

(Gladys)
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THE ^{endy}W.A.M. ^{ike}PLUS REPORT

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12 days in a dugout canoe

Fortunately we found a canoe to rent right away. there aren't many in the business.

Unfortunately it was too small so we kept on looking.

Fortunately at the next stop we found a bigger canoe and rented it.

Unfortunately we discovered too late that it was too big for the river/swamp and maneuvering was difficult.

Fortunately we had a motor.

Unfortunately the motor stopped working with no repair shop in sight.

Fortunately we had brought along paddles.

Unfortunately we had to paddle through thick water lilies.

Fortunately we were going downstream.

Unfortunately it was still hard work.

Fortunately we found a piece of dry land to sleep on since we didn't make it to the village before dark.

Unfortunately it was already inhabited by bees.

Fortunately they were (as Winne the Pooh would say,) the right sort of bees and none stung me.

Unfortunately the very sound of bees buzzing around kept me nervous enough.

Fortunately/unfortunately? We didn't find Mokelembembe, a Loch Ness type dinosaur said to live in these swamps.

Fortunately we found all of the 5 villages we were looking for and we received a warm welcome.

Unfortunately the warm welcome usually meant watching a dance in our honor late at night when I preferred being in bed.

Fortunately all that happened on our trip whether good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, we knew that God was with us, watching over us and protecting us. Can any unfortunatelys follow that? Fortunately NOT!



The survey trip among the Aka pygmies was very successful. Thank you for praying. God protected us from being bitten by a snake which had climbed into our canoe and he protected our boat from being smashed against trees as we steered down river. Although we hiked more than 35 miles during the trip, including 15 miles in one day, my knees which I injured in a race in Switzerland never hurt. Everyone received us very warmly and cooperated in helping us with our research. The most interesting finding was that although these Aka pygmies live isolated from the Aka in Central African Republic by over 130 miles, they were able to understand the recorded stories we had taped from the Aka in CAR. This means that they may possibly be able to understand and use the translation of the Bible that is currently being done in CAR. Another Aka survey is planned for a different region for April.

Mboshi Survey Jan. 9-23, 1997

This was our 1st trip by road in our new, all white, Toyota Land Cruiser (affectionately known as the ICEBERG). When we started off on the trip the odometer said 50Km. When we pulled back into Brazzaville 2 weeks later the odometer was reading 2000 Km meaning we travelled about 1230 miles. We couldn't call it the Iceberg anymore, That Muddy Thing fit better. We drove through too many deep mud holes to count and twice we got stuck and had to use the winch on the front of the car to get out. The trip was to the central part of the country to study four languages, Akwa, Koyo, Ngare and Mboxo and their linguistic relationship to one another. The members of the survey team were: Brenda Schlak, a new member of the Congo survey team, Andrea Waldschmidt, a Wycliffe translator working on the Mboshi translation project, Louis, her Congolese colleague, and a university linguistics professor from Brazzaville. We were grateful to have Andrea and her colleague along since they knew the area well and were a big help in determining if any or all four languages can understand Mboshi and use the translation of the Bible they are working on now. The results of the survey have yet to be determined. It will take several weeks of compiling the data we gathered before we can make any conclusions.



A few Words from Wendy: I had a great time up in Impfondo while Michael was out in the dugout canoe for 12 days. Unlike in CAR, we don't have the luxury of radio contact during the surveys. This requires a bit more faith on our part. I stayed with Leslie, whose husband Ron was out with Michael. Leslie has just arrived here in Congo and is going through a rough time of adjusting to living in such an isolated setting and with all the cultural differences of Africa. I was glad I could be there to help her sort through her thoughts and feelings. I was able to say, "What you are feeling is normal, and there is light at the end of the this dark tunnel. I felt the same way this past year."

Most of the adjusting has to do with feelings of not fitting in. We have thoughts like: "I'm so different from them, they're black, I'm white; they don't understand why I let my baby cry and think I'm a terrible mother when I do; they don't understand that I like and need my privacy which in their culture doesn't exist; they don't speak English or French (in the villages) and I don't speak any of their African languages - that means I have to learn yet another language!! I'm white which automatically means to them that I'm rich so they expect me to give them things and money when they ask. I miss my friends and family with whom I can relax and have fun. I miss shopping malls and streets without potholes. Will I ever find my way to fit in? Maybe I made a mistake in coming here." The list of our thoughts could go on.....

Yes, the first term on the field is spent trying to figure out how to fit into this new world. Your prayers for our continual adjusting are always needed.

Your Partners in Bible Translation,
Michael & Wendy
David

If you're interested in reading more details of Michael's surveys write to his parents for a copy of his daily journal he kept during the trips: Dr. Darrell Buchanan, 10 Cherokee Dr., Cumberland, MD 21502

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Prayer Needs:

The question to hire a full-time Congolese linguist for the survey team has not yet been resolved. At present we have no candidates, but we had a linguistics professor from the University to participate in the January survey. Pray for good working relations with him and for the Lord to use us as a positive witness to him and others at the university.

Continued wisdom in choosing how to live here in this new culture.

Answers to your prayers:

Wendy's back is MUCH better!!

God protected during the Aka and the Mboshi survey trips!

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