



MAY 2021

## MINISTRY UPDATE OF THE CAMEROON BAPTIST CONVENTION EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

### *Prayer*

- Pray for those children who have not had the opportunity to go to school because of the insecurity in their area due to the anglophone Cameroon socio-political crisis for four years now.
- Pray for many other children who have been able to return to school but under less than optimal conditions, that they would get the education they need.

### *Praises*

- God's protection of school children, generally from the coronavirus.
- Opportunity for the CBC Education Department to provide general education in a Christian context, exposing young ones to possibilities of spiritual formation.

*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.*

PROVERBS 22:6



*Walter on campus tour for Baptist Comprehensive High School, Buea, Board of Governors Meeting.*

When the missionaries first came to Cameroon and the national church took its roots, the mission/church was the first to open schools and

provide formal education. The goal was to train Cameroonian children in a Christian context as a tool for evangelism and to prepare them with the life skills for adulthood.

Later, government and the private education providers also opened many schools. By 2016, before the start of the anglophone crisis, there was probably an over-saturation of schools in English Cameroon. With the onset of the crisis when anglophones protested their marginalized treatment by the francophone-dominated government, both sides used the schools as a political tool for their agenda – and the children suffered. Schools were burned, students going to school in school uniforms were threatened, school buses were attacked. This led to almost all schools in English Cameroon being closed from January to June 2017. Yet schools in the French regions were



operating normally. Thus, many internally displaced peoples (IDPs) moved their families to these parts of Cameroon so their children could restart their education. Others who had relatives on the French side sent their children over to them so they too would not lose out on their education.

From September 2017, the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) Education Department started cautiously reopening its schools where it could – predominantly in the larger urban areas of English Cameroon. (The schools it runs in French Cameroon were thriving with the influx of IDPs.) The rural areas of English Cameroon tended to experience more extreme unrest and thus the reopening of schools in many cases was not possible. This resulted in many children not having the opportunity to continue their schooling.

For the 2018/2019 school year, the CBC Education Department went through the painful process of closing/devolving many of its schools. Schools in clearly unsafe area where students' and teachers' lives were at risk were closed. Others with too low enrolment to be sustainable for the CBC Education Department to run were devolved to lower bodies to run, either Fields (groups of churches) or local churches. While there have been a few success stories of devolved schools, most of them have ended up being closed. See the lists below.

### Secondary Schools Currently Being Run by the CBC Education Department:

1. Saker Baptist College, Limbe (all girls boarding school)
2. Baptist High School, Buea (boarding school)
3. Baptist High School, Awae, Yaounde (boarding school)
4. Baptist Comprehensive High School, Nkwen, Bamenda (day school)
5. Baptist Comprehensive High School, Soppo, Buea (mixed boarding/day school)

### *Walter & Florence Grob*

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### Closed/Devolved CBC Secondary Schools:

1. Baptist Comprehensive High School, Belo
2. Joseph Merrick Baptist College, Ndu
3. Baptist High School, Mankon
4. Baptist High School, Kang Barombi-Kumba
5. Baptist High School, Ndop
6. Cameroon Baptist Academy, Muyuka
7. Chaffee Memorial College, Kumbo

When the coronavirus pandemic struck in March 2020, all schools were closed. Later, to finish the 2019/2020 academic year, those classes writing the Government Common Entrance Exams for ordinary and advanced levels were invited back and prepared for those exams. All other classes had to stay home. With unstable internet, e-learning opportunities here are limited. The national television station did, for that period, program teaching through their medium. For the 2020/2021 school year, all classes resumed. Students wear masks, and handwashing facilities are readily available. The government established a policy of no more than twenty students per classroom, but that has hardly been followed as it greatly interferes with the economic viability of the schools. Thankfully there has been no significant outbreak of the virus among students. Graciously, God has allowed the CBC Education Department to continue its ministry in building up young Cameroonians and instilling Christian education and opportunities for spiritual formation, despite all these struggles.

Florence is a graduate of Saker Baptist College – one of the CBC Education Department's schools. We appreciate so much the ways she was able to grow in her faith there. We continue to thank all the churches and individuals who support us through prayers and missionary financial support to allow us to share even in a small way in this ministry.

