



FEBRUARY 2020

FAMILY IMPACT FROM THE CAMEROON CRISIS

Prayer

- Pray God would bring about His reconciliation to the political impasse and instability in Cameroon
- Pray for Florence's efforts to run a dental clinic in Douala, precipitated by the depressed economy in Bamenda

Praises

- For the resilience and forbearance many are exercising through the hardships and inconveniences resulting from the Anglophone crisis in Cameroon
- For the 55 baptised at Nkwen Baptist Church on December 29, 2019

"But you are a shield around me O LORD; you bestow glory on me and lift up my head."

PSALMS 3:3

For quite some time now (since November 2016), people have been praying for the end of the Cameroon crisis of marginalization of peoples from the English colonial background by a government dominated by people of the French colonial background. I am sure God is hearing those prayers. Yet the crisis is not ending. In such circumstances we honestly do not want to think about Israel's 40-year exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land nor do we want to be reminded of Israel's 70-year Babylonian/Persian captivity. We are resigned to accept God's ways are not our ways, His timing may not coincide with our desired timeline.

Since returning to Cameroon from home assignment in late June 2019, we have been able to appreciate firsthand how the crisis is affecting families. Due to sporadic gun battles near her home, Florence's mother came to live with us in Bamenda since August 2019. It is not yet safe enough for her to go back. There are many families going through this scenario – family

members from a danger zone going to live with extended family in a safer environment. In our case it is just one person in a fairly spacious house. But in many cases, it is a good number of people going to already tight living arrangements. In this regard the Cameroonian resilience is remarkable.

Before the crisis, I regularly went hiking and biking around Bamenda – and enjoyed it! Part of my weekly routine was to do some of the household shopping. Currently all those activities are on hold for the sake of kidnap avoidance. Fortunately, our residential compound is where my work and church are. It is also big enough to walk the dogs and play soccer at the primary school field. (That's a real blessing.) I do go occasionally off the compound, but that is in a vehicle with other people. Many, many Cameroonians have changed their habits and daily movements due to the threats related to the crisis.



Florence's Bamenda dental clinic is in an area of town where there has been a fair bit of unrest. Some of her local clients fear going to that part of town. Other clients from outside English Cameroon want to avoid coming to Bamenda because of uncertainties surrounding the Anglophone crisis. With this in mind and blessed



Florence attending to a patient at new Douala dental clinic

with the donation of two dental chairs and equipment acquired through one of our supporting churches (thank you Colonial Village Baptist), she has proceeded to set up a second dental clinic in Douala, Cameroon's largest city. Her Bamenda clinic is still run by two of her staff and is limping along. Florence and two other staff are trying to make a go of it in Douala. Starting is never easy

and Douala is known as a tough town. So now we face the challenge of running two households and being apart from each other more time than we want. We are not alone in this situation. Other couples, due to the degenerating economy in English Cameroon, where one spouse has employment curtailed and the other has employment maintained have had to choose to live apart to make ends meet. Even more common is parents sending some or all of their children to extended family or friends in French Cameroon so their schooling can proceed without the frequent interruptions occurring in the crisis zone. Though a good number of schools are functioning in the safer areas of English Cameroon, so many children continue to stay home and experience disrupted education. Our comfort is God sees this and will see His people through this challenge.

Yet in all this struggle, God's Church continues to move forward. In 2019, Nkwen Baptist Church had its highest number of baptisms ever, including 55 baptized on Sunday, December 29. The Cameroon Baptist Convention was recently recognized by the Baptist World Alliance as the "Fastest Growing Member Body in both Africa and the world." Can I explain it? No. But God is good! There are now about 250,000 Christians in about 1,100 Cameroon Baptist Convention churches.

It remains a privilege and an honour to be prayed for and supported by individuals and churches in North America. Thank you. We are mindful and praying for the challenges our sending churches are contending with. Contend well. God bless.

Walter & Florence Grob

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