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## Prayer Letter

### June 2009

Greetings to you all. I am really grateful for your prayers over the last few months. They have been hectic and challenging times.

Praise God that a new executive director has been appointed. Last month Jennie Collins was given a loving and special farewell by the UMN board and then staff after a momentous eight years of service which saw this nation change from a traditional monarchy to a democratic republic. We still are grappling with what that means and on the first day of the board meeting the prime minister resigned in a public address to the nation. The implications of this are not clear as the formation of a new government is proving to be difficult in our fragmented political scene. UMN has been radically re-structured during the last eight years, moving from implementing projects to working through Nepali organisations empowering them to transform communities as together we address the root causes of poverty.

Praise God that Dhana, my replacement, is settling in well, enjoying the challenge and making mature decisions in her handling of the team leaders. We have travelled together to the clusters for her initial introduction programme. In Dhading it was very special for me to have two days visiting schools about which I had heard for the last three years and actually both see and hear some of the changes that have taken place as a result of UMN working with them. It was awesome to be welcomed by the local band of traditional instruments, especially as I had had a three-hour jeep ride and three-hour walk to get to the school. Teachers and parents were enthusiastic about the improvement in facilities... books in the



*The UMN General Assembly*



library, schedule for children to come and read, charts on the wall, parents involved in decision making and much more. There were four schools to be visited before it was dark and the final one had a television running on solar power to use with a DVD player to help the younger children learn English, maths, creative art and science. After watching a lesson and chatting with the delightful newly qualified teacher who was excited at how this technology was encouraging the younger students, we moved outside for a most welcome cup of plain tea. A charming young woman, elegant in her crimson sari with gold embroidery came up to me, smiled warmly and greeted me with the words, 'Jai Mashi'. My host for the programme rushed up to explain she was the dalit representative on the parent teacher association. A representative of the low caste, despised and frequently ignored community but she knew and loved the Lord Jesus Christ and wanted me to know that, hence her greeting. We chatted. No she had never had the opportunity to go to school but oh yes she had learnt to read through a non-formal education programme and now was able to ensure her young daughter not only attended school but did her homework! As I moved off we blessed one another.

A few hours later I was at the small lodge where I was to spend the night. Another woman came for a chat, older and careworn, she poured out her heart about her husband's drunkenness and violence, their son in Kathmandu who

hates coming home as he is ashamed of his father, their daughter still at school and her anxiety that they would never have enough money for her to marry a good husband. I listen and then prayed with her asking God who knows her heart to open a way for his love to reach and touch her in her trouble.



News from Shaha in UK has focused on his computer which crashed the day before he left. We all eagerly look forward to welcoming him back later this month.

A ticket is booked for my journey in November to my next country... one not as flat as Bangladesh and certainly not as mountainous as Nepal. After time with friends I shall hope to be in Leicester by the end of November and moving into a house soon after that. Full details later when things are a bit clearer.

The coming months will focus on end of year reporting, project proposal writing and some reflection on how the work of UMN in the clusters has changed from when it was first conceived in 2002/3. I also plan some time with a friend of long standing who is moving house and a visit to other friends of long standing scattered around Bangladesh.

My recent readings have been in the letters written by Peter and there is much to encourage and stimulate. There are words in season for all ages and stages of life. From the many quotable quotes I close with this, 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you' or as a modern paraphrase expresses, 'Live carefree before God, he is most careful with you.'

*Christine*

## Prayer Points

- ◆ Dhana as she continues to grow into her role
- ◆ Those with whom I will be working to refine reporting and proposal writing skills
- ◆ Mark Galpin the new Executive Director as he gets to know UMN
- ◆ The Cluster Teams in the far west as the monsoon approaches which will mean some are cut off from family and supplies for up to 3 months. Our cluster-based staff as many are seeking opportunities to study outside of Nepal.
- ◆ The government, wisdom and courage and a restoration of law and order
- ◆ Patience, creativity and stamina as well as safety in travel.

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