



Mark and Laura Woodward, July 2011

Dear praying friends,

It has been encouraging for us to see many of you over the past few weeks, and to be reminded of how much we rely on your support in prayer, financially and in other practical ways. We're so grateful for all you do in supporting us, and through us supporting what God is doing through translating the Bible around the world.

We're both currently continuing with our studies which we're enjoying and seem to be going well. Laura has been particularly encouraged that the recent counselling modules she has taken will be very relevant to her future work overseas as she serves alongside people who are living and working in cross-cultural teams, in what can often be a stressful environment. She is also aware of how the stress of transition can be something that people need help in processing and addressing, both from her classes and from first-hand experience over the past few years!

As we think ahead to spending some time in Tanzania's Katavi Region from January we are looking forward to getting to know the rest of the team we'll be working with. Most of our Wycliffe colleagues we are already friends with, but we're also looking forward to meeting many new faces, particularly from the local church leadership, and also the translators and literacy workers who will be chosen from the various language groups.

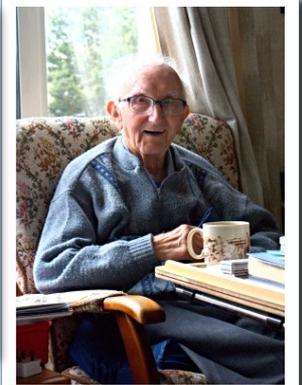
Mark is planning to serve the team in Katavi in practical ways as they set up an office and begin the work of linguistic analysis of the languages, creating alphabets and writing systems, starting translation and distribution work, and promoting literacy. This will be certainly be a challenge for Mark, but he is looking forward to serving the team in this way and helping to facilitate the process of making the Bible available to language communities in western Tanzania.

During next year Mark is also hoping to carry out research for his MA dissertation, investigating how people engage with the Bible in various languages in Tanzania. There may be a need to survey various language communities in Katavi too, to investigate how they can best have access to the Bible, which is something that Mark has previous experience in.

In May Mark spent three weeks in England taking the final module of his MA in Bible and Mission, thinking through how the Bible is used in mission, both in a western context and among minority groups around the world who are maybe just beginning to have access to it in their language. Many of the parts of the module, particularly those relating to translation and Scripture use in oral cultures, will be very useful as we plan to work with language communities in Katavi.



Mark was glad to be able to meet up with some family and friends during his time in the UK in May, as well as sharing at our three supporting churches there. Unfortunately Laura wasn't able to join him on the trip as flights were just a bit too expensive, so she stayed at home in Oregon...



Having been living in Oregon since last October we feel as though we have settled in to life here fairly well, although we're well aware that it will be time to move on again soon. Laura's Mom is planning to sell her house (where we're living) in the next few weeks, which means we'll be looking for a new home! We're currently praying about various possibilities, either staying here in this area, or spending the next few months in California where Laura grew up and where we have some good friends, or a combination of the two. We would definitely appreciate your prayers for wisdom as we consider where we should spend our last few months before going overseas, and as we continue to raise support for our work.

Over the next few months we'll be continuing with our courses, and plan to both be finished by December, with the exception of Mark's dissertation for which he hopes to conduct research in Tanzania next year.

In June we were able to spend a couple of weeks in California with some good friends and our supporting church in Petaluma. It was great to see many familiar faces and to meet some new ones too, as we had the chance to share with a couple of home groups about our work in Bible translation.

We had a lot of fun with our friends and their young families, which included camping in San Diego and seeing one-year-old Levi dedicated at church.



As we have shared above we have some ideas about where God may lead us in the coming months and years, but are also aware of many factors that are outside of our control. We are very conscious of the truth of the proverb (16:9) that says that we can make our plans but the Lord determines our steps.

Currently our plans involve going to Tanzania in January to settle in there, Laura to learn Swahili, Mark to do some research for his MA dissertation, and us both to get to know our roles there to some extent. At this stage we're planning to spend 6-8 months in the country, after which time we would return to the US for a period of time before eventually returning to Tanzania to continue working in Katavi longer-term. However, we are also aware that there are many factors that we need to take into consideration, and things that can change, so we would ask for your prayers for wisdom as we plan ahead in faith.

Finally we would ask you to remember the church leaders in Katavi Region as they continue to plan the start of the translation project later this year. Several of our colleagues are also in the process of moving to the region to work alongside these church leaders, so they are praying for good transitions and a time of settling in well to a new living environment.

Thanks so much for all you do to support us and to support language communities in Katavi, Tanzania as they prepare to translate the Bible into their languages. We really appreciate all that you do and thank God for each of you!



Cut along here to remember to pray for us!

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Thank God that:

Mark's course in England went well and he was able to spend time with friends and family

We are both enjoying our studies and learning a lot

We had a good trip to visit friends and supporters in California

Pray for:

New people to join our team of prayer and financial supporters

Our colleagues and church leaders in Katavi Region as they prepare to start work on Bible translation

Wisdom for us in decisions we have to make over the next few months, and as we prepare to hopefully fly to Tanzania in January