of Shanta Bhawan and Patan Hospital

population served, disease patterns of patients, and stories of the experiences of the Nepali and expatriate staff. Thousands of employees, mostly Nepalese have been a part of the hospitals over these fifty years. An outstanding example can be found in Bir Bahadur Khawas, who in the 1960s immigrated from Kalimpong in North India to Nepal and went to Tansen to work as a carpenter. Bir moved to Kathmandu where he began a progressive career in hospital administration at Shanta Bhawan Hospital, acquiring skills and abilities in management. In 1986 he was appointed to serve as the chief executive officer of Patan Hospital, one of the busiest hospitals in Nepal with 138 beds and with all the primary specialties. An elder in the Nepali Christian Church, Bir has kept his professional work separated from his religious responsibilities, but his religious ethos became an obvious part of his tenure.

A unique feature of leadership of mission related hospitals was that three women physicians were in charge of the hospitals for a period of time: Dr. Helen Huston (Canada) in Amp Pipal, Dr. Pam Dodson (U.K.) in Tansen, and Dr. Winnefred (Sandy) Anderson (Scotland) in Shanta Bhawan. In the beginning, it was another woman, Dr. Bethel Fleming (USA), who began the medical work in Nepal. Each of these women brought her own unique gifts of clinical expertise, relationships with local government officials and skill in personnel management. Unlike some of the early pioneering women doctors in Indian mission, these women doctors were admired and respected but not idolized. When it was time for their departures, there was always a concern about finding suitable replacements. But replacements were always identified.



Okhaldhunga Hospital

Expatriate nursing leadership included Becky Grimsrud, Nora Vickers, Jill Cook, Ruth Judd, Enid Russell, Helen Berg, and Mabel McLean, and many others. In time, Nepali nurses, most of whom had trained at Lalitpur Nursing Campus, assumed leadership in the hospitals. They included, among others, Rinjit Sada (Shanta Bhawan Hospital), Prem Lata Sotang (Patan), Bishnu Singh (Tansen), Chochara Maskey (Okhaldhunga), and Shobha Gurung (Amp Pipal). The staff in each hospital, Nepali and expatriate, could relate stories of the life-changing effect of the hospital in the lives of the people they cared for and worked with over the years. Individuals in the hospitals: housekeepers and laundry workers, kitchen and maintenance crews, administrators, accountants, social workers, dental workers, therapists, lab and x-ray technicians, nurses, dentists and doctors, all have their own role

and hospitals cannot exist without them. Collectively the staff make it possible for hospitals to care for the sick, to save lives, and to support the families who bring their loved ones for help.

Each hospital grew in its own way, adding staff and services in keeping with their location and size. Amp Pipal and Okhaldhunga Hospitals located off the road, were developed to meet the needs in their immediate surroundings. Tansen and Patan Hospitals developed into full service hospitals in urban centers. Tansen, though not designated as a government hospital, served in that capacity when the government hospital was closed for a time. The Tansen Hospital is a primary care hospital but over time developed a major surgical reputation, drawing patients from the entire western region of Nepal and from India.



Tansen Hospital

The hospitals renovated, added extensions, and built new facilities as needed, though building discussions were sometimes contentious. In the early 1970s, it became evident that the physical plant of Shanta Bhawan Hospital, an old Rana Palace, was no longer adequate. This was at a time when there was a growing emphasis worldwide on preventive and promotive aspects of health care in developing countries. The debate over priorities raged among UMN workers, who could discuss both sides of the issue. In the end, when the opportunity came for the mission related hospital to serve as the District Hospital for Lalitpur located on the edge of Patan, UMN agreed, resources were secured, and Patan Hospital built.

The annual reports and budgets for the mission hospitals from the 1970s through

the 1990s are full of details about building projects, securing medical equipment, providing upgraded professional training for medical staff, and always discussions about financial and personnel resources. During the decade of the 1990s, approximately 80 percent of the costs of running the larger hospitals were funded from patients' fees even though all those who came to the hospitals received care regardless of their ability to pay. Member bodies, churches, and friends of the mission in Nepal donated to the Medical Assistance Fund to cover recurring costs and costs for hospital charity care. In the late 1990s a medical endowment foundation for the hospitals of the UMN was established in the United Kingdom.

The mission hospitals in Nepal, as primary care hospitals, provide extensive outpatient



Opening a new wing of Tansen Hospital in 1975 with Chief Guests welcomed by Dr. Bill Gould

services. Tracing the growth of this service provides a quick overview of the growth of the hospitals over the years.

The first year that Tansen Hospital was opened, 1957, there were 10,805 out-patients. Ten years later, 1967, that figure had grown to 17,512; in 1977 to 34,904; in 1987 to 90,784 and in 1993 to 97,991. Shanta Bhawan Hospital recorded 8,689 outpatient visits in 1957; this increased to 46,108 in 1969; in 1977 to 91,650; in 1987 to 131,198, and in 1995, now at Patan Hospital, the outpatient visits were 209,310. It was not uncommon to have up to 1300-1400 outpatient visits in any one day at Patan Hospital.

In 1962 while Amp Pipal health services were provided in its dispensary location, there were 17,600 outpatient visits.

This number grew to 25,916 in 1979 and 39,012 in 1995. In Okhaldhunga, even more remote than Amp Pipal, there were 5,272 outpatients in 1962; 8,831 in 1965; a decrease to 6,595 in 1970; a spurt of growth to 11,440 in 1986; and, in 1995, 19,980 came as outpatients to Okhaldhunga. The statistics for Amp Pipal and Okhaldhunga hospitals are all the more remarkable in that each one of these patients had to walk to reach the hospital or be carried on the back of family members. The mission related hospitals were known for their medical care. The medical institutions also advanced understandings about disease patterns and public health, due to the specific skills and abilities of some of the physicians who worked in Nepal.

Originally from the U.K., Dr. J. Cecil Pedley came to Nepal in 1957 after twenty-two



Patient being carried to Amp Pipal Hospital

years of work in leprosy in China and India. He first worked at Anandaban, a medical facility specializing in patients with leprosy on the outskirts of Kathmandu Valley before moving to Tansen in 1961. Pedley relentlessly pursued ways to trace the spread of leprosy among the 90,000 Nepali people estimated to have the disease in 1972. Through extensive research, Pedley was able to prove to international satisfaction that leprosy was not transmitted by unbroken skin but through nasal and oral mucus, skin lesions, and possibly mother's milk. This finding was important because it could lead to a reduction in leprosy through appropriate health education of patients. Dr. Pedley's research was going on before the discovery of multi-drug therapy for patients with leprosy. In Nepal, like other places in the world, those with leprosy were sometimes cruelly isolated and often left alone to die.

In the 1960s, public health tended to be disease specific. Dr. Norbu Iwamura, a survivor of the bombing of Hiroshima, out of gratitude for his life, came to Nepal in 1962 as a public health physician. Tirelessly Dr. Iwamura investigated the spread of TB following the trade routes from India into the villages surrounding Tansen. He left Nepal in 1963 but returned again to work in Tansen from 1966-1970 in public health. Later he and his wife moved to Kathmandu where Dr. Iwamura was in charge of all the public and community health programs of UMN. He became known throughout Nepal for his excellent rapport and friendships with government officials, local villagers, and with staff of UMN. His infectious personality, enthusiasm, Christian commitment and professionalism were sorely missed when he and his wife left Nepal in 1977. His reputation in Japan was

such that the story of his life was included in some of the literature for school children in Japan.

Central Support Services

The various parts of the work of the mission could not have held together without a wide array of central support services. These services were seldom documented in annual reports to the government or even to the member bodies supporting the mission, however, support services are the glue that holds the mission together especially in Nepal where so many projects are located in geographically isolated settings.

Financial services affect the mission in profound ways. The basic guiding principles were always present: secure the funds and responsibly administer and account for them. The financial office grew with the mission. From the outset, expertise was needed not only in good accounting principles, but also in working in currencies from different countries and sorting out the accounting systems used by the thirty or more member bodies. The complexity of the UMN accounting, if known in the early days of the mission, might have given cause for second thoughts in decisions to work together, at least for the financial officers. Accounts developed within the mission were at first hand written, later typed, and are now computerized. Nepalis joined the accounts office, first as learners

and then to positions of responsibility, as exemplified by Ghan Shyam Sharma who presently serves as accounts office manager and is one of UMN's longest serving staff. Others, Krishna Prasad Devkota and Suresh Sharma, worked in the accounts office while they studied for higher degrees before moving to other careers, Krishna in a government agency and Suresh to a development program of the United Nations in Sri Lanka. The work of the financial department became more complex as the mission secured grants from large international government donors who usually required separate accounting reports for their specific grants.

In the early years, personnel services related more to the expatriates of the mission than to the Nepali personnel, as local projects hired their own staff. Later, a missionwide employment system was developed that required more sophistication in management to fit the differing needs of the projects. Labor relations in the 1990s became an issue in UMN work as it did elsewhere in the country. This issue was largely due to the government's Labor Act which was interpreted as very "labor friendly". UMN had always set high standards for employment, perhaps more rigorous than other groups and there were some challenges in UMN's employment of staff. A new position, the employee relations officer was considered a management position and yet needed to represent the desires of the employees, as this position was often involved in negotiations of salary



Tek Bahadur Bhandari in charge of UMN mailroom

and other labor relations problems. Ongoing training of staff, Nepali and to a certain extent expatriate, though not lodged administratively in personnel, was also a new development in the 1990s, fitting naturally with the growing emphasis worldwide on human resource development. Graduate degree programs in management through distance learning with a university in UK provided increased opportunities for both Nepali and expatriate staff to improve their skills and careers. Courses in English were popular, particularly as they related to developing skills in writing grant proposals and reports.

There were some central support services that affected only the expatriates and their families, e.g. housing, language and orientation programs for new arrivals, and help in the education of expatriate children. Housing and children's education concerns

were of utmost importance to expatriates. Language training was critical and expatriates arriving from non-English speaking countries were challenged to learn both English and Nepali at the same time.

For UMN staff who lived outside Kathmandu Valley, the supply of materials was most crucial to their work. The Central Supplies office was responsible for securing the correct supplies down to the exact size and color of thread - difficult in Nepal's changing environment, as what was available one day might be off the market the next. This office also managed the custom formalities for projects and for all the personal goods of the expatriates arriving in Nepal and their shipment requirements when leaving. Dealing with custom formalities in any country can be a test of one's patience and communication skills.



Finance Office staff

Other central support services included the medical supplies office that purchased and shipped medicines to the hospitals and community health programs, and the communication office which grew to accommodate the increased needs for printed materials and official reports to the government and other audiences, including the development of audio visuals. As UMN adopted computer technology, a department was developed to secure the hardware and software and install, maintain and develop the internal communication system through email and the internet. Although theirs was not an easy task, the UMN technical support in computer services rivaled that found in the developed world. Jeff Rollins, who grew up in India and spent up to fifteen years in Nepal, was able to access and analyze most technical problems related to computers and either fix them or rebuild them. There was

therefore great concern when he and his family left Nepal, but as in most other areas of work, skilled Nepalis took over the leadership with support from expatriates who were recruited for specific functions. Central Support services also included the UMN Archives, which are maintained as a part of the Himalayan Collection in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Changed Lives: The Human Equation

Measurements of UMN work can be categorized into lists of patients seen, surgeries performed, immunizations given, graduation classes of school children, honors received, villagers participating in non-formal education classes, hydropower projects developed and completed, kilometers of electric lines and acres of irrigated land, number of families

with piped drinking water and sanitary latrines, safe deliveries of children performed, vegetable gardens planted, seeds distributed, forests protected, buildings built, institutions established, and groups formed. All of these serve as indicators of work outcomes. But the real outcome is seen in the lives of changed individuals, the people of Nepal and those who worked with UMN, both Nepali and expatriate.

In the early 1970s, three young women in Kathmandu Valley villages began their young teenage years by becoming involved in making a difference in the lives of the people in their villages. Meena Sharma in Pharping, Roshani Shrestha of Lubhu, and Nalini Shakya in Bungamati, were three of many women who were identified to serve as volunteers in the mother and child health programs in the early 1970s. These women later went on to study professionally in nursing and nutrition and were appointed to positions of leadership with UMN. Meena Sharma and Nalini Shakya are now working in international organizations and Roshani Shrestha has been the Director of UMN's Nutrition Program.

Fran Swenson of the United States, Stina Ulberg of Sweden, and Kirsti Kirjavainen of Finland exemplify those many who came to Nepal ready, willing and able to move from place to place where their skills were needed in the mission. Fran, in the early days of the mission, served successively at Shanta

Bhawan, in headquarters, Bhaktapur, Gorkha, Tansen, again at headquarters, in CDHP in Lalitpur and finally for six months in Jumla. If there was a need and Fran Swenson was asked to serve, she assented. Stina Ulberg came to Nepal in 1959 to serve as staff nurse at Shanta Bhawan Hospital until 1966 when she joined the District Clinics. During the transition from District Clinics to community health work, Stina went to Bhaktapur Hospital for one year before taking up residence in Lubhu Village as a community health nurse in 1973. In 1979, she was then needed in the central health offices where she arranged for scholarships for the training of medical staff of UMN until the time she left Nepal in 1991. The modern day example is Kirsti Kirjavainen, always ready and willing to go to the "hard" places, usually remote, including Okhaldhunga, Ramechhap, Jajarkot and Mugu.

Howard and Betty Barclay from Australia were also always on the move. The Barclays came to Nepal after working on the Indian border. From 1960-1965, Howard was a teacher and area administrator for the mission project in Gorkha; he moved to Luitel to serve as headmaster from 1965-1967; moved to Kathmandu in 1968 to serve as acting executive director of UMN for one year; in 1968-1969, moved again back to Gorkha and later to Kathmandu where he served as education director from 1970-1972. The Barclays returned to Australia in 1972 to work in their home mission, but

in 1980 they returned to Nepal to serve as counselors in Kathmandu before journeying to Jumla where Howard was project director for two years. In 1984, he was an automatic choice to become executive director of UMN, a position in which he served until 1990.

Many of the expatriates, after having served with UMN, returned to their own countries to assume leadership positions in their professional fields, in their mission headquarters or in the government of their own country. After years of working with her husband Tor in Nepal, Dr. Sigrun Mogedal returned to Norway and joined a Norwegian church-based international non-government organization, from where she was later appointed to a position with the government of Norway that brought her to Nepal as the representative of the Norwegian government for the official inauguration of the Khimti hydro-power plant in November 2000.

In their various capacities, former UMNers have represented their missions as members of the UMN Board, Peter Quesenberry, Richard Clark, Gary Hafvenstein, Juhani Kivelä, Hans-Olov Green, Karen Doehne and Ryohei Takatsu among them. There are others such as Mia and Asbjørn Voreland from Norway who, with their 18-month old daughter Hilda, made their first journey to Nepal in 1964, overland in a landrover with eight other people. The trip took six weeks during which they took turns driving

night and day with no stops. The Vorelands served in leadership positions in Gorkha and in Kathmandu. Asbjørn Voreland returned to Nepal in 1999 as the director of International Nepal Fellowship, a sister mission in Nepal.

It is also not unusual to find children of expatriates who grew up in Nepal returning to work in Nepal in their own professional capacity either through the UMN or other international organizations. Within UMN these have included Tara, Lynn, Tim and Matthew, children of Joyce and Sanfrid Ruohoniemi; Bethany Lindell, John Barclay, Richard Friedericks, Katie Dick, David Bergsaker, Jeanette Roche-Happ, Helen Voreland Eikeland, and Ellen Harding Collins among others. And, of course, many of the children of the Nepali staff were educated and now serve in positions within UMN.

Many who have worked in Nepal and left could not stay away, returning after a period of years to work in some professional capacity or to visit again and again, counting Nepalis as their friends and extended family.

Nepali staff also moved in and out of UMN. Draupadi Rokaya went to a mission school in Gorkha. After education and marriage she joined the staff at CDHP in Lalitpur not once, but at two different times. After a four-year separation from UMN, she rejoined it as the first coordinator of the Advisory

Group on Nepali Women. Mrs. Rokaya is now the executive director of the Young Women's Believers' Association, affiliated with the World YWCA.

Ishwari Prasad Sapkota began an educational career as a part of the Gorkha Community Service Project where he was headmaster in Nawalpur in Harmi Village until 1973 when schools came under the New Education System Plan. After further study in agriculture, he joined government service as a teacher in the Amp Pipal school. When in 1992, Ishwari Prasad Sapkota retired from government service, he worked as staff with the non-formal education program in Amp Pipal continuing to serve the villagers in his area until retirement from UMN in 2001.

Decade of the Nineties

The decade of the 1990s brought a new form of government to Nepal, a constitutional monarchy. This democratic political structure resulted in new freedoms. Democracy provided a climate for growth in telecommunications, liberalization of the political process, unparalleled construction in already crowded Kathmandu, massive import of new cars and Pajero jeeps in a country with few roads, all resulting in a widening gap between the rich and poor in Nepal. Sadly, such an increase in choices and freedoms in an environment with inadequate responsibility and accountability brought excesses.

The 1990s were exuberant times, but perhaps also harbingers of difficult times ahead. The gap widened between those who were able to take advantage of the new freedoms and the villagers in remote mountain communities. The quality of public school education declined, the materialism of the west manifested itself through satellite communication, there was an increase in drug usage, all of which heightened the alienation between those who had concern for the poor and those who became rich on the spoils of uncontrolled excesses. These conditions gave rise in the 1990s to a movement in the mountains in Jajarkot called the Maoists who, by the end of 2002, threatened and continue to threaten the stability and future of Nepal.

Remarkably, the Christian church flourished during this time and worshipping congregations sprang up all over the country. Unlike the decade of the 1980s, there was relatively little persecution. In the 1990s, with increasing freedom, Christian development organizations could be registered with the government, thus allowing Christian communities to make efforts in the development of Nepal.

During these times of increasing freedoms there was an intentional desire to more clearly sort out the relationships and understandings under which staff worked in a Christian mission. Edgar Metzler was appointed executive director of the United



Mr. Y. K. Silwal, Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Edgar Metzler signing the UMN General Agreement in 1990

Mission in 1990. Building on his previous service with the Peace Corps in Nepal (1970s), he initiated discussions about the future direction of UMN considering the multi-religious environment and the increasing desire to more fully place all programs of UMN under Nepali leadership. These discussions involved analysis of the strategic groups with whom UMN had worked and hoped to continue to work: the poor, the marginalized, the government, Nepali NGOs and, of course the organized Nepali Christian Church. The adoption of the Mission and Vision Statement of UMN by the board in 1996 was the culmination of input from Nepali and expatriate staff throughout the mission. Even before the Mission and Vision Statement was adopted, the discussions had led to the creation of a UMN Statement of Values in 1993 that provided a framework for the staff with

diverse religious beliefs to work together. The values statement describes behaviours considered important for all Nepali and expatriate staff. Excerpts:

UMN Statement of Values

PREFACE: The culture of an organization includes those values that determine how the organization works and behaves. The Christian commitments of those who sponsor UMN, and the personnel they send to Nepal, are clearly described in the UMN Constitution.

The following list of values describes behaviours we consider important for all Nepali and expatriate staff who represent and work for UMN. We recognize they are ideals, but we intend to be accountable for their expression in UMN, influencing our programming and the selection and development of staff.

EQUALITY: We value and respect each person without making unjust distinctions based on status, wealth, caste, religion, relationship, gender or ethnicity.

SPECIAL CONCERN FOR THE POOR AND DISADVANTAGED: We give special priority to the poor, the vulnerable and the oppressed, and seek to change those social structures and attitudes which disadvantage them.

LOVE AND SERVICE: We seek to identify with people in their needs and aspirations, sharing with compassion our time and capabilities, doing whatever is necessary without considering any tasks too menial or belittling.¹⁴

Other values spelled out in the statement include forgiveness, integrity, professional competence, participation, training, cultural sensitivity, concern for the environment, identification with Nepal and humility.

To be in Nepal in the 1990s working among Buddhist, Hindu and Christian colleagues was a rich experience. When one Hindu colleague was asked by staff of another international organization about how he could work in UMN without being Christian, he replied, "I am not a Christian, but I believe in the values which guide our work." The values also were used in interviews for staff as one non-Christian panelist looked the interviewee in the eye and said, "Do you

know what it is like to work with UMN? You care for others. If they need help and support, you touch them. If they are still with you at the end of the day, even it is quitting time, you stay on until the issue is resolved."

The Statement of Values was perhaps one of the single most important documents guiding relationships among UMN staff in the decade of the 1990s, and a most important document for UMN work.

The statement provided, and continues to provide, a guide for working together across religious boundaries in multi-cultural Nepal.

Fifty years after the first explorative visits to Nepal when Ernest Oliver and Trevor Strong asked government officials the parameters within which Christians could share their faith, those who have never had experience in Nepal question how Christian missionaries can work in what might be considered a "restrictive environment" for sharing one's faith. From that first visit by Oliver and Strong in 1951, this question was addressed. It was made clear by the Nepalese officials that one could not proselytize nor preach, but if one were asked why they had come to Nepal, the question could be answered. The question is resolved by each individual who has come to minister to the needs of the Nepali people in the Name and Spirit of Jesus Christ. One expatriate was asked by her Hindu colleague, "Why do you come to Nepal?" The answer was, "I love Nepal and its people and I love Jesus".

From the outset, it was determined that UMN would not be directly involved in the establishment of an organized Christian church in Nepal. Nepali Christians took the initial and continuing leadership in the development of the church in Nepal. Through the early years of persecution and into the years of freedom from persecution in the 1990s, the church grew. In the year 2000, it was estimated that there were over 400,000 baptized Christians in Nepal. Those who came to work with UMN worshipped with and supported the growing Nepalese church.

Jonathan Lindell stated, "From the beginning and all along the Mission has made clear to officials and society that it is a Christian missionary organization. People know this. And knowing it, the Government has continued to permit the mission to carry on in the country and engage in work in many places. The Mission (expatriate) personnel in their various places have considered themselves members of the church in their place and joined in worship and activities of the congregations. They bear witness to Christ and the teaching of the Bible as they have opportunity in informal, unscheduled and unstructured ways".¹⁵ Monika Schutzka, from Germany, working in Nepal as a community health nurse wrote, "We meet Christ in His word and in the fellowship of brothers and sisters. We meet Him around the communion table and as we live and share together in the service given

to us. We meet Him in people, the neighbors to whom He leads us to serve day by day. This meeting of Christ does not lead us to be separated from the community but leads us directly into the midst of the communities of this world. There we find our place to share in work and service".¹⁶

The history of the 50 years of the United Mission to Nepal and the effect of its work can be revealed only in the lives of the Nepali people who have come into contact with, worked or have had their lives affected by the programs of the mission. It is now a story to be told by them, and if in the telling, project names, dates and details of those who were involved are omitted it does not matter. The saga of the work of UMN continues to be told in many languages by those who have lived and worked with the United Mission to Nepal, but it is also the expectation that a new language will be added to the rich mosaic. The story will be told in the Nepali language by the Nepalese.

* * *

For fifty years, expatriates, formerly called board appointees or mission workers, were sent by their member bodies, but were called to Nepal by their faith in Jesus Christ. Some came alone and others with families, all committed to live and witness among the Nepali people. For each name that has been cited in this brief recount, there are hundreds of others who are not mentioned, but are remembered and recalled by those

with whom they worked and by the families and churches that supported them. In the early years, they went out not knowing where they would work nor the circumstances of their living situation. Resourceful and tenacious, they would energetically (even the slow climbers) walk from place to place up and down the terraced mountainsides because they believed in the purpose of the work and their call. In later years, those who came knew their assignments in advance and the development in Nepal resulted in greater comforts in living.

In the beginning, letters arriving in Nepal would be carried to the remote areas by mail runners, sometimes requiring four or five days to reach their destination. Advances in telecommunication technology evolved from cable to telex to fax and finally email communication so that at the end of the 20th century the international telephone service from major cities in Nepal rivaled service in developed countries - except for the cost. However the advances in technology did not annihilate the distance between the extended family, children in college, and aging parents, and in some ways brought new pressures. But nothing could change the resolve for those who were called to serve.

For each Nepali mentioned in the text, there are a thousand others, who, courageously in some cases, joined side-by-side in the work

of the mission, knowing that the religious faith of those who had come was not theirs. But they too were called and believed that in working together, the lives of their friends, neighbors and communities could be altered. They wanted to be a part of that transformation as Hindus, Buddhists and Christians linked together in work that changed lives. Through the grace of God, some Nepalese also accepted the call to follow Jesus Christ, led and nurtured by the Nepali Christian Church.

For each project or program cited, there are countless other endeavors that had an enormous effect on the lives they touched. There were experiences in relationships with Nepalis in sewing and knitting classes, handicrafts, youth clubs and sports activities, family gathering and parties, organized treks, child care classes, prison visitations, and informal work with women in every project. Expatriates had life changing experiences when they lived in communities where Nepali brothers and sisters welcomed the stranger in their midst into their families and homes.

This is a short recounting of some of the events and programs organized under the United Mission to Nepal. The changed lives and transformed communities, whenever and wherever these miracles occurred, are solely due to the grace of God. □

No more pigs for me

Shanta Rai is a hard-working wife, mother and member of her village women's group. Shanta tried pig-raising to help support her family, but her pigs never reached 25 pounds (ten kilos), even after two years of feeding. What a waste of feed and labor! Shanta said she would never raise a pig again.

UMN's Okhaldhunga Rural Development Project encouraged and helped village women's groups to form an association. In 1994 this association became a non-government organization called Gramin Mahila Jagaran Samuha, (Rural Women's Awakening Group). Okhaldhunga Rural Development Project and UMN's NGO Support Project worked together to help strengthen the new organization. In response to the women's requests to learn how to grow vegetables, training was arranged through UMN's Rural Development Center in Pokhara.

Shanta attended the workshop and was excited about what she learned. Immediately she put her new skills into use. Within a few months, several people were stopping by Shanta's garden to see the impressive results.

A few months later the Rural Development Center trainers were called out to Okhaldhunga again, this time to teach a course in pig-raising. The women's group selected Shanta as a participant, even though she had given up on pigs earlier. Following the course, however, Shanta decided to give pig-raising one more chance. After all, a few simple lessons had transformed her vegetable garden. Would it be the same with pigs?



When Shanta returned home she made a few simple changes to her traditional pig-raising practices. She added some ventilation holes to the small stone pigpen, cleaned the manure out of the pen weekly (and composted it for her vegetable garden), administered worm medicine, and fed her pigs a homemade salt-mineral mix. With these changes, Shanta raised a piglet from weaning to 25 pounds in just five months! She slaughtered the pig, fed her family a feast for the autumn holidays with half the meat, and sold the other half for some cash income.

Thanks to the cooperation of three different UMN rural development projects working in partnership with a local NGO, the future looks brighter for Shanta's family. She has new skills, lots of encouragement and support, and plenty of pigs!

by Karen Stoufer





United Mission to Nepal as I perceive it

Dr. Rajendra K. Rongong



Out-patients at Shanta Bhawan hospital

My First Acquaintance

In March 1956, we came to Nepal, the homeland of my grandparents, which was going to be ours from now on. My wife, Mrs. Jermi Rongong and her friend Miss Dhana Khawas, were invited to be teachers at the Girls' School UMN was going to begin at Bhaktapur. There were 11 of us in the group; each of us had our own calling. A few days after we arrived in Bhaktapur we paid a visit to the very newly established Shanta Bhawan Hospital. We traveled from Bhaktapur to Kathmandu on a rickety 'lorry', an old truck. We paid our fare of 50 paisa and walked from the bus park, the present Ratna Park, to Shanta Bhawan Hospital. We could not see the building until we walked around a high brick wall and came to a huge iron gate. It was indeed a Bhawan not a hospital. As we entered the gate we were

greeted by a wide-open garden with shrubs and a pond full of colourful fish. We proceeded to the frontdoor, which too was huge with a magnificent chandelier hanging from the ceiling.

A tall, smiling sister in a white uniform greeted us. My impression, as a young lad, was one of terror whenever we saw an expatriate sister in a white uniform in a hospital. But she was different. The sister happened to be Sister Mabel McLean from the UK. She greeted us and showed us our room for the night, a cozy room with two beds with lavender coloured bed sheets, pillows, and blanket – simply gorgeous. It was indeed a treat for us. Later we were told that the room - the little house turned guesthouse - was in fact a storeroom for dirty clothes for washing that belonged to the Ranas. Shanta Bhawan was a residential building –

a palace which was gradually being converted into a hospital. There were patients being tended by nurses and doctors from different nationalities. The outdoor department was full of sick people and their attendants. There were so many of them. This was our introduction to the Health Project of the UMN. The next day we visited and got first hand knowledge of the hospital. We saw several people of different shapes, sizes, and colours who served as doctors, nurses, dispensers and social workers. They were from different countries working together for a common cause in the Name of Jesus Christ. It was indeed a United Mission.

United Mission to Nepal as a Development Organization

My first 'official' contact with the UMN was in the capacity of a translator for the expatriate doctors. I usually translated for Dr. Edgar Miller at the outpatients on Saturday. Saturday used to be my day off. The patients came in hordes. It gave me an opportunity to see the real need of our people and it was an awesome experience for me. The patients came from different parts within and outside the valley and some of them came from quite a distance. It also gave me an opportunity to see the way the 'Missionary Doctors' or the Expat Doctors worked.

They maintained the same kind of relationship with all their patients and gave them all the same attention. They spent some

time with each patient and asked him or her many questions. I could feel their concern for each one of them. Some of the patients were simply dirty and smelly, with bruises and wounds of all sorts. They touched the patients, examined them thoroughly, and asked questions sympathetically. They asked them about their problems when either the patients could not be hospitalized or the cost of some treatment was seemingly expensive. They would then provide them with help, sometimes from their own pockets. What impressed me most was the way they did their work. They did the work with enthusiasm and all seriousness. One could sense that they had a concern for the people. Then there was the lighter side also. They told me that they had seen more diseases in three months in Nepal than they had seen in their entire medical career in their own country.

On one occasion I was interpreting and as usual there were many questions and a thorough examination. As Doctor was writing the prescription the patient told the doctor something. The doctor looked at me and said, "Raju, (he had difficulty pronouncing my name Rajendra) in our country we tell patients what medicine to take but here the patients tell us what medicine we should prescribe them." There were Nepali and Indian staff also who were equally dedicated in serving the sick. The entire staff of the Shanta Bhawan hospital was, as it were, bound by a common ethos



Careful examination at Shanta Bhawan hospital

of serving the needy with concern and care. It made a difference.

Later I had the privilege of serving as a Board Member of the UMN. By that time it had started working in other areas also and its work was spreading in other geographical locations. Its work comprised of different areas like Education, Engineering and Industry, Rural Development, Health Services etc. It gradually developed into a very credible developmental organization. The UMN was able to undertake several projects, which made a difference in the lives of the people in the rural as well as the urban areas. Their sustained effort and seriousness of purpose made an impact in those areas. Gradually the concerned communities began to accept the UMN as a viable organization. This does not mean, however, that their services were recognized and welcomed by all. I had a

feeling that the authorities, somehow or other, looked at the UMN with suspicion. Many people including the concerned authorities did not know about the work of the UMN. All they knew, and maybe what they chose to know about the UMN, was that the UMN was a Christian organization, which was here to propagate Christianity. The UMN, on the other hand, preferred to maintain a low profile as regards their achievements in various areas in many parts of the country for a long time.

United Mission to Nepal – Department of Education

Having been associated with education for quite sometime it was natural for me to be interested in the educational activities of the UMN. I was directly or indirectly involved with the establishment of the Mahendra Bhawan



Fun for junior at Mahendra Bhawan School

Girls High School in Kathmandu and later with that of the Gandaki Boarding School in its very initial stage. I was working under the Ministry of Education, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, hence my role with UMN was voluntary and an advisory role only, but I always cherished my association with the UMN. Later I had the opportunity to serve as a member on the committee within the UMN's Education Department and as a Board Member of the United Mission to Nepal. Those associations gave opportunities to look at the work of the UMN in the field of education. His Majesty's Government of Nepal invited the UMN to work in the field of education as well as other sectors. The integrated project at Gorkha, which included schools and a high school for girls (the present Mahendra Bhawan Girls High School) and other educational programmes were the first few projects. These projects were successful

and were lauded by the students, parents, the community members, and the government authorities. This was followed by more agreements between the government and UMN, inviting the latter to work in other areas of education. The UMN was involved in various sectors of education such as:

- ◆ Non-Formal Education (NFE): in Jajarkot, Dailekh, and Non-Formal Education Support Office to provide services to the NFE programmes.
- ◆ Technical-Vocational Education: Butwal Technical Institute, Karnali Technical School
- ◆ Formal Education: Mahendra Bhawan Girls School, Kathmandu; Amar Jyoti School Gorkha; Gandaki Boarding School, Pokhara, Kathmandu University; Kathmandu International Study Centre (KISC), which I consider an innovative educational programme.



Ragnhild Nyström training teachers in Dailekh

Apart from these, the UMN has initiated a Schools Partnership Project, which supports schools in rural areas. Secondments of teachers to the University, Training institutions, Library Consultancy, Scholarship Scheme are more activities in which UMN has been successful, thanks to the painstaking and untiring effort of the visionaries and the frontline workers. Things were not always easy. Most of the time, for the pioneers the task was challenging but they had a mission to fulfill and they stuck to it. Several projects have been handed over to the government or to local trusts. Some of them are doing very well, manned by the local personnel. They have set a pattern and achieved it. In recent times the activities have been narrowed down and focused. Integrated education programmes, women's empowerment, partnership programmes etc. are being emphasized. The main thrust of these activities

is to equip the local people with knowledge and skills with a view to building up local manpower. To a great extent the UMN has succeeded in its efforts. Demands from other localities for similar programmes, the willingness of the government to work in partnership with the UMN, and occasional comments from high-ranking government officials as well as satisfaction expressed by local people including political parties are unmistakable indicators of success. One high ranking official, in fact a Secretary in the government told me, "The Mission succeed in their work because they love the people of Nepal and they want to help them." I have had the opportunity to attend the Annual Seminars of the Education Department of the UMN. They are always full of interesting activities but the most touching impression I had was the opinion expressed by the participants from projects working in



Junior physics at Gandaki Boarding School

different parts of Nepal. Everyone invariably expressed that through their association with the UMN they had imbibed the values of the UMN. They expressed that they loved the people and wanted to help the people wherever they served, to the best of their ability. It was simply heart-warming to hear each participant say this in different ways. These were the people who in fact were working at the grassroots level trying to bring in change for the better. They were motivated which encouraged them to dedicate themselves for their work. They had to face difficulties but these did not deter them from doing what they had set out to do. To me they are real facilitators of change. Some success stories have been documented elsewhere. I have had the opportunity of attending some joint meetings of the government and other agencies where the role and work of the UMN have been lauded. They have made a difference.

Nepal, a hermit State, was thrust into the 20th century without much preparation. Its topography had isolated the country. Some of the traditions and more importantly the policies of the then rulers were successful in keeping the country completely isolated from the rest of the world. The UMN came into Nepal as a response to the need of the country. One of the important guidelines the UMN followed in its work was to develop projects and programmes suited to the needs and situation of each locality. The training and mobilization of local manpower was its other important strategy, which paid off very well. I for one believe that the experiences reaped by the UMN will help to produce a practical theory in the field of partnership in educational programmes. The UMN educational projects have used education as the focal point, and then linking to other areas such



Men as well as women join non-formal literacy classes

as health, agriculture, and other appropriate activities.

At the risk of repetition I want to highlight a few important features of some of the projects. The Non-Formal Education programme has been widely accepted and successfully launched in several districts of Nepal. For the newly literate a series of easy reading materials, Pipal Pustak Series, is an innovative reading scheme. The language is simple and the content consists of the life history of ordinary local people who have succeeded in their lives. KISC (Kathmandu International Study Centre), as I prefer to look at it, is a miniature form of EDUCATION FOR ALL where children from different nationalities are able to learn to fit into their respective contexts. In short the UMN has been able to successfully work in partnership with the government

in the domain of education as it has in other areas.

Sustainability of the different projects has been a major concern of the UMN right from the beginning. As a close observer and a participant in some of the projects I have observed these characteristics. Before starting any project a thorough assessment of the project site is carried out. Both expatriates and Nepalis visit the place and spend time studying and observing it. A detailed planning follows which is not done in a hurry. They take time. The situation of the local community is taken into consideration. The projects are non-threatening to the local community and they seek approval of the concerned authorities. There is a constant monitoring in the form of regular reports from the field and frequent visits from the centre. Finally, the UMN, as I experienced it, did a

lot of thinking, evaluating, discussing, exercising, in developing "Our Vision and Strategy into the Twenty-First Century". I would like to quote two paragraphs from the paper, one from the context and the other from the conclusion because these provide the ground for the vision and the belief in the vision.

Context: "The Government of Nepal continues to welcome UMN to serve the country under the terms of the General Agreement and the project agreements.

UMN's record of development work in the Name and Spirit of Christ is considered a positive contribution to the government's efforts to foster self-reliance and decrease dependence on foreign assistance."

Conclusion: "We believe God calls us to nurture the capacities of others for transformation. Guided by this vision and strategy as we serve in the Name and Spirit of Christ, we covenant anew to work together in unity as we participate in the fulfillment of God's vision for Nepal."

United Mission to Nepal and the Local Churches

The UMN and the churches in Nepal came about the same time i.e. after the advent of democracy. They have remained separate, as institutions, right from the beginning. These were the main guiding factors for this situation –

1) The UMN was restricted from Christian activities like preaching and proselytizing and was bound by an agreement and, 2) It was generally accepted that the leadership of the local churches should be in the hands of the local Nepali Christians. This, however, did not mean that the two would remain separate and aloof. The Christian staff of the UMN attended and participated in the activities of the church, as regular members of the church. For the Mission there were only two options - either abide by the agreement or leave the country. This had a big impact on the relationship between the UMN and the churches.

In spite of the problems the UMN and the churches maintained their relationship. The staff of the different agencies within the UMN, both expatriates and others, attended the local churches. The UMN invited representatives from the local churches in its important meetings. The relationship, as I have felt, was cordial. There were times of misunderstanding but it did not affect the relationship so much. The underlying bond in Christ has remained the same.

In Conclusion

The UMN was established with a definite purpose. With God's grace and the unrelenting and faithful work of the staff, the UMN has made an impact on many places including remote areas and touched the lives of many people. Many localities where the



A winter church service

UMN pioneered different projects lacked even the minimum facilities necessary for living. Yet the workers went to these places and worked under a lot of hardships and pressures. They dared to work in those places where many people would refuse to go. Many have retired and have gone back to their homes, some have passed away, and others are still working here. These people believed in God, and loved and served the people in the Name of Christ.

As we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of UMN, we would like to pay our tribute to these people. Their efforts have not gone in vain. As the UMN marches on, I strongly believe that God will honour the belief, the faith, the dedication, and the commitment of all the staff of the UMN. They will be equally, if not more successful in the changed context with shifting paradigms. □

If Given a Chance

The following story appears in one of UMN's "Pipal Pustak" books, a prize-winning series of easy-to-read real life stories developed by the NFE Support Program.

My name is Singh Bahadur Gurung. When I was a baby I became sick. My parents carried me from our village in Lamjung to the United Mission hospital in Amp Pipal, Gorkha. But it was too late. I had contracted polio, and both of my legs became crippled.

No one considered it worth sending me to school. Many years had passed when I decided that if I were to make anything of my life, I would have to study. Perhaps then one day I could help my village and make a name for myself. So at age 18 I crawled to the local school and enrolled myself in class two. It took me three hours to get to school every day. The road was steep and difficult. Since my classmates were much younger than I was, adjustment to school was a challenge as well. But both students and teachers were helpful and compassionate toward me.

Ten years later UMN's Lamjung Community Health Project had begun a non-formal education (NFE) program in our area. I was 28 years old. The local NFE committee selected me to attend a workshop where I would learn the skills to become an NFE class facilitator. I would not only teach literacy and numeracy skills, but also would help to raise awareness about community problems and needs.

The NFE facilitator training truly inspired me. Over the year that I have conducted my class I have grown in confidence. I enjoy sharing health and

development messages that I have learned from the UMN staff. I have encouraged parents to send all their children to school, and the number of students is increasing in our area. We are participating in activities to improve our own health—building toilets, for example—and the health of our animals. We are working on agriculture and water systems as well. Slowly change is coming.

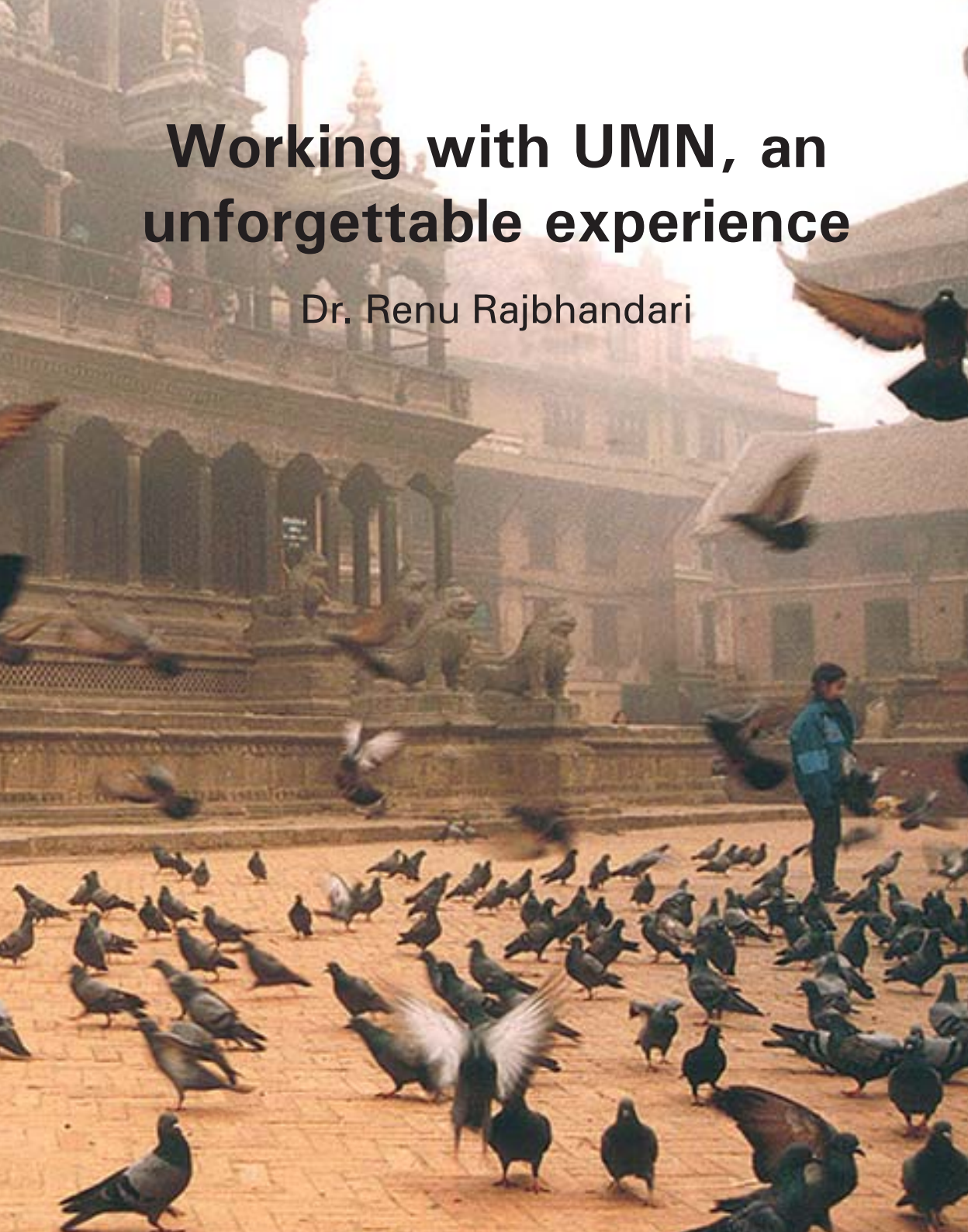
In addition to my class and community work, I help care for my brothers' children, and I weave mats and baskets from bamboo and jute. I hope to pursue some type of vocational training someday. My experience has revealed that a physically handicapped person like me can accomplish things—not only for oneself but also for others. For this reason I believe everyone should be given a chance.

Translated and adapted by Ellen Harding Collins



Working with UMN, an unforgettable experience

Dr. Renu Rajbhandari



Background

It has always been a pleasant feeling to remember my time when I worked closely with UMN. Ten years ago I took my first assignment to work at the district health office of Lalitpur district. At that time I had just completed my MPH degree and was undergoing a shift in my career; before that I was engaged in clinical practice only. For Nepal, those were the initial years of the revival of a democratic system and everywhere Nepal was engaged in political debate. On the basis of the leaders' judgement, the political parties artificially divided every staff. I was also involved in that situation, although till today I don't know to which party I belong. In short, it can be said that I took charge in a very difficult situation. For a person like me who had very little experience in administration, it was also quite challenging. Against this backdrop, I joined my office in a very confused state of mind.

Firstly, I reviewed all the projects, which were being implemented in the health sector in Lalitpur district, and I came into contact with UMN there. Prior to this I had heard many things about the organisation, some positive and some critical. I decided to meet with the officers who were in charge of the implementation of that project. They were invited into my office and were briefed about their project. Numerous grievances and challenges were shared with me in regards to coordination, cooperation and the work of

the District Health Office itself. In short, although I knew that there were many challenges, this was also a real ray of hope for me. I really felt relaxed and was almost sure that I could now work in a productive way. My logic was that any institution that is concerned about people, particularly the marginalized, that stands up for their principles and fights for the rights of the people and forces others to be accountable can be a real ally of the people. As a young public health expert, I was very much looking forward to working with that kind of institution. UMN became my ally in the field. From that day till today, directly and indirectly, I am working with different projects of UMN and I always find people committed to the causes and devoted to the service of the marginalised.

I have visited several projects of UMN such as CHDP, NGO support, NUTRITION (particularly in Salyan) HIV/AIDS and AGNW), not only as an observer but also as a critical analyst. I must say that my opinion of UMN has not been changed after reviewing all these.

In the development sector of Nepal, I feel strongly that UMN has contributed immensely to the benefits of rural and marginalized people, keeping themselves far from the competition of resource generation, as well as being an INGO that provides top salaries. I am sure that UMN has faced real challenges in retaining qualified staff, but that they have been able to retain staff demonstrates how an organization's commitment to clear



goals, mission and vision can itself be a real incentive to staff. I am quite sure that this work draws only committed staff as evidenced by the positive impact that UMN has had.

After I started to work with UMN I began to read more about the projects and learn about the institution. The more I learned, the more I became attracted to the work of the organization. I should point out here that several activities which we are doing within Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), the organization I had initiated, were adopted from UMN's program module. In addition to several other programs, I appreciate in particular UMN's program on health, education and capacity development because these issues are the foundation issues for the development of any society.

Future Directions

I congratulate UMN for commemorating 50 years in the development sector in Nepal and I look forward to the continued contributions that it will make to Nepali society. I hope that the future will see UMN operating in a more concentrated and organized way as it seeks to continue to support and advocate for marginalized communities. As mentioned earlier, all programs of UMN are equally important and people-centered. In order to make it more people centered, it will be beneficial for UMN to initiate programs from a rights-based approach. In order to make such programs sustainable, it will be useful

for UMN to play a facilitator's role, rather than taking the role of implementer. It is very necessary to develop ownership by local people and community members in each and every program. This can be possible if they themselves implement programs, otherwise it can become a project-oriented approach.

UMN has already reached its 50th year in the development sector, a high accomplishment. However, this is the time to reassess previous development policies and practices. Although UMN has begun to support local organizations to undertake projects by themselves, this is a goal that needs to be implemented in a much more accelerated way.

There is a saying that it is difficult to get a good name but more difficult to retain the same. Therefore, it is very necessary that UMN work hard to retain its good name and the faith of the organization which has been gained so far. For this I propose that UMN find good partners to implement its programs. In order to continue its important work, UMN should not aim to work only with self-initiated and self-made organizations. UMN should take the example of some organizations that have tried this model and failed in order to learn what works and what does not. I really wish a lot of success in working towards achieving all of the organization's goals and fulfilling its mission in a more efficient and practical way. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my feelings about UMN with you. □

More lives than she can count

Sun Maya Gole is a Tamang woman from Thurladurlung, in South Lalitpur. Illiterate and the mother of eight children, she never expected her life to amount to much. She assisted other women in the village during childbirth, but that was what was expected. Then things began to change. In 1990 at the age of 40, Sun Maya was invited to attend a training session offered by UMN's Community Development and Health Project (CDHP). The workshop targeted traditional birth attendants, teaching them new skills and life-saving information.

That workshop was just the beginning for Sun Maya. More workshops and learning opportunities followed. She has since transformed her own life as well as the lives of hundreds of women and children. Her name is well known not only in south Lalitpur, but also in the neighboring districts of Kavre and Makwanpur, where she is called to assist with deliveries. Dedicated to serving mothers, Sun Maya often walks for hours over difficult terrain to respond to requests for help


In addition to working as a "trained birth attendant", Sun Maya is trained as a Community Health Volunteer. Thus she is a health promoter, family planning motivator, vaccinator, nutrition worker and safe motherhood educator all wrapped up in one. She also voluntarily helps out at the poorly staffed local sub-health post, and serves as an assistant trainer during CDHP workshops for other birth attendants. It is people like Sun Maya who confront Nepal's dismal health statistics and dare to make a difference. Statistics clearly show that in the areas where CDHP has trained traditional birth attendants, the maternal mortality and infant



mortality rates have plummeted below the national averages. Furthermore, the quality of life of new mothers and their babies is improved, through post-natal care, including immunization, nutritional and family planning advice, and simple counseling.

In 2000 Sun Maya was invited to tell her story on national radio. The same year CDHP enabled her to attend an international women's health gathering in Bangladesh, where she shared her experiences. These opportunities have given her self-confidence and incentive to continue her struggle to bring babies into the world safely, and to care for families as a whole. When she is asked how many deliveries has she assisted, she answers with a chuckle, "I never thought of keeping track!" Sun Maya Gole's life has made a difference to more lives than even she can count.

by Ellen Harding Collins

A photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a dirt path leads up a grassy, rocky slope. The middle ground shows a range of snow-capped mountains. The sky is a deep blue with a layer of white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear.

Into new territory - a transformed UMN

Stefan Östman



Fifty years have gone since the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) was born in Nagpur, India, as an international, interdenominational mission organisation. Over these years many changes have taken place in UMN in terms of structure, strategies and areas of work. Many times, God called pioneers to take new initiatives, to cross boundaries into the unknown and unexplored. At other times, UMN was forced to change working methods or to move from one geographical area to another because of external circumstances. When looking back at such developments it is often striking to see how God was in control. What may have looked like failures at the time often paved the way for new opportunities of service to the people of Nepal.

However, many of the changes in the past were gradual adjustments to new circumstances or moderations of approaches and methods within fixed parameters. Now UMN is going through something different – a complete transformation of the organisation at all levels, including governance, structure, culture, strategies, areas of work and geographical locations.

Background

The strategic change process is not a sudden new development, nor a complete break with the past. Rather, it builds on the past and seeks to take to their full conclusion early strategic statements that for various

reasons have only been partially implemented so far. Training and handing over of activities to Nepali ownership and management was a key feature in the very first agreement between the United Mission to Nepal and His Majesty's Government of Nepal, the so called "Dikshit letter".

In 1970, UMN's Board of Directors gave the following guideline for the organisation's planning: "It is the policy of the Mission to plan that future ownership and management of its institutions shall evolve into indigenous hands, either that of the Government, or semi-Government, or private organisations". As new opportunities emerged in the wake of the revolution and democratisation of Nepal in 1990, the Board reaffirmed this statement and emphasised that even greater attention should be given to the training of Nepali people, in order to increase their capacity for development through indigenous organisations. In the case of hospitals and other health institutions, it was envisaged in 1994 that ten years later they should be "managed by self governing Nepali organisations which share the vision and values of UMN".

UMN's Christian identity and its relationship with the Nepali Christian Community is another aspect that has been important since the beginning, and continues to be so in the new UMN. There have never been any formal ties between UMN and Nepali

churches and UMN has not been involved in direct evangelism, church planting or similar activities. The fellowship between UMN and Nepali Christians has, however, been strong. At different times throughout the history, this fellowship has taken different expressions. It has been a challenge to balance respect for government restrictions and agreements with the ambition of working together with Nepali Christians. Finding new appropriate ways of co-operation is a priority for the future.

In 1996, UMN's Vision for Nepal was formulated and adopted by the Board. It envisions a future where "individuals and communities will be able to secure their basic needs in a sustainable manner through participation in effective and self-reliant Nepali organisations, including Nepali Christian organisations." The vision for Nepal is part of the broader "Vision and Strategy Into the Twenty-First Century" statement, which forms a backdrop for the Strategic Change Process.

When a new Five-Year General Agreement with the Government had been secured in November 2000, a new long-term Executive Director, Jennie Collins, was appointed and with indications of major changes at hand in Nepali society and legislation, the Board of Directors agreed that the time was ripe for a transformation of UMN into something new and different. Following much prayer and consideration, it gave Jennie Collins

the go-ahead for preparing necessary changes that would put UMN in the best possible position for serving the people of Nepal in a rapidly changing environment.

The Change Process

"What does God want UMN to focus on in the next five years as it seeks to serve the people of Nepal in the Name and Spirit of Jesus Christ?" This question was formulated as a starting point for the Change Process. The organisation needed to seek God and try to discern His priorities, rather than setting the agenda based merely on international trends in development, rational thinking, or, for that matter, convenience. Therefore, the importance of prayer and active listening to God was emphasised from the beginning. Jennie Collins had received a vision for UMN as she was considering the job of Executive Director: the river that flows from the temple in Ezekiel 47. She saw UMN as flowing from the heart of God with the purpose of giving life to others. At different stages the river takes different shapes until it empties into the Great Sea, where it transforms the salty water. Large numbers of fish of many kinds dwell in the fresh water, and fruit trees of all kinds grow on both banks of the river. Their fruit serve for food and their leaves for healing. Jennie shared this vision with others in UMN, including the expatriate workers at the Annual Conference, and it became a source of envisioning for the future.



The first part of the Change Process was dedicated to collecting information. A very participatory approach was used. A search for issues of concern to UMN was conducted, and the result summarised into seven General Topic Areas: Christian Identity, Government & Politics, Personnel, Finance, Development of Nepal, "How do we do it?", and Organisational Culture & Structure. A large number of staff members at various levels participated in topic teams who explored and wrote reports on these topics. Staff were also consulted through workshops at project locations, surveys and other means. UMN sought input from other stakeholders as well, including Member Bodies, donors, His Majesty's Government of Nepal, Nepali Christians, partner organisations, INGOs and others.

Another essential tool in this part of the process was the writing of a Nepal Country Profile, through which Nepal's current situation was analysed, and compared to UMN's vision for the country. This exercise gave important information about what the most alarming needs are in Nepal today, and convincing arguments that UMN really needed to refocus. It showed that, in general, infrastructure and coverage of basic public services have improved in recent decades and people are living longer, but poverty and hunger have increased in rural areas.

Furthermore, government plans were studied, and new legislation analysed, including the Foreign Aid Policy and the proposed

Social Development Organisations Act.

They indicate that the role of INGOs will have to change. In the future all social development projects will have to be implemented by Nepali organisations.

The political and security situation in Nepal has been very unstable over the past few years. In 2002 the death toll in the conflict between Maoists and security forces rose to 7,000. The suffering of the rural population has been further aggravated by the fact that development efforts have been hampered in many parts of the country. UMN has followed developments closely and made contingency plans to ensure safety for its staff and projects at various locations. These security concerns were also taken into account in the considerations of what type of organisation UMN needed to become to be able to operate successfully in Nepal.

As information was gathered from many different sources, different parts of the planning for the future UMN were taken forward in different ways. It was established early on that UMN's Mission and Vision for Nepal should remain the same¹⁷, and the Statement of Values was also kept intact. It was realised, however, that UMN lacked a vision for itself as an organisation. Through an extensive exercise involving expatriate and senior Nepali staff as well as Member Body representatives in UMN's Executive Committee, a statement slowly took shape and was finalised as follows:

“UMN will be:

A learning community of servants in fellowship with the Christian community, encouraged and sustained by God, promoters of justice and transformation through the sharing of God’s love with the people of Nepal.”

The most significant outcome of the information gathering phase was, however, the Strategic Directions, around which UMN’s Five-Year Strategic Plan 2003–2008 was developed. The plan outlines how UMN will work in the future, what general areas of work it will be involved in, what type of structure and culture it will have and how it will seek to attract resources. Plans were also developed for how projects, programmes and institutions would transition from the old UMN structure to new ownership and management.

In parallel, a task force appointed by the Board of Directors worked on a new Constitution and Bye-laws, incorporating major changes in the governance of the organisation. All this work led up to an extraordinary meeting of UMN’s Board of Directors in December 2002, to which the different aspects of the Change Process were presented for discussion and endorsement. The Board approved both the Strategic Plan and the new Governance system, and it also decided that UMN should seek registration as an INGO in Nepal, as soon as legally possible¹⁸.

During the first months of 2003, strategic programmes were defined and a transition structure put in place. The Board of Directors, at its regular meeting in April, ratified the Governance system, and on 17 July 2003, or 1 Shrawan 2060 of the Nepali calendar, the United Mission to Nepal entered yet another era with the commencement of its new Strategic Plan.

Strategic Directions

The Strategic Directions will guide and shape the work of UMN over the next five to ten years. They describe how UMN’s Vision and Mission can be worked out in UMN’s current situation in Nepal. Micah 6:8 was used as a framework:

“And what does the Lord require of you?
To do justice and to love compassion
And to walk humbly with your God.”

The Strategic Directions link to these phrases and read as follows:

1. Addressing Root Causes of Poverty

While progress has occurred in Nepal’s development, a greater number and a greater proportion of Nepalis now live in poverty and have insufficient food. As our understanding of poverty continues to develop, we will refocus our efforts to address the root causes of poverty so that the basic needs of the poor are more effectively met.

2. Addressing Injustice It is clear that issues of effective public administration and the application of law are strategic in addressing the root causes of poverty. UMN will actively pursue appropriate involvement in advocacy to promote justice and equity in Nepali society on behalf of the poor and marginalised.

3. Peace and Reconciliation The socio-political environment in Nepal will probably continue to be unstable and insecure for some time to come. We believe that the Gospel has a unique contribution to make to any process of true reconciliation, the healing of relationships and the restoration of hope. UMN will actively look for ways to contribute to peace, reconciliation and conflict transformation in Nepal.

4. Relief Poverty and food insecurity have increased in Nepal. This has been acutely exacerbated by armed conflict. UMN will develop a capacity to be involved in specific, time-limited, geographically focused relief activities. Relief will be directed towards meeting basic needs in ways that encourage interdependent communities and do not undermine development. This includes being open to working with people who are internally displaced by conflict or disaster.

5. Partnerships We will build partnerships with organisations whose values and strategies are consistent with UMN's, including

NGOs, companies, institutions, and local government. This is not new for UMN but signals a renewed commitment to partnerships as our primary way of working and recognises that we are moving out of direct implementation. This will include the placement of Christians into partner organisations. We will be innovative and pioneering in working together at the local level to develop and model strategies to address the Strategic Directions.

6. Relationship with the Christian Community in Nepal The Nepali Christian community is growing and broadening its expression of the Gospel. UMN wants to contribute in relevant ways. We believe this will be through partnering with, learning from, and building the capacity of the Christian Community to be involved in Christian development.

7. Capacity Building We will build the capacity of individual Nepalis and Nepali organisations through training and organisational development. This capacity building will be in areas consistent with UMN's work.

8. Contributing to National Policy Development We will contribute to the development of national policies, priorities and strategies in areas relevant to UMN's work.

9. Transition UMN will continue to work in some areas of work in which we are currently involved. However, we will phase

out of directly implementing and managing programmes, projects and institutions. Appropriate conclusion of directly implemented projects or their transfer of ownership and management will be completed within the time of UMN's current General Agreement (i.e. at the latest by November 25, 2005). This will be accomplished in a careful, compassionate and orderly way.

10. UMN's Future Shape UMN, as an organisation, will look different. It will be smaller and more flexible. It will be decentralised: a reduction in the concentration of people in Kathmandu; a clustering of people in a smaller number of under-served locations. In addition to mid-hills rural areas, UMN will work in the Terai and in urban areas.

11. Focus & Discipline UMN has a rich history of involvement in a wide variety of work. We have become overstretched, and our commitments continually outstrip available resources. We are committed to becoming more focused, disciplined, and realistic in our planning and resource allocation. We will be involved in fewer areas of work.

New Ways of Working

UMN has traditionally worked through development projects, health programmes, schools, hospitals and other institutions, activities that are tangible and easy to grasp.

Not surprisingly, there was some confusion both among UMN staff and supporters when they received the message that UMN would no longer run any projects or institutions. Would UMN cease to exist, then? Or what exactly would UMN do in the future?

Key words are "capacity building" and "partnerships". This is nothing new to UMN, that has a lot of experience to build on from its history. A number of enterprises, born within UMN, have matured to strong independent companies, particularly in the hydropower sector. UMN's capacity building over many years has been crucial for their success. Institutions such as Patan Hospital and Gandaki Boarding School have kept close relationships with UMN and benefited from a strong partnership. The proportion of UMN expatriate workers who have worked in seconded positions in partner organisations has grown steadily over the years.

Following the advent of democracy in the early nineties, indigenous non-government organisations (NGOs) became important players in Nepal's civil society and UMN saw their potential for local development. It began partnering with NGOs who had a commitment to improving the living conditions of marginalised communities, in particular in rural areas. UMN also encouraged the formation of NGOs and other organised groups in its project areas, aiming at greater sustainability of development efforts. These experiences are invaluable, as capacity

building of partner organisations now becomes UMN's primary way of working. UMN will partner with organisations that further UMN's Strategic Directions and whose values are consistent with UMN's. Organisations that UMN envisages to work with in the future include NGOs, companies, institutions and local government.

Mentoring and coaching will be the primary modes in UMN's capacity building efforts. UMN will seek to facilitate organisational development rather than provide a large variety of technical inputs to its partners. This will be done in a variety of ways. Organisational development experts will provide consultancy and organise workshops and other types of training for partner organisations. Awareness raising and empowerment of local groups will have a high priority. This may include assistance to groups who wish to seek legal registration, which in turn may lead to new formal partnerships.

Secondment of UMN personnel is a strong tool for building the capacity of partner organisations. The proportion of UMN staff that work in seconded positions is likely to increase further in the future. UMN will also keep being involved in training institutions, building the capacity of individuals in addition to that of partner organisations.

The Christian Community in Nepal has grown considerably over the past decades, and in recent years some Nepali Christian

NGOs have also been registered with the government. This creates new opportunities for partnership. UMN wants to increase its co-operation with Nepali Christian groups, learning from them and building their capacity to be involved in Christian development. Nepali Christians have an important role to play to promote peace, reconciliation and social development in Nepal, and to bring hope to individuals and communities in despair. UMN will seek to partner with registered Christian organisations, but informal relationships and fellowship with brothers and sisters in the Christian family will also be important, in particular at the local level.

Over its 50 years of existence, UMN has gained experience and developed expertise that has benefited more than local communities. Oral health, mental health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, hydropower, curriculum development for government schools are a few examples of areas where UMN has made significant contributions at the national level. Although UMN will keep a local focus and decentralise its work, it will continue to seek opportunities to contribute to national policy development. Thus, UMN's contribution to Nepal may reach further and UMN values may influence government policies and priorities.

New Areas of Work

The Strategic Directions, in particular the first four, form the framework for what UMN

will be involved in over the next five to ten years. They all somehow relate to the struggle against poverty. Despite development efforts, and despite positive trends on some development indicators, poverty and hunger are increasing in Nepal. Forty percent of Nepal's population fall below the poverty line, defined as the level at which people can obtain sufficient calories to be active and healthy, plus other essentials such as housing.

UMN's top priority is to address the root causes of poverty in Nepal. It now seeks to increase its understanding of what these root causes are. As a Christian organisation, UMN believes that the most fundamental, underlying cause is broken relationships between God and humans. To address this, UMN will seek to develop a theology of Christian development together with its partners in the Nepali Christian Community.

Between this ultimate cause and the daily experience of Nepal's poor lie a web of intermediate connecting causes including the following, which were identified by a working group in UMN: low status of women and disadvantaged groups, population growth, lack of education, poor governance, weak national economy and very limited employment, unequal land ownership. The challenge is to discern which activities are most likely to address the root causes of poverty, and for which UMN is in a position to contribute. UMN will continually assess

whether activities that it supports address these causes.

UMN's leadership has identified seven key areas of work that are related to the Strategic Directions, and that UMN initially will focus on. Sets of methodologies, called "Strategic Programmes" will guide and facilitate UMN's input for each of them. The key approach in all cases is the capacity building of partners involved in these areas.

Food Security

The World Bank defines food security as a state where "all people at all times have access to enough food for an active, healthy life." In Nepal, food security has declined since the 1980's and the country has been dependent on imports from India. The Food and Agriculture Organisation estimated that the proportion of Nepal's population who are chronically hungry increased from 19 to 23 percent between 1990 and 1999. Asset poverty is the primary reason for food insecurity throughout most of Nepal, i.e. lack of access to and poor quality of land, livestock and skilled labour. Vulnerability to natural disasters and limited availability due to climate conditions at high altitudes are other contributing factors.

The major strategic challenges are to improve access to food by enhancing incomes of the poor, reduce vulnerability to disasters, and increase availability of food in hill and



Planting rice is team work

mountain areas. UMN has identified a list of “best practices” that have potential to address these challenges. What types of activities UMN will become involved in depends on the food security situation in the locations where UMN will work, the interests of potential partners and the skills that UMN can offer at the time. They may include: supporting people who have migrated from villages to find work in towns; developing food processing technologies; ecotourism; food for work programmes.

Women and Children

Women and children are disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in Nepali society to which UMN wants to give high priority in its work. They are those who suffer most from poverty and injustice, and their situation gets even worse in times of political unrest,

economic decline or natural disaster. Despite aid and government efforts, malnutrition among children under five years has worsened in rural areas in the last decade, and there are fewer sites of emergency obstetric care available in the hills of Nepal today than there were five years ago.

UMN will build on its long and rich experience of working towards the health and development of women and children in its future partnerships. It will seek to be innovative and active in areas that are consistent with its Strategic Directions, and where other organisations may not be involved or effective. “Best practices” have been identified also for this area of work. UMN will promote a life cycle approach to health for girl children and women. Other methodologies may include the use of local health workers as “safe pregnancy advocates”,



Three generations wait at Tansen hospital

child-to-child activities for health education, health messages directed to married men, information via mass media, technical training to health service providers, involvement in national policy development etc. UMN will move away from direct health care service delivery, but continue to be involved in health care training.

Education

Education is a cornerstone for development, and will continue to be an important area of work for UMN. UMN will seek opportunities to enhance teaching quality in primary and secondary schools through training of teachers and school managers. Good governance of schools and training institutions is also essential for the education to keep a high quality. UMN will contribute in this area by encouraging and facilitating

civil society to get involved in the management of local schools, e.g. through formation of school management committees. It is also important to raise the awareness of parents, and to encourage them to take responsibility for their children's education.

In addition to involvement with the formal school system, UMN will build on its experiences in the area of non-formal education, for empowerment of disadvantaged communities. Functional literacy has proved very efficient as a gateway to community development. This includes education for adults as well as for children who do not attend school. UMN will also continue to channel scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds.



Opportunities for further learning

Peace and Conflict Transformation

Since 1996 an armed conflict has ravaged the Nepali countryside and caused deep wounds among the people, wounds that will take a long time to heal, whether a political solution to the conflict is reached or not. UMN believes that the Gospel has a strong potential for the healing of relationships and the restoration of hope. It will seek ways to contribute to peace, reconciliation and conflict transformation in Nepal, in consultation with the Christian community. This is a new challenge, an area in which UMN has not been directly involved before, but individuals within the organisation and some of UMN's Member Bodies have experience and knowledge that will be useful. UMN will also seek to learn from other organisations in Nepal and on the sub-continent, including the partners in the Tri-Agen-

cy Partnership. Experiences from the conflict in Sri Lanka may prove particularly useful in the Nepali context.

Networking will be an important strategy, and UMN will work with other organisations in advocacy for particular issues. At the local level, UMN will especially look at ways to address the root causes of the conflict, which to some extent overlap with the root causes of poverty. Awareness raising and training will be key elements in the work. It has been expressed that peace building and justice work is more an attitude and way of life than a set of skills, so relationship building may be more important than anything else.

Relief

Nepal's climate and geology makes it prone to natural disasters. Every year hundreds



The results of even a small earthquake

of Nepalis die or lose their homes and land due to floods, landslides and other calamities. The armed conflict in recent years has added another dimension to their predicament. In some parts of the country, villagers have had to flee their homes to seek refuge in urban areas.

UMN feels a responsibility to respond when disasters occur in the vicinity of its working areas. It will not be involved in large-scale relief programmes, but wants to develop a capacity for specific, time-limited and geographically focused activities. It will continue to promote disaster preparedness, including for earthquake situations, and seek cooperation with other organisations involved in relief activities. UMN's focus will be on meeting basic needs in ways that encourage interdependent communities, and do not undermine development.

HIV/AIDS

The number of estimated cases of Nepalis with HIV/AIDS in 2001 was 58,000 and it is growing steadily. Many fear that AIDS will become the leading cause of death in the 15–49 year old population over the coming years. UMN has acquired knowledge and experience in the field through its hospitals and health programmes in general and the Sakriya Unit in particular. The Sakriya Unit has taken the lead in Nepal in the area of counselling training and has also produced a number of educational materials about HIV/AIDS. This work will be continued by an NGO formed by UMN staff members, but UMN also wants to keep a direct involvement in the area of HIV/AIDS, as it fits very well with the Strategic Directions, in particular issues related to poverty and injustice.



Nepal's future needs friendships and peace

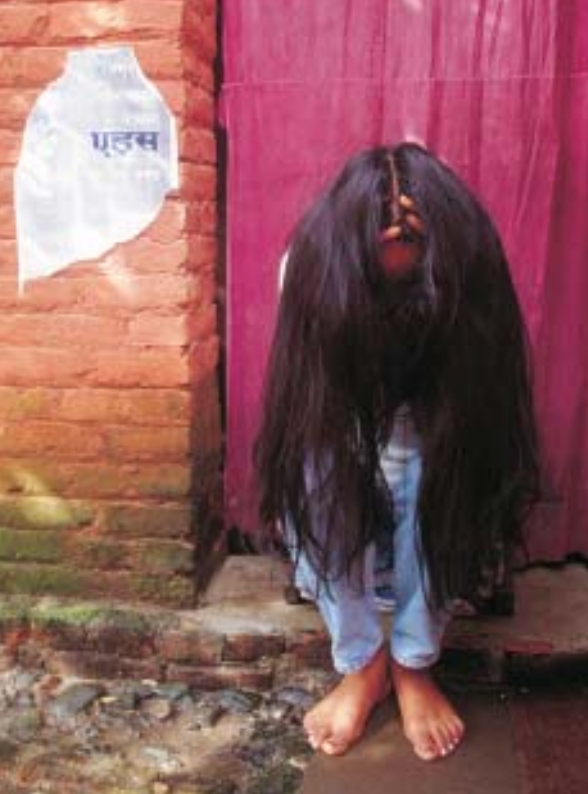
UMN is now exploring opportunities for future initiatives related to HIV/AIDS. The partnership with the new NGO may continue, but UMN will also seek other potential partners in its working areas. Involvement could include developing community and home-based care, working with churches in family life teaching, support and input to local health services, advocacy and awareness raising activities.

Enterprise Support

Micro-enterprise development activities, when combined with other initiatives that address more basic issues, can be a strong tool for alleviating poverty in the long term. UMN has seen positive fruit of previous efforts in this field and wants to build on those experiences as it moves into new geographical areas. Micro-enterprise devel-

opment activities can include micro-finance with the provision of savings, loans and insurance to villagers for small business and other purposes, and business development services such as training, marketing and development of related areas that support enterprise. Advocacy also has an important role to play, as well as other related activities such as health education, literacy, improved governance etc. These are important to remove obstacles for enterprise.

UMN will concentrate its enterprise development efforts on rural communities. Various types of enterprises may be promoted and supported, from small family-based enterprises that help individual households to survive, to medium-scale businesses that can create jobs.



HIV/AIDS still brings social rejection

Transition of Current Activities

In parallel with the development of new strategies, UMN is going through the massive exercise of transitioning all its current activities to their new organisational status. Some components will continue to be part of UMN in a new form, but most projects, programmes, institutions and other units are either being phased out according to plan, or transferred to new ownership and management outside UMN. The ambition is to complete this task within the time of UMN's General Agreement, which expires in November 2005.

A variety of different solutions have been chosen for the various units, each tailor-made according to their particular strengths and potential. Several of the projects and programmes are transferring into independent Nepali organisations. In many cases the relationship with UMN will continue through partnership agreements. A special model is sought for the hospitals (Okhaldhunga, Patan and Tansen), with plans to find a new Nepali organisation that would take over after 2005¹⁹. The hospitals would continue to be managed under one umbrella. The ambition is to keep a Christian input, so that the hospitals will keep their distinct character and quality as mission hospitals with a special concern for the poor. UMN is committed to continue involvement in the hospitals until 2008 through a partnership relation, with the aim of ensuring provision of health care for the poor in the longer term. After that, partnership may continue in areas of work that are in line with UMN's Strategic Directions.

A New Type of Organisation

UMN's old structure and culture served their purpose well for many years, but are not suitable for the outworking of UMN's new strategies in Nepal in the twenty-first century. The United Mission to Nepal is being transformed into a new type of organisation, an organisation that is more flexible, dynamic, focused and decentralised.

Organisational Culture

The culture of an organisation has been defined as the shared assumptions, beliefs and values which guide its collective decision-making behaviour and processes. Through a series of workshops, a group of 20 people in senior positions in UMN endeavoured to identify traits that have been characteristic of UMN, and qualities that UMN should try to enhance more. This resulted in the following snapshot of a “preferred organisational culture” that UMN will be aiming towards: “A friendly, creative and dynamic place to work. People work in highly participative teams, experimentation is encouraged, and the aim is to be at the leading edge, yet not forgetting our Mission and Vision. Staff are encouraged, nurtured and developed in their respective roles.

“Decision-making is decentralised, forward thinking and timely. There are high levels of trust between the leadership and the cluster teams. There are fewer corporate directives and rules. Volumes of reporting are reduced, yet high standards and overall excellence that are part of the organisation’s history, are not forgotten.

“Decentralisation and flexibility do not mean irresponsible behaviour, or ‘everybody doing as they wish’; UMN will continue to manage resources (funds and personnel) in a responsible and accountable way, in serving the people of Nepal.”



UMN adopts the new Strategic Directions

Governance and Structure

Some feel that “culture” is a very abstract aspect of an organisation, difficult to put one’s finger on. Structure is in contrast very concrete and tangible. As a consequence of the new strategies, and as a response to the changing context in which UMN is operating, UMN needed to adjust its structure at all levels, from the governance of the organisation to the work at programme level.

At the governance level, the previous Executive Committee and Board of Directors, where representatives of all UMN Member

Bodies and Affiliated Member Bodies met once a year in Kathmandu to guide the organisation, have been replaced by a General Assembly and a smaller Board with more Nepali input.

The General Assembly, called every two years, now serves as a forum for Member Body representatives and others to interact, discuss and provide general direction for UMN's work. The new Board of Directors meets every six months. It is responsible for the outworking of UMN's Mission and Vision, and oversees its work. It has 13 members, including seven Member Body representatives, UMN's Executive Director and five other members, of which four are from Nepal's Christian Community.

The expectation is that this shift will make governance smoother. The Board is closer to Nepal, with much more Nepali influence and knowledge about local circumstances. Its functions have also changed. Decisions are made at lower levels than before, allowing for more flexibility and initiative. This is also the case for the rest of the organisational structure. Decentralised decision-making, room for innovation and creativity have been important targets in the shaping of the new organisation. The idea of "clusters", groups of UMN staff serving together in a smaller number of geographical locations, is central in the new structure. Most UMN staff will be based in these clusters, while the concentration of people in Kathmandu will

be reduced. Each cluster will have considerable authority in deciding how to outwork UMN's strategies in its particular location, and which local organisations it chooses to partner with. In addition to capacity building of local partners, the relationship and interaction with the Christian community will have a high priority at the cluster level.

A "Programme Support Team" will have a key role in assisting the clusters with technical advice and set standards of practice for the areas of work. It will also support the clusters with co-ordination of partnership agreements and logistics.

"The Corporate Services" has the responsibility for organisational leadership. It consists of five teams: Finance, Personnel, Marketing, Strategy & Policy Development and Liaison (primarily with Government and the Christian Community). UMN's Leadership team, replacing the previous "Co-ordinating Committee", includes the Executive Director, the Programme Support Director, the directors of the Corporate Services Teams and one member from among the cluster leaders. Initially, the leadership will also include three members of the Transition Team. This team will cease to exist once the transition phase is completed.

New Geographical Locations

UMN seeks to have a balance in its activities, both in terms of areas of work and of geo-



graphical locations. It has stated that it wants to be involved in both urban and rural areas, in the Terai as well as in the hilly regions of Nepal. In the spring of 2003, UMN's leadership commissioned and sent out eight teams of UMN staff to explore selected locations in different parts of the country, for consideration as possible cluster locations. After doing research and making visits to the selected places they submitted their reports to the Leadership Team. Following thorough consideration and prayer, the decision was made to choose Mugu, Dharan, Kathmandu, Dhading and Rukum as locations for UMN's first clusters, with Butwal as an alternate. The Mugu and Dharan clusters will be set up first, the Kathmandu cluster before the current General Agreement with the government expires in 2005, and the other two after 2005. All plans are subject to obtaining necessary approval by the Government.

Mugu is located in north-western Nepal, bordering Tibet. It is one of Nepal's most remote and less developed districts. The average life expectancy is less than 40 years, partly due to high infant mortality. Literacy rates are among the lowest in Nepal, in particular among women. The climate is harsh due to the high altitude, and the fields cannot yield enough food for the population. Droughts have caused famine on several occasions in recent years.

UMN's work there since 1999 has, however, proved that there is hope for Mugu. Its education and community development activities have transformed lives and given villagers, not least women, a sense of dignity and determination to improve living conditions. UMN has very positive relationships with local government and other organisations active in Mugu.

Dharan in **Sunsari** District is a bustling town at the opposite end of Nepal, in the south-east. It is much less poor than Mugu, but there are still great areas of need and many opportunities for UMN. A number of Nepali organisations with potential of becoming UMN partners are active in the area. Several of them have gaps in skills and expertise, and would benefit greatly from capacity building. There is also a great potential for co-operation with the Christian community in several of UMN's key areas of work.

UMN began a partnership with the BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan in 2002, when Drs. Mary and Owen Lewis started developing its Department of Family Medicine. The Institute is keen to broaden its partnership with UMN. UMN also has links to a school for blind children in Dharan, where a number of students can afford their education thanks to UMN scholarships.

Kathmandu was selected as a cluster location partly for practical reasons, as UMN

needs to have a presence in the capital. UMN Headquarters will stay in Kathmandu, and some of the support services need to be based there. But there are also other reasons for having a cluster in Kathmandu. The city keeps growing as the lack of land forces people to leave their home villages in search of employment in the urban areas. The armed conflict has also contributed to migration into Kathmandu. Many of the issues the capital is facing link to UMN's key areas of work. There are ample partnership opportunities, with old partners as well as with other organisations. Yala Urban Health Programme, with its public health activities in Patan, has been a model for how UMN can work in the future. Its capacity building efforts and partnership with the municipality have been very successful and are examples to follow.

Dhading is the district situated to the immediate west of Kathmandu. It is close to the capital in kilometres, but large parts of the district, especially in the north, are very remote due to the lack of roads. It is mainly those northern parts, and a pocket in the south-west, that UMN is interested to work in. The northern localities have to a large extent been neglected and forgotten when it comes to development efforts. The main reason for this is their inaccessibility. The population is largely Christian - in some Village Development Committee areas being 90% - and there are many opportunities for initiatives linked to UMN's key areas of

work. The challenge is to find suitable partner organisations to work with, as no NGOs are currently active in the area. The Maoists have a strong presence.

UMN is also interested in south-west Dhading, where there are opportunities to work with marginalised Chepang communities. UMN has worked for many years in other parts of the district, and has developed positive relationships with local government that can be an asset for the future.

Rukum is a new, interesting challenge for UMN. Apart from some short-term nutrition work, UMN is completely new to the area. It is located in the hills of Nepal's mid-western region and is known as part of the Maoist heartland. It is a remote district and communications with the outside world is a challenge, although the district centre Musikot has an airport.

No other INGOs are currently working long-term in the area, but there are local organisations that UMN could partner with. There is a potential for initiatives related to most of UMN's key areas of work, and there is also a church with a vision for social outreach.

Rupandehi District with its centre Butwal was identified as an alternative location, in case it would not be possible to start working in Dhading or Rukum. Both these districts have been badly affected by the conflict between Maoists and security forces,

and may not be suitable as cluster locations if the security situation deteriorates. A decision will be made in 2005 about how to proceed.

Butwal, located on the Terai south of Tansen, has a long history of UMN involvement, in particular in the area of Engineering and Industrial Development. A large part of the industries that give Butwal its character are, directly or indirectly, the fruit of UMN work. There are still many opportunities for new initiatives, not least in the more distant parts of the district of Rupendehi.

* * *

The strategies are in place, the locations are identified, the structure is taking shape and the culture is slowly emerging... It is with joy and anticipation that UMN now begins implementing all that it has been planning and preparing for over the last couple of years. It is entering new territory, to a large extent unknown, but it does so with trust in God's faithfulness, with a conviction that He will continue to guide UMN step by step as He has done in the past. Therefore, it is with confidence that UMN crosses the 50 year mark and moves into the future with a feeling of being born again. □

Healthy smiles for all

What if you brushed your teeth with toothpaste and discovered that instead of healthy teeth, your teeth developed cavities? This was the situation in Nepal not too long ago. The level of dental caries was doubling every ten years due to increased sugar consumption, in spite of the fact that many used toothpaste. A recent survey showed that nearly half of Nepali schoolchildren suffered from tooth decay. This problem seriously affected the quality of life of many Nepali people. In the context of poverty, poor nutrition, and poor health, an abscess from a tooth can spread to other parts of the head and neck, and can even result in death.

The difference between healthy smiles and pain and suffering is fluoridated toothpaste. The widespread use of fluoridated toothpaste in many developed nations has led to a dramatic decline in dental decay. A market analysis in 1998 by the Oral Health Programme of the United Mission to Nepal showed that virtually all toothpastes in Nepal, including those manufactured by many multi-national pharmaceutical companies, were not fluoridated. The availability of fluoridated toothpastes was limited to relatively expensive imported brands accessible only to wealthy consumers in Kathmandu.

Started in 1984, the Oral Health Programme works to develop effective preventive and promotive oral health initiatives. In 1999 the Programme launched an advocacy project aimed at increasing the availability and consumption of affordable, fluoridated toothpaste by targeting manufacturers of local and imported toothpastes. The advocacy project not only educated the manufacturers, but also raised awareness among Nepali dentists, Health Ministers and bureaucrats regarding the importance of a fluoridated environment.



When the project commenced, annual fluoridated toothpaste consumption was negligible. Two years later almost all local toothpaste manufacturers had changed their policy. Annual consumption of fluoridated toothpaste was approximately 900 tons, and total market share of fluoridated toothpaste was approximately 90 percent—mostly through the conversion of non-fluoridated toothpastes to fluoridated toothpastes.

To ensure that quality affordable fluoridated toothpastes are increasingly more available to the people of Nepal, the Oral Health Programme has recommended the removal of taxes on these toothpastes. Since February 2003, the Programme has been partnering with the newly formed Oral Health Unit in the government's Department of Health Services to implement this and other oral health strategies to ensure 'Healthy Smiles For All'.

by Robert Yee

N O T E S

1. Ernest Oliver first went to Bihar, North India as a missionary in 1935 with Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU). He was joined two years later by his wife Margaret. In 1948, after the war, Ernest was Field Superintendent in Bihar which brought him into close contact with two RBMU centers at Raxaul and Jogbani. Ernest took leadership in bringing the evangelical mission groups along the border to accept the invitation to go into Nepal together. Ernest then became the first Executive Secretary of the United Mission after it was established in 1954, based in India but traveling to Nepal frequently. He moved to Kathmandu in 1959 for one year before a home assignment in UK where he was asked to be director of his mission.

2. Dr. Trevor Strong and his wife, Dr. Patricia Strong went to India in 1948 to reopen Duncan Hospital in Raxaul where they worked for 25 years. Dr. Strong was elected president of the UMN Board of Directors for 1968-1970. In 1972, Drs. Trevor and Patricia Strong moved to Kathmandu to serve with the United Mission to Nepal. Dr. Trevor Strong became the Medical Superintendent of Shanta Bhawan Hospital and Dr. Patricia Strong was on the medical staff. They returned for a further term of service in 1987.

3. Jonathan Lindell. Nepal and the Gospel

of God (New Delhi: H.K. Mehta at Thomson Press Ltd., 1979) p. 139.

4. In 1956, there was a delegation of eleven Nepali Christians who migrated to Nepal from Darjeeling. Among others, they included Robert Karthak, Rajendra and Jermit Rongong and Dhanamaya Shrestha. Rajendra, Jermit and Dhanamaya were involved in teaching. Robert Karthak, though also skilled in teaching, served as pastor to the group and through the years became known as the senior pastor of the indigenous church in Nepal. His wise advice and counsel to new Nepali Christians, expatriate missionaries and to the leaders of UMN were of immense value to all. For a full understanding of the growth of the church in Nepal, please review *A Biographical History of the Church in Nepal* by Cindy Perry (revised 2000) and *The Cross in the Land of the Khukuri* by Norma Kehrberg (2000).

5. The eight charter members of what became known as the United Mission to Nepal included: Regions Beyond Mission Union, Church of Scotland Mission, American Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church in Southern Asia, Zenana Bible and Medical Mission, World Mission Prayer League, Swedish Baptist Mission, United Christian Missionary Society. The Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon was listed in the Minutes as a member but this

error was corrected in a later meeting. This Church was an active participant in the formative meetings but did not formally join the Mission. Information taken from Jonathan Lindell, *Nepal and the Gospel of God*, pp. 147.

In 2003, the member bodies of the United Mission to Nepal include: Church Missionary Society of Australia, Presbyterian Church in Canada, United Church of Canada, Danmission (Denmark), Evangelical Free Church of Finland, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission, Gossner Mission (Germany), Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Japan Overseas Christian Medical Cooperative Service, Norwegian Himal-Asia Mission, InterAct (Sweden), Baptist Missionary Society (UK), Church of Scotland, Church Mission Society (UK), Methodist Church (Britain), Tear Fund (UK), Common Global Ministries Board (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, International Technical Assistance Group, Mennonite Mission Network (USA), Mennonite Central Committee (USA), Presbyterian Church (USA), United Methodist Church (USA), World Mission Prayer League (USA), and the international mission groups Assemblies of God, Interserve and World Concern. These 27 member bodies were joined by 25 affiliated member bodies representing 16 different countries of the world.

6. As an example, Shyam Krishna Ranjit, a former director of the Community Develop-

ment Health Program (CDHP), stated in an interview in Kathmandu in March 2002 that six staff who served as health assistants in the CDHP program went on to complete medical school and are now serving in medical teaching institutions in Nepal.

7. Executive directors of UMN: Ernest Oliver, 1954-1960, Jonathan Lindell, 1960-1971, Frank Wilcox, 1971-1976, Gordon Ruff, 1976-1979, Carl Johansson, 1979-1984, Howard Barclay, 1984-1990, Edgar Metzler, 1990-1998, Michael Askwith, 1999, Norma Kehrberg, 2000, Jennie Collins, since 2001.

8. Varughese Thomas with his wife, Mary Thomas from the Mar Thoma Church in Kerala migrated to Nepal to serve as the headmaster of Luitel School. They were not members of UMN but served as direct staff of Luitel. After a period of years, they were succeeded by another couple from Kerala, Thomas Varughese and his wife. Both of these couples were active in education in Nepal after leaving Luitel.

9. Betty Young was the secretary for Ernest Oliver in Bihar, India from 1957 before moving to Kathmandu. Betty served in UMN administrative positions including personnel secretary until she left Nepal in 1990. Betty continues to serve with UMN as the archivist based in Edinburgh where the UMN archives and church history records are kept.

10. Odd and Tullis Hoftun first came to Nepal in 1957 to build Tansen Hospital. Tullis recalls how songs and music were able to draw people together across different countries and Christian perspectives. She said that their horizons were widened and led to increased openness and understanding, so necessary for life in the many years ahead. Tullis wrote in 2002, "Certainly not all was sunshine and happiness on that barren hillside in Tansen called Bushaldala and we had our times of disagreements. But I do not think anyone of us could think of leaving UMN to work for any single, less complicated mission organization. We felt privileged."

11. Simon Pandey left the directorship of Butwal Technical Institute to work full time as a pastor in Butwal. In 1994, he was elected to become the Secretary of the National Churches Fellowship, Nepal. He and his family moved to Kathmandu.

12. Dr. Rajendra Rongong was in the first group that came to Nepal from Darjeeling with his wife, Jermit, who worked with Elizabeth Franklin at Mahendra Bhawan Girls High School. Dr. Rongong subsequently joined government service as an educator and served in many capacities including professor of education at Tribhuvan University and also as principal of the Laboratory School. Dr. Rongong retired from government service, was elected an elder in the Nepali Christian Church and

continues to provide consultancy service to UMN in educational matters.

13. Lindell, p. 196.

14. Excerpts taken from UMN Statement of Values, an official document of UMN.

15. Lindell, pp. 254-255.

16. Monika Schutzka, Reflections from Sanagaon, Out of print booklet published by Shanta Bhawan Community Health Program in November 1975. p. 30.

17. However, a set of "Operating Principles" were developed to help UMN as an organization and staff members at the personal level to apply the Mission Statement in their lives.

18. UMN has not had any formal registration as an organisation before, neither in Nepal nor in any other country. The legal basis for its work in Nepal has been its five-year General Agreements with His Majesty's Government of Nepal. Registration will be necessary if and when the proposed Social Development Organisations Act will be ratified.

19. UMN has submitted a proposal to the Ministry of Health for a process of moving to this new structure. At the time of writing, UMN was still waiting for the ministry's response.

BIOGRAPHIES OF CONTRIBUTORS

Dr. Suresh Raj Sharma, has been a Vice Chancellor of Kathmandu University since 1991. Dr. Sharma started his career as a lecturer of Chemistry at Tribhuvan University and climbed the ladder of success, becoming Associate Professor; Professor; Member Secretary, National Education Committee; Executive Director, Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training; and finally Vice Chancellor, Kathmandu University.

Dr. Sharma has published over half a dozen of books on education, science and technology and he is also well-known in the media for his frequent contributions.

The service rendered by Dr. Sharma in education and social work has been recognized by the late Kings Mahendra and Birendra with these prestigious awards and decorations: Mahendra Vidyabhusan both A and B, Gorkha Dakshin Bahu, both Class 2 and 3. Dr. Sharma has visited 24 countries.

* * *

Norma Kehrborg first came from the USA to Nepal in 1968 and has been involved directly or indirectly with Nepal ever since. As a professional educationalist she has been involved in both formal and non-formal education sectors. While in Nepal, she also took a keen interest in women's

issues, seeing this as a vital area of development that Christians should be involved in. During her time in the United Mission to Nepal, Norma served as a non-formal education consultant, as Education Director and also one year as Executive Director.

Outside Nepal, Norma has been Associate General Secretary of the General Board of Global Ministries for the United Methodist Committee on Relief and has worked as an international health consultant. She has degrees from Westmar College, the University of Michigan and from the University of Hawaii. Her book "The Cross in the Land of the Khukuri" (2000), describes the impact of the Christian gospel in Nepal over the last 50 years.

* * *

Dr. Renu Rajbhandari is an independent women's rights activist. Prior to this, she worked for the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal campaigning against trafficking of women and children.

Inspired by a girl who was back from Bombay after being trafficked, she has started an organisation called Women Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC). Work modality is very much from the experiences from UMN which really inspired her to incorporate this within the organisation.

Dr. Rajendra Kumar Rongong, now retired, worked as a Professor of Education at Tribhuvan University for 38 years. He has a B. A. (Cal. U.); M. Ed. (Delhi U.); Ed. M. (Rutgers U.) and Ph. D. (S.I.U.) He was the first recipient of a Bachelor's degree awarded by a Nepali authority in 1958 (the degree was granted by HMG/N as there was no Nepali university then).

Dr. Rongong started his career as a primary grade teacher, gradually moving up to become a secondary school teacher, headmaster and finally a professor. He was involved in the Nepal Scouts from its initial stage to the mid-nineties. These are the positions he held during his career: Director of the National Development Service, Director of the Curriculum Development Center, Tribhuvan University; Chief Commissioner (B) of the Nepal Scouts, Senior Education Consultant at the UMN, Chairman and Member of different Campus and Schools' committees.

He has received Gorkha Dakshin Bahu, Coronation Medal, Birendra-Aisworya Medal, Education Day Medal and a few other awards. Dr. Rongong is an elder of Gyaneswor Church in Kathmandu. His hobby is reading. He has two daughters, a son and four grandchildren. His wife Mrs. Jermit Rongong is one of the founders and teachers of the Mahendra Bhawan Girls School. He lives at Sanepa.

Stefan Östman was born in Sweden in 1972. His interest for international relations and mission began at an early age, as his family moved to France when he was eight years old and stayed there for four years. After completing secondary education, Stefan studied to become a journalist. He started working as a reporter for a daily newspaper in southern Sweden in 1994. The same year he married Marie. Together they nurtured their interest for mission, and in 1998 decided to leave Sweden for a short-term assignment in Nepal through the Swedish mission organisation InterAct.

This soon led to a longer-term commitment. After completing training at the Örebro Mission Institute in Sweden they returned to Nepal in 1999. Stefan worked in UMN's Communications Office until June 2003, from 2001 as In-Charge of the office. His responsibilities also included involvement in the Strategic Change Process and in the planning for UMN's 50th Anniversary celebrations.

Stefan completed his term with UMN in July 2003. He and his wife now live close to Örebro, between Stockholm and Gothenburg. He continues to be involved in mission, based in Sweden, and part of his heart remains in Nepal. He is currently working with InterAct Sweden, visiting churches to inform, inspire and challenge people for mission work.

“And what does the Lord require of you?
To do justice and to love compassion
And to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8



यूनाइटेड मिसन टु नेपाल

UNITED MISSION TO NEPAL

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ISBN 99933-759-5-0