

Congo Trip - 1 to 14 December 2015 - Part 2: Training

This was my fourth time with the Jesus Film Mission Trips. The emphases have changed over the years along with increasingly modern technology. The original Jesus Film was released in the late 1970s and was often shown using 16mm movie film and projectors. It has now been translated into 1378 languages, far exceeding the number of translations of any movie of any type. The original is essentially the historical account of Jesus Christ as given in the Gospel book of Luke. Now in digital format, the color balance has been improved to modern standards. An Old Testament introduction is included to show the need of the life of Jesus.

A shorter children's version has been created, now in 159 languages. 2007 saw the release of a version with more emphasis on women in the Bible story. It is called Magdalena and is told from the perspective of a woman healed by Jesus and the first person to whom the resurrected Jesus appeared. It was recently available in 90 languages. A new series, Rivka, has followup topics about life as a new follower of Jesus. There are some other followup movies specific for certain regions of the world.

The Jesus Film has been cut into 61 short segments for use with smartphones and tablets as discussion starters. On this trip to the southern edge of the Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R. Congo) we used the 2-minute segment called Jesus Calms the Storm, leading to a possible discussion of how the "storms" in our lives might be calmed. (http://jesusfilmmedia.org/search-results/?type=film-clips&refid=1_529-jf-0-0) That web site lets the segments be individually selected for download. A drop-down lets the language be changed from English to one of more than a thousand others. We used the Swahili-Congo language, though we had 12 regional languages downloaded onto the electronic systems that we brought to Congo.

On a similar trip last December we also used short films not directly related to Jesus but useful for discussion starters leading to more spiritual applications. (<http://www.globalshortfilmnetwork.com/>) We liked using La Liberte, Jangled, Cabernet, The Search, My Last Day, and Venia. Some have no language. Others are available in several languages.

One of the purposes of this Congo trip was to introduce some modern and much lighter technologies to leaders of the region. During our daytime instruction we used a light weight portable screen that is elliptical, held tight by flexible interlocking rods. The entire screen can be disassembled into a small bag.

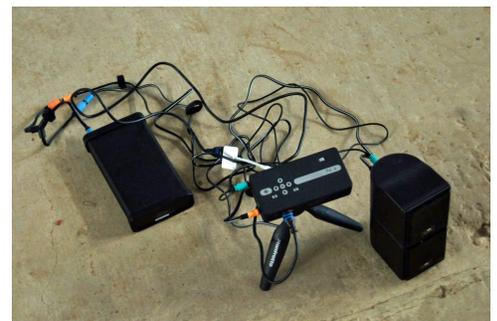


For outdoor film showings we used a larger rectangular screen with rigid poles that fit into a larger bag.

A major technology advance is this micro projector (center) that is powered by a battery (left) and uses a speaker (right).

For outdoor use we had

more powerful speakers and an electric power generator, but the same micro projector. It avoids the weight and possible mechanical challenges of the old 16mm movie projectors.



The leaders were trained (see photos on next page) about how to download the short film segments to a smartphone and iPad and use them to start conversations with people on the street.



Many of these leaders do not own such modern devices. They were told that they can apply to Jesus Film headquarters for a grant to receive pre-loaded devices for free, paid for by eager donors to the Jesus Film Project. After training we went in small groups into public locations to talk with people. We Americans just watched and prayed while the leaders spoke in the local languages (Swahili-Congo and French).



Later the leaders told what happened with their talks in the public areas.



On four evenings we showed the Magdalena film in the Swahili-Congo language in four different neighborhoods, usually near a church and having a local pastor address the crowds. Most respondents were children. Local leaders gathered contact details from teens and adults for followup to the responses.



There were times, including at a Sunday service and at the film showings, when we gave brief talks about our spiritual growth or addressed a particular Biblical theme. Of course the translators converted our English.

