Christian publishing industry veteran Jim Powell died today in Queensland, Australia, surrounded by his family. Powell, 68, was recently diagnosed with cancer in Cairns, Australia.

"We gathered to grieve, celebrate, eat and sing together about God's love," Powell's daughter, Jennifer Dilger, wrote on the CaringBridge.com page dedicated to her father. "Jim was comfortable and eyes opened from time to time. ... The family and I arrived at about 11:15 Monday morning, which would be Sunday early evening in the United States. The breathing was raspy and I was told by the nurse that Jim would not wake up again. It was only an hour later that we knew he would be welcomed home."

Powell, 68, stepped down as president of Christian Trade Association International (CTAI) in 2011 in order to serve as a mission-station guest house manager with his wife, Peggy, in Papua New Guinea for Wycliffe Bible Translators. He was the former international director for CBA who was a driving force in establishing CTAI when the U.S.-based Christian retailers' association shed its overseas chapters in 2005.

"Jim served the Lord in literature ministry for more than 40 years," said Kim Pettit, CTAI's executive director. "He will be greatly missed."

Having previously served as president of the International Bible Society, Powell joined CBA as international director in 1994. With the founding of CTAI, he hosted an annual international celebration lunch and the International Marketsquare section at the exhibit floor of CBA's summer show, providing a meeting point for those doing international business.

In 2008, CTAI debuted Marketsquare International, an annual January show providing a one-stop North American buying opportunity for overseas visitors in the absence of CBA's canceled winter show.

Funeral arrangements are pending. Click here to send messages of condolence to Jim Powell's family or post a tribute on his CaringBridge page. 