

SFC Mission 2016 to 2017

Andy and Jutta Cowie



Will be coming to see Stockwood Free Church on weekend of 25th and 26th November

Where is Guinea?



- Andy found a huge compound in Labe with multiple courses held there. Courses from mechanics, construction, carpentry, electricians, cooking, sewing, welding and many more. They were very excited that a European had moved to the town and want him to start teaching.
- They have started travelling outside the town, to see how they can help in the surrounding countryside. They have a fellow worker who treks into the countryside and shares the good news. They were invited to go with them. ***If you get on their email list they send updates of their visits.***

- An answer to prayer, how awesome is that. We were at a monthly retreat and a fellow worker asked if anyone was interested in trekking, as his ministry here is to trek into remote villages to spread the good news. Due to various reasons, he was short of a companion for a month period and as he can only trek in the dry season, he was asking for volunteers! I spoke to Caroline and she gave me the green light if I wanted to give it a go.

Heading to the hills to start the trekking adventure





Heading to the hills to start the trekking adventure

**Footpaths plotted
by Google Earth**



- Plotting our route via Google Earth, it's amazing you can see footpaths even in remote locations.
- We would start with a two day trek just to build up to the longer one.
- We all met for the prayer time, praying for good connections and relationships, safety as we would rely on those we would meet to feed us and give us water. And good communication with the tribal chiefs.



House for the night



Empty villages



Dry and hot to cross 3 km

A typical vehicle crossing!



One Story from the trip...

Caroline returned home and we set-out, our first stop was to visit the local regional leader, this is always done to ask permission to enter his region. We found him at a building site of a new mosque, they had destroyed the old mosque just leaving behind the mihrab directly in the middle, and they told us that after the mosque is dedicated they would then destroy the mihrab. After receiving his approval we headed to our first village and vehicle parking spot. In each village the first person we would look for is the village chief or elder. We found the village chief in the first village and he recognised my companion from his previous visit three years earlier. He promptly went inside his round grass roofed hut, coming out with a blue bag saying “you can have the book back that you sold me three years ago, I haven’t read it”. Our question was, “Why haven’t you read it?” The print is too small he replied, we told him we could help with that, the chief perked up “how?” We had with us micro SD cards to go in a phone, he asked how much they were, we gave him a price and he bought one, we left him listening and trying to follow the book in his native language, result we thought. When we returned the next day to collect the car two more people wanted SD cards, now that was a result.

- On the longer of the two treks, we encountered one day with the only food offered was oranges...
- While walking across a dry arid plateau, the heat was beating down from the sun but you could also feel the heat coming up from the rocks, as you breathed in the air was hot. At that point I felt something sharp in my foot.



Many villages we entered were only inhabited by women and children, the men had left to search for work. It didn't feel right to stay in these villages so we welcomed them and moved onto the next village.

- In village entered after dark welcomed in, given uncomfortable bed of straw for the night.
- Rice and sauce given for breakfast - but great hospitality
- Falling down slopes as tripped landed on his 20 kg back pack, no way he would get rescue or help in the countryside – so he just had to keep going on his painful knee.
- Interesting wildlife to contend with including snakes and monkeys!!

Perspective! The two treks were an amazing experience to understand the country I live in, to gain an insight into the lives of people and their culture from the perspective of village life not the urban sprawl where we live. Hot sweaty, hard floors, cold bucket showers once in four days and the flies that try to get moisture from around your eyes. It was all worth it for the relationships formed, I hope to get back again next dry season.

Our vision.

- **An inclusive church**
- **Great to see lots of new faces in the congregation. Let us be a welcoming church.**
- **More of us in homegroups to study the Word of God and encourage one another in our Spiritual journey.**

finish

One more story...

- One village we found the elders sitting under a tree cutting manioc, after greeting them they offered us a meal, which we gratefully received after the day before on oranges. After one elder asked if we could pray for his daughter, she had been having behavioural problems after losing her baby a few days after the birth. He took us to his house and then around the back of his house we found his daughter, she was attached to a large piece of tree trunk, which her leg passed through and was padlocked by a chain the other side. She was able to lift the log and move one pace before putting it down to rest. He told us that she had become disruptive in her mental state and had pulled all the straw from the roof of a neighbour's house, therefore she had been placed in this contraption. I was shocked and thought it was such a draconian way of keeping her in place, later my colleague explained that she was lucky to be with a caring family who was there to look after her, some are pushed out of the village to fend for themselves.

Sfc AGM 18 May 2017

Burlacu, Moldova

SENERIS 2016



Highlights

- Visit by Margaret, Sarah, Carol and Lance in September 2016
- Puppets used at Christmas
- Ministry amongst “youth”
- Course for married couples
- “Regular” Skype conversations with Andrei
- Benefits for our ministry here in Stockwood

Pray for....

- More Christians to stay living locally
- Protection of Christians from “the world”
- New car for Andrei and Eugenia
- More money for Ghenadie and Anna
- Ongoing communication
- Possible future visit