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# Pygmies: Where there is no lie ( Orthodox mission in Congo Brazaville )

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Orthodox catechism in Pygmies.

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*Orthodox catechism in Pygmies.*

The addiction to the violation of nature, which is a creation of God, captures the mind into pain. It makes big efforts to escape, seeking the supremacy of serenity. It expects to see images of purity of daily existence.

A journey to Africa, bathed in a reverie of love, takes as far as the mouth of the legendary river Congo and its tributaries. It is there, in the tropical rainforests, where the diminutive Pygmies live. You see them crowned with “leaves of truth” on the forehead, because they ignore the meaning of “lying”. This word has never existed in the vocabulary of their race.

The meeting of the Pygmies with history takes place mainly in the central basin of Africa. They were already known to Homer and Herodotus due to their short stature. The average height of men is no more than 1.45 m. Their name is owned to the Greeks since the word “pygmy” refers to their height and compares them to the fist (’pygmi’ in greek).

The Pygmies were the first people to settle in the area of Congo, followed by the big negroid family called Bantu. Later they were repulsed by the latter, and today they are dispersed in small groups known by different names: Babongo, Bagyeli, Batwa, Bambuti, Babenga, Aka….

Nowadays, a part of them has become hooked on the bait of technical social development, working in the cities. However, their picturesque villages still impart a tasteful touch to the image of the jungle. Every circular hut, like most of them, is thatched and is supported by little tree trunks. The circumference remains open so that the air can go through and cool them from the suffocating heat and humidity.

When the dawn bids farewell in the night, it finds them ready to participate in their daily working routine. Some go hunting, others go fishing in the rivers in their pirogues and others climb up the huge trees in order to collect fruit, even honey from natural hives.

Only women cultivate “manioka”. From the dried roots of this bush they produce

flour with which they make a kind of gruel. It is usually eaten with meat or fish and a variety of fruit.

From infancy the children of the Pygmies are trained in archery while women around the huts knit their hunting nets with thin branches of vine. They are 40-80 m long and 80 cm high. A 12-year-old boy is ready to grow into a man by hunting with a bow and carrying a net on his shoulders. He encircles the animal by spreading the net, and then it is easy to aim at it with his arrow.

Many times the long marches in the forest make them spend the night in trees and continue the next morning until they achieve their goal. However, when they return to the village carrying an antelope, they all start a joyful dance that shows acknowledgement of the hunters' dexterity. The most formal dance is that of the Elephant, which is indicative of the hunter's big strength.

Times goes by, leaving the Pygmies in the freedom of the jungle.

The Orthodox Missionary Fraternity ( Thessaloniki, Greece ) , showing great sensibility towards the tribe of the Pygmies, has affectionately embraced one of their villages on the banks of the Ubangi river, near the little town of Impfondo in the northeastern part of Congo-Brazzaville.

The missionary Fr Theologos humbly crossed the threshold of their heart! His simplicity and kindness were united with their own merits and made spiritual fruit flourish in their souls, by baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Source: orthodoxmission.org.gr