

ALLEN (*James Woodruff*), Missionary (Missouri, USA, 19.07.1885 – ? 1980).

Known to his missionary colleagues as Uncle Jimmy and to Congolese Christians as Muambi (Tatu) Kasai, Allen was a beloved and effective missionary, used by God to bless many in the Belgian Congo.

Born in Pleasant Hill, Missouri, July 19, 1885, he was educated at Westminster College, Missouri (BA, 1908) and at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (BD, 1911). Lafayette Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the United States licensed and ordained him to the Gospel ministry in 1912. That same year he married Mildred Montgomery. They were appointed by the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions (PCUS) to missionary service in the Belgian Congo.

The Allens began work at the newly-opened station of Mutoto in 1912 but in 1913 moved to Luebo to help open the training school for evangelists/catechists and teachers. In 1922 they moved to Bulape to do the same work plus primary schooling for girls and boys. This involved keeping a boarding department in their backyard. In 1931 the Luebo school was combined with the one at Bulape and moved to Mutoto to become the Morrison Bible School. The Allens were stationed there until 1939 when they returned to Bulape to continue the training of village leaders, which included regular visits to them in the villages where they worked. In 1951 the MBS moved to Kankinda to become part of the *Institut Morrison* which included an *Ecole Primaire*, an *Ecole de Moniteurs*, and an agricultural programme. The Allens returned to Bulape in 1956 but were furloughed to the United States in 1958 for health reasons. They were honorably retired from the mission on January 1, 1959.

Throughout his ministry “Uncle Jimmy” Allen was engaged in teaching and training ministers and teachers.

To help them and the church he wrote in the Tshiluba language many commentaries on and expositions of books in the Bible, including handbooks on Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers; Matthew, John and Acts; Romans, I and II Corinthians; Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians; I and II Timothy and Titus; Hebrews; I, II and III John. Desmond Tutu, at that time director of the Theological Education Fund of the World Council of Churches, stated that these and similar works in the Luba-Lulua language were among the best series of biblical resources in African language south of the Sahara. Mr Allen was a member of the Tshiluba Bible Revision Committee during the 1930s.

In 1936 the Belgian government awarded Mr Allen the *Croix de Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal du Lion*. He was also honoured by his *alma mater*, Westminster College, with the degree of Doctor of Divinity in 1932. His wise counsel and sweet spirit have had a lasting effect on countless ministers, African and expatriate alike.

23 August 2002.

C. T. McKee.

Sources: WHARTON, E.T. 1952. *Led in Triumph*. — WITHERSPOON, E.D. (Jr.) 1975. *Ministerial Directory of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.*