



Walter Grob

MISSIONARY IN CAMEROON

MAY 2020

MMMM . . . IT'S MANGO SEASON!

Prayer

- Pray God would bring about His reconciliation to the political impasse and instability in English-speaking Cameroon.
- Pray for Florence's efforts to run a dental clinic in Douala, precipitated by the depressed economy in Bamenda.
- Pray for creativity in the Church's ministry necessitated by meeting restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Praises

- God's providing of rain and fruit in its season, reminding us of His provision and care.
- For the resilience and forbearance many are exercising through the hardships and inconveniences resulting from the anglophone crisis in Cameroon, now combined with the coronavirus pandemic.

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

2 CORINTHIANS 4:16-17



Mango tree behind our house.

Mmmmm . . . I love mangoes. One obvious benefit of living in the tropics is the ready availability of tropical fruit. This is the best time of the year when mangoes are ripening. They add such a rich flavour when combined with the ever-present bananas, papayas, and pineapples. Sure, we have entered a period of

double crisis. There continues to be violence, destruction, and oppression from the 3-and-a-half-year-old socio-political crisis in the restive English

regions of Cameroon. And since mid-March Cameroon has joined the rest of the world in the storm known as the coronavirus pandemic. But it is mango season and mmmmm . . . they are good! They are also for me a reminder that God provides, that whatever hardships or despair we go through, He is there to go through it with us.

As many who read this newsletter have now experienced lock-downs, restriction of movement, and significantly worsening economic situations because of the coronavirus, you are now much better qualified to appreciate what we have been going through in Cameroon because of the socio-political crisis – lock-downs, restriction of movement, and deterioration of the economy. Not



that I would wish this on anybody, but it has been said, “misery loves company.” ☺

A good number of churches in violence-stricken areas have stopped meeting. Churches and schools on the French side of the country have been growing, while those on the English side are diminishing as people migrate to where it is safer and economic activities are more favourable. Working in the Finance and Development Department of the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) where accounting services are provided for the church’s ministries, I see how much the socio-political crisis is affecting these ministries. The two seminaries in Kumba and Ndu (violence-stricken areas) had been functioning but at a decreased capacity as some students could not get to them for safety reasons. Before the socio-political crisis, the CBC Education Department supervised the operation of twelve secondary schools, now only five are being supervised. At the primary school level, so many schools, especially in the rural areas, are no longer functioning. Two CBC health centres in violence-stricken areas are not able to run. Many people needing medical help do not get it because of the dangers in travelling to health facilities. We persist in prayer for God’s resolve to this situation.

There are many evenings in the last several months where we cannot watch the news on TV because of incessant low voltage affecting the cable provider’s ability to transmit TV signals (not to mention how it affects the rest of our electrical appliances). When I do get to watch the news, I see that the restrictions set to curb the spread of the coronavirus vary greatly from place to place. Here in Cameroon, meetings of 50 people or less are permitted. As much as possible, a distance of 1.5 meters should be kept between you and others. Wearing a protective mask in public is mandatory. Inter-urban travel, though not encouraged, is permitted. Due to economic pressures, the government made the following concessions. Bars and restaurants that were originally compelled to close at 6:00 pm now have permission to maintain

regular hours. Buses and taxis that had been required to carry passenger loads of only up to 60 to 80% of capacity are now allowed to carry



Walter teaching Sunday School at an access-restricted worship service at Nkwen Baptist Church, Bamenda.

passengers at 100% seating capacity. The national borders are closed to passenger traffic but open to the transmission of goods. All schools have been suspended. The Cameroon government is provisionally planning to reopen schools June 1 to salvage the school year. How has all this affected the church’s ministry? Churches here too have opted to use social media to broadcast messages, some also broadcast on radio. Smaller congregations can still meet or hold multiple services of 50 or less. Churches with well-developed small group ministries seem to be coping well. Nevertheless, the overall general recommendation to “stay at home” and discouraging meeting is causing some frustration and consternation. May God help His Church persevere through this.

It may not be mango season where you are, but what has God done to show you that He is near? Grateful for your prayers and support. Contend well. God bless.

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