



Cameroon

The Baka

People of the Rainforest

Who are the Baka?

For the Baka, life centers around survival. As the logging industry changes the rainforest, their traditional lifestyle is harder and harder to maintain. The large game animals have retreated further into the dense forest as the hardwood trees whose fruit and shelter they depend on have been logged out.

With less meat available, and therefore less protein in their diet, more Baka children suffer from malnutrition. Diseases brought from outside their communities, such as AIDS and tuberculosis, are also on the rise.

There is easier access to alcohol and drugs, to which many Baka are turning in hopeless desperation as they are not equipped to handle so many new challenges.

The average life expectancy is 42 years, with up to 50% mortality in the 0-5 age group. Those who live until age 50 attain the status of an elder, and as the Baka are a more egalitarian society than many other Cameroon people groups, both the men and women have recognized roles in the traditional culture, which is quite family-oriented.

Most Baka are monogamous, but like our own society, changing partners has become more common than in the past.

Location

Some 50,000 - 60,000 Baka live in scattered groups of 200 or less in an area about the size of the state of Maine. Their territory is mainly in the southeast rainforest region of Cameroon, with some living across the border in Central African Republic and Congo-Brazzaville.

For many generations the Baka people have preferred to live in the thick rainforests of central Africa as semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers living off the bounty of game and fruits from the forest. Their livelihood is tied to the trees.

The forest is their grocery store and pharmacy. Their extensive knowledge of the plants and animals is unmatched.

But their way of life is threatened by rapid deforestation. Over the last two decades more and more Baka have settled in permanent encampments along the logging roads that have penetrated the rainforest.

World Team

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Hope for the Hopeless

Abandoned because of Disobedience

Of the 250+ people groups in Cameroon, the Baka are considered the lowest of peoples. They are animists who believe in a creator god named Komba who abandoned them because of their disobedience. He left them to the capricious whims of Jengi, the spirit of the forest.

Years of ministry among the Baka had produced few lasting results or believers. The hope of planting a self-sustaining and self-propagating church seemed unattainable until a major breakthrough happened.

First Baptism

The year 2011 ended with 21 Baka celebrating their new life in Christ in believer's baptism. Years of labor had finally resulted in a break through; the Baka people are seriously examining the claims of Christ. Since 2011, people have continued to come to Christ and are being baptized!

Discipleship

To nurture the spiritual growth of the community, workers are investing in the lives of Baka leaders. The fruit of discipleship has been the Baka forging their own plans for evangelistic outreach to neighboring camps.

Oral Storying

To prepare the Baka believers for sharing the Gospel, the team is training Baka believers in Oral Bible Storying. Believers share the stories they learn with their friends and neighbors through memorizing the stories, using story recordings and through pictures.



Ministry Overview

People	The Baka
Language	Baka
Location	Cameroon, Africa
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agriculture —train Baka to develop gardens, livestock, orchards• Medical work —community health workers, nurses and doctors• Translation• Literacy• Children and Youth• Church Planting• Discipleship• Oral Storying

The Baka need the hope that only Christ can give -hope for their families, hope because they have worth to God, and the hope of heaven.

As their lifestyle changes from the fatalism of their former animist belief to the hope of being children of God, their sense of personal responsibility is allowing progress in meeting other needs in their own families and communities.

Join the Team!

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