



The Aka of Central African Republic

The Aka pygmies of Central African Republic, who call themselves the Beka, have not had much contact with western society and as a result are the potential focus of anthropological research. This can complicate publicity of their needs. They are nomadic hunter-gatherers that live in the forest and hunt in large groups. They live in small dome structures made primarily of branches and leaves. Some live part of each year in villages at the edge of the forest. Meat and honey are the most important part of their diet. Deforestation and exploitation of game in the area is forcing some to farm or work in saw mills. Family units are small due to a high infant mortality rate. The Aka are an egalitarian group. The main leaders are the head of the family and the head of the clan. Their religious beliefs and worldview are deeply held. They believe in magic and physical and spiritual metamorphosis into animals. They believe in life after death and in reincarnation into lower life forms.

Primary Religion:

animism

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

2%

Churches:

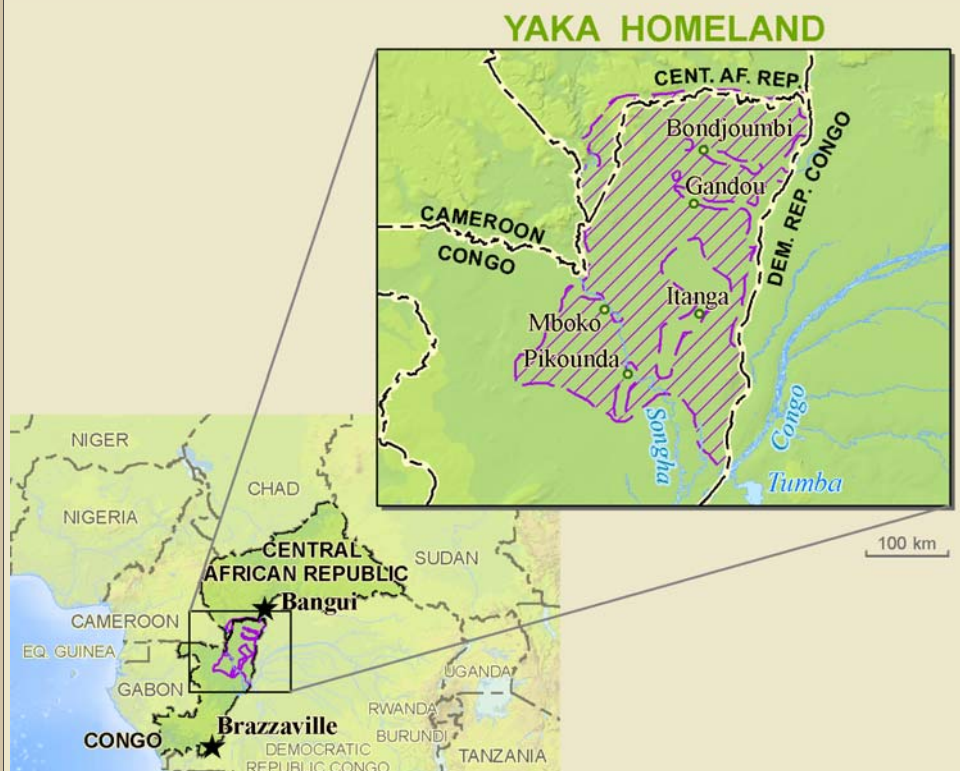
6

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

Translation work started

Population (date):

15,000 (1996)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	<7%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	2%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	>90%	
Number Of Pastors	3	
Comment (Pastors)	estimate	
Number Of Missionaries Working	6	
Comment (Number Of Missionaries)	Evangelism by Catholic nuns. Exact number unknown.	
Response To The Gospel	Antagonism; A large number have probably never heard who Jesus is. Cannot provide a percentage. Many are relatively resistant to the gospel or respond to the gospel with syncretism. Many have never heard the gospel because they like their own religion, not because there has not been evangelistic work.	
Number Of Churches	6	
Comment (Churches)	There is a church in Londo. There are at least 4 churches in Nola. The churches are typically led by national pastors. Other church groups meet around tree stumps in villages.	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	Translation has begun and the Gospel of Luke is finished. It is not published, but a prepublication version is being used.	
Translation Medium	Printed	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There is only a 1% literacy rate. The Aka are nomadic. , Poor roads or the absence of roads and poor storage conditions cause literacy materials and scripture portions to degrade quickly.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	Film, recordings, radio. The Jesus Film is available in Sango. But only a few Aka understand Sango. Also, the lack of electricity makes showing the film problematic. There are recordings of gospel portions interspersed with music. Catholic radio stations broadcast in Sango and French.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	Literacy workers	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	30,000	
World Population (Date)	1996	
Comment (World Population)	Most Aka still live in forests.	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Congo (Brazzaville)	
Country Name	Rep of Central Africa	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	the southwest corner of the Central African Republic (Nola, Bambio, Mbaiki, and Mongoumba subprefectures) and across the border into Congo. The Sangha River is the border with the Baka region. The political boundary, the site of swamps and dense forests, is not an obstacle. There are no border posts. The Aka migrate freely between the two countries.	
Country	Rep of Central Africa	
Longitude	7 00 N	
Latitude	21 00 E	
Climate	Tropical; hot, dry winters; mild to hot wet summers. 60-80 F in cooler months, 80-100 F in warmer months.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	YAKA	
Comment (Language)	Yaka is also the primary language of the Baaka of Congo (Brazzaville).	
Comment (Language)	The alternate language names, Babinga and Bembenga, are considered derogatory.	
Alternate Language Names	PYGMÉES DE LA SANGHAS	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Alternate Language Names	NYOYAKA	
Alternate Language Names	AKA	
Alternate Language Names	PYGMÉE DE LA LOBAYE	
Alternate Language Names	BABINGA	
Alternate Language Names	BEKA	
Dialects	NZARI	
Dialects	BEKA	
Comments (Dialect)	Gbayaka, Bayaka, and Moyaka are alternate names for the Beka dialect.	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Second Languages	Sango, French	
Comment (Second Language)	Only a few Aka speak Sango or French.	
Literacy		Group Description
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	
Active Literacy Program	Yes. At least one group is teaching Yaka literacy. Brethren churches have a Sango literacy program.	
Publications In Vernacular	The Gospel of Luke	
Comment (Literacy)	There is definite interest in literacy. Translated Scripture is used in churches each week. Literate Aka travel to various churches to encourage others to learn to read. In one literacy workshop, 150 narratives were recorded on one weekend. Literacy efforts are often thwarted by the Aka's need to hunt for food.	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers	
Income Sources	working as porters	
Community Development		Group Description
Diet (Quality)	Fair	
Clothing	minimal	
Transportation	Transportation is by foot.	
Infant Mortality Rate	high	
Life Expectancy	low	
Society & Culture		Group Description
Family Structures	small families	
Authority / Rule	There are family and clan leaders.	
Social Habits/Groupings	The Aka hunt in groups.	
Cultural Change Pace	Rapid	
Local Language Broadcasting	None	
Attitude To Outsiders	Very receptive	
Comment (Culture)	Many Aka now farm or work in saw mills. Aka are receptive to outsiders. They allow outsiders to use abandoned domes.	
Education		Group Description
Primary Schools	0	
Primary School Enrollment	0	
Secondary Schools	0	
Secondary School Enrollment	0	
Percent Of Eligible Students Enrolled	0% in rural areas	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	French	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Sango	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	Sango	
Language Of Textbooks Early Years	French	
Number Of Schools > 90% Homogeneous	0	
Comment (Education)	Only children who immigrate to a town attend school.	
Church Growth		Status of Christianity
Lay Leaders	5-12	
Comment (Church Growth)	There are 2 expatriate missionaries and 4 national missionaries among the Aka.	
Religion & Response		Status of Christianity
Religious Practices & Ceremonies	Edengi, an animistic practice involving fetishes and ceremonies, is thought to give success to hunts, to protect from danger and illness, to attract animals to traps, and to cause honey to be abundant. There are ceremonies and sacred dances to heal from sickness and to identify sorcerers. Medicine men and diviners are common. Black magic and metamorphosis into animal shapes are reportedly practiced by those with "power".	
Attitude To Christianity	Very resistant	
Recommended Approaches	It is recommended that a language team live among the Aka for a year or more to organize literacy training. A language development project would strengthen language prestige and encourage the Aka to assert themselves in the face of exploitation. Living conditions are extremely difficult and health risks are high. The Aka are nomadic, which makes sustained projects difficult. These and other complications allow for only modest objectives.	
Current Needs	Community development needs – clean water, introduction of animal husbandry Additional literacy teacher training Medical assistance Funding	
Items For Prayer	Pray for the two nationals who are working on the translation project. Pray that the Aka will not be exploited as more westerners explore these regions.	
History Of Christianity In Group		Status of Christianity
Year Began	1970	
By Whom	Mr. Adamou (Swiss missionary)	
Significant Events	3 or 4 Aka men have committed to engage in full-time ministry among the Aka.	
Comments (History of Christianity)	In addition to the Roman Catholic, Brethren, Apostolic, and Baptist organizations among the Aka, there are also the Foundation Jerusalem (engaged in evangelism) and the Eglise Cooperation Evangelique Centrafricaine (engaged in literacy).	
Scripture		Status of Christianity
Translation Status	In Progress	
Available Scripture	Portions	
Form Of Scripture Available	Printed and Audio	
Comment (Scripture)	17 chapters of the Gospel of Luke have been translated. 15 chapters have been checked by consultants and approved for publication. Chapters 3-5 of the Gospel of Luke are printed. Audio cassettes of Luke 3-5 are also available.	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	Yes. The booklet, "God Saves His People", describes the history of the Jews and explains the message of salvation and the link between the Old and New Testaments.	
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	Yes. Chapters 3-5 of the Gospel of Luke	
Missions and Churches		Status of Christianity
Organization Name	Apostolic Church Mission	
Comment (Organization)	organization name (Eglise Apostolique)	
Comment (Organization)	The Eglise Apostolique is primarily engaged in evangelism and training.	

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Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Baptist
Comment (Organization)	The main ministry of the UFEB is education sponsorship.
Comment (Organization)	organization name (Union Fraternelle des Eglises Baptistes)
Organization Name	Roman Catholic Church
Organization Name	Brethren Mission
Comment (Organization)	The EEF has recently started to use Yaka.
Comment (Organization)	organization name (Eglise Evangelique des Freres)