

# Evangel Bible Translators Wordwatch

## STRONGER TOGETHER

We are often asked if Evangel Bible Translators works with other Bible translation organizations, and the answer is a resounding YES! 17 major Bible translation organizations, including Evangel Bible Translators, have united with a single purpose as the Forum of Bible Agencies. By working together, we avoid overlapping efforts and unhelpful competition. We pool our resources to strengthen our impact and demonstrate the effectiveness of combined efforts.

This edition of Wordwatch features the Johnson family. Michael, Lori, and their three sons, Nathaniel, Benjamin and Evan, minister in Papua New



Guinea. They are members of Evangel Bible Translators who are currently on loan to Wycliffe Bible Translators and the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The Johnsons arrived in Papua New Guinea in February 2002 and immediately began to immerse themselves in the culture. For several months they lived in a village, sharpened their language skills, worked on assigned language and culture homework, and began reading the Bible to the people and praying for the sick.

They moved to the city of Ukarumpa in May 2002 and settled into a new routine. Michael works mostly on Bible translation software development at the Summer Institute of Linguistics Papua New Guinea Branch as part of a worldwide team communicating via the Internet. Lori teaches missionary kids and others at Ukarumpa International School, thus helping free many Bible translators to concentrate on their translation projects. Their three sons are attending Ukarumpa International School.

We trust that the following information from Michael Johnson will give you additional insight into their ministry and the contribution Evangel Bible Translators is making, in cooperation with Wycliffe Bible Translators, to the cause of Bible Translation.

### Computers and Bible Translation

*By Michael Paul Johnson*

The invention of the printing press both drastically lowered the cost of a copy of the Bible and reduced the number of copying errors in the Bibles that were printed. Since the Gutenberg Bible was printed in around 1450, printing presses and Bible printing have continued to improve in both quality and capacity. Godly applications of technology continue with the inventions of electronic communications and computers. Typesetting is now something that is done with computers instead of boxes of movable type. Now, with notebook computers and solar power, it is possible to take advantage of computer technology even in remote places like the villages in the rain forests of Papua New Guinea, as well as in places like Ukarumpa that have electrical power.

With custom computer software, we can do much more to aid the Bible translation process than just word processing and typesetting.



My own work as part of the WordWorks team is to create and improve software that does **linguistic analysis on Bible texts** for the purpose of **assisting the Bible translator** with the actual translation process. This is especially useful when translating the Scriptures into a language when there is already a Bible translation in a related language, or when one project involves a team approach to **translating the Scriptures into a group of related lan-**

**guages.** Our goal is to help Bible translators **quickly create a first draft**, which can then be checked for accuracy against the original language texts and tested for understanding with the target audience. It is then edited as needed, then typeset and printed. Existing software has proven that the concept is good, and is already helping more people to get the Holy Bible in their own language faster.

The WordWorks team is part of a larger Bible translation software development effort called Field-Works. We come from several different Bible translation agencies, including SIL International (sister organization to



Wycliffe Bible Translators), Evangel Bible Translators, and New Tribes Mission. In this way, we get input from a large number of Bible translators about what their needs are, and we provide software to meet those needs to Bible translators working on Bible translations for hundreds of languages. Please pray that we will be effective in getting the Word of God to more people in the

language they understand best.

## Godly Fruit

So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11 NKJV)

God's Word changes cultures. For example, recently, a murder was committed in a village near here. The murderer's entire extended family (including a friend of ours) was afraid that the clan of the dead man would take revenge by killing someone in their clan. This is the typical cultural response to this kind of crime. Instead, the Christian leaders of the village came together, prayed, and concluded that the right thing to do was to deliver the murderer to the police. This is truly a breakthrough, considering that the revenge and fear cycle was so entrenched here, but as Jesus said, **"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."** (John 8:32, WEB)

## Radio Dreams

I have been interested in radio since I was a little boy. I still am. I see a window of opportunity beginning to open for some really good things to happen with Christian radio in Papua New Guinea. I can see the possibility of Christian broadcasting seriously taking root in many forms, here. There was a lot of interest in Christian radio at a recent pastors' conference that I attended. According to the latest official census, less than 44% of the people aged 10 and above in the Eastern Highlands Province can read any language, so it makes sense to get the Word of God out in spoken form as well as continuing to work on literacy and education projects. While I have big dreams that I believe come from God, I believe that the first step in Christian radio broadcasting would be a low power Christian FM radio station in this valley. I am looking for some people who would be willing to host, maintain, and operate it, as well as a place to put it and funding to set it up and operate it. Since there is no other FM station in this valley, but lots of radios (mostly to listen to short wave radio), I believe that it would be an effective way to get the Gospel out. Please pray that I would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and alert to what His plans are for radio in this area.



For over 300 million people, no Scripture exists in their languages; the translation task remains a daunting challenge. And even where the Bible has been translated, all too often it remains inaccessible and not carried

to those eager to read its transforming message. This is why the members of the Forum of Bible Agencies are committed to both the translation and distribution of the Bible. The



Johnson family is a wonderful example of Evangel Bible Translators working with Wycliffe Bible Translators to be more effective at giving the world the Word.

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