



***Son-rise Around the World Newsletter***  
**CHURCH PLANTING THROUGH THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION**  
**Report by EARL & KATHI COOPER**  
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**January 2012**

**Earl's Ministry Update... Special report written from Cameroon**

As this month represents the commencement of 10 years of teaching trips to Africa it was appropriate for me to arrive in Cameroon in the midst of severe ministry trials. I say appropriate because the years of teaching in Africa had conditioned me to face, with growing acceptance, the hardships that our brothers and sisters endure in serving Christ here. I feared complacency, something I vowed would never happen. So this month's trials were a wake-up call; a reminder that escape back to Canada, where I can find comfort and relaxation in ministry, is not good enough; a reminder that I determined when first arriving in Africa and seeing the plight of God's people here, I would try my best to do something about it. Therefore, I commit this newsletter to a wake-up call to my Canadian church families. My desire is to paint for you a 'word picture' of the reality of ministry here in Cameroon:

My New Year ministry began in the dust bowl of Cameroon. No rain has fallen in this area since mid-November. This means that the usual sources of water for drinking, cooking, washing and watering gardens for essential food is drastically reduced. Here on campus the water taps, found in various locations on the 4 acre site, are regularly cut off from the water tower supply. The usual sight of students and children carrying buckets of water to their residence is greatly diminished. The families just do without fresh water by re-using their supply! The temptation to just drink what has sat around for a while is often too much for most children. Consequently sickness is widespread.

With the decreased rainfall, hydro-electricity is also in short supply. This means regular planned and many unplanned electrical outages. This becomes a daily routine, interrupting necessary school and office work dependent upon machines such as computers, copiers, and even lighting for classes. Most classes just carry on in the dimmed haze of Harmattan (sun-blocked sky due to constant dust in the air). Although the African student families and faculty are used to going without electricity (some of the students come from villages that have no electricity), the season of Harmattan brings its own threat. Without rain, the earth is not naturally washed; therefore, germs, parasites, bacteria, and disease-carrying dust settle everywhere. Young children playing and naturally putting their fingers in their mouths (along with everything else they pick up) contract everything from worms to typhoid. This adds disease to the widespread sickness. It is common on campus for an entire family to have everyone sick at the same time. The missionary families are not exempt.

The picture that I have painted so far is normal for West Africa during the dry season. There is little that can be done to change the environment. This has been the history of Africa since records have been kept. However, with modern medical advances, there is really no excuse for the suffering to be as severe and prolonged as it is. Most of the illness can be prevented or quickly remedied with medication. Unfortunately, modern medicine does not help when the resources to purchase such help are outside the reach of most African families, including those serving and studying at the seminary.

The hardship of constant illness on campus, despite the on-site medical clinic and gifts from Canadian churches to inoculate, is entirely due to the reality that the seminary is attempting to run on a *shoestring* budget. This fact paints yet another bleak picture. Due to lack of regular funds to sustain operating costs, the seminary is unable to provide medical care to staff and students for regular sicknesses and diseases. A few days after I arrived on Campus this January I discover that Dr. Simon (seminary president) was confined to the medical clinic for intravenous treatment of malaria and typhoid for 2 days. He was able to get treatment because I delivered a money gift to him from Canada. The other campus families are not so fortunate. Sickness and disease keeps students out of classes, children in serious trouble, and a cloud of concern over the school throughout the months of dry season – twice every year.

Shoestring seminaries are also regularly 'tied-up' with broken equipment. Since January 7, the school has had to deal with the headaches of equipment deprived of regular maintenance. The school van, critical for providing transportation for students and faculty to outlying ministries and securing necessary food supplies, required an engine overhaul. There had been no funds for regular oil changes! The overhaul was done at the expense of securing other supplies, such as medicine. The copier, necessary for making student manuals etc., broke down. I spent one Saturday repairing the 'drum module' only to discover when I turned the machine on that a computer component was burned out. There is still no copier for the school. The school chain saw, needed to keep brush back, provide fire wood, and remove dangerous overhead dead branches, broke down. It

had been run with improper oil because the correct oil was not affordable. There is still no chain saw available. Dr. Simon's vehicle required a new water pump. It sat until funds were available, putting additional stress on transportation requirements. It was repaired at the expense of other family necessities. The main school computer died of old age and 'computer viruses' which were not prevented because the internet available at the school is insufficient to keep the computer protected. Shortage of funds does not allow for faster internet service. (This essential equipment was replaced by money from Canadian churches and missionaries serving at the school).

Besides the health issues and maintenance issues, the result of running a school on a shoestring is obvious; no new equipment to replace old, no budget for advancing school services and ministries, no funds for additional staff, no funds for expanding facilities for new students, and much labour and time consumed on chasing down used parts for cars and equipment as a part of coping with desperately small resources. I define the resources as *small* not *limited* because the Lord God has unlimited resources. However, as He has purposed that His own children supply His resources for one another, the neglect of those who *have* toward those who *have not* has left the Cameroon Seminary with small supply.

God is too gracious and loving to limit His care. However, for the sake of reflecting what I consider to be an urgent need, let me speak foolishly by saying "If the Lord should choose to answer only one prayer of mine this year, that prayer would be that God's people in Canada, who have more than most Africans could imagine, would be moved of heart to give generously and regularly to the needs of God's people in Africa. Cameroon Seminary needs help. *We who have* cannot allow comfort and complacency to lull us into inaction!

### **SPECIAL PROJECTS:**

1. Tuition AID project for a Pastors working on PhD studies to be career missionary teachers – Present Goal: \$4000 per year.
2. Cameroon Seminary - estimated \$1000/month present shortfall. Goal: \$12,000 per year.

**2Co 9:7** *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

### **UPCOMING ITINERARY:**

February 5-13: Earl will be in Portugal  
February 26: Pinegrove Baptist, Bracebridge  
March 25: Fellowship Baptist, Parry Sound  
April 15: Bethel Baptist, Orillia  
April 21: ABWE Canada Annual Meeting

April 22: Springfield Baptist, Springfield  
April 29: Riverside Baptist, Huntsville  
May 12 – June 11: Earl Teaching in Cameroon  
June 20: We will be in Portugal to visit the Bouma's and to celebrate our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

### **PRAY WITH US...**

1. For the Lord to supply for the ABWE Canada-Cameroon Seminary Fund and Tuition Aid Fund.
2. For preparation of the studies for the coming year and the writing of books on 'Stewardship' and 'Depression' – the work is progressing.
3. For effective teaching where God leads. Our prayer is to labour in the Spirit's power to bring understanding to the pastors and equip them to teach their own people.
4. For the Lord to provide teachers to meet the growing need throughout the world.

### **PRAISE THE LORD...**

...for His provision that allows us to continue serving around the world.

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