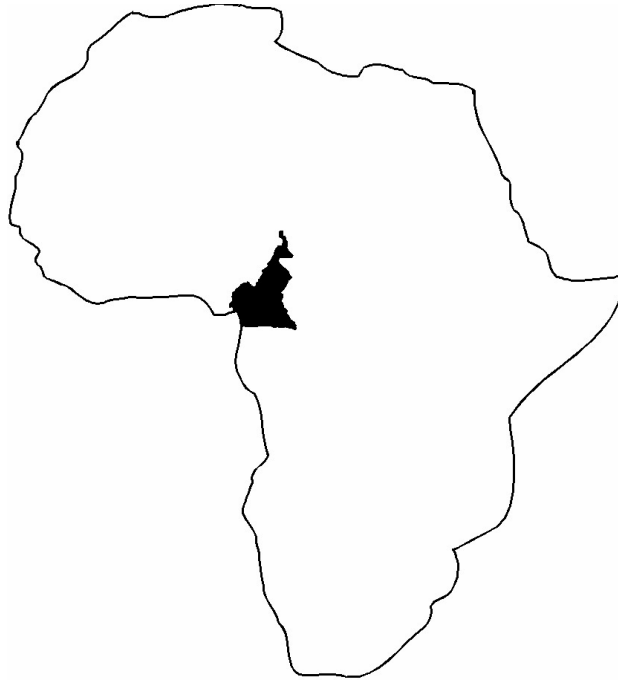


Cameroon Visitor's Survival Handbook



Written by Denny Miller, 1982

Revised by Willy Muller and David Lake, 1985

Updated by Oryn Meinerts, 1987

Revised by Oryn Meinerts, 1991

Updated by Oryn Meinerts, 1994

Revised and enlarged by

Elsie Lewandowski & Mary June Burgess 2002

North American Baptist Conference

Missions Department

1 South 210 Summit Avenue

Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois 60181-3994

Tel. (630) 495-2000 Fax (630) 495-3301

CAMEROON VISITOR'S SURVIVAL HANDBOOK

I.	Your World.....	4
II.	Preparation.....	7
	A. Official Documents to Carry.....	7
	B. Luggage Information	7
	C. Health Issues.....	8
	1. Personal Hygiene.....	8
	a) Wash hands...wash hands...wash hands.	8
	b) Shoes	8
	2. Water	8
	a) Drink lots of it!	8
	b) On the road or at a restaurant	9
	c) In your room	9
	3. Eating.....	9
	a) “If you can’t peel it, don’t eat it”	9
	b) “Hot off the fire”	9
	c) Avoid salads in restaurants.....	9
	d) Peppe and Mangoes.....	10
	4. Malaria.....	10
	a) Prevention	10
	b) Mosquito Nets	10
	c) Dusk to Dawn	10
	d) Preventative Medicine.....	11
	5. Vaccinations.....	11
	6. Other Medical Items to Bring	11
	D. Electricity.....	12
	1. 220 volts.....	12
	2. Transformers.....	12
	Small transformers for travelers	12
	3. Batteries.....	13

III. On Your Way	13
A. Stranded in North America or Europe	13
B. Arrival	14
C. Stranded at the Airport.....	15
First Option.....	15
Second Option	15
Union Des Eglise Baptist du Cameroun.....	16
D. Traveling from the City to your Destination.....	17
Ask the driver.....	17
IV. Things to Bring.....	18
A. Clothes	18
1. Men wear.....	18
2. Women wear.....	18
3. Children wear	19
4. Infants need.....	19
5. Everyone needs.....	20
6. Accessories	20
B. Toiletries	21
1. Available toiletries.....	21
2. Things to bring.....	21
3. Towels.....	21
C. Stationary	22
D. Personal Items.....	22
V. Now That You've Arrived	23
A. Housing	23
1. Houses	24
About Household Help.....	24
2. Guesthouses	24
B. Communication.....	25

1. Snail Mail	25
2. E-mail	25
3. Telephone.....	26
4. Radio/Television	26
C. Languages	26
D. Transportation	27
1. Taxis and Public Transport	27
2. Mission Vehicles	28
3. Plane/Helicopter.....	28
E. Customs.....	28
1. Do's and Don't's	29
2. Respect.....	30
3. Values	31
a.) Time/Events.....	31
b) Crisis/Non-Crisis.....	31
c) People/Tasks.....	31
4. Relationships.....	32
a) Family and Tribal Ties	32
b) Male and Female	32
c) Protocol.....	32
d) Work	33
F. Finances	33
1. Expenses.....	33
2. Receiving Money on the Field.....	33
3. Personal Money.....	34
4. Taxes.....	35
G. Cameroon Baptist Convention	35
H. Cameroon Missionary Fellowship.....	36
I. Your Spiritual Walk	36
1. Personal Devotions	36
2. Local Church.....	37
Concluding Remarks	37

Cameroon Missionary Handbook

Welcome to the Cameroon. Some of you have come as Short Term Missionaries for a month, several months, or a year; others have come for a defined term of 2 or more years; while still others of you have come as volunteers to work with the Health Board, Education Board, or for specific projects. In any case we welcome you to Cameroon and thank you for joining us in serving in Cameroon.

The Cameroon Missionary Fellowship (CMF) is the team of missionaries who work with the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC). Presently we are actually from three mission organizations: North American Baptist (NAB), Baptist General Conference (BGC) and World Team (WT). We are very glad that you have decided to join us in working with the CBC.

Some of our volunteers come not for a religious purpose but for a humanitarian service to mankind perspective. You are also welcomed. While here working with us in Cameroon, we ask that you be aware of the church foundation of our hospitals and schools. We want you to enjoy your stay, but ask that while working with us that you remember our purpose and the effects of your behaviour on the missionaries and staff at our institutions. Whether you are here as a missionary or not, most Cameroonians will see you as such and will judge your behaviour as that of what missionaries do. We ask therefore that you refrain from activities and behaviour that would reflect in a detrimental fashion.

When you begin to tell people that you are going to Africa as a missionary or as a volunteer, you will get many different reactions. Everyone has a different perception of what this venture will be like. Questions begin to occur to you:

"How big are the bugs and snakes?" (Mostly the same size as at home.)

"Will people understand my English?" (Probably)

"Will I live in a mud hut?" (Fifty years ago, perhaps, but not now, unless you want to.)

"Under whose authority will I work?" (Cameroon Baptist Convention leaders, career missionaries, school authorities, or medical authorities.)

"How many pairs of shoes (toiletries, dresses, trousers, etc.) will I need to bring with me?" (What are your needs during that period of time at home? Many of these items are also available in Cameroon but take time and additional money to find.)

"What will I do when I get there? (Don't worry; you will generally be placed within your sphere of ability and training.)

Short Term Missionaries:

"Will I spend all my time under palm trees sharing the Word of God?" (No.)

"Will I become a super-spiritual Christian?" (Not automatically. Like at home you have to work at spiritual growth.)

"Can I come with mixed motives?" (Yes, as long as God has called you, and you come to serve God through your personal calling.)

"Can I live on what I will earn?" (Yes, unless your standard of living is higher than normal.)

Perhaps more important are such questions as, "Is there a need for expatriot missionary workers and what is their role?" These are difficult questions and ultimately will be answered by you.

Why short-term missionaries (STM) and volunteers? The STM and volunteer are not just here for personal evangelism, but to aid others by fulfilling a specific commitment. The following are the main reasons why Cameroon continues to need STMs and volunteers:

1. Specific help for the field.
2. Expertise for specialized jobs.
3. Fresh, contemporary ideas.
4. Less expensive personnel.
5. Experienced prospect for career missionary appointment; may become a long-termer.
6. Additional missions promotion in home churches.

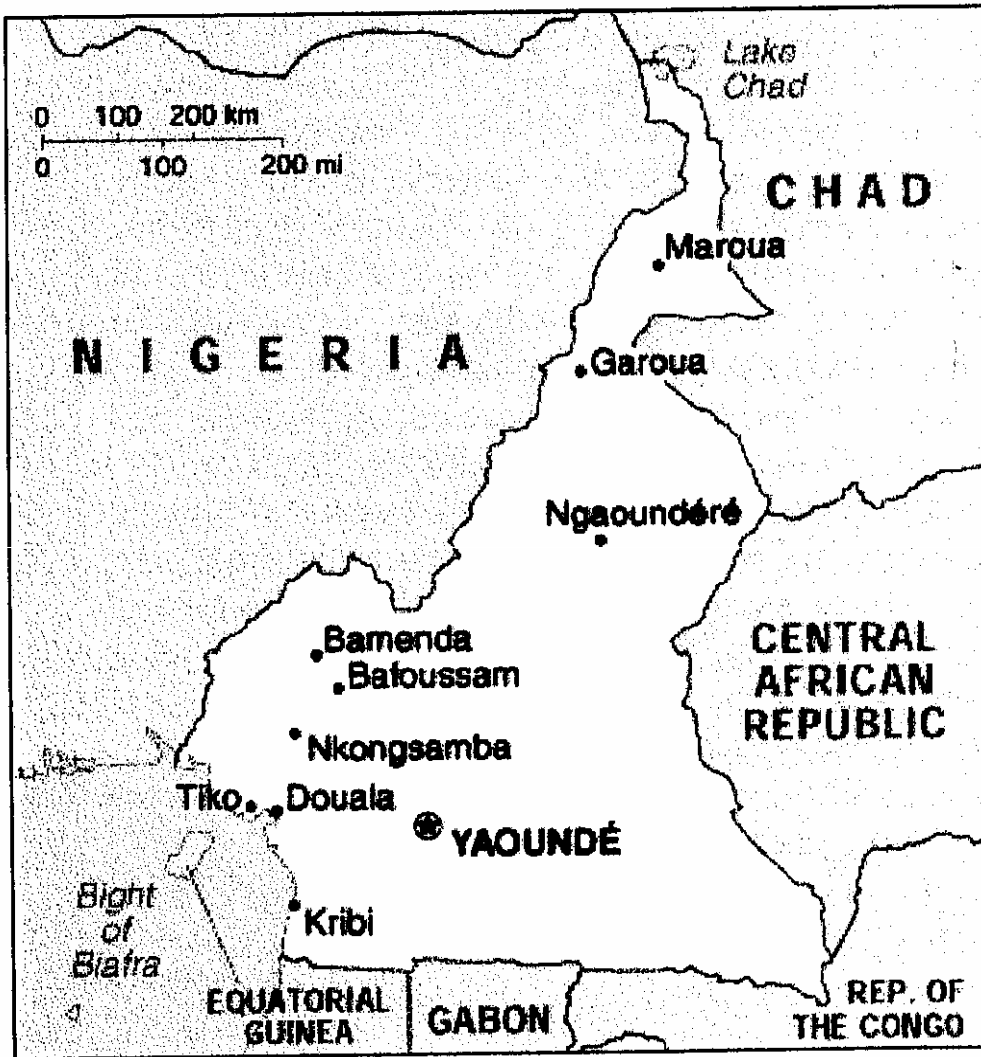
I. Your World

For a complete description visit:

<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/cm.html>

Cameroon

Location: Western Africa, NE of the Gulf of Guinea, (part of the Atlantic Ocean) (8° - 16° E and 2° - 13° N of the equator). Called “the hinge of Africa”.



Land boundaries:

West – Nigeria

North – Chad

East - Central African Republic

South - People's Democratic Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) (DRC), Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea (E. Guinea includes the island of Bioko or Fernando Po).

Total land area: 469,440 sq. km. – slightly larger than California

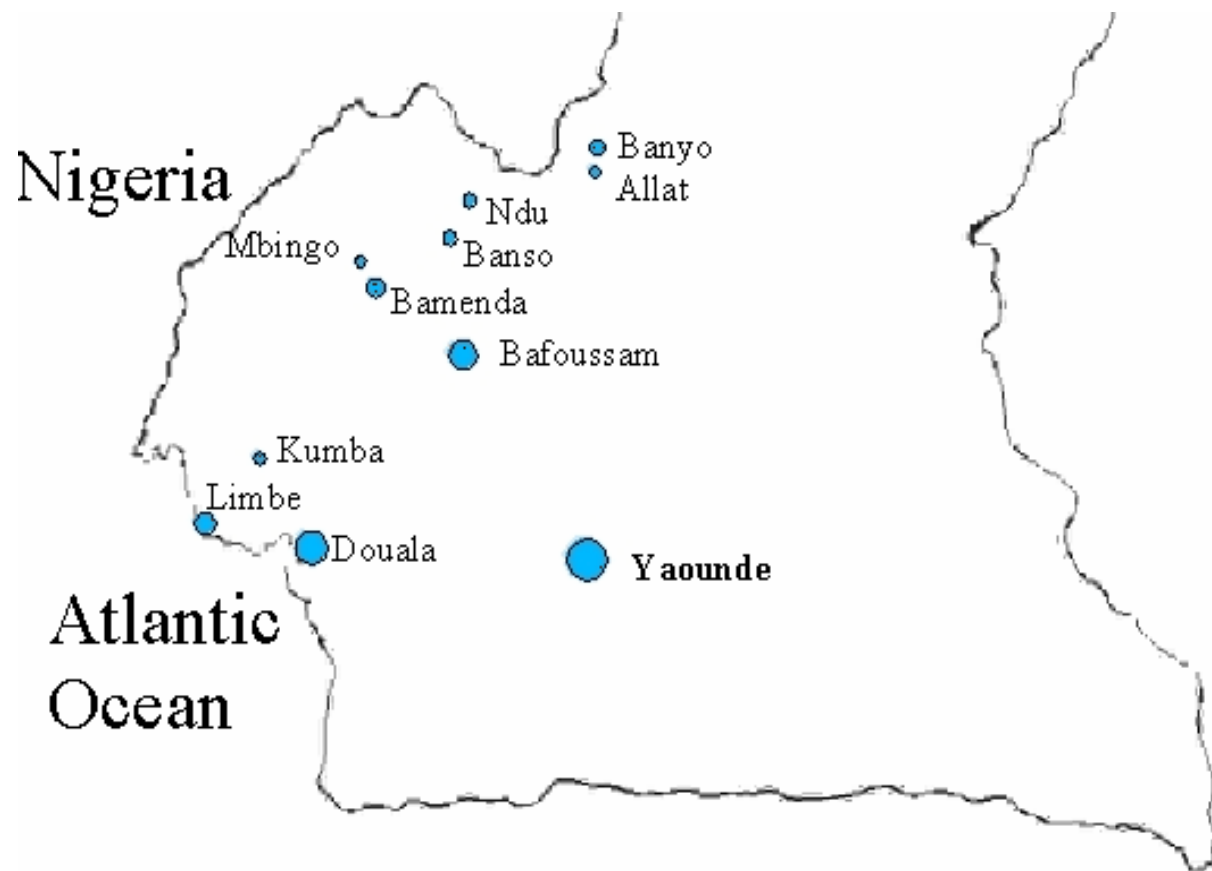
Population: 15,456,092 (July 1999 est.)

Languages: Officially French and English; French is predominate, but there are over 200 dialects. Most Cameroon Baptist Convention work is in the English-speaking provinces. Pidgin English is widely used in those areas.

Capital: Yaounde

Climate: Northern plains, semiarid and hot; central plateau, cool, short dry season; southwest, year-round rainfall; coastal lowlands, warm and humid.

Currency: Central African Franc (CFA)



II. Preparation

A. Official Documents to Carry

There are several documents that you should have in your carry-on and not in your checked baggage:

- _ Passport with a Cameroon Visa stamped on one of the pages
- _ Letter of Invitation from the Cameroon Baptist Convention
- _ Immunization book, which must include yellow fever vaccination
- _ Driver's License (easier to obtain a Cameroonian license)
- _ Cash (see finances)
- _ Two photocopies of all official papers including pages of your passport (to use as a back-up and for our files)
- _ Two copies of a list of your luggage contents (written in general terms, not detailed items)
- _ Typing paper sign reading "CBC" (for identification at the airport)

B. Luggage Information

Check with the airline regarding size and weight allowances for your luggage. Make sure each bag is clearly labeled on all sides and well secured. In addition to luggage tags, using bright, fluorescent paper with your name and the place of your destination taped to the side of your boxes or suitcase and inside them is helpful. Rubbermaid trunks or containers are good for shipping belongings as they are sturdy and are useful for storing things once on the field. Keep with you a general list of the items contained in the bags for evaluation by customs when entering the country. Do not put values on these items.

Occasionally luggage may be lost or delayed during the transit process so it is a good idea to keep a spare set of clothes in your carry-on. You may even have an opportunity to swim upon arrival, so include a suit.

Holding on to the luggage receipts issued by the airline will assist in tracking down the luggage.

C. Health Issues

In general, health rules are based on prevention rather than cure. The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," is true.

1. Personal Hygiene

a) Wash hands...wash hands...wash hands.

It's still the best way to prevent infectious disease. After coming home from outside (after shaking many hands), before eating, or preparing food are times when it is especially important to wash your hands. Hand sanitizers are helpful (do bring them), but soap and water eliminate dirt best.

b) Shoes

Wearing shoes prevents many problems. Open-toed sandals are fine on pavement or well-trodden paths, but you need closed shoes for walking in long grass or in churches with dry, dusty floors where insects hide. Most houses have cement floors and "inside" shoes are a good idea. Even in some showers you may want to wear "flip-flops".

2. Water

a) Drink lots of it!

Many people don't realize how much the airplane and nervous tension has dehydrated them. Especially on the five-hour ride up from Douala or Yaounde, it is good to keep drinking.

b) On the road or at a restaurant

“If it’s not bottled, don’t drink it!” Bottled water and soft drinks are sold in many places. Check the seal on bottle water to be sure the bottle has not been refilled. It is better to drink from the bottle than the restaurant glass and avoid ALL ice in restaurants. (Be aware that two kinds of bottles are available. Plastic bottles are disposable and you may take them with you. Glass bottles are returnable and need to remain behind whether you finish your drink or not.)

c) In your room

Never, never drink tap water. The guesthouse should have safe bottled water in the room. Use it for brushing your teeth and rinsing your toothbrush. It can also be used to wash fruit like mangoes before peeling.

3. Eating

a) “If you can’t peel it, don’t eat it”

There are many roadside fruit snacks. Avoid all fruits that have been already peeled or sliced, however, enjoy those you peel with a clean knife and clean hands. Choose peanuts with skin that can be peeled.

b) “Hot off the fire”

Many roadside snacks are delicious and safe to eat if they’re hot off the fire. Don’t be afraid to ask vendors to put food “back on the fire”.

c) Avoid salads in restaurants

Missionaries know which restaurants have “safe” salads, but for the first few weeks in the country, it may be wise to decline all salads.

d) Peppe and Mangoes

The most powerful spice in Cameroon is a liquid oil made from a local pepper. This is incredibly potent and should be used sparingly until you are used to it.

One of the most delicious fruits is mango, however some people are allergic to the skin and/or the fruit. Enjoy, but be aware if you react.

4. Malaria

Malaria is a serious disease but there are also many medicines that treat it effectively. If mosquitoes don't bite you, you will not get malaria. Some of the preventive methods will not be available to you as soon as you enter the country, but with common sense, it is unlikely that you will contract it in a few nights.

a) Prevention

Bring an insect repellent with a high percent of DEET and use it. The guesthouse should have screens on the windows, so mosquitoes are less likely to enter. Be careful about leaving the doors open.

b) Mosquito Nets

It is advisable to use a mosquito net in low altitude areas (Bamenda, Bansa and Ndu are high altitude), especially during rainy season. No-see-ums or permethrin nets should be purchased in North America because they are unavailable

in Cameroon. If the building is well screened, you need not set up your mosquito net for the one night.

c) Dusk to Dawn

Mosquitoes are active from dusk to dawn so it is advisable to be inside during this time. If you are outside, wear long sleeves and trousers and/or insect repellent. There are also mosquito coils and mats available in Cameroon to burn inside or outside.

d) Preventative Medicine

A malaria preventative medicine is required for all personnel. It is recommended that you consult a travel clinic, your physician at home, as well as the missionaries on the field well in advance of your visit. The malaria in Africa is often resistant to Chloroquine, but you have other choices:

- i) Mefloquine (weekly) or,
 - ii) Malarone (daily) - least side effects, most expensive, or
 - iii) Doxycycline (daily) - adults only, or
 - iv) Chloroquine - 300 mg base (weekly) - should be started two weeks before entering Cameroon.
- Paludrin (100 mg) 2 tablets daily can be taken in conjunction with Chloroquine or Mefloquine.

5. Vaccinations

Only Yellow Fever vaccine is required to enter Cameroon, but the following additional vaccines are recommended: Typhoid, Hepatitis A, Meningitis, Polio IPV booster for adults; Rabies vaccine is more optional. Your regular immunizations, such as Tetanus, should be up-to-date.

It seems like a lot, but most of them can be given at the same time if your doctor orders them in advance.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control) maintains an excellent website with advice for travelers at: <http://www.cdc.gov/>

6. Other Medical Items to Bring:

- Some over-the-counter medications for minor illnesses. Ex. Tylenol, Aspirin, Imodium, Gravol/Dramamine, Decongestants, Antibiotic Ointment.
- An adequate supply of prescription drugs you need. Many are not available here and may be outdated.
- Thermometer
- Several needles and syringes (3)
- Sun Screen and a hat

D. Electricity

1. 220 volts

All electricity in Cameroon is wired for 220v, like Europe, and not 110v in like North America. Some missionaries run on solar power and thus have their houses wired for 110v or for 12v. You can buy some 220v items in North America, but they are costly. Some items, like blow-driers, computers and radios, are meant for international travel and are wired for both kinds of voltage.

DO NOT PLUG ANYTHING INTO THE WALL WITHOUT CHECKING, FIRST.

2. Transformers

You will probably need to borrow a transformer or inverter. If you are here a short time, do not buy a transformer. They are

costly and heavy. Most missionaries have one that you can borrow.

Small transformers for travelers

Some of these are designed for use with electronic equipment such as radios and computers; others are designed for use with heating appliances. If you are bringing a small transformer, **read the instructions carefully before buying and again before using. Don't depend on the store clerk.**

Using one designed for use with heating appliances can burn out your radio or computer.

3. Batteries

Beside Duracell, there are many kinds of cheap batteries available, but they are not very economical. In major cities, a variety of “round” sizes are available, but rarely the “square” 9v. Many missionaries like to use rechargeable batteries for flashlights, walkmans, etc. but also have their own 110v. chargers. Bring extra specialty batteries for your camera or your watch.

III. On Your Way

A. Stranded in North America or Europe

The following procedure is suggested so that alternative arrangements can be made for someone to meet you at the airport.

1. Immediately contact the airline responsible to determine what alternative flight arrangements have been made. Make sure these are confirmed.
2. Make a collect call to one of the following people to inform them of your alternative flight schedule (date, airline, flight number and expected time of arrival). They will then contact the appropriate personnel in Cameroon.

Country code for US and Canada is: 1

Rev. Fred Folkerts **Office:** 1(630) 495-2000 ext. 210
OR **Home:** 1(630) 620-1193

Mr. Ron Salzman

Office: 1(630) 495-2000 ext. 209
Home: 1(630) 668-2293

You can call directly to Cameroon, but you cannot call collect.

Country code for Cameroon is: 237

Rev. Dave Burgess

Office/Home: 336-1285
Cell: 750-0479

B. Arrival

Before leaving the plane:

It is advisable to use the bathroom on the plane as the bathrooms in the airport may not be very clean and well equipped.

Upon arrival in the airport, you will be required to go through several checkpoints before meeting with your welcome party. Be patient and be prepared.

- **May be searched** - Your carry-on baggage and your person may be checked by airport security.
- **Boarding Pass Check** – You may be asked to show your boarding pass.
- **Immunization Card** - You will be asked to produce your health card, which verifies that you have received the required immunizations, specifically yellow fever.
- **Passport Check** – Your passport with Cameroon visa stamped inside (and **letter of authorization** to enter Cameroon, where applicable) must be produced for verification. Your passport will be stamped and returned to you together with a very small receipt. **Keep this receipt** and proceed to the baggage claim area.

- **Collecting your Baggage** - You may have to submit the receipt you just received to enter the baggage claim area. In most cases, your welcoming party will meet you here. However, airport security does not always allow the general public to enter the baggage claim area. Porters are willing to help at a rate of around 300 CFA (70 cents US) per piece of luggage. Allow the welcoming party to make these arrangements for you, when possible. Do not discuss any financial terms with porters. Collect your luggage and proceed to the next checkpoint, the customs agents.
- **Custom agents** - You may be asked to open your luggage for inspection by the customs agents. Have your baggage claim stubs from the airline, luggage keys and your list of the contents of each piece of luggage close at hand. Patience and cooperation in answering all the questions directed to you is advisable. Answer only the questions that are directed to you. There is no need to confuse the issue by giving more details than are necessary. If the same questions are repeatedly asked of you, give the same answer. Upon completing this inspection, you will be allowed to leave the baggage claim area and the airport.

A word of caution: Do not take any pictures within the airport or any government buildings. It is probably better to leave your camera packed until you reach your room. Taking pictures where you will be staying is fine.

C. Stranded at the Airport

In the unlikely event that a communications breakdown has occurred and your welcoming party is not there to meet you, be assured that every effort will be made to contact you personally as soon as possible. Until then, the following steps should be followed. The airport has several public telephones, but these are not often operational.

First Option: Take the commuter bus that is provided by the Akwa Palace or the Hotel Ibis. They are the best hotels in Douala (cost about 50 dollars a night).

Second Option: Exit through the main doors of the airport to secure a taxi. Before loading your luggage and getting into the taxi, discuss what rates are acceptable to the driver for both passengers and luggage. In 2001, rates to charter the taxi from the airport to the city center were 3000 CFA (\$5.00), higher in the evening hours.

Go to one of the following locations:

<p>European Baptist Rest House <i>Union Des Eglise Baptist du Cameroun</i> (Akwa Quarter) Office: 342-75-23 Home: 342-61-42 Other: 342-89-88 E-Mail: MBE@camnet.cm</p>	<p>Seamen's Mission <i>Foyer des Marins</i> (Akwa Quarter) Phone and Fax: 342-27-94</p>
<p>CBC Douala Resthouse Phone: 997-5572</p> <p>They will come for you.</p>	<p>Catholic Procure <i>Procure Generale des Missions Catholique</i> (Akwa Quarter) Phone: 342-27-97</p>

Having arrived at your destination and settled into your room; go immediately to the nearest public telephone and make contact with one of the following people to inform them of your arrival and whereabouts. Having made contact, wait there until you are met personally.

Dave Burgess (Field Director)

If no answer, then try:

Bamenda
Phone: 336 –1285
Cell: 750 – 0479

Chief of Center at the CBC Health
Center, Douala
Phone: 997-5572

Field Director's Driver often meets people coming in for the Field Director.

Vincent Ndi , Cell Phone 750-0486

Field Director's Administrative Assistant, cell 750-0487 or 760-1323

It may even be worthwhile to phone North America. Sometimes the international phone lines work better than phone lines within the country. Do keep trying to make some contact as soon as possible.

You may want to call North America to tell them of your safe arrival as well. Be aware that the call will cost \$7.00 a minute from regular fixed phones, which needs to be paid before you leave the resthouse or hotel, and credit cards, phone cards, etc. are not accepted. Most cell phones from North America will also not work in Cameroon.

Before calling from the resthouse or hotel, ask the driver about Internet Cafes for making phone calls. The driver can help you to call someone in Cameroon using his cell phone, if necessary. His phone can not access international calls. The Internet Café or Cell Phone will be much less than the fixed phones. Usually \$1.00 to \$1.50 per minute.

D. Traveling from the City to your Destination

Ask the driver:..

- _ To buy bottled water and “toilet tissue” for the trip
- _ To stop at a bakery to buy snacks for the five hour trip (Recommendation: “Cow cheese”, other cheese, bread, yogurt, ham and cheese sandwiches, etc.)

- To stop if you need a bathroom break. Be prepared to use “the bush” because there may or may not be a bathroom facility along the way.
- To guide you, in buying roadside snacks when he stops at a town along the way. See “food” guidelines to decide if you’d rather have a fun experience than eat bakery food.

IV. Things to Bring

A. Clothes

Clothes are normally washed with a wringer washer or done by hand and then hung outside to dry. This process makes them wear out and fade much more quickly. African prints are easily accessible and local tailors can make clothes relatively inexpensively. Second-hand western clothes are also available but are time-consuming to find. Be prepared to leave most of your clothes behind.

1. Men wear:

- Jeans and work slacks (called “trousers” here) unless stationed in a teaching or medical position, then casual slacks are more appropriate.

NOTE: "Pants" in Cameroon usually refers to underwear. Please keep this distinction in mind to prevent embarrassment for you or your hearers.

- Modest shorts, for sports, but never in Muslim areas.
- Collar shirts, t-shirts, work shirts. (Short sleeves are OK)
- Dress shirt and tie, or suit, or traditional Cameroonian attire for special occasions, speaking engagements and church.
- Tennis shoes, good walking shoes, sandals and work boots. (Bring more than one pair as they dry slowly in rainy season)

2. Women wear:

- Dresses or skirts just below the knees or longer (knees and thighs are considered sensual objects). Denim and cotton are sturdy and work well, but bring also some dressier outfits for church in the city, banquets and special occasions. (Dressy African outfits can be made here) Wide culottes at knee-length are also acceptable in cities.

- Blouses or t-shirts (not too tight or revealing, nor baring the midriff). In Muslim areas, some sort of sleeve is required. Tank tops with a wider strap can be worn in certain areas, especially with a shirt as a quick cover-up.
- Jeans or slacks in the evenings in some cooler areas (shorts in hotter areas), at missionary retreats or in your home. (Usually with a cover-up wrapper handy). Capri pants, dress slacks and shorts are not appropriate in most other places.
NOTE: "Pants" in Cameroon usually refers to underwear. Please keep this distinction in mind to prevent embarrassment for you or your hearers.
- Sandals, tennis shoes, good walking shoes (especially if you'll be standing on cement floors). (Bring more than one pair as they wear out and dry slowly in rainy season)
- No pantyhose generally.

3. Children wear:

- Shorts, shirts and dresses made out of local cloth by local tailors. These clothes will not be very durable so you may want to bring other clothing in various sizes. T-shirts cannot be made here.
- Jeans and slacks plus long-sleeve shirts for cooler evenings and "mosquito time". Little girls can wear shorts and slacks until they reach puberty, then dresses are more appropriate.
- Sandals and tennis shoes. You can buy "thongs" or "flip flops" here for about 50 cents and most missionary kids wear them most of the time. Bring several pairs of shoes in different sizes as shoes wear out VERY quickly here.

4. Infants need:

- A good supply of cloth diapers, plastic pants, and diaper pins. Plastic pants tend to crack from the sun and the elastic wears out, so bring plenty. In some places disposable diapers are

available, but they are VERY expensive and the quality may be inferior.

- Other supplies. Cribs can be made here but a Graco tot yard works best as a portable baby bed. Bring along mosquito netting for the crib. A baby food grinder is helpful. Expensive baby food can be found in the cities.
- Bottles, if you plan on using them. Purchased here, they are expensive and inferior in quality.

5. Everyone needs:

- Underwear (known as “pants”; “trousers” are slacks). The elastic wears out very, very quickly.
- Socks. Again, the elastic wears out very, very quickly and white doesn’t stay white.
- Shorts and modest swimming suits for pools and the beach.
- Sunbathing should only be done at the pools or the beach.
- Sweat pants and sweat shirt for cooler locations.
- Caps or hats for protection from the sun.
- House slippers or inside shoes. (Consider that you may be standing on cement floor for long periods of time)
- Robes.
- Pajamas or nightgown. In rainy season, things may take three days to dry, so you may want more than one.
- Windbreakers, lightweight jackets or sweaters.
- Belts.

6. Accessories:

- Umbrella – Buy it here. It is inexpensive and easily accessible.
- Head Ties – Preferred for women in traditional church settings.
- Body piercings – Little girls generally have their ears pierced at birth and many Fulani women wear nose rings. In cities

you may see some young men with earrings as well. HOWEVER, in general, earrings for men, multiple earrings, nose rings and other piercings for women is still considered as a sign of “being loose” and wearing such is not advisable. Single sets of pierced earrings for girls and women are fine.

- Jewelry – Some people prefer to leave their diamonds and expensive items at home.

B. Toiletries

1. Available toiletries:

Various toiletries, listed below, are available in larger cities. Brands vary, often coming from France or Switzerland. North American brands tend to be expensive. If you find your favorite brand, you may not find it again the next time. You need to decide how much space and weight you want to allot for these things.

- Toothpaste (No Crest) & Toothbrushes
- Mouthwash
- Shampoo & Crème Rinses/Conditioners
- Soap
- Kleenex (usually in pocket size; toilet paper is always available)
- Hand lotion
- Shaving supplies (Disposable razors are readily available but not razor cartridges.)
- Hand mirror, soap dishes, shoe brushes, fingernail brushes
- Pumice stone (The real thing! From the mountain!)

2. Things to bring:

- Deodorant
- Combs and brushes (Those here are not for our type of hair)

- _ Women: cosmetics, curlers, perms, sanitary pads, tampons, hairspray
- _ Men: barber set or hair cutting scissors

3. Towels:

Guesthouses will supply you with one medium-sized towel and possibly a washcloth per week. If you prefer a larger towel or more than one and a washcloth, you may want to bring your own and include it in your personal laundry. Choose darker colors and ones that are not too thick to dry in the rainy season. You may even consider leaving it behind when you go. **(Some guesthouses do not supply soap either.)**

C. Stationary

Many stationary items are available in major markets, such as, pencils, pens, paper, envelopes, and tape and file folders. The quality is often inferior and European standard sizes are used. The list and variety is extensive so contact a co-worker for specifics.

D. Personal Items

- _ **Walkman/CD Players**, etc. – Bring your own tapes and CDs. It seems that this is one item which people miss the most if they leave it behind.
- _ **Camera** – Bamenda has an excellent place to develop photos and buy film. Film tends to be expensive. No slide film is available. Bring extra batteries. If you bring a video camera, bring enough cassettes.
- _ **Family Pictures** – Cameroonians are very interested in families and enjoy seeing pictures.

- **Flashlight** – Inexpensive flashlights are available, but many people prefer to bring their own. Ensure that your flashlight does not need unique batteries, such as 9v.
- **Songbooks and musical instruments** – Many Cameroonians do not read music but enjoy learning new songs, if you enjoy music and would like to teach them. Feel free to bring your own instrument, if you wish.
- **Books** – Although there are few bookstores in Cameroon, missionaries and guesthouses have a variety of books to read and borrow. New books are always appreciated, but there are enough to keep you reading for some time.
- **Magazines** – Magazines are difficult to get here and are often lost in the mail. When leaving the plane you are allowed to take the complimentary newspapers and magazines, which are highly appreciated.
- **US and/or Canadian Stamps** - Many people come and go from Cameroon and are often willing to carry mail that can be securely mailed in North America if you have stamps already on the letter.
- **Computers** – Laptop computers are the easiest to manage. They can be used with 110v or 220v. It is still advisable to purchase a voltage regulator when you get here. Most printers are 110v only and will also need a transformer to work.
- **Bible Study/Devotional Materials** – For your personal use, small group or leading staff devotions, you may want to bring appropriate materials.

V. Now That You've Arrived

A. Housing

Houses and guesthouses are made of cement block or sun-dried bricks plastered with cement and have a variety of conveniences. All have indoor toilets, running water and cement floors. Most of the stations now have 24-hour electricity. This is 220 volts, 50 cycles. A few stations that do not have electricity are powered by solar or generator. You will need a transformer for using most North American appliances. Be aware that both electricity and water may be unavailable occasionally for hours at a time. You can expect a house will be ready for you or you will have arrangements to stay in a guesthouse.

1. Houses

Basic house furniture includes tables, chairs, living room chairs, beds and dressers. Most places will also have end tables, some bookshelves and a desk. You will have some kind of refrigerator and a butane operated stove. Kitchens will have cupboards and counters. These details will vary from place to place and it is best to write for specifics.

Short-term missionaries and volunteers should have kitchen equipment and linens supplied for them. Again, it is best to write for specifics.

About Household Help: Keeping your house clean in Cameroon is a big job. Dust in the dry season and mud and mold in the rainy season make housekeeping much more work than it is in North America. Laundry and cooking are also more difficult. Missionaries generally find it expedient to hire some household help. It is quite easy to find nationals willing to work in your home and salaries are low. (Often you are helping supplement a family's income.) With workers, you may assume certain legal responsibilities, which you should ask about when you arrive.

2. Guesthouses

Each guesthouse has its own unique situation. Some have a dorm style and some are a large house or more self-contained. They usually have shared bathroom facilities with a shower. You may want to bring your own towel, washcloth and soap. Most guesthouses will provide a meal, which may be Western or Cameroonian. A small kitchen may be available in which you can do some cooking or heating water for yourself.

B. Communication

1. Snail Mail

Mail delivery is slow and frustrating. It takes about three weeks for a letter to reach North America unless it is posted at the Douala or Yaounde airports. Postal delivery within the country is also very slow. Much mail is hand carried because of this.

Packages can be sent to Cameroon but only by airmail and 2 lbs or under. Larger packages have outrageous duty charges. Packages should have a green declaration label with “gifts”, “books”, “household items” and a low dollar value stated. Square 2 qt cardboard milk cartons or padded envelopes make good parcel containers. Sealing the package well will make it less likely to be opened.

2. E-mail

Most of the missionaries have e-mail access of some sort. The success rate for sending and receiving varies. If you are near a major city, you can send and receive your e-mail from there where

there is telephone access. Some cities have Internet facilities. In the very remote areas, SAT phones have been used with good success. They are expensive to operate, but worth it. Another possibility is a system using a shortwave radio with a TNC to a central hub.

As cell phone service expands, many missionaries are using data transmission over cell phones to do e-mail. If you are using a cell phone for receiving email, INFORM family and friends NOT TO SEND pictures or attachments. Files above 200 k may cause the server to hang up and make getting other emails impossible until the offending file has been removed from the server.

3. Telephone

The cities usually have telephone access but it is not always reliable. Calling to North America is considerably more expensive than North America calling Cameroon. Recently cell phones are being used in more places although there are still problems. North American cell phones rarely will not work in Cameroon.

4. Radio/Television

Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) is a government-operated system that has one television station and radio stations in each of the provinces. The CBC has free time on several of these radio stations. Many of the programs are in French. Satellite dishes are prevalent in many places and often CNN is available. International broadcasts can be heard on short-wave radios, which can be purchased in the country.

Each major CBC ministry has a two-way radio and there are two daily contacts with other stations. This provides communication with other missionaries and nationals.

C. Languages

Cameroon is officially bilingual: French and English. CBC work began in the English-speaking provinces and has since spread into the French-speaking sector. Cameroon has over 300 dialects and people are delighted if you can express a greeting in one of them.

Many people in the North West and South West provinces understand grammar (proper English). However, upon arrival your English may not be understood. This may be due to accent or colloquialisms you may use, your nasal pitch, and the speed at which you speak. Be patient! Do not be embarrassed at having to repeat yourself. You may experience just as much frustration trying to understand others. Listen carefully at the differences in pronunciation (we say "water" and they say "wata"). Be willing to adjust in order to be more clearly understood.

More popular in the North West and South West provinces is Pidgin English. It has a syntax, structure, and pronunciation that can be learned. It is much easier to understand Pidgin than it is to speak it. It is especially helpful in church, in the market and when speaking to children. A guide to Pidgin English will be available in Cameroon.

D. Transportation

In Cameroon, there are several paved roads in good condition linking major cities. The majority of roads however, are still dirt or gravel. Many of these roads deteriorate badly during the rainy season. Even within towns, roads are not maintained very well.

1. Taxis and Public Transport

The primary mode of transportation within Cameroon is by taxi. Taxis come in all sizes: compact cars, vans, minibuses and large coaches. Coaches travel only between major cities. Taxis operating within town limits are compact cars usually painted yellow.

Between towns, taxis are usually overloaded with cargo carried on top. Taxis leave only when they are full. Taxis traveling long distances usually stop for food and possibly a bush bathroom break.

Public transport is often stopped for traffic checks. You need to carry some Identification and be prepared to show it if asked. Beyond showing your identification, it is unusual to get further questions.

2. Mission Vehicles

Many missionaries have vehicles, which they use in their ministry. Institutional vehicles are sometimes available for personal use. A set rate is charged for the use of mission vehicles. Some missionaries have their own cars or motorcycles, although required insurance does not make this economical. To drive in Cameroon requires a valid Cameroonian license or an International Driver's license. If you bring your current driver's license, it will be easier to get a Cameroonian one.

3. Plane/Helicopter

The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) has two planes based in Yaounde and Bango, respectively. CBC uses the one at Bango regularly for its medical ministries; both are used often to transport missionaries.

Helimission (helicopter service) is a Swiss operated helicopter service that is based in Bamenda and used regularly for evangelism, medical needs and transportation to areas not available by vehicle.

E. Customs

Each culture has customs to make relationships easier. No one culture is superior to another. It is helpful to know some of these customs of the culture you are entering in order to make a smooth adjustment. In recent years, some of these customs have begun to change and are becoming less significant.

1. Do's and Don't's

Do

- Greet people with a “Good morning, good evening” etc. Ask about their family, how they slept and if they are well.
- Use a handshake with your greeting. Be sure to shake hands again before you depart. When shaking a superior's hand, allow him to do the shaking. Expect to do the shaking if someone considers you his or her superior.
- Invite people to have a seat when they visit. Extend greetings and have conversation before asking the purpose of their visit.
- Offer light refreshments (peanuts, cookies, fruit and a drink) although it is not obligatory each visit.
- Walk part way with your visitor when he or she is leaving. If he or she is carrying any items, it is appropriate to carry it for him or her (regardless of gender) until you separate.
- Receive any gifts that are offered to you. They represent an offer of friendship. Receive gifts with the right hand or with both hands.

- Use the right hand **exclusively** in giving and receiving **all** items, including money, purchases, food, etc. If you must use your left hand, it is appropriate to say, “Excuse my left.” (or “Chose my left”)

- Walk on the left side (or woman’s side) of a man, if you are a woman.

- Say “kwa-kwa” instead of knocking when approaching a home. They will respond with “Enter”, “Come in” or “Yes”, upon which you should go in. Occasionally people will cough or clap instead of saying “kwa-kwa”.

Don’t

- Cross your legs (a sign that you are prestigious).

- Blow your nose in a handkerchief in public. Be discreet and choose the least obvious manner.

- Expect people to look you boldly in the eye, especially women to men.

- Start a conversation or business without taking time for proper greetings.

- Continue working when receiving visitors. Stop and give them your full attention.

2. Respect

Every culture has ways of showing respect. In establishing relationships, you will want to show respect appropriately and will want to know how to receive respect.

You will be called by your title or “Sir”, “Madam”, “Miss”, “Pa”, “Ma”, “Brother” or “Sister” instead of your personal name. You will be called “White man”. This is often to just get your attention; ignore the person or call out a greeting.

In social situations visitors:

- are given a seat, often the most prominent
- are served first at meals
- are spoken to with hands covering the mouth
- are greeted with a two-handed handshake (the left hand holding the right arm)

3. Values

It is easy to think that your upbringing and culture is far superior to others. It is important to become aware of the nature of different values, which affect behavior. Try to be open, to accept the validity of certain things and to understand. (Acceptance does not necessarily mean agreement.) Please remember that all cultures, including your own, include sinful practices. Examine carefully your own culture as well as the new culture in regards to Biblical principles and practices.

These areas of difference may include: love, marriage, lying, bribery, work, equality, education, money, success, native medicine, Christianity, fate, white men, missionaries, and drinking.

a.) Time/Events

Time is not as important to the Cameroonian as the event that encompasses it. Westerners strive towards efficiency, including the utilization of time. We set schedules and determine to keep them. Be patient, learn to slow down, enjoy the event, and share your time freely with the people.

b) Crisis/Non-Crisis

Cameroonians tend to manage with crisis therefore, pre-planning does not have a priority.

c) People/Tasks

People are more important than any task at hand. Paperwork is often set aside because someone comes to visit whether it be at the office or at home.

4. Relationships

Since people are so important in the lives of Cameroonians, it is important to understand some of the relationships you will encounter.

a) Family and Tribal Ties

These are very strong. Extended family or tribesmen can visit at any time without warning. Their needs will be taken care of for the duration of the stay. Families have large influence on marriages, careers, use of time and money, and almost everything imaginable.

b) Male and Female

Traditionally there is a clear separation between males and females. Their roles in society are distinct: division of labor, places of socializing in the home, sitting on opposite sides of the church, etc. Husbands and wives do

not openly show affection; neither is it appropriate for dating couples to do so. Therefore, in order to not be offensive, it is wise to refrain from such behavior in most settings.

However, affection can be shown during greetings and departures. These may include: hugs, shaking hands, prolonged hand holding and European style kissing (kissing on each cheek). Hand shaking is most appropriate for the initial meeting and the Cameroonians should initiate other forms of affection. Holding hands between the same sexes is a sign of warm friendship.

c) Protocol

Protocol is the expected procedure in the way things are done, whether this in a home, work or a formal setting. Attitudes toward protocol in North America have become negative and “being casual” is valued instead. Manners of dress, procedures, titles and names all have protocol in Cameroon. These customs need to be respected and followed in order to establish positive relationships.

d) Work

At your job site, it is important to learn to whom you are responsible and ensure that you communicate your ideas, questions and plans with him or her. Although some procedures may seem strange to you, be patient and observe carefully before making suggestions for change. Be aware that you will be observed at work and off-hours, so set a good example.

F. Finances

1. Expenses

As a career, short-term or volunteer missionary you will be expected to pay for the following:

- Rent, whether housing or resthouse
- Personal food, whether at home or in the resthouse
- Transportation, including mission vehicles with a driver
- Utilities in a house
- Use of telephone and/or e-mail
- Official documents, like residence licenses
- Customs charges
- Receiving postal packages, etc.

2. Receiving Money on the Field

Your money is sent in a bank transfer to the CBC Central Accounting Office in Bamenda and placed into your personal account. You will be charged for and given a personal account book that enables you to make deposits or withdrawals through any CBC bursar. You can pay internal bills, such as resthouse, use of mission vehicles, medicines at CBC facilities using this missionary personal account book (MPA). Many missionaries use the personal account system as their bank in Cameroon. Using a bank account at any commercial bank in Cameroon requires much time and patience.

Your salary is usually deposited into your account near the beginning of the month. It is necessary for you to check the printout you receive every month to ensure that there are no errors (just as with a checking account in North America). The amount deposited each month may vary due to the floating exchange rate.

It is for you to decide how much of your money you want sent to Cameroon and how much you would like to remain in North America. If you would like to change the amount sent to the field notify the Associate Director of the Missions Department at the NAB Conference International Office and allow two months for the change to be effective.

NAB Head Office discourages people from sending personal monetary gifts through them. Gifts should be sent to your personal banking account in North America. Inform friends not to send any cash, cheques, or postal money orders through the mail. Using Western Union is an option.

3. Personal Money

Some missionaries have traveler's checks in case of emergency. They can be cashed at most major banks but at exorbitant exchange prices. Most missionaries also have American dollars or Euros on hand. Credit cards can only be used at the major hotels in Yaounde and Douala, again with high exchange charges. ATM machines are not available. More information will be given at orientation time.

4. Taxes

Besides paying US or Canadian taxes, you also pay Cameroon taxes. You are required to file US, Canadian, and state tax forms when applicable. Special forms are sent to you as you can reclaim some of your taxes as a citizen working overseas. The Central Accounting Office automatically deducts your Cameroon taxes from your pay each month. The comptroller forwards the money to the local area treasurer, who pays the money into the divisional

tax office. More information will be given during orientation upon arrival.

G. Cameroon Baptist Convention

Currently, three cooperating mission bodies work with the CBC: North American Baptist (NAB), Baptist General Conference (BGC) and World Team (WT). A detailed explanation of how the CBC operates will be given during the in-country orientation.

The CBC is currently divided into 28 fields and 2 missionary areas. Ministries of the CBC include: Evangelism, Health and Education. The executive officers of the CBC are: President, Vice-president, General Secretary, Treasurer/Comptroller, Director of Evangelism and Missions, Director of Health Services, Education Secretary, Field Director, and Liaison Officers from each cooperating mission.

Three boards govern the operations of the convention. The Evangelism Board concerns itself with the churches, church growth, pastoral training and evangelistic crusades. The Health Board operates two hospitals, a number of health centers, dispensaries and community-based health posts. The Education Board operates 100 primary schools, seven post primary schools and a teacher training college.

H. Cameroon Missionary Fellowship

All missionaries serving under the CBC are a part of the Cameroon Missionary Fellowship (CMF). A retreat time is held each year after Christmas for fellowship and mutual support. The CMF is responsible for immigration matters, inter-station transfers, and

arrival and departure formalities of incoming and outgoing missionaries. Your mission in conjunction with the CBC Administrative Council decides your place of ministry.

Each mission group also has its own retreat and/or field council meetings within the year.

I. Your Spiritual Walk

1. Personal Devotions

As you serve in Cameroon, your walk with God may not come easier nor will you have more time and incentive for consistent devotions than you had in North America. If anything, you will have less time and you will not have many of the encouragements and aids that you are used to. Dr. Paul Groen, former missionary to Africa, advises that missionaries “go into the field with the full expectation that the days ahead will be stormy both spiritually and emotionally.” There is little chance to be fed spiritually by someone else. Your devotions take on even more importance, as they will give you strength and guidance.

It would be good to bring with you some additional helps such as a Bible dictionary, a good study Bible with concordance and a Bible handbook. Some missionaries find that teaching tapes or sermon tapes are helpful. Occasionally you may lead staff devotions or a Bible study group, in which case, you may want to bring materials for that.

2. Local Church

Involvement and participation in the local church communicates an interest in and care for the people along with a personal commitment. **It is required that you take membership in a CBC church within six months of arrival.** You do not lose your membership at home, but rather obtain dual membership.

Even though the worship style and practices are usually not familiar, it is important to set an example and be an encouragement by participating as much as you can. Give yourself a little time before you pledge your involvements. Your presence and support will be highly appreciated.

Concluding Remarks

There may be many things in this handbook that may overwhelm you. Much of what has been written is based on questions new missionaries and volunteers have asked.

Upon arrival you will be given a more formal orientation during which you can ask questions, meet the people with whom you'll be working, visit some mission stations and gain additional information to help you in your adjustment.

You do not need to be afraid. Assure yourself, your family and friends that the God who led you here will keep you in His care and help you become the servant He wants you to be.