

Prophetic Vision Leads MMA Fighter Into the Heart of Africa

He's known as the "Big Pygmy" and is using his time in the ring to quite literally fight for the forgotten. It all started with a vision Justin Wren says God gave him in 2010 soon after he got saved.

"I was in the rain forest," Wren recalls. "I knew I was way out there, walking down footpath with trees all around. I heard this awesome drumming—very distinct, but beautiful singing, and saw what I now know were pygmies. Everything shifted from curiosity then because my heart was broken for them. I knew they were hated by other people groups around them. It was so vivid I almost saw just past the people and saw the pain. It crushed me the most because they felt forgotten by people and by God. I cried like I've never cried before in my life."

Less than a year later, Wren's prophetic vision came to fruition, and he journeyed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to minister to the Pygmies.

The DRC government estimates there are approximately 600,000 Pygmies in the Congo today—about 1 percent of the population. According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, the struggle of the Pygmy people is "considerably worse" than the average Congolese person. The Congolese are ranked as some of the poorest in the world.

"He wants to defend the weak, empower the voiceless," Wren says of the Lord. "What He's shown me a lot, a lot of times (is that) Western missionaries, NGOs look for the quick fix, a Band-Aid of (throwing) money at the problem. ... A lot of times, people think charity is the answer, but God's shown me

something much greater than charity, (which is) opportunity.”

Wren initially wanted to raise money for two water wells, but he is now closing in on providing funds for nearly 30. Increased access to clean drinking water could prevent more than a half-million deaths every year from malaria alone. In addition, fresh water could prevent 1.4 million child deaths from diarrhea and 860,000 child deaths from malnutrition, the World Health Organization reports.

This is perhaps why God sent an internationally known fighter to their rescue and has used his fame to restore hope and joy to the Pygmies.

“My first promise to them was to give them a voice,” Wren says. And by making his comeback to mixed martial arts, he appears to be doing just that.