

Lost *in* Africa

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www.lostinafrica.org.uk

Alastair & Anna Duncan serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Tanzania

Our Orientation Course

We've done so much in the last six weeks since we arrived it's hard to capture it all here! After arriving on 3rd February we have been learning lots about culture and life in Tanzania. We spent a few days in Dar-es-Salaam before going to Dodoma where we had most of our lectures and introductory Swahili lessons.



Much of this was taught by Ismael, a Tanzanian who also works at the language school we will be attending in Iringa. He gave us great insight into the differences between Tanzanian society and western societies. One of the more obvious is that greetings are so important here: a handshake and spoken greeting is necessary whenever you meet anyone; a relationship has to be established before any sort of business is done. This is a valuable thing but time-keeping isn't so important which can sometimes be frustrating for us westerners!

'Practical anthropology' sessions were interesting; we went to a local market area and asked questions about people's daily lives. Due to the drought across much of eastern Africa, many are struggling to get enough food, it's even worse in the rural areas. In addition, electricity is a problem everywhere as the hydroelectric reservoirs have nearly dried up. We only have power about every other day at the moment and it's not very predictable!

Family life in Tanzania

One of the highlights has been staying with a Tanzanian family for a week in the outskirts of Dodoma. We were forced to practise our (very limited!) Swahili as the mother spoke no English at all. During the day we visited the market and helped her with cooking. The evenings were good fun with all



the family plus extras around (five children plus two cousins who were living with them!). We played a lot of draughts with coke bottle tops and it was so hot we all sat outside under the stars chatting, laughing and singing with the children. We shared family photos, and they all fell about laughing when they saw Al in his kilt!



Prayer & praise

Praise God that we've settled in and enjoyed travelling around Tanzania and meeting many people.

Praise God for good relationships with the other new Wycliffe members we are training with. So far we have been getting on really well but we have another 4 months of living together in close quarters!

Pray for Anna's family back home, especially her mum and sister after the loss of her Nain (grandmother in Welsh) in mid-February. It's been a hard time for Anna too, so please remember the whole family and do praise God for Nain's wonderful and long life.

To the southern highlands...

Dodoma is very flat, hot and dry but the south in great contrast is very green and hilly. For the last week of orientation we spent a few days at a campsite just outside Iringa (where we'll be at language school from April). We then travelled to Mbeya and when we arrived it was just like... Manchester! It was raining, grey and cold! So we feel at home, and fortunately the rain is interspersed with days of sun, a pleasant temperature and beautiful views of the mountains which surround the city. Mbeya is a large city with a population of approximately 400,000, but still has a small friendly feel to it and we think we'll be happy living here.



Why is literacy so important?

One of our colleagues, Margaret Beckett, tells the story of when she went to visit the Maasai in northern Tanzania. She went to a Maasai church and many had walked for hours to get there carrying their Bibles. During the meeting, they would have their Bibles open, but as Margaret looked closer she realised some were upside down- the people couldn't read them!

Without literacy any written translation is useless! As well as giving access to God's Word, literacy is an important step in meeting people's physical needs. Being able to read means access to information on diseases (such as malaria), health care and agriculture. Mother tongue literacy facilitates the preservation of endangered cultures as the people write down traditional stories and build up a collection of literature in their language.

Mbeya Literacy Workshop

In the next three weeks we are helping with a literacy workshop here in Mbeya. Forty Tanzanians from nine language groups have travelled here with the aim of producing 20-30 Bible story and development books in their own language. We are responsible for desk-top publishing. Anna is working with the Malila group and Alastair with the Safwa group. It's a big task, please do pray for everyone involved.

Thank you for all your support, especially your prayers and encouraging emails. Much love

Duncan Firsts...

- Using a laptop by candlelight
- Anna introduced herself in Swahili as Al's lump of charcoal
- Anna introduced Al as her wife in Swahili

Mbeya is more fertile than many other areas and has had some rain recently. But please **Pray with us for rain**, the rains have not been good across much of eastern Africa and drought and crop failure is occurring across the region.

Please Pray that God would give us wisdom and guidance as we decide where to live when we return to Mbeya in August. We have a couple of options, but need to decide which house will best suit our needs.

Please pray for us as we move to start our full time language learning. We'll be studying for 4 months and it's very important for us to be fluent to be able to do our work well and develop good relationships with Tanzanians.

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Do visit our new website at
www.lostinafrica.org.uk – more photos
coming soon!



To find out more about Wycliffe's work and how you can get involved visit www.wycliffe.org.uk or contact: Wycliffe Bible Translators, Horsleys Green, High Wycombe, Bucks. HP14 3XL Tel: 01494 682268