



## GLOBAL MINISTRIES COMMISSION

of the Evangelical Congregational Church  
Empowering National Churches • Facilitating Mission Workers • Ministering to the Marginalized

### Introducing Jim & Joan Farr Serving with Wycliffe Bible Translators *and* Global Ministries of the E.C. Church

**Beginnings:** We (Jim and Cindi Farr), have served with Wycliffe Bible Translators-Summer Institute of Linguistics (WBT-SIL), for the past thirty seven years. We have been carrying out linguistic and cultural studies, and using our expertise to help local teachers with education in the vernacular and the churches with Bible translation among the 4000 Korafe-Yegha and 1500 Tafota Baruga speakers located in the Tufi District of the Northern (Oro) Province.

Jim received his B.A. in German with a minor in education at Ursinus College, and Cindi hers in Spanish with a minor in education at Westminster College. We were married in 1968, taught school and while teaching we trained in linguistics for work with Wycliffe at the University of North Dakota. Our son, Jamie, was born in 1970. We discovered how resilient a baby can be when we took him to the jungle living course in Mexico. Before World War II, the Anglican Mission had brought the gospel, but without God's Word in their own language, the Korafe church remained weak. The Anglican Church asked the Summer Institute of Linguistics to send a translation team, and in February, 1972, we moved to Baga village in the Tufi area. We dove into learning Korafe, finalizing an alphabet that fit the language, and learning the Korafe culture, even becoming clan members! By the mid 1970s, we had progressed enough to start translating the New Testament with our Korafe and Yegha co-workers. On October 17, 1984 the Archbishop of the Papua New Guinea Anglican Church, Sir George Ambo, and several other dignitaries dedicated the Korafe-Mokorua New Testament for the Korafe-Yegha church. The words of welcome, set to traditional drum music, both thrilled and embarrassed us: "Welcome, Bubu clan brother! Welcome, Beghuma clan sister! You have brought us the Light of the world! You have brought us the Life of the world!"

**The next 20 years were characterized by - Change!** After the New Testament dedication, our ministry broadened considerably. Jim was elected Associate Director of Language Affairs (ADLA) in 1986 and again in 1996 to supervise over 200 language teams and the overall technical studies program of the P.N.G. branch. While in that job I had the privilege of seeing 26 language teams began their village programs. I also trained as a translation consultant and continue working in that role checking translation for other teams.

At the same time linguistics was playing an increasing role in Cindi's life. Helping other teams use the best ways to translate was always challenging and fulfilling. Our SIL supervisors encouraged her to pursue a doctoral program in linguistics in 1990 at the Australian National University in Canberra. In April, 1997, thanks to your prayers, the Lord's help and lots of hard work, she received her Ph.D. in linguistics. Until she was called home this year she helped many newer teams analyze the best ways to express Biblical truths in diverse languages.

After my first stint in administration, we began to work in 1989 with the Baruga people located

in the Musa river valley west of Cape Nelson where the Korafe live. In January, 1996, the first book ever printed in Baruga (Tafota dialect), the Gospel of Mark, was dedicated. The Tafota Baruga work progressed slowly due to Cindi's study program, but the Baruga translation committee has swelled to 15 members, and the way they are growing in their faith and their knowledge of the Word is evident in the way they break some traditions to care for their wives. They have been firm in resisting the development of a strong cargo cult movement operating in our Oro Province and have used their Bibles to challenge what the cult leaders are teaching.

Their enthusiasm is increasing and six of the committee members raised the money to buy their own way to a 5-week Greek course for nationals at Ukarumpa in August, 2007, and this year 3 of them did the same to attend a Hebrew course. This year, after Cindi's death, a long planned visit from leadership within the Evangelical Church including Cindi's brother, nephew and Bishop Mike Sigman took place and the Baruga people dedicated Luke, Acts, and 1 Thessalonians in Tafota Baruga in conjunction with the trip.

### **What's next?**

Age is creeping up on us! When I was at Ukarumpa, I am regularly on the tennis courts. But I am grateful that Ibuprofen exists! I am probably within 4-5 years of finishing my input here in Papua New Guinea, but I still have some dreams. Following Cindi's death I was overwhelmed by all the details of life, and was reminded again and again of all that Cindi had done, and her share of the burdens she had so cheerfully and competently borne. I did a lot of praying about how to go on, and the Lord led me to a wonderful woman Joan Henry, also a Wycliffe translator, with 25 years experience in Papua New Guinea working with the Kombio people in the East Sepik province.

In the early 1990s the Korafe-Yegha New Testaments sold out and we worked with a small committee to revise it. To foster enthusiasm we produced and screened the video of Luke's Gospel in Korafe and after dedicating the revision in 2003, we've had several short Bible Courses. Their impact continues as ex-participants do outreach. Another slightly different group of Korafe-Yegha folks are working at Old Testament translation and have drafted most of Genesis in Korafe-Yegha and begun translating the Psalms.

Many of the same group as well as some Korafe-Yegha elders have helped us get very close to publishing a Korafe-Yegha dictionary, and we'd like to plan a distribution campaign which would distribute the dictionary, but also have a distinctly spiritual impact perhaps by showing the Luke video.

I would like to personally see the completion of the Baruga New Testament through to the end. Over the next 3-4 years pray with Joan and me for wisdom to let the Korafe and Baruga take over more leadership of the program. We'd like to leave them with office facilities to continue Old Testament translation in both Korafe-Yegha and Baruga.

Life in Papua New Guinea is full of the challenges found in third-world countries, and I know that I can do nothing in my own strength. Please pray that Joan and I will be able to help the Korafe, Tafota Baruga and Kombio people as well as other Papua New Guineans to grow in their relationship to the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Pray that we will ourselves become more like Jesus, and learn what death to self means in each of the situations that we face. We keep in mind Proverbs 16:9:

***"We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands."***