

THE YELLOW STAR



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

Let the Holy Conferencing Begin ...

Bishop Benjamin Boni stood and addressed the room full of pastors and church leaders, raising his hands to give a blessing.

After he had prayed, it was official — the church in Cameroon

is now a Mission, as defined by the Book of Discipline. This is the culmination of years of dreaming by Cameroonian Christians, and the direct result of the General Board of Global Ministry's efforts over the last seven years.

We celebrated becoming a Mission by doing what Methodists do so well — holy conferencing, which is just a fancy way to say that we gathered, worshipped, sang, and ate together!

The first Annual Meeting of the United Methodist Church in Cameroon took place on April 21-22, 2006 in Limbe. We were blessed to have the honor of the presence of Bishop Boni, and an entourage from the Cote d'Ivoire Annual Conference.

Other special guests included David Wu and ST Kimbrough from GBGM, Ellis Larsen and Bill Lovell from the General Board of Higher Education, and a small VIM team made up of

people from Texas and South Carolina.

As I stood before the pastors and delegates, I was overwhelmed by a sense of extreme pride in their achievements and hard work. For a moment, I understood what the Apostle Paul felt when he wrote to the small, struggling churches which he had helped found. After all the trials and temptations which necessarily come with such ministry, he was able to write

confidently to the Thessalonians, "It is the breath of life to us that you stand firm in the Lord." Indeed, what a refreshing breath it is!



Above, it's all business in the Annual Meeting, led by Bishop Boni (third from left). Below, Pastor Rosalie Nzie leads everyone in some pre-worship singing.



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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
- Cameroon Initiative, #00344A

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Youth Camp 2006: Fun and Spiritual!

By Rachel Magruder, age 12

This year's second annual youth camp was a complete success. Everybody either from Cameroon or Texas and even chaperones learned something. After Ginger spread the word to Cameroon about this year's camp, people around the world were excited. Volunteers from America were ready to come and help out. I was just as excited for them to be here as they were to be here.

Youth camp started on a Monday. When kids began piling in, we started off with a non-planned dancing game where anybody could go in the middle and take their turn to dance. That evening everybody got to know one another while we ate dinner. We slept that night wondering how the next day and the rest of the week would turn out.

The next morning after passing out t-shirts, Bibles and pictures, we split into "small groups." Each group consisted of two volunteers and about 4-6 Cameroonians. French and English were split. I decided to join the English group "Barcelone." Our first conversation was about miracles. Then, still in our small groups, we made prayer bracelets and followed with a prayer. After lunch, we did "give-back activities." There was drama, music, dance and liturgy to choose from. Everybody prepared something for the next morning's worship.

Game time was next. We played elbow tag. It was a hit and some people you would have never thought of being athletic were the fastest out there. After resting we went back to small groups to talk about sin and temptation. We all wrote down a sin we had committed that year. We had worship that evening after dinner. To

start it off we nailed our sins to a cross and asked for forgiveness. It was a powerful moment. We followed with songs. We sang many songs and the Cameroonians learned songs from the Americans and Americans learned songs from the Cameroonians. Some of our favorites were "Lean on Me," "Siyahamba/We are Walking," "Sanctuary," "Allons Chanter a Sion" and "Ah, Je Suis Renomme." This was the typical outline of each day of the camp.

The rest of the week we talked about loving God, God's power and making disciples. We also played lots of tag and soccer. Thursday afternoon we even went to the beach to go swimming. It was fun and everybody could participate. That night we had s'mores around a camp fire.

I remember a highlight of the trip on Wednesday night. We weren't really doing anything; it was just free time after dinner. So

some people started playing drums and other people sang and the rest danced. Soon everyone was dancing and singing; it was my favorite part of the trip. We formed two circles that went around each other. Then I looked around and thought to myself, that the ministry and I were so lucky to have this group of kids as their future. Once we stopped dancing everybody was pumped. It was a fun night.

Friday was a sad day because everybody had to say goodbye. I was glad they could go back educated and full of spirit. Then I thought again, I was glad that I could also go back full of the spirit.



Kids Are Missionaries, Too!

By Mallory Magruder, age 7

Hi, it's Mallory again! I am 7 now and I am here to tell you how it is here in Cameroon.

I like it here in Cameroon. I want to show you a picture of me.

Summer is fun, especially when I play with my Cameroonian friends. The yard to our new house is very big. We are going to get a tire swing put in by my



friend Collins. We have a new dog named Jina. Chloe, my sister, is in Germany with her friend Joelle. She has a dog Beena. We are also keeping that dog for the summer.

Here is a picture of our new house.



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 start school soon. Rachel will be attending the Rain Forest International School, and Chloe and Mallory will be home-schooled by a missionary friend
- ✂ For the final registration of the United Methodist Church in Cameroon
- ✂ For the remaining partner churches needed; we have eleven of nineteen, to date!
- ✂ For Ginger Cooper in her role as Partner Church Coordinator ... and all the other roles she plays, too!
- ✂ For Pastor Rosalie Nzie (John Wesley UMC, Yaounde), who is pregnant with her fourth child
- ✂ For the ongoing training of our ten probationary pastors
- ✂ For the regional conventions which our churches are planning in three different areas
- ✂ For the upcoming visits of my parents and John Thornburg to Cameroon in October
- ✂ For my trip to Johannesburg, South Africa, for the Upper Room African Editors' Conference on October 21-28
- ✂ For the upcoming marriage of Pastor Victor Essama Galous (Douala First)
- ✂ For the work of John Thornburg on the future Cameroon Hymnal
- ✂ For the expansion of the Mission into new territory over the next twelve months
- ✂ For the success of our new Preacher's Kids Scholarship Fund (see Maman Leah's Corner for information)
- ✂ For Bishop Benjamin Boni, and his pastoral responsibilities in Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Cameroon

Maman Leah's Corner

By Leah Magruder

Kids are the same the world over. They all laugh, love to play, pick on each other and love to learn. What is not equal is how they get to learn. I don't think Americans always remember what a blessing it is to have free education. A few pencils and notebooks and you are good to go. And when I taught in public school, I remember having a few students that couldn't afford that and the school would provide it or I would personally.

I would like to unroll a new program we are starting in the United Methodist Church in Cameroon this month. It's called **PK Scholarship Fund**. For those of you that are not "preachers' kids", that's what PK stands for. Education in this country is anything but free. Every student must register, enroll, pay all books and necessary supplies and a (usually outrageously priced) uniform. If you come missing any of these items, admittance into the school is denied. The school doesn't jump in to help pay for any books, supplies or uniforms. The teachers many times aren't even paid on a regular basis themselves, no help there. So what happens...?

Unfortunately, the result is that many children don't go to school. They sell goods on the street or help their parents in the fields or make trouble because they have nothing better to do. Let me break it down for you in dollars and cents. Our pastors make about \$150 per month. Most have between 3-6 children they support to go to school, whether it be their own biological children, children they have acquire through the death of the children's parents and often they have their nieces and nephews because they are "fortunate" enough to be paid a regular

salary by the Mission. School costs about \$300 per child per year. That, of course, doesn't sound like much to you and me but for them, and multiplying it by 4, 5 or 6, is virtually impossible.

Here is what we propose. We would like to offer each pastor the opportunity to match funds for their children's education. If they put in \$50, we put in \$50. Because people here have as much pride as anyone else in the world, matching funds is a way they can put their children through school and still contribute. We would place some requirements on receiving the money, like providing receipts for the registration and enrollment fees, requiring copies of report cards to insure continued enrollment, etc... We trust our pastors but accountability is always wise. Maybe one day, we can offer scholarships to the academic achievers going to university. That is almost unheard of in the ranks of dedicated pastors. University is too far out of reach financially for them.

Please send me your feedback. We would love nothing more than to offer the gift of education to our pastors' children. It wouldn't ever be taken for granted and maybe someday we will have the joy of seeing one or two of those PK's going to seminary to follow in their mom or dad's footsteps.

To contribute to the PK Scholarship Fund, send a check to The Advance at The Advance Office, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 1400, New York, NY 10115. Write #00344A in the Memo line, followed by the words "PK Scholarship Fund."

School starts at the beginning of September, and we're determined to help every one of our pastors who need help. Thank you for your prayers and concern.



Ministry Review

Pastors Lounge at Beach: In an effort to facilitate fellowship amongst our pastors, I organized a weeklong retreat at Kribi. Many of the pastors met each other for the first time ever! Anglophones and Francophones, men and women, young and old, ex-Pentecostals and ex-Catholics gathered to worship, learn, and play! I am hoping this is the beginning of an annual tradition.



Hymn-Fest, Part II: For the second time in less than a year, my good friend, Rev. John Thornburg visited Cameroon. John is working on assembling music for the first-ever Cameroonian United Methodist Hymnal. He brought his friend, Mitzi Scott, with him. The pair spent the first week with a small team of Cameroonian musicians and worship leaders, then took them on the road for a series of music festivals in several of our churches.

HIV/AIDS Team, Phase II: Our team of HIV/AIDS educators, led by Collins Etchi and Ginger Cooper, took their program on the road in March. They visited all of our churches in the Southwest Province, and added a component on malaria prevention. They also distributed approximately 200 mosquito nets to children and pregnant women.

First VIM Team of 2006: A small team from Texas attended the first Annual Meeting of the Cameroon Mission in April. Led by Wanda Holcombe, members of the team were able to visit partner churches, shop in the Douala market, and enjoy the beach at Limbe.

Trip to America, Part I: A few days after the Annual Meeting, I had the pleasure of flying into Dallas-Fort Worth with Pastor Simeon Nomo. We were special guests at the second Cameroon Consultation, hosted by FUMC Allen. We also had the opportunity to speak and preach at various churches in the North Texas, Texas and Southwest Texas Conferences. But the best thing of all — we got to attend a Texas Rangers game at Ameritrust Field (they even won!).



Trip to America, Part II: In June, Pastor David Sen and I attended the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference, in Mobile, Alabama. I got to present Bishop Larry Goodpaster with a “special gift” — a giant-sized portrait of him when he was in Cameroon, visiting the King of Bafoussam! We also toured the conference, preaching and speaking.

Second Annual Youth Camp: A team of twenty-one young people and leaders arrived in Limbe to host and conduct our second youth camp. Over 35 teenagers from our churches attended the camp, and enjoyed the singing, games, and teachings (see Rachel’s article on page two for more information)! Special thanks to Rev’s Cammy Gaston, Joe Zinser, and Dana Compton for their help in making it happen.

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*Preach peace till you have it; and then,
because you have it, you will preach peace!*

**The Magruders
at the lava flow in Limbe,
site of the 1999 eruption
of Mt. Cameroon**

