

THE YELLOW STAR



**The Mission
Newsletter of
the Magruder
Family, United
Methodist
Missionaries
to Cameroon**

Embracing All God's Children

I recently visited a village church to preach and lead Communion. I noticed what looked like a small child laying on a bench in the back, as if taking a nap. As the service started, the figure sat up.

But it was no child; instead, it was a young woman, emaciated and frail. After the service, I had the astonishing realization that I knew who this woman was ... She was Maria, and the last time I'd been in this church, her engagement to a young man had just been announced. She had been beautiful, young and full of life. She had led much of the singing, and her face had been a perpetual smile.

Not anymore. She could barely walk to the front for Communion. After she received the bread and wine, I anointed her with oil and Pastor Jean-Blaise and I prayed for her.

After the service, her husband approached me and asked for financial help to take her to a hospital in Yaounde. It was obvious that Maria was suffer-

ing from AIDS.

The story of the AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa is well-told in the Western press. But it's a different thing altogether to see it for yourself.

I was thrilled, then, to learn that we had received a grant from the Women's Division, GBGM, to put together an AIDS task force.

Collins Etchi, a young adult from John Wesley UMC, wrote the original grant proposal, which brought together five Cameroonians and an American college in-



The AIDS team before their Obala presentation. From left to right, they are Ebede, Gisela, Lydia, Leah Bouas, and Collins.

tern, Leah Bouas. This team was trained in Yaounde on AIDS education and prevention, then made a series of presentations in villages and towns. Their particular focus was fighting the stigmatization and prejudice that those who are affected with AIDS face.

My prayer is that their presentation, entitled "Embracing All God's Children," will indeed do something to help people like Maria, and the churches they belong to.

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To support the work of the United Methodist Church in Cameroon, give through The Advance for Christ and His Church, using the following numbers:

- Wesley Magruder, #14943Z
- Leah Magruder, #14944Z
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Kids are Missionaries, Too!

By Rachel Magruder

I went to America over the summer to visit my grandparents and lots of relatives. I went to Portland, Oregon to visit my aunt and uncle, and then to Tennessee for a family reunion. I really didn't ever think how great it is to have a Sonic slushie or a Wendy's frosty every once in a while! I probably gained ten pounds over the summer.

While there, I was reminded of some of the differences between living in Africa and America. For example, I realized that Cameroonians are very grateful for everything. They keep everything you give them and eat anything you give them, too, as long as it's not too sweet. Americans don't always think too much about the many choices they have, especially when it comes to food.

Another difference is driving. Although the traffic rules may be similar, drivers in Cameroon pay much less attention to them and get away with breaking them all the time.

There are many other differences. Many Cameroonian houses are very small and don't have furniture or electricity. And there are just some features of Africa that take you by surprise sometimes, like the sight of people carrying things on their head or babies on their back. You find people on the roadside selling phone cards and pineapples. And if you want to buy something, negotiation is the key!

That's just Africa!



Above, Theres Nomo, wife of Pastor Simeon in Obala, uses the Sunday School curriculum with the children of Sion UMC.

Maman Leah's Corner

By Leah Magruder

Bonjour tout la monde! Whew!!!! What a summer! We had visitors from May through August, and it was great. The work of God is non-stop here in Cameroon.

Let me update you all on my favorite subject (outside of my children) and that is Christian Education. I have been hounding everyone all year about this new curriculum I found through my Presbyterian missionary friend, Christi Boyd, called "Vien et Vois!" You remember the flannel graph system of telling stories through cloth figures and scenery.

My goal was to be able to finance all 20 of our churches so that they could have the full set of Bible figures, flannel board, one week's training in Makak, and a little extra so that I could go around the country and help the teacher's in their techniques. Well, in my financial statement from GBGM in New York this month, it stated that I had received over \$11,000 from Vacation Bible Schools and United Methodist Women groups! I am so thankful to God. Now, not only can I get all the materials to all the churches, but I can have more than one person per church trained as well. The best news of all is that we can spend the rest of the money on Bibles. Very few of our Sunday School children have Bibles, and now we can make sure they have French and English Bibles in every church. **Thank you so much** to all the churches that so generously donated their mission offerings from Vacation Bible School this summer and to the UMW's that so freely gave that our children's Sunday School can teach the stories of God in such a beautiful way!

Ministry Review

“Day of the Prisoner”: The last Sunday in June in Cameroon is designated “Day of the Prisoner,” on which various churches bring supplies and gifts to people in prison. This year, Rev. Wesley was asked to speak at the “Day of the Prisoner” weekend service, featuring special music and choirs. The Mission donated bags of rice and cartons of sardines to the Protestant Community of the prison.

Visit of Bishop Goodpaster: In July, we were thrilled to have a delegation from Alabama-West Florida Conference visit Cameroon, led by Bishop Larry Goodpaster. The team visited a number of our churches in Douala, the Southwest Province, and Yaounde. The only snag in the visit was the fact that the team’s luggage didn’t arrive in Cameroon until two days before they were to leave!



School of Ministry, Session 4: Rev. Wesley held his fourth session of the School of Ministry, conducted at John Wesley UMC. In July, a number of pastors and interested laypersons gathered to study “By Water and Spirit: A United Methodist Understanding of Baptism.”

Plans for a Cameroon Hymnal: A good friend from the North Texas Conference, Rev. John Thornburg, visited for three weeks in August, to make preliminary plans for a bilingual songbook for United Methodists in Cameroon. He toured churches, sat in on choir practices, listened to lots of singing, and even taught a few new songs himself. He plans to return again in early 2006.



UMW Conference: The recently-elected national officers of the United Methodist Women of Cameroon met in Yaounde in July for a training session, led by GBGM missionary Catherine Akale



Wedding of Pastor Ashu: Sampson Ashu, pastor of Horeb UMC, the only Anglophone church in Douala, was widowed over a year ago, and left with two young children. He called Rev. Wesley excitedly earlier this year to say that he would be remarried. On August 26, Rev. Wesley officiated as Pastor Ashu was married to Theres Bih at First UMC, Douala.

Sierra Leone 4: In September, Pastors Rosalie Nzie, Sampson Ashu, Seraphin Oum and Bi-venue Iloga Iloga traveled to Freetown, Sierra Leone for a week-long West Africa Academy of Evangelization and Church Growth, sponsored by the United Methodist Church.

Pastor Simeon gets Motorbike: Thanks to a gift from the partner church of Sion UMC, Obala, Pastor Simeon Nomo received a motorbike for use in his ministry. After the success of the cholera prevention team in June, Simeon had started three cell groups in neighboring villages, but had trouble finding transportation to the groups. With a new motorcycle, Simeon is able to travel whenever and wherever needed!

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**Keep up with the
Magruders at [http://
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*Preach peace till you have it; and then,
because you have it, you will preach peace!*

PRAYER REQUESTS

The most significant way that you can be a part of our ministry in Cameroon is by agreeing to pray for us on a daily basis. Take this list and post it somewhere handy — use it daily, please!

- ✚ For Leah in her job as Area Financial Executive
- ✚ For Wes in his job as Director of Mission
- ✚ For Rachel, Chloe and Mallory who have begun their seventh, fourth, and first grade years respectively at American School of Yaounde
- ✚ For Ginger Cooper, a Volunteer in Mission, who is beating the visa problem by working at the American School as nurse and assistant house mother
- ✚ For a planned conference of United Methodist pastors in November in Kribi
- ✚ For an American partner church for each one of

our nineteen churches in Cameroon

- ✚ For Wes' trip to the States in October to attend the Board of Directors meeting of the General Board of Global Ministries, and then do some speaking in Michigan churches
- ✚ For a new building for Horeb UMC in Douala
- ✚ For the second phase of our AIDS team project, which is to take place in Anglophone Cameroon
- ✚ For continued improvement in learning French for the whole family
- ✚ For the final registration of the United Methodist Church in Cameroon
- ✚ For the ordination process
- ✚ For the creation, translation, and proliferation of United Methodist literature amongst our churches and people