



ELSIE LEWANDOWSKI - Missionary in Cameroon

MAY 2019

Dear Family and Friends,

“Miss Elsie, you’re back!” I’ve been hearing that a lot these days. February/March in Yaoundé, April in Bamenda, May in Yaoundé, June in Bamenda... I praise God for the days I CAN spend in Bamenda and for the help I can give in Yaoundé. One week at a time. One project at a time.



I first came to visit this village in the Esimbe area in 1995 and it’s been years since Zac and Noah have sent a watermelon rind boat on the Menchem River. Throughout the years, I visited this place often as the Jealous, Warkentin, Koenig and Coleman families served here. But even years and years before that, Baptist missionaries and Cameroonian Christians have presented the gospel to these folks but few have responded. Believers seemed to have difficulty unifying and trying to translate the Bible into Esimbi; it never seemed to create enthusiasm.

Since trouble began in 2016, this village and dozens like it are burnt to the ground, deserted and desolate. Even the town of Benakuma (approx. 20,000) is empty with pigs running through the streets. The population has “run to the bush,” seeking out survival next to streams or thick forest. Cell phone reception is sparse. Medicines are non-existent with people regularly dying of malaria. It’s heart-breaking.

PRAISES

- Safety and provision, especially rain and healthy crops for so many people in the NW/SW region
- A wonderful visit to Bamenda even though I was not able to continue my phonics class
- Opportunities to proctor AP exams and “flesh out” curriculum

PRAYER REQUESTS

- A resolution to the problems in the NW/SW regions
- Safety and provision, especially for those in the bush
- Contentment as I try to do God’s will just for the day

“And we KNOW that in ALL things, God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
Romans 8:28



North American Baptists
1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd.
Roseville, CA 95678
(916) 797-6222

Elsie Lewandowski
elsielew55@gmail.com

serve@nabconf.org
www.nabconference.org



ELSIE LEWANDOWSKI - Missionary in Cameroon

My young friend “got stuck in Bamenda” when the road closed to this area. She has not seen her family in a year and a half. Her father is sick and she sent him medicine but has no idea if he has received it. Her two brothers and a sister, all of whom were in high school, have not been in school for three years. But she’s optimistic because her mother, baby sister, and grandmother are all doing well.

“We’re in God’s hands,” she says repeatedly.

But God is at work. This crisis has been a wake-up call. Through the years, Esimbe people have been trained as pastors, translators, and counsellors but now they are presenting a unified front. They are trekking for days through dangerous territory to meet together, coordinate their assignments, exchange ideas and information, and pray with each other. Finally FOUR books of the New Testament have been completely translated. This is just incredible news!

The process of translation involves many first steps: establishing (and agreeing on) an alphabet (especially with sounds non-existent in English), figuring out tone, figuring out the grammar (How do they make plurals? Past tense?) and what’s a good word or phrase that explains the Holy Spirit? In addition to a *translation committee*, there is now a *literacy class* where people are learning to read and write their language. There’s been a *dictionary seminar* with people recording as many words as they can and an *emphasis* on using the language to explain the gospel. People who have never understood that Jesus was, is, and always will be the ultimate sacrifice for sin, are finally becoming free of ancestor worship and its fears. Because of Jesus, we can go directly to God for advice and not through the ancestors. People are amazed at what the Bible teaches because for the first time, they’ve understood.

Did God create this crisis in Cameroon to jolt the Esimbe into action? Did he intend for them to run to the bush or to Bamenda or other parts of Cameroon in order to do translation? I don’t know. But I DO know that He is using a difficult situation to do something amazing and wonderful. He really likes to do that. I also know that this is just one of many stories we will someday hear. God is at work, especially where there is pain and suffering. Please pray with us that God will continue to work in hearts and lives and that His Will be done.

Thank you for your prayers for safety, provision and opportunity. Thank you for your loving support and financial support. You are a dear family to me.

Safe in the Hands of Jesus,
Elsie