



Son-rise in Africa Newsletter
CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION
Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER
(for Newsletter Archives go to <http://www.discipleshipministries.ca/>)
June 2009

Ministry Update...

Here are a sample of the email correspondence I sent to my family while in Cameroon. This will give you an idea of the teaching tour in Cameroon in June. Thank you for your faithful prayers, God blessed the teaching:

June 2009: Cameroon trip #3 – June 11 Journal Installment:

The class of 27 pastors is going well. The Cameroon guys are a great bunch. They are so enthusiastic, despite the fact that we usually start late each day and the 15 minute break inevitably goes to 30 minutes. Arrival time is routinely a round of "how are you?" , "how is your family?" , "how did you sleep?" because these are the only phrases I recognize in French and can return to them!! A quarter of the class will come up to me as they arrive and go through the routine. They are so anxious to make me welcome and feel at home.

The weather has turned rainier. We get a good heavy downpour every afternoon around 5 p.m. and another sometime after midnight. The pattern is unique, the storms come 1 hour later each day. Sometimes it just rains heavy, other time it comes with lightning, thunder and a real blowing dump like a hurricane in Florida. Amazingly the people take it all in stride, even when the streets literally run with water. I have not figured out yet whether the city is growing, or many have no homes as a result of the Pope's "purifying" visit (squatters homes torn down for aesthetic reasons) . Nevertheless, there seems to be many more people on the streets than when I was here before. With the crazy traffic jams that occur each night, it is actually quicker for me to walk the 20 minutes home than try to take a taxi through the chaos!

My teaching routine will continue through Saturday and start again on Monday. On Sunday, Simone is taking me to a village 100 km away from Yaounde to preach at one of the student's churches (the student is the pastor).

June 2009: Cameroon trip #3 – June 15 Journal Installment:

Saturday started off with a storm but by the time I was ready to walk to class at 7:30 the weather cleared and it was a nice, cool 20 minute walk. The class started with discussion of the class assignment I left the men with Friday night. - To get into groups of at least 2 different African culture differences and discuss the differences regarding beliefs about man - his origin, relationships, death and afterlife! Wow was that interesting. We have a few guys from the West where ancestor worship is practiced. Each community has an ancestor worship house. After a relative has been dead and buried for 4 years, they dig up the body, remove the skull and bring it into the worship house to join all the other skulls that have been collected for many years. They decorate the new skull and call a worship service where the relatives come and pray to the skull for blessings and favours! This goes all year round! In the North, pre-marital sex is encouraged among the young people so the young men can get young girls pregnant and show they are real strong men! There were also death ceremonies and other interesting "fetish" rituals mentioned. This is among one of the most highly educated countries in Africa! - just proving that education without God's light does not change hearts!

I preached at a village church out in the middle of Cameroon yesterday. The worship service was truly African - heavy drum beat, rhythmic music with the occasional screeching of one of the women, chanting a song in the pattern of Africa where a woman leads and the congregation echoes her words while they sway and dance to the beat. You would think that the music came from a Tarzan movie! However, for these folks that is worship, and it was all done in a worshipful manner. These brothers and sisters in Christ were very attentive to the word - even the children that sat all in the front hard wooden pews. A dog lay beside me on the platform (6 inch raised floor at the front of the church where the home made pulpit was). Fortunately the dog refrained from howling during the service - he just scratched away!

After the service Dr Simone, my translator, and I returned to the Pastor's house (one of the students I teach) for a big meal - chopped up pork & chicken (bones included), cooked plankton (that plant that looks like bananas), cooked beans and corn and some other plant, and the popular yam plant, and for dessert - the sweetest pineapple you ever tasted - tons of it - mmmmmm!!

It was an 80 km drive from Yaounde and the last 7 km were on a road with huge truck ruts in places - we got stuck going in but the local folks dug us out quite quickly. All in all it was a great day. I left at 8:30 and returned at 3:30. The weather was a steady 80F with threatening rain and a nice breeze. Not uncomfortable at all, except that the vehicle Dr Simone drove had the heat stuck on and I cooked whenever he exceeded 50 km per hour - which was pretty much all the way!! Today I begin Soteriology with the men.

June 2009: Cameroon trip #3 – June 20 Journal Installment:

I have completed the studies on Anthropology, Hamartiology and Soteriology and will spend the next 2 class periods (4 hours today and 4 hours tomorrow) teaching the principles of stewardship. The class has gone very well. The men are eager to learn and have grown accustomed to my "grouping for discussion" method of exploring scripture. The men have had interesting challenges to think about. I asked them yesterday, after teaching about "Adoption" in salvation - being adopted into God's family as well as born into it so all would recognize that there is no 'waiting period' for a child to be declared mature in order to benefit from the Father's inheritance (not so in Roman culture). After teaching this I asked the class if there was a 'cut off' age for a child to be saved - i.e.. how young is too young. When they finally admitted that 'understanding and faith' varies with each child, and could be very early, then I asked them if their churches had 'age qualifications' for baptism. This immediately began a hot discussion on whether this is Biblical or not. Some men had churches that would not baptize until a child is a teenager, others whenever the child expressed true understanding and genuine faith. One thing for sure about Africans, they love to argue - in good spiritual discussion without 'judging' (or at least most do not judge!).

As to weather, it usually rains now about every 2nd or 3rd day as the dry season continues to take over the climate. The temperature is remaining cool in the mornings - 70-75, but by 6 p.m. it hits the higher 80's. I still walk home from class at 7 p.m. Its getting dark by then (there are street lights) and beginning to get cool. I am still amazed at how many people are still about. The walk home is like a 20 minute walk through the Bracebridge Fair's mid-way with 'booths' to lure the gambler to try his luck and food stalls to lure the hungry with the great variety of food smells. The presence of garbage does tend to curb my appetite while walking though. This is probably my last journal entry for you. I leave tomorrow night - heading to the airport at 5 p.m. after 4 hours of class and a quick pack after lunch. Lord willing, I'll see you all soon.

Present Itinerary:

Please pray for God's blessings as we complete our 2009 schedule.

Lyndock Baptist, Eganville: Aug. 2

Holiday to St Johns, N.B., Aug 3 – Aug 14

Calvar Baptist, Pembroke, Aug. 16 or 23

Trinidad: Aug. 28 - Sept. 14

Victory Fellowship Baptist, Hanover: Sept. 20

Calvary Baptist, Espanola: Sept. 26-27

Parry Sound Baptist: Oct. 4

First Baptist, Cochrane: Oct. 18

Southend Baptist, Owen Sound: Oct. 25

Otterville Baptist: Nov. 1

Central Baptist, Brantford: Nov. 8

Bethel Baptist, Orillia: Nov. 15

India: Nov. 20 - Dec. 8

Please pray with us...

1. For effective teaching where God leads, while BATA is organized in Africa. Our prayer is to labour in the Spirit's power to bring understanding to the pastors and equip them to teach their own people.
2. For travel safety during Earl & Kathi's continued travels in 2009.
3. For preparation of the studies for Trinidad (August – September) and India (November).
4. For our monthly support shortfall – as of this June 30 now \$180.
5. For ministry opportunities in Canada and U.S. as we continue ministering in 2009 and planning 2010.

Air Miles Assistance - Cooper Air Miles No. 8006 178 1930

A practical way of supporting our ministry travel costs is by using our Air Miles number at participating merchants. For those who have passed on your earned air miles to us, we thank you.

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