

PRAY FOR THE
BANGOBANGO
OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO

Have you ever had a friend take a message to someone on your behalf? When I was little, this most often occurred when a girl (like yours truly) liked a boy, but was too shy to go tell him herself, so she sent a rather brave friend in her place to share the news on her behalf. I remember it like it was yesterday. A huddle of little girls and a huddle of little boys. Nervous glances at each other. Lots of giggling on the girl's end. The one sending the messenger would hide behind the group, so as not to be seen but still allows you to peek around to watch what proceeds. Imagine it. You've just put everything on the line. You totally put yourself out there. Your fate is either rejection or acceptance. Death or life. You watch as your friend skips across the boy/girl battlefield, or elementary school playground, and takes a bold stand in front of the boy of choice. This is it. You hope and hope that she speaks your exact words with a pretty smile and proper batting of the eyelashes, although you don't want her to be too pretty. The boy is supposed to like you not her after all. Then, she skips back across the playground without a care in the world and says, "he said he likes you too... hehehe..."



The Bangobango are an unreached, unengaged people group living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They grow their own food and raise animals for their livelihood. While the Bangobango are primarily Muslim, they also practice ancestor worship. They try to appease a supreme god and lesser gods by looking to their family members that have died to be their mediators. They believe their dead ancestors go-between the gods and man. So, they build shrines and have ceremonies to please their ancestors in hopes that their ancestors will protect them from evil spirits and help them please gods.

The idea of ancestors acting as mediators can be a bit confusing but it's a bit like sending a friend in your place to give a message to a boy. For the person sending the messenger the idea of going to speak to the boy herself, just seems unthinkable. She believes she has no direct access. She depends on the friend to not only go on her behalf but to do it well. Do you think the messenger friend would do a good job of delivering the message if the girl sending her was mean and bossy? Probably not. The girl sending the messenger has to have a good relationship with the friend and ask really nicely. This idea might give you a tiny idea of what it's like to trust in ancestors to intercede on your behalf. Can you imagine living a life like that? It's one thing to use a mediator to tell a boy you like him. It's another to depend on mediators to please what you believe to be spirits that affect every part of your life. When you have that worldview, you believe gods cause rain or drought, sickness or health, peace or war, life or death. Let's pray that the Bangobango will hear the good news that they don't have to live in fear anymore. Jesus is the only true mediator between man and the One True God.



Don't forget to pray for the Bangobango children, too! Pray that they would find freedom from the burden of ancestral worship and appeasing false gods and experience the joy that comes from having direct access to a Holy God through Christ our Lord, brother, and mediator. What a kind, loving God we serve that has made a way for us to be at peace with Him in Christ.