

A Liddle Good News

From the Wycliffe ministry of David and Katherine Liddle, September 2013



Computers, as I've discovered, can either make a person's life easier, or they can make life more difficult. In the nearly two years since we arrived in Germany, I find that more and more often I have to ask myself, "Is what I'm doing going to make life more difficult?" I also ask, "How can I make this less complicated?"

The Setting

Far from the busy life of Dallas, Texas, we now live in a pretty, rural part of Germany. Instead of a campus of a few hundred people, I now serve the small Wycliffe offices scattered throughout Europe. The office I work from has only five full-time staff members. My colleague and IT director for Europe, Martijn, lives in Switzerland with his family. Each of the larger offices has no more than 30 people using a computer. The "scale" of life and work has altered my perspective and approach to the work I do in God's Kingdom.

The Family

Let me pull back briefly and write about some of the more interesting parts of life. Yes, two years have gone by and much *could* be written, but I hope you will be satisfied with a summary.

Jonathan and Caleb have been attending the local schools here from the start. We are quite pleased with their success in class, in making new friends, and in mastering German. You would be amused to observe them as they switch back and forth between English and German as they play and, well, act as 10- and 12-year old boys do.

Both boys are active in youth groups and a variety of sports, including volleyball and soccer. Jonathan is even part of a LEGO club at his school. They never had *that* when I was a kid, but I'm not bitter about it.

Katherine started our time here focused on learning German and getting our household up and

running. Once we felt settled, she agreed to take on the role of prayer coordinator. That means that she invites each office in Europe to share how the wider Christian world should be praying for them, their work within their country, and the missionaries that they've sent and support. She writes up their requests and posts them to Wycliffe's World Prayer Network (accessible at www.wycliffe.net/prayer).

We've had visits from Katherine's family, a college friend and her family, and a couple from one



of our supporting churches. Every visit is fun and encouraging, but I'll tell you that Jonathan and Caleb like the family time best.

Last month we visited my family. We met them in Florida and then went back to Pennsylvania to spend more time together. One of the highlights was meeting a nephew (and cousin) for the first time. You can do a lot over the Internet these days, but we all know that it's not even close to seeing someone in person.

The IT Work

The difficulty of meeting people in person is one of the things my colleagues look to technology to mitigate. Let's not say *fix*. It's not that simple yet.

There are many ways of communicating and collaborating these days. One might almost say *too many*. It can be hard to choose: social media, blogs, wikis, forums, file sharing, video- and



teleconferencing, email, chat, and SMS. And, for the time being, you can still send letters by mail. When I'm feeling *really* adventurous, I go meet a person *face-to-face*.

Some of my time has been spent advising people on ways to collaborate and setting up equipment that helps them do some of the above. I've provided support for several conferences now, and I'm rewarded when I see everyone happily (and wirelessly) navigating their way through the hustle and bustle of modern communication.

My daily routine almost always includes helping someone with their office or home computer. Such times can be good opportunities to get out from behind my desk. You might even find me making a house call.

The core of my work is maintaining the systems that allow people from all over Europe, and elsewhere, to update their financial data and reports. One of my first tasks after we arrived was to set up a reliable, secure channel of connecting to the

databases we host. This system has saved folks a lot of time and headaches. With it, they keep funds flowing to the Wycliffe missionaries from their countries. Those brothers and sisters, in turn, tell the story of our God's Good News in languages all over the world.

An Ordinary Life

Life seems so *normal* here that it is hard to remember how *unusual* it is for people to be in this



situation. But there are some *extraordinary* people who help us to live this seemingly ordinary life. The folks who pray for us and support us financially are so confident in our God, in his Word, and in us that they make pretty big sacrifices in time and money to see that our life and work here continues. Their faithfulness over the last two years is truly worthy of gratitude, respect, and admiration.

David, for Katherine, Jonathan, and Caleb

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