

Dear friends,

## A visa refused

Last month I (Steve) was due to start typesetting the New Testament in the Ife ("Ee-fay") language of Togo, West Africa. However, **the Ife translator was refused a visa**, despite appeals from three separate MP's. This set off a chain of correspondence and planning, as this one event ties in with **recent developments in Wycliffe in Africa...**

## Wycliffe Africa

Wycliffe Africa is the new umbrella for eleven national African Wycliffe Member Organisations (WMO). These include BTL (Bible Translation and Literacy) in Kenya; GILLBT in Ghana—the Ghana Institute for Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation; and CABTAL in Cameroon—the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy. The establishment of Wycliffe Africa is an important milestone in the development towards African countries no longer being "the mission field". Instead, as the result of years of missionary effort and their own initiative, they have taken on the responsibility for Bible Translation themselves. In June last year the first Wycliffe Africa Conference was held in Yaoundé, Cameroon. Each African WMO (Wycliffe Member Organisation) recruits, trains, supports and sends out nationals, with the involvement of local churches.



*The Moba team in April 2007—also from Togo*

In Yaoundé there is a new Typesetting Department run by Cameroonians. And in Ghana a young man is learning to typeset, though he is not yet ready to produce New Testaments.

As WMO's in Africa develop, the pace of Bible Translation increases. At the same time Britain is tightening up on granting visas.

*And so, the incident of one visa refused has led to some major changes in my plans for the first half of this year!*

After much correspondence and weighing up priorities and possibilities, this is the outcome:

— I have received the **files of the Ife NT (Togo)**, and am doing essential preliminary work here in the UK, corresponding with the team in Togo by email. PTL for modern technology!

— On 18th March a translator from Ghana will come here for the **typesetting of the Ahanta NT**, provided he receives a visa! He has been in Britain before, which we hope will help.

— **In June I will go to Cameroon for 6–8 weeks** for a dual purpose. One is to complete the Ife typesetting there: the Ife team will join me in Yaoundé. The other purpose is to give consultancy help to the two Cameroonian typesetters as they get started on their first actual jobs after training in the States.

There has also been a request for me to come to Ghana for 6–8 weeks to finalise the training of the Ghanaian typesetter, so that he can confidently begin work on New Testaments. However, two trips of 6–8 weeks each in short succession would be too much for a number of reasons. *But*—if the Ahanta translator doesn't get his visa, I'll have to think again!

## The future?

We are delighted that so much is happening to bring Vision 2025 nearer to completion: a Bible Translation Project started in every language in the world that needs one, by 2025. In Nigeria alone there are hundreds of languages; and in Central Africa six hundred still remain to be done. This will lead to more typesetting as well, and possibly more of a 'mobile' consultancy role for me.

*We are grateful for the encouraging developments in Wycliffe Africa; and that my work ties in with it.*

## Please pray for:

— The Ahanta translator, that he will be granted a UK visa; he is due to speak in a number of British churches also.

— Wisdom as I start on the Ife files without the translators being present.

— Johanna, as my absence in June/July has immediate consequences for her now! (See next page.)

## Steve's Schedule (so far!)

### 2008

Feb.–Mar. UK: **Ife NT** (Togo).

Mar.–May UK: **Ahanta NT** (Ghana).

June–July Cameroon: **Ife NT + consulting.**

Aug.–Sept. UK: PD.

Oct.–Dec. UK: **Konkomba Bible** (OT and NT—Ghana).

### 2009

Jan.–Apr. UK: **Chumburung Bible** (Ghana).

July–Sept. Kenya: **Rendille NT** (Kenya).

Oct.–Dec. UK: Sabbatical.

### 2010

Jul.–Nov. UK: **Jula Bible** (Burkina Faso, West Africa).

**JOHANNA WRITES:**

We had actually planned a PD Furlough for May–June. **PD is Partnership Development** — staying in touch with all of you lovely people who pray for us, encourage, and support us. We're also seeking to extend our existing team of supporters. For a number of reasons we face a deficit in our income this year. This happens from time to time, and God has always provided. However, **our furlough has now been postponed until August/September.** *Meanwhile I want to do all I can to keep in touch with you* and also to seek new resources.

I recently took on a private **Dutch student!** I love the teaching.

**We also hope to get our house “up to scratch”** according to safety standards, etc., so that we can let it when we go to Kenya next year. House improvements are not included in our Wycliffe budget, but Wycliffe does allow it as a **“special project”** if needed. When we bought this house 10 years ago, it was very run down. Much has been done, but some major repairs are still outstanding. As the DIY-er in our family, I do what I can in terms of planning, painting, small repairs, etc.; though for larger projects we'll need the experts!

But I am delighted with the **increased strength** I'm now enjoying. I am really doing quite well. Many of you have prayed for my health, and I am so much better! The underlying problem was candida, and I am now officially free of that. As I have suffered from it for decades, the body will still need months or years to get totally back into balance (which goes more slowly when you are over 50!), but I feel I can LIVE!!

**My heart remains with supporting people who serve Him in Africa.** Last year I was able to find three ladies to support **Pastor Sammy**, who works with my friend **Irene Tongoi** in Kenya. *He works full-time in the slum of Huruma, north of Nairobi*, and in spite of the recent troubles in Kenya, has made good progress. He has started to pull the many small churches there together, and they recently organised an outreach week. Many were saved, and he is now teaching the new believers. In addition, he has dug rubbish pits (very necessary!). He holds daily devotionals at the new High School Irene started, and leads Bible studies in the evenings. He has (as a metal worker) adjusted bikes for 4 men so they can carry a passenger, and is doing market research to see what kind of small industry could be profitable. Irene is delighted, and said that a sense of hope is emerging for the first time in Huruma.

Huruma is almost entirely Kikuyu. Where there is no mixing of people-groups, things are not as bad as elsewhere, though for Irene it was a hard time as everything in Nairobi came to a standstill. This slowed down the building of new classrooms. She herself is not Kikuyu. Her outreach in Huruma is an act of courage and great love. Many Kenyan Christians are now faced with the challenge to exercise Godly love that transcends tribal differences, and so become vessels of reconciliation.

**Dennis Tongoi**, the husband of Irene, set up the Kenyan Alliance of Churches during the crisis, and all the denominations pulled together for the first time. He has also been leading CMS Africa (Church Mission Society) into a new phase of autonomy, just as Wycliffe Africa has become autonomous.

**Short update on the Next Generation**

Our offspring are both doing well at their respective universities. **Stephen** will finish this June, and then stay on to work with his church in Sheffield, St. Thomas Crooks, taking a part-time job to pay the bills. **Jen** continues with Anthropology at Goldsmiths College, University of London. In addition to her studies she is seeking how she can best prepare for a future as an Aid/Development worker. After a chat with Dennis Tongoi, she decided to do a free distance learning course on micro-finance and setting up small businesses in emerging economies, offered by the UN. We have also heard from **Freddie** in Nairobi; he said he was safe and well, but otherwise gave no news.



*The Pillingers,  
Christmas 2007*

In His love,

*Steve, Johanna,  
Jen, Stephen*

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