

## PYGMY UPDATE FEBRUARY 2022

### Way Alege

#### 1. Celebrating the life of Nzelewa

It was in 2006 that **Apamaguebi Nzelewa** integrated me into his Pygmy family. I was given



new names: **Apuebhe Apameli** (*Who loves the Pygmies and loves the forest*). Plantain banana with salt fish from Lake Albert was served to the members of the new family. Singing and dancing continued until 1am. My sleep was cut short around 4am as I was awakened by the prayers of my new Pygmy father (Nzelewa). As much as I was happy to be integrated into this new family, my new father was happier than I because his name **Apamaguebi** literally means “*that who*

*has no son*”. I could hear his prayers breaking through the leaves of the thatched hut as he thanked God for my presence (new son in the family). The prayer went on for hours. Thanks and requests were clear and well-articulated: “*God, thank you for Apuebhe. There are three things I want to see in **Shaurimoya**: a church, a school and a dispensary all with corrugated iron sheets. I want to see these things before I die. I want to receive treatment (at least one injection) from this dispensary before I die.*”.



We thank God for having answered all these prayer items. God used you in Australia to make the dream of this old man a reality.



**Nzelewa** was the only Pygmy of faith I came across 16 years ago who was able to give testimony about how he came to Jesus, left sin and became a new creature. Nzelewa showed true love to our family and he did not hesitate to entrust to us his grand-daughter **Fina**, who became our daughter, who sadly for us, went to be with the Lord in October 2019. I am grateful that because of Nzelewa, I am not seen as a stranger among the Pygmies, but a member of the community. This is why integration for our son Shalom is much easier. **Nzelewa** went to be with Lord on **10<sup>th</sup> February 2022**.



#### 2. Golden opportunities for the Gospel

Funerals are golden opportunities in the Pygmy camps to preach the Gospel. The local pastor is always assisted by teachers to share the Word of God. It is also an opportunity to show love to the Pygmies and break some negative cultural behaviours.

Culturally the Pygmies fear dead bodies. In the past, dead bodies were left in the camp or buried in a hollow trunk of a tree as members then moved to a new location. According to tradition, death means the site is (hot) not appropriate for living. Therefore, moving to a new place



means avoiding death. However, since we secured properties for the Pygmies, teachers help make coffins and burials are on the property and they can keep on living there. But until the body is buried, fear is still there, and no one touches the body except those digging the grave.

### **3. Clean water**

Lack of clean water for Kangakolo village has become a major problem. The population there is used to drinking running water. We had advised teachers to boil or use chloramine to treat the water or simply carry clean water from Ataloholu. However, this is becoming tiresome. We have sent an engineer to assist Shalom inspect water sources and see whether something can be built to serve the community. Fortunately, one source of water seems promising but a lot of work will be required as the area is swampy.



### **4. Moving towards entrepreneurship**

Our son William Will has embarked on producing fresh passion fruit juice. After three years of pharmaceutical studies, he could not come home for holidays. Instead, he decided to visit his colleagues who are already in a passion juice business. On his return he started his own business putting into practice a childhood skill of producing passion juice. We hope that Ituri will become secure enough to start farming passion fruits to boost his business in the future.



### **Praises and prayer requests**

- We praise God for the meeting with Shalom University friends who are willing to assist in securing our properties. Please keep praying they will fulfil their promise.
- Pray for the shipping of materials for the bridges as we have finished with preliminary metal work. It is time to take the pieces on the field. Pray that the local population will cooperate to collect other materials (sand rocks) for the project.
- Keep praying for our multipurpose oil plant. We plan to pay for the equipment in instalments.