

## Appendix 1: **Cameroon, Africa Mission History Project**

**PURPOSE:** To organize and make more accessible (onsite and online) the Cameroon mission materials in the North American Baptist (NAB) Heritage Center at the Sioux Falls Seminary in South Dakota, USA and publish a short history about the North American Baptist missionaries and their Cameroonian colleagues.

### **ACTIVITIES (OBJECTIVES):**

- 1. Organize into a coherent and online-accessible *Cameroon Mission History Collection*, the Cameroon materials** (books, pamphlets, academic papers, periodical articles, correspondence, still photographs, slides, videos, DVDs, etc.) in the NAB Heritage Center at the Sioux Falls Seminary. Process the materials for long-term preservation. Add other key Cameroon materials to the *Collection*. 90% complete.
- 2. Create digital files and printed binders of the *Collection's* Catalog, Appendices and Indexes.** 70% complete
- 3. Generate the Catalog and Index computer files** needed to integrate the *Collection* into the **NAB Heritage Commission Website** thus making it accessible and searchable from the **Internet**. 60% complete. (*An early version is available on the Web that can be accessed by going directly to [www.nabarchives.org/collections/cameroon-mission-history/](http://www.nabarchives.org/collections/cameroon-mission-history/) or by doing a Google search using "Cameroon Mission History"*).
- 4. Produce an illustrated book of the history of Baptist missions in Cameroon** focusing on the years 1891-1975 ministries of NAB missionaries and their Cameroonian colleagues. 60% complete. (*The book is being written by John Siewert, retired global mission researcher/writer with World Vision, and Daphne Dunger, retired Cameroon missionary nurse/educator who led the start of the Life Abundant primary health care initiative for underserved villages of Cameroon*).

### **INTRODUCTION:**

There are a variety of documents and other materials relating to missionaries in Cameroon at the NAB Heritage Center. Within the millions of words and thousands of pictures is a fascinating story about the work of North American, Canadian, British, Jamaican, and European missionaries with most of the documents relating to North American Baptist missionaries.

The first Baptist missionaries to Cameroon from North America were August and Anna Steffens who arrived there in 1891. They had responded to a call from Cameroonian Baptist leaders asking that missionaries come over and help their two struggling Native Baptist churches. These churches had been planted earlier by British Baptist missionaries. However, by 1887 the British missionaries had left Cameroon because of disagreements with the German colonial government that had forcibly taken over Cameroon in 1884. August Steffens was a student in the German Department of the Rochester Seminary in upstate New York, the forerunner of today's Sioux Falls Seminary, when he first read of this call from Cameroon. He decided to go there even though at that point he had no visible support base for such an undertaking. However, in his words, "I do not think that I should have any financial need because the Lord, if it is His will, will open a way."

August Steffens served in Cameroon for 18 months until malaria ended his life at age thirty-two. However, his wife Anna continued and others followed so that against incredible odds over the years, churches were planted, schools started, and medical facilities established - all proclaiming in word and deed the Good News of Jesus. In 1954 leaders of the Cameroonian Baptist churches formed the Cameroon Baptist Convention (CBC). By 1975 all NAB mission properties were turned over to the CBC and Cameroonians took the lead in the continuing partnership with the missionaries serving mainly in support roles of medical ministries and post-primary education.

Organizing the *Cameroon Mission History Collection* started in 2001 as NAB archival materials and additional materials from Cameroon were assembled for writing a book on the history of Baptist missionaries and their Cameroonian colleagues. It became apparent that writing an overall history needed careful research of a broad scope of materials. Summaries of historical materials were placed in computer files in order to prepare a catalog and indexes so continuous cross-checking during research could be more easily carried out. Retired and active missionaries along with retired and active Cameroonians serving in churches, schools, and medical facilities were interviewed for their stories.

Along with the materials already in the archives, more books and other materials were added to the *Collection* as the organizing, cataloging and book-writing continued. For example, a 1940-50s NAB missionary provided a manuscript of his memoirs entitled "Africa: the Rest of the Story". Also books and other materials written in German telling about the early Baptist missionaries were translated into English.

Steps were taken to better preserve older documents. For example, Annual Reports, Field Committee Minutes, correspondence, etc. going back over 85 years were placed in transparent acid-free sheet protectors for better preservation and in binders for easier access. Surprises surfaced as the *Collection* grew. For example, over 50 academic papers (theses, dissertations, etc.) about Cameroon Baptist missions and churches have been collected. Most are by Baptist missionaries or Cameroonians as part of their studies in seminaries and universities masters and doctorate degree programs.

The range and quality of photographs, slides and videos (including some 1930s 8 and 16 mm movie films) might possibly lead to an additional objective: A Power Point type of presentation showing the NAB missionaries and their Cameroonian colleagues ministering together through the years and how this has made a significant difference in the lives of millions of Cameroonians.

Much can be learned from reading these accounts of how over the years in God's Providence these missionaries and Cameroonian colleagues continued to press on, ministering in word and deed despite the many obstacles and setbacks they encountered. Stories of the difference made in the lives of Cameroonians abound in the materials of the *Collection*. Today the ministries continue to expand and new ministries develop through the work of Cameroonians and others in the churches, schools, and varied healthcare ministries of the Cameroon Baptist Convention.

## **SECTIONS (CATEGORIES) of the CAMEROON MISSION HISTORY COLLECTION:**

- A. Books** (Including unpublished manuscripts and English translations of works in other languages)
- B. Pamphlets** (Including brochures, booklets, etc.)
- C. Academic Papers** (Including dissertations, theses, etc.)
- D. Periodical/Magazine Articles** (from CBC, NAB and Non-NAB/CBC publications)
- E. Newspaper Articles** (from Cameroonian and North American newspapers)
- F. Historical Web Pages and E-Newsletters** (printouts that are no longer online)  
Sections G – Z are restricted to persons authorized by the NAB Heritage Commission Executive Committee
- G. Annual Field Reports of the NAB Cameroon Baptist Mission**
- H. Annual Missionary Field Conference Minutes/Reports**
- I. Field Council/Committee Minutes**
- J. Field Council/Committee Correspondence follow-up regarding the Minutes**
- K. Missionary Quarterly Reports**
- L. Field Superintendent/Secretary Circular Letters** (to Missionaries)
- M. Missionary and NAB Home Office Communications with Supporters**
- N. Correspondence and Other Documents of the NAB's Cameroon Baptist Mission not fitting in Sections G-M**
- O. White Cross Program Documents** (NAB Women's Missionary Union sent medical, etc. supplies to Cameroon)
- P. NAB General Missionary Committee & Board of Missions Minutes**
- Q. Cameroon Baptist Convention Documents** (Minutes of General Session, Council, Executive Committee, Education Authority, and Medical Authority meetings, etc. with related correspondence and other documents including materials from the Women's Union and 3 H -Head, Heart, Hands for Christ- Girls programs)
- R. Nigeria** (Various materials from Mambilla Mission, Woyke House residence, and Hillcrest School in Jos, Nigeria for NAB Cameroon missionary children. Before 1961 the Mambilla area was part of Cameroon)
- S. Miscellaneous Materials** (Non-correspondence items that did not fit in Sections A-R)
- T. Oversize Materials** (maps, posters, etc. too large for regular size shelves)
- U. Photograph Prints (color and b/w stills), 35 mm Slides & Film Strips**
- V. Audio and Video Mediums** (audio cassettes, CDs, 8 & 16 mm movie films, DVs, VHSs, vinyl records)
- W. Paintings** (Cameroon life, traditional views of spirit world, etc.)
- X. Artifacts** (wood carvings, musical instruments, etc.)