

JONATHAN AND KATHY WILSON
Commissioned May 29, 1990
Wycliffe Bible Translators

JONATHAN

Home Church: West Somerset Baptist Church
Birthdate: February 27

KATHY

Home Church: Royersford Trinity E.C.
Birthdate: January 26

Jonathan Wilson grew up in Appleton, NY, the third of eight children. He was led to Christ at age nine through the faithful witness of his parents and Sunday School teacher. During his teen years he was involved in 4-H and camp counseling. While attending Word of Life Bible Institute, the Lord began directing Jonathan's interests toward Bible translation. After graduating in 1984 with a degree in Bible and Theology from Dallas Bible College, he enrolled at the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) in Dallas.

Kathy, along with her two brothers and sisters was raised in Limerick, Pa. She accepted Christ into her life as a young child. As a youth attending Twin Pines Camp she was challenged to become a missionary. In order to reach her goal, she earned a BA in Community Development/Christian Missions. For five years she worked with Teen Haven in inner-city Philadelphia. Sensing the Lord's call to overseas missions, she obtained a one-year Bible degree from Moody Bible Institute and then attended the Summer Institute of Linguistics for training before being accepted as a Wycliffe member.

Jonathan and Kathy met in January 1988, the day she arrived in Dallas, Texas for training a SIL. Jonathan at the time was into his 3rd semester of linguistic training. Seven months after meeting they were married. Justin was born March 10, 1990 and four months later they headed to Papua New Guinea (P.N.G.) to start their first term Sarah was born in P.N.G. on May 20, 1992, and Jonita followed on May 29, 1997.

Jonathan and Kathy are presently working as Bible translators among the Binandere people of Papua New Guinea. The Binandere number approximately 5,000 and inhabit numerous small villages on the banks of the Eia, Gira and Mamba rivers in Oro Province.

The life and work of a Bible translator is most adventurous! Because of cultural differences we often feel out of our comfort zone; there seems to be so many new and unexpected experiences. At times like these we are grateful to be working for the Lord and know He is in control of every situation. Every 2 to 3 months we pack up and move our family between the village and the Ukarumpa mission center, 170 miles away. Our focus, while in the village, is to work along side of our Binandere language helpers as we complete grammar and anthropology research, and tackle Bible translation. Small SIL airplanes fly our family to a grass airstrip along with our supply of food, school books and linguistic materials. Village men are waiting there to transport us down the river on dugout canoes to our Nindewari village house. Survival as a family in the village takes a large percentage of our time each day (bathing and laundry at the river, homeschooling children, treating malaria and other sicknesses and staying in touch with

our village neighbors).

After a few months in the village we fly once again to the mission center. There we are able to work with language consultants, attend workshops, and spend time analyzing the language and entering data into the computer.

A few months of each year are also spent in group service work to support the overall operation of the SIL Papua New Guinea Branch. One year we served for 3 months as Children's Home parents to 12 MK (Missionary Kids) teenagers. Another year we managed the East Papuan regional Center for 3 months. At this time in our language program we are starting to translate the Gospel of Mark. There are many steps involved in obtaining a good Bible translation. The first step of course is to live with and learn to talk the language of the people, and of course to understand their culture and way of thinking. It's a long and gradual process that takes shape as relationships are built among the village people.

Before actual translation can begin, grammar and anthropology research data needs to be gathered and compiled, academic papers written and submitted and finally approved by SIL consultants. In time the Bible translator can then prepare for scripture translation. Personal study and exegesis of each verse in each chapter is necessary before sitting down at the translator's desk with the language helper. Actual Bible translation is tedious work as the translation team seeks to make steady progress verse by verse, and chapter by chapter. Later small portions of Scripture are brought before the village people and checked for clarity, accuracy and naturalness. Following the village check, the translator needs to make a Vernacular to English back translation. This is used by a trained translation consultant, who rechecks the translated scripture portion in conference with the translator and an uninitiated language speaker. An uninitiated language speaker is a person who is fluent in the vernacular but not had previous exposure to the translated scriptures being checked. In the final stages, the draft which has been revised according to the consultant's input is rechecked again by the translator and native language speakers. Then it is prepared for typesetting, printing and distribution.

Through the years we have experienced opposition from the Evil One via criminal activity, sickness and various adverse circumstances. Of course we are not surprised, because we realize how powerful God's word is. God used it to save us from our sins and give us eternal life. Satan does not want us to spread this Good News. He knows that God's Word can have the greatest impact on people's hearts when they are given a chance to hear it in their own mother language. And pray for health and stamina our family needs as we press on with the task.