

CONGO RIVER MISSION

By God's grace, despite many difficulties, dangers, and frustrations, our missionary to the Congo, Johan, has recovered from malaria and is continuing his five-month mission by dugout canoe down the Congo River.

A Strategic Necessity

There are 18 million people living next to the Congo River and its tributaries. Most of these are inaccessible by road. The Congo River Mission is a strategic necessity to evangelise and disciple the remote villages along this vast inland waterway.

A Macedonian Call

As a matter of urgency, we need to send capable, dedicated co-workers to assist Johan in this vital ministry. We are also trusting the Lord for the resources to obtain a suitable missionary boat that can deliver and distribute Bibles, Gospel booklets, audiovisual resources and mission teams to conduct film evangelism and discipleship programmes to the many villages along the Congo River.

Foundational Work

Johan is an ex-South African Naval Captain. He is most dedicated and has done an enormous amount of work, and many months on the ground travelling the full length of the Congo River, doing thorough research, establishing contacts and networking with many local churches and missions.

By Dugout Canoe

In June Johan launched out on his own on a five-month mission, determined to get the work going, even if he had to paddle a dugout canoe. As it so happens, that is exactly what he has done.

River Boat

Johan's Congo River Mission plan is for a dedicated mission riverboat with a 300-ton payload (the MV Good News Trader) with an established Bible depot/mission station/coordinating office in Kisangani (the old Stanleyville). The Congo River basin is in a tropical rain forest and

therefore it is essential to have a riverboat, which can keep the Bibles and audiovisual evangelistic equipment dry in the torrential monsoon type rains.

The Heart of Darkness

Most of the villages and tribes along this river are isolated and are without any missionary presence. The Congo River is the original heart of darkness, which inspired the book and was first mapped by intrepid explorer Henry Morton Stanley. His books, *Through the Dark Continent*, and *In Darkest Africa*, describe the aggressive tribesmen and violent cannibals, which inhabited this river basin area and the desperate battles that he had to fight to survive raids by aggressive cannibals.

Every Tribe Must Hear His Voice

The Congo covers a vast area including approximately 55 million people in an estimated 450 ethno-linguistic tribal groups. Logistics in this remote and generally inaccessible area is what complicates everything.

In the Footsteps of Stanley

Many of the local tribesmen are terrified of the river, even though it is the only means of travel to most of these areas. Johan has designed an epic reconstruction of Henry Morton Stanley's route up the Congo River by paddled dugout canoes.

Breaching Strongholds

At one point Johan threatened to tear his clothes, throw dust on his head and shake the dust off his sandals if local churches didn't break out of their comfort zone and determine to break through to strongholds and reach these remote tribes for Christ.

First Fruits

Shortly after that, one church provided eight singers, three drummers and four oarsmen for the dugout canoe. Another church mobilised twenty men from their village to help restore a mission harbour with concrete and brickwork.

Field Reports

Johan has reported that the Chaplain's Prayer Book and Chaplain's Hand Book have been valuable for equipping and training evangelists.

Tshopo

Johan reported many along the Tshopo tributary of the Congo rejoiced to receive their evangelistic visit.

Perseverance

Despite many setbacks and complications, Johan has persevered, so far reaching almost one hundred villages by dugout canoe. At one point, his missionary outreaches were interrupted as he was struck with malaria fever. Despite being afflicted in the body, he returned to the dugout canoes and paddling onto other unreached villages. Everyone on their team has suffered health problems and harassment from officials.

A Mission Harbour

"The mission harbour is a once-off expense, an international mission asset with no maintenance cost. Aim to do the work with twenty men over three months plus the cost of steel and cement."

English Teachers Wanted

A recent communication from Johan requests "any missionary English language teachers prepared to come and present three-month English courses in Kisangani? August – October or July – September 2011 would be ideal (Hebrews 10:24)."

Pray for Revival

Another communication reads: "The Christian church in the Congo needs to grow consistently and continuously and cooperate interdenominationally to become an undeniably loud spiritual and moral voice."

Reaching the Unreached

Another communication: "Reaching deep rural and isolated communities in the Congo with the Good News. Preaching Matthew 22:37-40, John 3:16 and Romans 12:1-2."

What is your Chief Concern?

"Many brothers in Christ experience too much concern about personal comfort and profit ahead of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 4:1-8; 1 Timothy 6:3-10)."

The Labourers are Few

"An outboard motor is needed to reduce time and reliance on extra paddlers/oarsmen. More participation is needed."

Please continue to mobilise prayer and support for Johan and the Congo River Mission.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord may run swiftly, and be glorified, just as it is with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have Faith."

2 Thessalonians 3:1-2

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