

Jeff and Sonya Kilmartin

Missionaries in Cameroon



Though raised in a Roman Catholic home, Jeff was a practical atheist until he was about twenty-one. At that point he met a man who said he was born-again. Jeff also wanted a relationship with God, so he became a Christian and was baptized that year. Sonya was raised in the church, but at about the age of nine her family moved to a church where she realized for the first time that she needed to make a personal commitment to Christ. She was baptized at the age of ten and was active in a very vibrant church community through her teen and young adult years.



As a young Christian, Jeff knew he wanted to be involved in vocational ministry. He earned his BA from Trinity Western University in Langley, British Columbia, and afterward received a BTh from Northwest Bible College in Edmonton. In the 1990s he discovered he was a Baptist in his theological leanings, and thereafter earned his MDiv from Edmonton Baptist Seminary (now Taylor). Sonya pursued her education degree at the University of Alberta and worked in two Christian schools in the Edmonton area and in related education fields for a number of years, including a two-year stint as Athletic Director at North American Baptist College (now Taylor) while Jeff was in seminary.

By then the Kilmartins were married and well on their way to having a family of four children: Robert, John, Cari, and Daniel. During Jeff's exit interview from EBS with all of the Canadian NAB regional ministers in 1996, he was asked what he wished to do. He replied that he wanted to pastor a small country church somewhere, after seven years have a sabbatical where he could take his family to live somewhere in Africa for a year, then come back and serve that same church after having made connections in Africa. He wanted to keep those connections alive by traveling back to that same place every year or so.

The RMs encouraged the Kilmartins in their vision, so during their first NAB pastorate at Elim Baptist in Beausejour, Manitoba, they did just that. They travelled with their family to the Mambilla Plateau in Nigeria, where the NAB had a mission field. Jeff served as the Acting Field Director from 2008–2009. Out of that trip came a partnership between Elim Baptist and a small group of Christians among a Least Reached People Group in Nigeria. Like a candle, that partnership both stayed with Elim and came along with the Kilmartins when they moved to Wiesenthal Baptist in Alberta in 2011 in order to be closer to their aging parents.

In the meantime, both Jeff and Sonya have returned to Nigeria and Cameroon at different times to minister among this Least Reached People Group and to teach in various settings. Jeff also earned his DMin degree from Sioux Falls Seminary in 2010, having written a project paper dealing with his experience in Nigeria. While they have loved their churches here in Canada, they know the great need that exists among this Least Reached People Group—and many other people groups—in West Africa and had a desire to return to minister according to their faith and ability.

The Kilmartins began their work in 2017 with Jeff's teaching position in Ndu, Cameroon being their anchor point, and traveling other parts of the year among this Least Reached People Group in both Nigeria and Cameroon. However, this location became untenable due to the political instability in the Northwest Cameroon, and they have since relocated to Adamawa state. This location allows them much more access to this people group, as well as better opportunities for language development. It has limited seminary teaching, but recently Jeff has been able to do some instruction at a few locations with the seminary's extension education program. Sonya had planned to build on her two summers of experience with the Baptist Teacher Training College to help equip national teachers in some capacity, but it has not taken shape as originally envisioned. However, she has been involved with a local CBC school which has children from various people groups, all schooling in English. She hopes to see fruit from that endeavor at student, teaching and administrative levels.

Birthdays:

Jeff: February 8 Sonya: August 25

Anniversary:

August 16

kilmartinblog.wordpress.com

For more information, visit our website @ www.nabonmission.org or email us at serve@nabconf.org