

Oh, the Irony!

Description

On Taunya's last-week theme of daily new experiences, just today we saw this man giving some snake gourd to a bull — a first time sight in Nepal!

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Man feeds bull

The work is progressing. We have two approved projects awaiting legal agreements to be drawn up. Another project we expect will be approved this coming week. We're still working on the proposal for a fourth one, and then for an encore—we are determined to get a wheelchair project rolling (no pun intended)! That one is going to be tricky, as the players involved, both old (from previous wheelchair projects done by LDS Charities in Nepal) and new (the Rotary Club) are not in a great position at this point to form a team to do the implementation. We not only get to write the check and serve as in-country coordinators but are also trying to be pros at public relations and interpersonal dynamics. The technicalities are one thing, and no small thing at that. But technical is the easy part! I find it ironic that our “great” people skills are going to be put to their severest test yet in a monumental effort to possibly smooth ruffled feathers as well as coordinate different parties to help identify, fit, train, and assess the benefit to the truly needy beneficiaries of mobility devices that will dramatically improve their lives.

Music lessons yesterday after Church went better than we expected. There is something very unsettling about this undertaking to teach piano and other musical skills to 14 individuals with widely varying knowledge and skill levels. We *must* be insane! It helped that 3 adults and two children (one of them the youngest one) were not there — but still, 9 students is a lot! They are energetic and enthusiastic and yes, some are somewhat undisciplined. But they responded well to our instruction, which pleased and encouraged us. To help us, we are hoping for some more musically talented brothers and sisters to miraculously materialize when new US Embassy personnel arrive in Nepal next month!

On another looming-large topic, the Social Welfare Council (SWC) is the government agency we work with, and with whom we signed the 5-year general agreement. They approve, monitor and evaluate all projects implemented by us INGOs (International Non-government Organizations) in partnership with local NGOs. The SWC bureaucracy is something to behold. Yes, they have their “process” (which they pride themselves on) — but to my mind it's a tremendously time-consuming process that involves a labyrinth of offices and people and multiple redundant copies of documents.

Their final evaluation report of the 2nd year of a 3-year project we're doing numbers 67 pages. In the report the evaluators made some observations about and recommendations for LDS Charities. SWC requires in response a “Commitment for Implementing Recommendations” (action plan) document. The official who had me sign two copies, one for him and one for me, said: Bring back your action plan within 15 days along with 8 (count 'em, 8) copies of the final report! Why in the world they would need 8 copies, and would require us to make them, is a mystery I am far from understanding.

The irony of them telling us that LDS Charities “lacks a proper office and critical personnel to offer the NGO partners technical and other help” — when I compare ours to their office and personnel, wow! The prideful man in me says I could tell them a thing or twelve about efficiency! We have a little more technical savvy and computer skills than our predecessors, so there will be no criticisms come next evaluation that “reporting and documentation were deemed to be extremely lacking”!

Another little irony occurred to me this week in connection with an incident involving a car. The car came out of nowhere as we were crossing the road that we have crossed without a problem many, many times. It was on the wrong side of the road and traveling very fast too! (Unusual for this

intersection.) The left side of the car brushed against my right forearm as it sped by, and a split-second later the left-rear tire ran over the most protruding part of me — my left big toe. I remember being surprised that it didn't hurt. At all. Granted, the car was small, and most of its weight was in the front. Taunya suggested some guardian angel was also there to "push" the side of the car so it would be even lighter at the exact moment of tire-toe encounter!

Where's the irony? A few days later when I least expected trouble, I stubbed my right toes on the 2-inch lip from bathroom floor to shower floor! That. Hurt. No guardian angel this time!

Notwithstanding the little slings and arrows (and cars and lips) life throws at us, we know we are blessed by Heavenly help, and prayers and love from family and friends who support us. With our best efforts thus magnified, this work will continue to roll forth, because it is the work of the Lord.

To quote Moroni,

"For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled." (Mormon 8:22)

A delightful bonus from the Daily New Experience file:

<http://firstthreeodds.org/wpcontent/uploads/2023/07/monkey-business.mp4>

Wait for it...!

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