



The Lord has provided an open door of opportunity for us in Cameroon. We are thrilled to be involved in all of the lives, events, and work He has prepared for us to do here!

October 6, 2016

Dear Ministry Partners & Family,

After our marvelous vacation, we're back to the real world of Bafoussam, Cameroon where ministry to the indigenous French-speaking population is a real challenge. **We solicit your fresh wind of prayers for our evangelism, follow-up, discipleship, neighborhood Bible study and the church planting training center** that God has started in our corner of the world. **Pray also for us to raise more financial support since our deficit is quite substantial.**

This month we would like to inform you of once in a lifetime opportunity that God has opened the door for Shirley to experience. In January, one of our colleagues told me about **Thrive Ministry**, whose original name was "Women of the Harvest", was having a women's retreat on the continent of Africa this year. I began praying about it and in March she gave me more information, at which time I started connecting with them online. **Thrive's Vision is to be global leaders, providing expertise and setting excellent standards of care for Global Women. We believe Global Women will thrive, in part because individuals, churches, and mission agencies provide holistic, pro-active care.** They go on to say, "There is a tremendous energy and momentum to get workers on the field but a lack of intentional effort to provide spiritual, physical, and emotional support once serving overseas. Unfortunately, many Global Women feel alone and are barely surviving. In 2007, the most comprehensive research study to date, which focused on retention, was published by the World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission called ReMAP II. The study revealed that 1 out of 14 workers leave their agencies each year and two-thirds leave for potentially preventable reasons! In addition, it has been estimated that the average length of a worker's career has dropped to only eight years. Thrive's goal is to bring change to that reality by caring for, connecting, and creating community for Global Women.

In 1998, Thrive Ministry began hosting retreats in various regions around the world for Global Women to get away from their demanding work for a time of rest, renewal, and refreshment. They host 3-4 retreats each year serving approximately 300 women annually around the world. The women are ministered to holistically – spiritually, emotionally, and physically. Their retreats provide a safe place for women to be themselves and share their unique challenges outside of their church and agency. Retreats are a four-day gift to an oasis of refreshment. Many of the attendees work in remote locations where running water and electricity are not available or dependable. The volunteer team for international retreats is typically overseas for 10-16 days to accommodate pre-retreat training, hosting the retreats, and taking time to reflect on the experience together. The value of the retreat experience is approximately \$780. However, the only cost to a participant is a registration fee of \$125 and any transportation expenses to and from the retreat. Thrive Ministry provides your hotel stay in a shared double room, all meals, meeting expenses, gratuities and other miscellaneous expenses. The agenda for Global Women during a retreat is: counseling, massage therapy, small groups, worship and prayer, speaker sessions, and beauty care. Retreats are only for U.S. and Canadian women who live and work cross-culturally. You must be currently a full time, support based, cross-cultural worker living overseas. They ask that you attend only one of their retreats during your career.

When I heard that the **Thrive Ministry Women's Retreat would be in Cape Town, South Africa** this year, I submitted an application online. I was accepted and began asking God how could I afford to attend & not miss this ministry in my life. A dear friend insisted that I should attend to take some time away from the stressors of our work for a time of physical, spiritual, and emotional renewal and they would finance it. So, I, Shirley, will be taking a Kenya Airways flight next Friday, 10/14 from here to Cape Town. I will return 10/31. Please pray for me during this time, but especially for my husband to operate the ministry single handedly!

Joyfully yours,

Shirley & Wilondja **Converge Worldwide/BGC, Cameroon B.P. 1409, Bafoussam Region de l'ouest Cameroun**

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