

EVERY TONGUE

Mark and Laura Woodward, February 2012

Dear friends,

After five years of talking, thinking, praying and getting excited about moving to Tanzania, on the morning of January 13th we finally arrived at Dar es Salaam International Airport, to be greeted by the heat and humidity of the Tanzanian coast! In a way it felt almost like a dream to be back in Tanzania, although that may have been more due to the fact that we didn't sleep much on the plane...!

Our first couple of months in Tanzania are still a time of transition, as we **get accustomed to life here** and as Laura spends time learning the national language – Swahili. While we are anxious to arrive in the town of Mpanda where we will be based, we are also aware that we have much to learn in these first few weeks, and that this time is in many ways foundational to our life and work in Tanzania in the future.

After arriving in Tanzania, the rest of January was spent in Dar es Salaam on the Tanzanian coast, **receiving orientation** to life here and to the Uganda-Tanzania branch of SIL International, who we are working with. This was a valuable time, although it was often quite busy as we were also trying to buy supplies, apply for driving licenses, take care of car maintenance, and spend time with people in the SIL office in order to discuss and learn more about our roles in Mpanda.

At the beginning of February we then drove eight hours west to the town of Iringa, where we are now staying at a Swahili language school. Here Laura is **making a start on learning to speak Swahili**, which is vitally important as Swahili is the main national language of Tanzania (in addition to the 120 or so local languages).

So far Laura has been making great progress and has mastered the basics of Swahili grammar in addition to learning quite a bit of vocabulary, but as with any language, becoming proficient will take a lot of time and effort! Mark can remember much of what he knew before, but is grateful for the opportunity to be able to talk with people here and to brush off some of the cobwebs from the Swahili section of his brain...

At the same time we are really enjoying making new friends, playing volleyball, and walking through the beautiful countryside and villages around the campsite.



Below: Laura tries some sugar cane as we visit a village



Above: Our house at language school



Right and Below: Laura's Swahili class with our colleagues



At the beginning of March we are planning to drive a further three days west to the town of **Mpanda in Katavi Region**, in the far west of Tanzania. Here we will be joining two other SIL families, and the church leaders who are eager to start the work of translating the Bible into the languages of the people of Katavi Region.

After taking a few days to settle in, Mark will begin serving the team as **Operations Manager**, trying to make sure that everything – IT, finance, office logistics etc – runs smoothly so that everyone else can do their job without too many interruptions! There is already plenty waiting for Mark to do in Mpanda, as our colleagues have been busily setting up the new office over the past few months.

One exciting milestone in the project will hopefully be at the end of March, when speakers of some of the languages of the region will come together for the **first linguistic workshop**, where they will be collecting hundreds of words from their languages which can then be analysed linguistically to come up with suitable alphabets and writing systems.

Proposed schedule for the next few months:

February: Language school in Iringa

Early March: Drive to Mpanda

March onwards: Mark to start serving the team as operations manager, and Laura in caring for people's personal needs

Late March to May: Word collection workshops with Bende-Tongwe, Pimbwe, Rungwa and Konongo speakers

June 2012 onwards: The team works on analysing the languages and starts to develop writing systems for each one



Some of the friendly creatures we have met so far...

As well as continuing to learn Swahili, once we arrive in Mpanda Laura will be starting her role **servicing the personal needs of our colleagues** as we work together as a diverse cultural team, many of us serving outside of our home country. This is an area that Laura enjoys, and she would value your prayers for wisdom to know exactly how she and another colleague, Jeana, can best serve the team.

Thank you again for **the part you are playing** in these initial stages of the long process of **translating the Bible** into the languages of these communities in western Tanzania. We are grateful for all that you do, and have very much been aware of the way God has been answering your prayers even in the last few weeks. We also really appreciate your financial donations which make our work possible, and your encouragements as you communicate with us from afar!

We are looking forward to continuing to work with you, alongside these communities, and are excited about the things that God will do in and through his people over the coming months and years!



Cut along here to remember to pray for us!

Mark and Laura Woodward



Cheques can be made payable to "Wycliffe UK" and sent to: Wycliffe UK, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP14 3XL, with a separate note "For Mark and Laura Woodward, a/c 214993"

Online and other donation options: www.wycliffe.org.uk/memberfundraising

Our website: www.everytongue.co.uk
Wycliffe UK: www.wycliffe.org.uk

Thank God that:

We have arrived safely in Tanzania, and have been very healthy so far

Our financial support level is close to 100% of our monthly budget!

Laura is learning Swahili well, and we are both settling in to life here

Plans are coming together to move out to Mpanda in early March

Pray for:

Our colleagues and the church leaders in Mpanda as they continue to plan the project

Continued good health for us, and safety as we travel the three days to Mpanda

That we would settle in well once we arrive in Mpanda, and get to know people there

That we would know what it means to follow Jesus in our lives here