



## Jeff & Sonya Kilmartin

MISSIONARIES IN CAMEROON

AUGUST 2023

# WORLDS APART

## *Prayer*

- For smooth transitions and travel during home assignment, and grace and flexibility when it's not smooth!
- For safety and strength for our African partners, who often face serious persecution.
- For continued identifying, development, and training of local leaders.

## *Praises*

- For safe travels from Cameroon to Canada thus far.
- For major milestones in our family's lives – birthdays, house purchases, etc.
- For the faithfulness and hard work of our African brothers and sisters in faithfully reflecting and sharing Christ to those around them.

*And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 (NIV)

Dear Friends and Family

Coming back for furlough, or 'home assignment' as it is more correctly termed, can be a bit of a



minefield – preparation and packing while still trying to do ministry, needing to plan but constantly having to improvise, bittersweet goodbyes and excited hellos, and endless details to consider, plus constant change . . . and then the adjustment to Canadian life.

Even though we have been home quite frequently in this past year, some of the differences are quite

jarring. I think my daughter and son-in-law were trying not to laugh as I was faced with the innumerable decisions required to simply order a sandwich at Subway, but honestly, the struggle is REAL!

Eight weeks ago, I was in Cameroon, trying to help the primary school pull off its first official Class 6 graduation and year-end awards program, and consult on staffing and other plans for next year.

I was simultaneously trying to sort through the last of our things that (finally) came from our house in Ndu, PLUS pack up as much of the house as I could with Jeff still in it, as well as work on our upcoming North American itinerary and travels, AND try to close a deal on a house in Winnipeg. I had a foot in two continents and multiple time zones for months on end.



Add to this the fact that I (Sonya) came back to Canada earlier than Jeff, who will be arriving here this month, and you have an interesting dynamic of us being ‘worlds apart,’ both literally and figuratively.

As I wrote this section, I was sitting in that new Winnipeg house, reflecting on five days of Kilmartin crazy with all the kids together here, including my daughter Cari and her husband from Alberta. Because the house we bought was an estate sale, we were able to offer the sellers a chance to leave a lot of basic household goods in the house that they didn’t really want to deal with – so I got a fully functional kitchen, cleaning supplies, even bits of furniture and a whole lot of random items – mostly(!) useful. I had a lot more cleaning to do, but we were blessed that we didn’t have to pay for any of those extras! Add some freebies and sales and, even though Daniel couldn’t move in with his furnishings until August, I was able to host everyone not just once but TWICE in July!



On the other side of the world, I heard from Jeff that his good friend came over from Nigeria to see

him before he left. The five- to seven-hour trip covers 160 km on motorcycle bush trail over a mountain range.

By contrast, as I edited this, I was with Cari and her husband on that return trip to Edmonton – a 13-hour trip for 1,300 km on paved highways across the Canadian prairies.

Even struggling to negotiate Winnipeg’s endless summer road construction doesn’t take away my appreciation for Canadian road infrastructure.

As I write, I’m looking at Jeff’s pictures from his trip to the more remote villages and am reminded how these people often struggle in the rain and wind to keep a roof over their head, literally.



*Our trusty Land Cruiser doesn’t have the shiny finish that our black Hilux had that allowed them to use it at a mirror, but the village children still find ways to entertain themselves around it.*

In Banyo, as we are on a Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC) compound, we have it pretty good, with running water almost all the time, power







about 16–20 hours on a good day, and a good, solid house around us.

Here in Winnipeg, I'm juggling getting plumbers, HVAC techs, electricians, and appliance repairmen in a limited time frame to get the house through some expected – and unexpected – repairs, so we can go forward with all the water, heat, AC, and appliances functioning. Granted, Cameroon weather doesn't require having furnaces, insulation, and sealed windows, but the differences in what we are able to have in a house here are sometimes staggering.

In Cameroon, we have months in the year when we are unsure when we're going to be able to replace our cooking gas bottles because of road conditions. For the locals, cooking gas ('gaz') is something most can't afford regularly, so most of them still use the three stone fire in a smoky 'country kitchen' for a majority of their cooking.



*I love it when people find time to encourage creation's beauty around them.*

In contrast, this week in Winnipeg, I had two stoves, a microwave, and a BBQ to choose from for cooking.

I've enjoyed puttering and weeding and envisioning improvements in my new Canadian garden, while wondering how my Cameroon garden is doing in my absence. I missed the tail end of mango season in Cameroon but



have been quite content to replace them with strawberries here.

Both of us have had a chance to teach what we love . . . and the particular African ways of doing it. Jeff has been teaching New Testament theology to a group of keen students this past two weeks for the CBT seminary's extension department. Given the unpredictable internet there, they've found a way

to do it using WhatsApp. It's a most interesting and a distinctly African spin on distance learning.

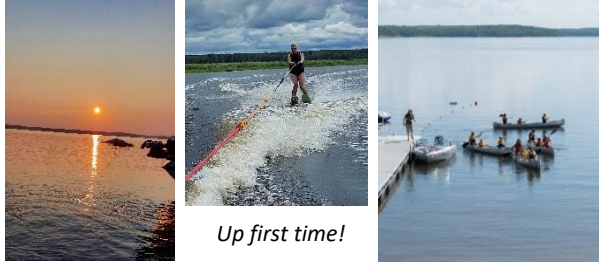


I had time between April and June to work more closely with a few of our teachers on improving the teaching of reading and spelling at our school. I have been trying to learn how help them teach more effectively to our two hearing impaired and one visually impaired students. We have a Braille teacher who helps out a few times a week, but we have no one in the school who knows sign language and NO formal training for the teachers for these kind of adaptations. The CBC has been a leader in promoting inclusive education in Cameroon, but there are very few supports in place for the teachers or students.

Jeff had a great trip in June out to the villages east of our area, with a lot of opportunities to teach and a lot of chance to visit people. He was also able to take the young mom and baby who has been in Banyo getting club foot treatments back for a visit. If you look at him in the last newsletter and compare to this one, you will see a huge improvement.



I had a great week out at Camp Nutimik in July, training current and emerging camp staff in canoe skills and canoe instruction. I also had some time



Up first time!

to relax and play (swimming, water skiing, and visiting) – plus the Lac du Bonnet Canada Day fireworks!!

I've enjoyed seeing Griz, cat to numerous residents of John's house over the past years, while Jeff updates me on our five kittens in Banyo, who are just about ready to go to new homes. I never was a cat person, so it surprises me how much I enjoy them.



I miss the youth I meet with weekly for fellowship, Bible study, and games. I've figured out how to use a lot of old Scripture songs I know direct from the Bible in *their* language, so all of us have learned a lot of Scripture in their language this way. This exercise got me really playing guitar more, as I wasn't particularly confident when I took it along. Being separated from my piano for four years facilitated that, so that has proved to be a blessing.

Here in Canada, I've enjoyed being in various services, being immersed in mostly familiar worship styles – even if I do need to learn two to three new songs in every service.



I've reflected on another complicated but fairly successful season of badminton with the kids from our Cameroon school that ended with two players going to the nationals in Douala (I couldn't go this

time), and I dream about improvements to our dirt playing venue. Here I've watched all kinds of basketball and soccer on marvelous fields, outdoor courts, and gyms. (GO Seabears!!)



As I reread this, it seems that this newsletter is almost more like a Thanksgiving-themed one, as I encourage us to be thankful for what we have and to remember those at home and abroad who are not living in abundance. But that is a timeless message for all of us, since a little perspective is helpful for us to see beyond our own problems.

By the time you get this, I will have wrapped up my first stint in Winnipeg and will be in Alberta. I have officially visited one of our supporting NAB churches in Ontario and a few Winnipeg ones unofficially (we'll get back here). I will stay with my brother and his wife, and also a bit with my dad. Supporting churches in south Edmonton, Camrose, Leduc, and Millet are on the itinerary for August and early September.

Jeff will have wrapped up teaching and closing up the house and will be en route to Canada by the time this is sent to the International Office. He's entering through Vancouver, then Kelowna, visiting Richmond and Okanagan area churches and a few of his sisters. We'll meet in Edmonton mid-August and do most of the church visits there together.

Mid-September will take us east to Michigan and Pennsylvania, with brief, midweek stops in Buffalo and Toronto. Then we will attend DAR (Debrief and Renew) at Mission Training International in Colorado (where we did our pre-mission training in 2017) and circle north through Sioux Falls before finding Winnipeg again in time for Canadian Thanksgiving.

By then it will be time for our November newsletter.



We're opting for more flying and less driving because of the location and grouping of our supporting churches. So pray for us that these flights and drive routes work. I experienced a two-day delay getting out of Ottawa because of a storm and tornado warning. We try to allow some margin, but it's not always possible, and weather issues can put us way off schedule.



*At my first stop, I forgot about the photo 'til we were just closing up to go home!*



We are really looking forward to reporting to our supporting churches and friends and seeing our friends and family. I hope to get some group pictures at each of our churches, so kindly make a plan for how best to do that and remind us of that when we come!!

Thank you for continued support and partnership – when we are near, and when we are ‘worlds apart.’

*Jeff & Sonya Kilmartin*

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*You can also help by giving to the [Least Reached People Group Special project fund](#) on the NAB website, which funds education, evangelism, and community development projects in both Cameroon and Nigeria. Thank you to those of you who have given faithfully and generously to this work.*

