



Preparing to work with Wycliffe Bible Translators and SIL

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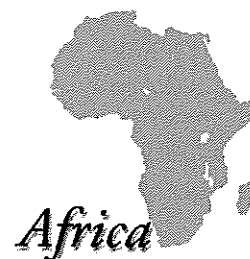
Letter to children and young people

Hello!

I hope you are all well and that the school term is going well for you all. I'm kind of in school, too, at the moment...

Where am I?

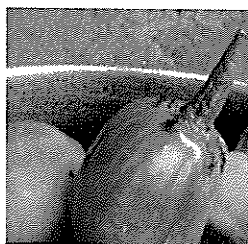
I'm at an Orientation Course in Africa in a country called Cameroon. This is a course to help me learn about living in Africa before I go to start my work in Mali. Can you find these two countries in Africa in your atlas?



What am I learning?

I'm having a great time here! The course is very interesting and I'm learning a lot about living in Africa. Did you know that in some cultures it's important to always pass things to people with your right hand and eat with your right hand? Using your left hand would be considered rude and could offend someone. That's how it is here in Cameroon. It would be hard to know these things if someone didn't tell me, so we spend some of the time in a classroom learning about the culture and beliefs of the African people. This way we can understand people better and relate well to them.

There are all kinds of illnesses here that do not exist in England, so we are also learning a lot about how to stay healthy in Africa. There is a lot we can do to avoid getting ill, for example washing our hands regularly and preparing our food very carefully. We work in teams to cook meals, and we also go to the market to buy the food. This is very different from shopping at the supermarket or the grocers at home. There are lots of fruits and vegetables and other foods at the markets, like



pineapples, papaya, bananas, plantains, carrots, tomatoes, courgettes, aubergines, various kinds of beans, herbs and spices, live chickens and many other things I don't even know the names of yet. I find it quite stressful to go shopping there because there aren't usually price tags. People bargain over prices and it's important to do this as it's part of the way people relate to each other at the market. Also, everyone wants me to buy from them and I find it hard to know how to say 'no' in a polite way. I'd like to become more confident about shopping at the market and to try out some new recipes.

What's it like here?

Cameroon is a beautiful country. Yaoundé, the capital city of Cameroon where I am living, is very hilly and is in the rainforest area of southern Cameroon. Everywhere is very lush and green. It's the rainy season now and we get a lot of heavy rain and thunderstorms.

Where do you like to go for your holidays? This is where we went camping for a week, right by the sea, to learn about living in very basic conditions. We had no electricity, all our water had to be collected from a nearby freshwater source, and the outdoors was our bathroom. We got very wet as it rained a lot, but it was always warm and the beach was absolutely beautiful. There were even monkeys in the trees by the beach! We had a great time!



What do people eat?

My favourite meal here is a fairly simple one which is eaten a lot by Cameroonians. It's called Cameroonian beans – a dish with beans in a sauce with tomatoes, onion, garlic, peppers and various herbs. I enjoy it particularly served with rice and fried plantains. (Plantain is a bit like a banana, but it is always cooked and is usually eaten with savoury dishes.)

Once we tried a more unusual meal called fu fu and njama njama, which we ate with our hands (our right hands of course!). This is eaten regularly by a lot of Cameroonian people, particularly in the villages, and it's likely I will eat it nearly every day when I go to stay in a village later this month. Fu fu is a kind of dough, njama njama is a bit like spinach and we ate it with a tomato and meat sauce.



What are these? You have probably never seen these before - they are fried grubs on sticks! This is a popular snack in Cameroon. Some of my friends have tried them and said they were quite tasty, but I wasn't brave enough to try one! At the market you can also see live grubs for sale, but I always hurry past these stalls without looking too closely!

So what's next?

At the end of October I'm going to stay with a Cameroonian family in a village for nearly three weeks. This will be very different from living in the city and I'm wondering what kind of things we will do, what we will eat, whether I will like all the food etc.

I will leave Cameroon at the end of November and I'm looking forward to going home to England for one week. Then at the beginning of December I will set off on my travels again, this time to Mali where I'm going to work.

Ways you can pray for me

- Give thanks to God that I am keeping well and happy
- Please pray for me and the Cameroonian family I will stay with in the village; pray that I will have a good time and that I will trust God for the things I will find difficult and challenging in the village
- Please pray that I will become more confident when I go to the market
- Please pray for me as I will leave Cameroon soon to move to another new country, Mali

Thank you very much for praying for me.

Goodbye for now

Nicola