



February 2008 Newsletter

Good News Media breaks new ground

For the past 60 years Good News Media and its affiliates have produced audio gospel messages in indigenous languages. Up to date, messages in more than 5600 languages and dialects have been recorded; with priority being given to oral societies and minority groups. There's only one glitch: people can't hear these messages unless they have the means to play them!

Good News Media solved the problem by developing and supplying hand wind record players. We followed this up with a hand wind cassette player. Now we've gone truly modern with the Sabre MP3 player.

The Sabre MP3 player

We are on the eve of releasing a hand wind MP3 digital audio player, with built-in generator, amplifier and speaker.

Why another playback device?

The hand wind MP3 player has key features, which set it apart from other digital players.

1. High volume output

The hand wind MP3 player will be of great assistance in oral societies. In these societies personal listening devices are inappropriate. Here, families and groups gather to listen, and interact with the Word of God. Under these circumstances it's important to have high volume output. This way, the Glad Tidings can be spread in churches, marketplaces, wherever many people are gathered.

2. High quality audio

For communication to succeed it has to be culturally appropriate. In many cultures music is a vital part of communication. The hand wind MP3 player is designed to reproduce music and speech of a high standard.

3. Inexhaustible power supply

The hand wind generator never runs out of power. By winding the MP3 player for just five minutes you generate enough power to last you 20 minutes. The player can also be charged using solar panels or 'mains' supply.

4. Flexibility

The hand wind MP3 player can be used in a multitude of ways. You can download audio programs from your computer onto the MP3 player. You can also use it to spread the Gospel, inform people of health issues like hygiene and AIDS, or to play music and tell stories.

Availability

A limited number of hand wind MP3 players will be available for field testing in April. General release will follow in the second half of this year.

From conception to birth

A design team went with a fine comb over every aspect of the player: the electronics, power generation and storage, usability, size, weight, strength, audio programs, control software, how to load and store, etc.

Uppermost in the team's mind was the profile of the audience for whom this player will cater. It will most probably be used by a pastor in a remote oral society; certainly not by a technologically savvy 'westernized' user.

Dynamite comes in small packages

- * The playback hardware is entirely electronic, with no moving parts. The player incorporates a speaker and high-efficiency digital amplifier. This makes it ideal for group listening.
- * A heavy-duty hand-crank mechanism is coupled with a rechargeable battery to ensure that power is always available. The battery can also be recharged from an external source, such as a solar panel.
- * The player has been designed to be reliable and durable. The case is made of tough ABS plastic, with impact-absorbing Neoprene corners.
- * The control buttons are high reliability switches, and have been covered with a durable fabric.
- * The player is sealed against dust and is moisture resistant.

Special thanks must go to the Christian Technology Centre in the US for their help with the electronics; also to Mike Fewchuck of Sydney who gave invaluable help with the design process.

Plastic pastor preaches up a storm in the Mosambiqan bush

The Makhuwa people are considered to be one of Southern Africa's most unreached groups. The Makhuwa reside in Mosambique's north-eastern Zambezia province. Here, Fritz and Nicky van der Merwe have been ministering to their spiritual needs for the past 15 years.

From day one they tried to get the local populace to spread the Word of God amongst themselves, and to start up small groups. But little progress was made. In the past year, however, there's being a turnaround.

Nicky tells the story in her own words:

*The former year we donated three sets of Good News Media's picture books and cassette tapes. Only two of the three sets were frequently used. Things stayed that way until last year, when the new schoolteacher came onto the scene.

Rodrigues, who had been hired to teach the grade Rs, asked me whether he could try out the picture books at home. (I myself have used it whilst teaching). As a result of this, Rodrigues has started giving Bible studies.

Shortly after this happened, another teacher came and asked me for his own set.

The material has given these guys the courage to reach out to a totally unreached area. Before long a group of 12 got together. Not one of this group was a Christian, but each and everyone was 100% inquisitive! The group convened weekly, so as to listen to more stories.

After a while these two group leaders asked our congregation to pray for them. They now have eight small groups, and have started to pray together. Can you believe it?!

A new fieldworker for Southern Africa

After much prayer, careful consideration of the growing workload in the office and opportunity for further strategic development of the ministry in our sub-continent, we appointed a new field worker at Good News Media.

Deon Langedyk's missionary career started in 1994 when he enrolled for a course of Cross Cultural Training and World Religions Training. He also helped build a Christian radio station. After this came a spell in the East. Langedyk spent five years working as a church planter in Sri Lanka. On his return to South Africa he obtained a diploma in Theological Studies from Hebron Bible College.

Langedyk then joined Trans World Radio. Here he gained technical experience working with various Sound Wave Editors, Wave Converting Softwares and File Transfer Protocol Systems. For the past few years he's being Broadcast Centre Manager for the Trans World Radio Africa regional Office in Kempton Park.

A new season for them ... and for GNM

Both Deon and his wife Nadia believe that the Lord has plans for them. Deon has a vision of the ministry of Good News Media growing, of more churches and people in Southern Africa thirsting for God's Word.

These communities will have to be catered for with culturally-relevant after-care materials.

Deon starts service in March this year. Prior to that, Deon, Nadia and daughter Bianca will spend three months in Sydney, Australia. Here, Deon plans to undergo further orientation and technical training at Global Recordings Network. This training is essential to ensure that the work of Good News Media is in line with international recording and technical standards. Deon will become a full-time member of the Good News Media team in Wellington in middle June.

Please join us in praying for this family.

Follow-up news from the Lesotho mountains

Remember Julius? For a long time this citizen of Lesotho's mountainous regions has been one of Danie Liebenberg's contacts. In earlier correspondence we wrote about Julius, and the tough times he was facing. Eventually things got too much, and he moved down to his father in Masenot. Here the community helped care for him and his family.

This is where Danie came onto the scene. Danie, a member of Logos Church in Brackenfell, saw Julius' need, and set out to help him.

Danie built Julius a battery pack. (After first going on a crash course in solar cells and rechargeable batteries!)

This battery pack changed Julius' life. It has enabled Julius to run a PC and printer in the rural setting of Masenot, to charge his hand wind cassette player, camera and cell phone, and start a small photography business. Much of this is due to the battery pack's practical nature. It can be folded up, it fits into a back pack, and is easily transported.

Nowadays Julius is a new man. He takes photos of individuals, families and landscapes, and prints them on the spot. And most important of all, he's making a reasonable living for the first time in his life.

Julius was overwhelmed with joy when Danie showed him his new tools of trade. But more happiness was coming his way: Danie also gave Julius a Bible picture set from Good News Media. Armed with this picture set, Julius is able to spread the Good News on his "business trips" to villages.

We share Danie's excitement about Julius, his new business and purpose in life.

Farewell to a dear friend and colleague

Guilherme Leno passed away after a short sickbed. Guilherme was a full-time worker with Project Mozambique in Beira, as well as a strategic partner. We thank God for his life, and for his dedication. We rejoice knowing that he is with the Lord.

Guilherme's home language was Nyungwe. He was, however, a man of many talents. Guilherme was fluent in Sena and Portuguese; he also wrote scripts and excelled at art. The latter he put to use making drawings for Sunday school.

We mourn Guilherme's passing, but also thank God for the privilege of having known and worked with him.

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