

# AFRICANS HEAD FOR FURTHEST CORNERS OF THE WORLD



Perseverance is key to success in missions, and Joshua and Judith\* have clearly needed plenty of it! They firmly believe that Africa has a vital role to play in world missions, but although God spoke to them clearly about being priests to the nations of the world (Exodus 19, 6) they have had to overcome many challenges to fulfil their dream of working in Asia.

This is not a couple to shrink back from such challenges and would be the first to remind us that no effective work can be done without a willingness to endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Apparently one cannot become involved in proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom without paying the price for the privilege. And the privilege is extended to us as well.

One of the biggest challenges for Joshua and Judith was "getting the churches in Africa to understand that it's their responsibility to send workers into the field", the couple says. They spent a few years establishing a strong and functional support network in their home country. "We focused a lot of our energy on ensuring that people understood why we were going to South Asia and how they could be a part of it", says Joshua. When they left in October last year, two churches committed themselves to support them through being part of their Home Front Team. Since being in South Asia - a part of the world with huge numbers of people who have never heard the gospel - they've been ministering to people whilst learning the language and the culture.

Joshua and Judith represent a shift in world missions. Africa, for so long a mission field, is increasingly becoming a vital sending force. African Christians are culturally much closer to the great blocks of unreached people than are Westerners. God has prepared, gifted and strengthened the African Church to play a unique role in reaching the remaining unreached areas of the world.

The story of this African couple illustrates that the world is open for 'battle hardened Africans'. Or in Joshua and Judith's words: "God's grace is there for everyone willing to learn: IT CAN BE DONE!"

(\* Not their real names because of security precautions.

## PEOPLE PROFILE *Mbuti Pygmies in DRC*



Photo: Alison Payne, The Rainforest Foundation

Many believe the Pygmies to be the continent's earliest indigenous people, predating agricultural tribes. Traditionally they have lived in the equatorial rain forests, as semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers. Recent government efforts have tried to resettle many of them, forcing them into agricultural production. Most have lost their original languages, speaking the language of tribes they are most in contact with. Today there are some 250,000 pygmies in Africa, divided into four major groups.

The Mbuti pygmies live in the lower Kivu area of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Traditionally they lived as hunters in the Ituri rain forest. Forcibly resettled, they are now landless and living in banana leaf huts as squatters on private property. To survive they work for cassava farmers, for little pay.

Joseph Magora, from YWAM Bulawayo in Zimbabwe works as a missionary among the Mbuti people. He advocates on their behalf amongst the farmers, and has been training people in carpentry and sewing. Of the 40 adults he lives with, three became Christians through the work of recent missionaries. Whilst he has found many are slow to change and unresponsive, he closely disciples the three believers and is encouraged that their lives are profoundly different from the rest of their group. They live free from fear of the spirit world. With a clear hope for the future they are planners and have a quality family life.

Joseph did his DTS in 1998. As he prayed, God put the Congo on his heart, and Joseph received impressions of bushmen-type people. To prepare himself for the work Joseph did the SOFM in Mombassa. He moved on to YWAM Jinja in Uganda to learn Swahili and then entered the Congo, basing himself in Bukavu. The Frontier Missions Centre has supported him as he has built a prayer and financial support base for his work.

With a long term call to the pygmies Joseph currently works alone, although others are interested in joining him. His dream is to see the Mbuti saved, discipled, and able to support themselves. As he has seen, there are challenges to overcome to get to the frontiers. However, it is worth it! The gospel can penetrate every culture and community, and its truth is slowly transforming life for the Mbuti people.

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## SENDING MISSIONARIES

*An interview with Peter Drypolcher of YWAM's Frontier Missions Centre, Lusaka*



DJEMBE: Many African YWAMers feel called to other nations - how do they get there?  
PETER: Young people here, as in every generation, want to live lives of passion and purpose, lives that will count for something. African young people are ready to go. The church needs to see itself vitally involved in the completion of the Great Commission, claiming the inheritance that is waiting for the Church. God has promised us that if we ask Him, He will give us the nations as our inheritance (Psalm 2v8). The harvest fields of

Asia are particularly ripe for African missionaries sent by the African Church.

DJEMBE: What hurdles need to be overcome to be an African involved in frontier missions?  
PETER: The main hurdles are, first, the view of missions by most pastors and congregations as a western

*Djembe recalls the Frontier Missions Conference held in Zimbabwe in 1999 when Steve Cochrane prophesied that God wants to use Africa to reach Asia, mentioning nations that border the Indian Ocean and share the Monsoon rains.*

The theme of the conference was Isaiah 49: "It is too small a thing". For us to reach Africa is too small a thing. There is a world of need! God is polishing His arrows, hidden in His quiver, ready to fire them into the nations.

enterprise and, secondly, the pull of family on the candidate to remain and contribute to its financial needs.

DJEMBE: As YWAM Africa we need to prayerfully think about how we address these issues. But how can the Frontier Missions Centre facilitate people going?  
PETER: We serve as coaches and advocates. We set

up a series of steps to the field specifically designed for each person and walk through those steps with them. Once they are in the field, we serve as the link between the missionaries and the home front team.

DJEMBE: What qualities and disciplines do you see in the people that make them successful?  
PETER: Stubbornness. Neither sickness, nor racism, nor bitter disappointment, nor lack of fruit, nor support money stolen in the mail, nor plans turned upside down, nor lack of means of communication, nor being kidnapped by rebels, nor vehicles not working, nor loss of financial support, nor unsupportive family, nor the frustration of learning difficult new languages, nor powerful spiritual opposition (just some of the things which have happened to the missionaries we facilitate) have sent anyone home. This Paul-like determination is found in every one of the YWAMers from southern Africa in the frontiers.

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## MOZAMBIQUE *SOFM targets unreached Yao village*



Itepele Team

In June YWAM Lichinga, Mozambique, started their first School of Frontier Missions (SOFM) with 10 students. The focus of the SOFM is training church planters to plant self-multiplying churches among the unreached people groups (UPGs). YWAM Lichinga and YWAM Mombasa (Kenya) plan on running the school in alternate years, so that there will be at least one SOFM each year in one of the two regions.

Lichinga is situated in the north of Mozambique, one of the least reached parts of Africa, south of the equator. YWAM's work there was pioneered ten years ago by a team sent out by a South African SOFM. Today the base is using this same tactic of running an SOFM to help them target the unreached Muslim Yao people.

Indeed after the SOFM finishes a team of 6 Africans will move to Itepele, a Yao village about 120 km south of the base. Among the more than 11,000 Yao living in this Muslim area there is one known Christian and no other evangelical witness. But the current chief has indicated that he would like to follow Christ.

The first year or two the team will focus on learning the language and the culture and doing intercession. After that they plan to plant home churches, do evangelism and set up a small laboratory for malaria testing.

The interest in the school was overwhelming, says Fred Barrington, the school leader. "The eagerness of Mozambican YWAMers to get trained as frontier missionaries meant all the 10 places were filled by local Portuguese speakers before we could advertise it further." They hope to accommodate bigger schools in future that will serve the whole region: "We hope to give momentum to the new wave of African missionaries to the unreached. I know that is on God's heart now, to use Africans as missionaries."

Students that passed through the SOFM in East Africa have spread out to different places in Africa and beyond. Some of them are working with the Masaai in Tanzania, the Pygmies of the DRC, the Orma in Malindi, Kenya and in Madagascar. Others went to nations like China with help from the Frontier Missions Centre.

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## School of Frontier Missions

The SOFM is a course designed to equip Christians to live and work amongst those forgotten people groups who live in the frontiers, those regions that have had little or no exposure to the Gospel.

It consists of a 3-month intensive lecture phase that provides students with the knowledge and life-skills they need to develop into effective cross-cultural missionaries. Some of the issues covered are: the biblical basis for missions, cross-cultural evangelism, language acquisition, church planting principles, team dynamics, and developing a healthy support base.

Students then do a minimum 2-year placement phase in a frontier missions situation as part of a church planting team - hopefully just the first step towards a long and fruitful ministry.

SOFMs have been particularly effective when teams have been trained, then sent out together, to pioneer in new situations - as in YWAM Lichinga.



Yao girls

For more information on the School of Frontier Missions, visit [www.uofn.edu](http://www.uofn.edu) and check out the noticeboard on page 4