



Mark and Laura Woodward, December 2008

Dear praying friends,

The last few months have really been a time when we have known God's blessing and have grown in our relationships with him. Things haven't always been straightforward, but we have a great deal to thank God for!

In September Mark was helping out on one of the courses for new Wycliffe members again. He was teaching phonetics, which is the study of sounds, to help the members as they prepare to learn and analyse languages overseas.

This was a really enjoyable experience, and was also a great way to get to know some of the students a bit. There was the added pressure that for some of the participants this year the course is part of an MA qualification, so Mark had to make sure he was teaching the right things...!

Mark has continued in his role as Recruitment Coordinator, which he really enjoys. He now has the responsibility of supervising two ladies – one in his office and one remotely in Belfast – while his current boss is taking a 4-month sabbatical. Supervising others has been a good experience so far, and has also meant that Mark has had to rely more on the Lord for wisdom, and in praying for those he's supervising which is a good thing!



Mark's phonetics class



Above: The Mali summer team returning to the UK
Below: Participants on the July Window on Wycliffe Course



This time of year is a busy time for recruitment, as many people, particularly students, are considering what they will do in the next academic year. In the last couple of weeks we have been travelling quite a bit, to Cambridge, Hull, Leeds and Newcastle where we have met with students interested in finding out more about how they can join in with what God is doing through Bible translation.

The events were really encouraging for us as we saw the excitement and energy of the students, and we pray that God would continue to work in the hearts of those he's calling to Bible translation.

In the office Mark continues to enjoy the opportunities he has to share with others what God is doing worldwide and how they can be involved. Our summer teams this year to Mali and Cameroon were very successful, with the participants learning a lot about Bible translation. As always with short-term teams there is very little that they can "achieve" during their time overseas in terms of completing tasks, but we pray that the relationships built and the things learnt will have an eternal impact.

After several months of praying we decided in September that Laura should finish in her role as Personal Assistant to the Director in order to spend more of her time working at home, and also to have more opportunity to be able to minister to the needs of those around her. Despite enjoying her role as PA, she had felt for a while that she wasn't able to give her best to both her job and her work at home and service to others.

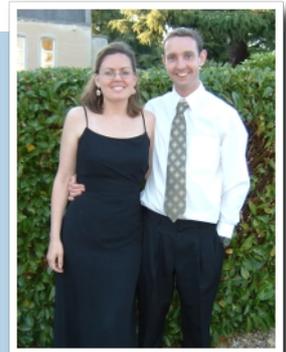
Having officially stopped working at the beginning of November she is really loving being at home so far, and is looking forward to being able to correspond more with friends and supporters, and to just be available to serve other friends and colleagues, which is something that she has a real gift for.



Dorset and Northern Ireland

After a few days camping in Dorset in August, we were able to go to Northern Ireland for 10 days in October, partly for work and partly for a beautiful holiday! The work part was for Mark to spend time in the Wycliffe Belfast office, as he works closely with the staff there, and also to help with a "Wycliffe and Me" event for people interested in working with Wycliffe.

The holiday was a really relaxing few days at a wonderful house on the north coast, lent to us by some friends of friends. The weather was quite cold, but we had some amazing views of the coastline, as well as being able to visit the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-rede rope bridge which was fun!



Above three photos: The north coast of Northern Ireland

Below: A panorama of the Dorset coast

Above: At a wedding in the summer



Looking ahead...

Next week we'll actually be moving house to another small flat here on the Wycliffe Centre, so that our friends who are needing a slightly larger flat can move into ours. We're looking forward to moving, although we'll certainly have to make sure we're tidy in our new smaller space! We'd appreciate your prayers for a good move, for both ourselves and our friends.

We'll be spending Christmas in the UK this year (Mark's first for 5 years, and Laura's first ever!), and are looking forward to spending time with Mark's family in particular. After that we'll be continuing in what we're doing at the moment!

Looking further ahead we have started talking to the Uganda-Tanzania Branch about tentative possibilities to return there in a couple of years. Our plan is that once Laura receives her UK citizenship, hopefully in 2010, we would return to Tanzania (potentially from early 2011) to serve in some capacity there. Although there's still a lot that can happen between now and then, it has been exciting to hear what is happening in Tanzania and what the branch's plans are for the next few years. Please pray that the Lord would reveal the next step to us at the right time as we continue to pray about the future.



Cut along here to remember to pray for us!

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Thank God for:

The opportunity for Laura to focus more on serving at home

Encouraging summer teams and a good number of enquiries for longer-term service

The ways that he's teaching us to rely on him in every step

Provision of another flat to stay in

Pray for:

God to prompt the right people to want to join in with Bible translation

Wisdom for Mark in communicating with enquirers and coordinating other things in the office

Continued provision of all our financial needs

Guidance for us as we pray about going overseas again at some point