

PYGMY REPORT - MARCH 2022

Way Alege

Tribute to Nzelewa



It is exactly 34 days since **Apamaguebi Afokenda Nzelewa** was laid in the ground to wait the Resurrection. Because of the key role Nzelewa played in our ministry we decided to document something of his life. **Pastor Timothy** Sumbukabo (*standing at the left in photo*) has been a pastor at Shaurimoya Brethren assembly for more than 25 years and has much to say about Nzelewa's Christian testimony.



According to Timothy, Nzelewa was known by his Pygmy brothers and sisters as a powerful hunter with mystical powers. He was also known to the Pygmies and Bantu as a strong farmer, capable of logging big trees. In addition to the above, Nzelewa himself recalled his addiction to alcohol and marijuana. Socially, he was known to be the only Pygmy in the area who married three wives and lived with all of them in a single small hut.

Despite the fact that Nzelewa had the opportunity to hear the Word since his youth, it was only in 1997 that he believed in Jesus and everyone saw a radical change in his life. Pastor Timothy recalled how they transported him on a borrowed bicycle from Shaurimoya to Nyankunde (approximately 45km) to be baptized in 1998. At that time Nzelewa appeared old and weak. During his baptism, he was assisted by three people. But he walked out of the water himself and became stronger than before. According to Timothy, since then, Nzelewa lived a faithful Christian life. It is thought that he was in his late seventies when he died, making him the only Pygmy that has lived longer than any other in the Ituri forest. This is contrary to scientific information that always describe the Pygmies with short life expectancy.

The memorial service was organised on 12th March. We spent the night around the campfire. Early in the morning, we were able to share the Word of God with Nzelewa's immediate family members, challenging them to believe in Jesus so that they may have eternal life and live as long as their father.



After prayers, the major discussion was about the future of the property following Nzelewa's death as this is the first 50 hectares property we secured in 2012 for the Pygmies from gifts from Australia. This could be among the first property owned by the Pygmies in the Ituri province. However, many people are tempted to grab the land

due to our prolonged absence from the area. This was due to the fact that different NGOs interfered with our vision there, attracting the Pygmies and the local population to them. This was coupled with the displacement of the Pygmies because of insecurity. Thank God that



Nzelewa's closest family members (around the graveyard), led by his son Ferdinard (above left), have decided to move back on the property where we have 6 hectares of palm trees which cost us US\$6,000, again purchased by funds from friends in Australia. Since 2021, as you can see in the above picture, wild animals and birds have helped plant more palm trees. The total palm tree surface could be approximately 9 hectares. However, many people are illegally harvesting the products.



Since building the school and the dispensary at Shaurimoya, different NGOs have come in to assist the population there. Latrines, chain link fence and maternity building were added. Besides, one classroom and benches were added at the school. However, all the above was done without information or collaboration with us. For instance, instead of building a new facility for maternity purposes, changes were made to the house we built for the nurse (*see house with blue roofing*) without prior notice. Furthermore, as there were no clear reasons for the dismissal of the nurse, Clarisse, we could not assist the nurse there. Currently, there is no nurse as two quit after Clarisse. Talking with people around, it seems that no nurse is willing to live there.

Praises and prayer requests



- We praise God that **Liki Muza Félicien**, (*with the big smile*), one of the Board members of CERCEP, the umbrella organisation under which we operate, was able to visit our projects and for the first time listen to the people. His presence is in preparation for the upcoming general assembly. The goal of this latter is to evaluate the activities and forecast new plans. According to members, the meeting should be held on the field. We are praying for security and logistics.



- We praise God for the **reconciliation** that we had with Shaurimoya development committee. Members asked for forgiveness for having made arrangements with NGOs without including us. Currently, all the NGOs have abandoned the site, and Pygmies are left without any vision.

PRAY for:

- **the soap project.** Starting this activity will help us to use the palm tree kernel for soap production.
- **safe drinking water** project at Kangakolo
- **safety in travel** for **Way** as he returns to **Shaurimoya** to set up a new development committee with a new shared vision

Please pray for Ataloholu staff



Mr Denaya Yolo Timothy - He is the head teacher in charge of the school administration. He is also the acting chaplain for the school. He works in collaboration with the local pastor at Ataloholu in organizing the Sunday service in the area, especially for teachers. He is also appointed elder in one of Brethren church while serving at Ataloholu.



Lylian Aseru, the nursery school teacher also in charge of Sunday school service, school feeding and cook for nursery school children. Lylian came up with innovative idea of reactivating feeding program in participation with parents. Her first experience is with parents of the nursery school children. Parents contribute food that she cooks for the children at school. She believes that the program should be extended to the entire school, but mainly with the contribution of parents.



Noela Basiminzi Mambo - the teacher that replaced Azonye in the first grade. Azonye got married. Her place was vacant. Noela's family fled the Alliance Democratic Forces (ADF) rebels from Tchabi, a Brethren mission station built by Pearl, a Canadian missionary. Noela is a singer in one of the choirs. Noela is happy that the assistance she receives helps to care for her child and her young brothers. Noela lost her father and is separated by the war from her mother. Now she takes care of the family.



Kakule Mathe, - teacher of the second grade. He replaced Ukia Divine who got married. Mathe is also a displaced person from Beni. He is happy for the assistance he receives through the school which has helped him bring his wife to Ataloholu. Mathe was among the people who gave their lives to Jesus during the December 2021 spiritual retreat. Pray that he will be able to share his faith with the pygmy children.



Richard Ayiko. He is the teacher of third grade. Pray that God shows Richard what he should do apart from teaching. We encourage every teacher to have a ministry within the school and in the community.



Dhedro Liripa Claude. He is the fourth grade teacher. He is one of the teachers who gave his life to Jesus during the retreat. Claude is very happy to be counted among the teaching staff at Ataloholu. Since childhood, Claude was mistreated and abandoned by his father who married a second wife. He grew up and studied in very difficult conditions. Claude is married to Tombo Mboyo Jose and they have two children. His wife and children have joined him at Ataloholu.



Akuki Mokili, the fifth grade teacher. He also gave his life to Jesus during the December 2021 retreat. Akuki has been teaching at Ataloholu for the last three years. But he has never been involved in any other ministry apart from teaching. Pray that the Holy Spirit shows him what to do.



Liki Bongho. He is the teacher of sixth grade at Ataloholu. Pray that he will get fully involved in the ministry according to the regulation of the school.



Answer to prayer

We thank God for his provision. For approximately one year, we have been praying for a **community nurse** that will be willing to live among the people in **Ataloholu**. After interviewing a number of nurses, we came across **Boluwe Dina Florence**. She is a graduate in midwifery from Nyankunde Nursing College. The most interesting thing about **Dina** is that she is from the ethnic group which speaks the same language with the Pygmies. This

has been a major selecting criteria based on the fact that there are many cultural barriers in health issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Dina is also a Christian from one of the Brethren Churches where she went to school. We thank God for this timely provision. Pray that God will provide for her needs while we work out with Government Health agents.

Kangakolo team



Robert Mokili, the Kangakolo team leader and teacher of fifth grade. Dhuki has a mission heart especially for the Pygmies. He is in charge of prayer meetings at the camp. He also initiated a church service at Kangakolo, where he faced a lot of spiritual warfare. He praises God for having met the servants of God during the December 2021 spiritual retreat. His aim is to bring children and their parents to the Lord. This task is not easy at Kangakolo where parents are deeply rooted in spiritually challenging traditions.



Apaike Kijana, the teacher of grade one at Kangakolo. Kijana is a displaced person from Tchabi. He is married and has a total of 8 children under his care. Some of the children are orphans. However, since the spiritual retreat, Kijana is recovering his joy. Pray that God will use him powerfully in his ministry.



Apekule Rehema, the grade two teacher at Kangakolo. Rehema is also a displaced person from Tchabi area. Pray for him to have a vision for the ministry among the children he is teaching. Rehem has replaced Alafi who has decided to go and help his parents.



Kabaseke Baraka Martin, the grade three teacher at Kangakolo. Martin has been a blessing for Kakangolo ministry among children and in the community despite the spiritual warfare. Martin has a special gift in singing and preaching the word of God. Pray for him as he plans to get married and probably move with his wife to Kangakolo if she is willing. Last year, Baraka's savings from one year of teaching were robbed in Bunia, while planning to go and visit his family. This has been a major setback for his plans.



Anite Amana. Amana is the fourth year teacher at Kangakolo. Amana is so much involved in singing and building quality relationships with children and community members at Kangakolo. She has faithfully served us for the last two years. Amana is planning to get married at the end of this year. Pray for her plans as well as for the vacuum she is going to create in the school once she has gone

Technical team



Shalom Anyume Christoph. Shalom oversees the Pygmy camp at Ataloholu and Kangakolo in collaboration with the Pygmy chief. He organises food for work activities with the Pygmies. He is in charge of child and mother protection against gender based violence. As a trained clinical psychologist, he deals with the mental health of children and community members. He is also in charge of security and liaison with local chiefs, police, army and Criminal Investigation Department. He also handles timber production activities and the government services. He organises students' internships in collaboration with universities. In

collaboration with the head teacher, Lilian and Mokili, they are in charge of decent burials of the Pygmies.

NB: Some of the tasks such as food for work and internship were organized by the agronomist David Nakwanda. However, since David has left to attend to his wife and the baby, Shalom has taken all the activities as he is not on the teaching staff.



Maliamungu Awule is a Veterinarian in charge of our animal farm and community veterinary clinic. The farm serves as a teaching facility for students, teachers and the community. He is the one who supplies meat during special occasions. We normally get fed from maize and rice meals. However, since farmers have fled because of insecurity, getting food has become difficult. Our pigs dropped from 50 to 20 leading us to slow the breeding at this time..



Manuel is a displaced young boy who assists the veterinary. He keeps the hygiene of the piggery, takes care of goats and collects fodder for the pigs and rabbits as we have difficulties finding enough feed.



Tombo Mboyo Jose is married to Dhendro Liripa Claude. The fourth grade teacher. She is in charge of the poultry. According to Congolese labour law, every married worker receives a living allowance for their dependants. As we do not have enough funds to do that, we prefer giving our teachers' spouses a small job to help them earn additional funds for their family members.



Idring'i Maloka, the tailor who is supposed to transfer the sewing skills to students. Apart from the health problems, he lost his wife and son-in-law. Now he has to resettle her daughter before moving to Ataloholu. This has destabilised our initial plans. We have opted for Maloka because he has been sewing for over 50 years. We urged him to pass his skills to the younger generation before he definitely retires from tailoring. Pray that our plans come true.