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“ Deusi Re, Deusi Re... ”



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“ **Deusi Re, Deusi Re...** ” are the words that my son, so many years ago, sang during the Tihar festival while dancing from house to house blessing the households and accepting candy and money treats. This year’s celebration happened while I was in Nepal in November. Hearing the words of that song being sung reminded me of years past!

Tihar is a time of celebration with lights and candles inviting Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, to enter one’s home by painting footprints up to the front entrance way inviting her to come

in. Their thankfulness for all the benefits she has bestowed the past year is shown with the lighting oil lamps. Candles on doorways and windows welcome the prosperity and the well-being that she brings. Colored sand or flower petals outside their house create a sacred welcoming area for the Goddess Laxmi as she enters a home bringing prosperity for the coming year.



Hearing “*Deusi Re, Deusi Re*” sung and seeing houses garlanded with lights reminds me of Christmas: the carols we sing telling the story of the birth of the newborn King; the lights the Christian religion uses to show the world that the newborn King is the Light of the World!

This year brought me a new meaning to Tihar. In my encounters with IM’s partners, my eyes were opened to see through this new lens how they bring the newborn King as the Light of the World to the people around them.

This young man, a recipient of a leadership grant, is studying engineering at a Nepal campus. His goal is to work with Multipurpose Community Development Service to use his education and engineering skills to show Christ as the light of the world in impoverished communities.



My friend, whom I know since 1979, has lived in Nepal for 55 years – 37 of them with the United Mission to Nepal. She is a nutritionist. Studying the local available grains in village households, she mixed these grains together to make “*sarbottam pitho*” (meaning super-flour) – high in protein and calorie intake. It continues to be used for treating mal-

nourished infants and children, as well as a weaning food for healthy ones. My daughters, in the 1980's, ate it as a weaning food, instead of the available white rice cereal.



Another friend is the founder and director of Asha Bal Bikash Sewa (ABBS), a day center for children living with disabilities. This boy, living with cerebral palsy, can now stand by himself and walk slowly. He was totally stiff when he came to ABBS years ago! Now he can walk! The Light of the World, pouring never-ending love and grace through the teachers to the ABBS children, brings light and hope to the children and their families. Whether malnourished, or living with a disability, all the children around Jesus were blessed in his arms.





And walking into another office in the same building as ABBS, I found the present and the founding Executive Directors of the Human Development and Community Service waiting for me. Speaking with our hands and our smiles, we shared the present plans of rebuilding the damaged staff housing in the rural hospital in Besishahar. Anticipating the coming year in a new way, we shared our future hopes and dreams.



And between all the lights, singing, and vacation days of Tihar having come to a close, the leadership at Elijah Counseling and Training Center was busily getting ready for a 3-day *Caring for Clients with Complex Trauma* Workshop to be held for about 20 counselors. They all have done a lot of post-earthquake trauma counseling. And it was now a time for them. In addition to their learning about the importance of self-care, they learned new skills and were challenged to grow and change. The leader, in addition to teaching, provided opportunities for role-playing. There were grateful smiles on each participant's face as they received their certificate, having been given new ways to bring light to their clients. Truly this workshop was appreciated more than I could ever imagine.



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Lights and candles have been taken down, chalk and paint are worn away, sand and flower petals blown away... until Tihar next year. Throughout this coming year, each of these people to whom I've introduced you will experience life with its ups and downs, and encounter opportunities for growing and changing. They are bringing the King – the Light of the World – to the people around them in ways specific to them. Their stories will probably be different next year.

"Deusi Re, Deusi Re..." will be sung next year. The songs of Christmas – *"Hark! The herald angels sing, glory to the new-born king... Light and life to all he brings..."* celebrating the birth of the newborn King will be sung.

Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world."* He also said to his followers, *"You are the light of the world."* Living life with its ups and downs, may you also bring light to your world around you this coming year.

