

Andy and Jenny Saunders

Home?

July 2021



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We hope to return to Kathmandu on 18th July. Are we returning home or leaving home? The last 15 months we've been living out of suitcases in a number of different homes so it will certainly be lovely to return to our own flat and to be settled again. But we're also painfully conscious of leaving those we love in the UK. Where is home? We're not sure.

Courses in Jeopardy

Jenny: I had an encouraging session with 3 of my supervision course 'graduates' who seem keen to help teach the course in the future. This team and the ECTC team will teach the foundation courses in parallel, then join to teach those eligible for the Advanced Course. However, if this does not have some form of accreditation by a reputable University or other organisation it is unlikely to have the 'kudos' to continue after I leave Nepal. I'm in the process of contacting individuals and organisations in the UK and Nepal. Most accreditation seems too expensive, or unethical or lengthy for our needs.

Andy: Early in August the Bible College will be assessed by the Asian Theological Association to see if their B.Th. course accreditation can be renewed. I've not been part of the preparation for this visit and a quick look at the requirements left me concerned that the college is deficient in a number of areas. The sad thing is that the process leading up to the accreditation visit is meant to include opportunities for reflection on the college's strengths and weaknesses and that hasn't happened. I hope the College does get its accreditation renewed but I'm also hoping that strong recommendations for improvement will be forthcoming.

Return to Nepal

We had 2 flights back to Nepal cancelled, but the one on 18th July seems to be going ahead as long as our PCR tests are negative and the paperwork is in order. We will then have to quarantine for 10 days in our flat. The weather will be hot and sticky every day because it's the monsoon season. We'll be dependant on friends for shopping and running errands. In Kathmandu there will probably be less Covid positives than in the UK now, but the general awareness of social distancing and 'bubbles' will be much lower.

This transition/goodbye time is always really hard. Parents are more frail and need us so much more. We are thankful that our daughter is still clear of cancer and has about 3 dance projects on at once. We'll say goodbye to her today and we saw our son last month.



Ouch!

Mission workers come with skills and gifts to share but these are not always recognised or properly utilised by the partnering organisations. We have seen friends frustrated and hurt by this over our time in Nepal and now it may be our turn.

Some changes have been made during our absence and we need wisdom to know if, how and when to challenge decisions and when to submit to the system/structure. It is complicated by cultural differences. Pray for wisdom and grace to stay sane.

Good Old Days

Two of Jenny's colleagues were reminiscing about their childhoods. They would be up early to work on the land, eat breakfast and then rush to school. For one, the long walk each way and remote location meant no meals for 12 hours! Most children had no shoes and only one set of clothes. They looked forward to the annual Dashain festival when a visiting relative would bring a new outfit. 'Money was rare to see. We ate what we grew and sometimes used a barter system for other things.' 'My parents wanted me to wear shoes but I hid them in a bush near my house, walked barefoot to school with my friends and put them on again before reaching home'.

There was a nostalgia for that old lifestyle and sadness that some are drawn to the cities to their detriment –'Like a moth sees the light and dies there'.



For Prayer:

For those we are leaving in the UK.
Wisdom and grace (and better sleep for Jenny).
A miraculous way forward for supervision course accreditation.
A fruitful visit to NBBC by the accreditation team.
Readjustment to Kathmandu life.

Whether home is the UK or Nepal we feel privileged to love and enjoy two countries so much. It has also been a privilege to meet many of you on our Zoom home assignment visits. Thank you for your continued support of us and of BMS.

Blessings and best wishes,

Andy and Jenny

If you would like to support Andy and Jenny Saunders by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.



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