

September 25, 2020

Dear friends and sponsors,

I hope this letter finds you well.

This has certainly been a strange season, with the pandemic disrupting all our lives. We had been looking forward to coming back to the U.S. for home assignment this summer, but like so many other things, those plans had to be cancelled. We missed seeing all of you, our faithful sponsors, as well as family and friends in the U.S. We are grateful that no one in our family, in Cameroon or in the U.S., has been infected with covid-19 so far, and we hope that you and your loved ones have been spared as well. The pandemic has not been nearly as severe here in Cameroon as in the U.S. in terms of percentage of population infected. We continue to take precautions, of course.

At the Lutheran Institute of Theology in Meiganga, we were able to restart the second semester June 1 and finish July 31 with an outdoor graduation ceremony in our courtyard. We had 28 graduates from our baccalaureate and licence programs. (In the French system, the baccalaureate degree is the equivalent of a high school diploma and the licence is the equivalent of a bachelor's degree.) Of those in the licence program, 6 were already ordained pastors who came back to continue their studies and now will go back to parish ministry. All the rest of the baccalaureate and licence graduates will begin a 2-year internship as "candidates for pastoral ministry" before being approved for ordination. Here are a few photos from the big day:



*Graduates of the baccalaureate program*



*Graduates of the licence program*



*Wives of students, who also take courses during their time at the Institute.*

You may have noticed in the photos that all the graduates are men. We do have three women students at the Institute, just not in the classes that graduated. I am happy to say that in the incoming classes of baccalaureate and licence, there will be four new women, so we will more than double our number of women students! It has been only eight years since the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon started ordaining women (in 2012, the same year I came to Cameroon), so I guess it is not surprising that it has taken time to increase our number of women students. I have been a bit impatient about that, so it is good finally to see some progress. The new academic year will start in October.

Eric, the kids, and I were able to spend some time together in Yaoundé in August. David and Etienne are getting excited for the beginning of primary school (kindergarten, or “class one” here) in October. Schekina passed her final exams at her secondary school in Yaoundé and has been accepted to the Catholic University of Central Africa (also in Yaoundé), where she plans to study finance and management. The first semester officially starts in October, but she is already there for a preparatory course.



*Left: David’s 5<sup>th</sup> birthday in April / Center: Etienne’s 5<sup>th</sup> birthday in August / Right: Schekina’s secondary school graduation in August*

That’s all the news for now. As always, we are profoundly grateful for your steadfast support and prayers. God’s blessings to you all!

+ Grace and peace +

*Elisabeth (with Eric, Schekina, David, and Etienne)*

[elisajo@msn.com](mailto:elisajo@msn.com) / mailing address: Lutheran Institute of Theology, B.P. 9, Meiganga, Cameroon