

HOWe THINGS ARE...

September 2012

“Missionaries were like the rock stars at our church growing up”, she said. Drew some laughs from the crowd, but I started thinking: That is so how I feel about Bible translators. The people who train as linguists and then they take upon themselves the task of translating the Word of God into someone’s language that doesn’t yet have a Bible. Seriously, how scary is that? To think your job is to translate God’s Word. I mean, yes, there are consultants and checks and things. You’re not like a lone ranger bringing the word of the LORD all by yourself. But it’s a big deal. It kind of makes me dizzy thinking about the weight of the responsibility.

Also, it makes me very happy to (a) not be one and (b) be able to help.

Last month I had the opportunity to provide computer help to a group of Bible translators. They all descended on a small town in southwest Germany for some meetings. I got to help with computer problems, and set up email, and talk about security. And I got to listen in on their devotion speakers. And I got to go to Germany and to England to see my boss who is now my former boss --- still depressed about my boss resigning, don’t want to talk about it --- and to France to visit friends.

Happy, happy me about traveling, getting to help, being a tourist* in between helping, meeting missionary “rock stars”.

“But can you do it badly?”

It’s my new catch phrase. I use it a lot. The devotional speaker at the Germany conference told a story. She and her husband are British. They were serving with a mission in England and God called her husband to be a pastor of a church in Minnesota or Wisconsin (one of those cold northern states). She had never been a pastor’s wife and also she was dealing with culture shock. She decided to ask the ladies in the church what their expectations were of the pastor’s wife. They made a list. She took their list and began to read and realized she could do none of these things. Her husband walked in as she sat distraught with the list. He asked her what the problem was. She explained about the list and the not being able to do any of it. “I can’t do this”, she said. And he said, “Yes, but can you do it badly?”

“Yes”, she said. “Yes, I can do this badly.”

And maybe sometimes this is the whole grand plan. When we do what we know how to do well, it’s not so obvious that the glory belongs just only to God. But when I attempt the thing because I can do it badly, well, then it’s just only God. I have no idea why this makes me giddy encouraged. But I can run a marathon badly. I can do my job badly. I can help people with their computer and security issues badly. The possibilities are limitless as to what I can do badly. This is fantastic.

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*see howethingsare.wordpress.com for gory details

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