



SPREADING THE GOSPEL IN CAMEROON



BY PETER NEWBURN

Country Coordinator for Cameroon

Peter has served in full-time ministry for over thirty-five years. He and his family spent three years as missionaries in Cameroon, where Peter was a theology teacher at the major seminary. He also worked for almost nine years as a parish life coordinator in the Diocese of San Bernardino, California, where he was responsible for overseeing all aspects of pastoral ministry and the administration of a large parish.

OUR MISSION TO PRIESTS

We spent one week each in the dioceses of Ngaoundéré and Bafia. The mission's purpose was to facilitate personal and ministerial renewal to priests in these two dioceses through inviting a greater openness to the role of the Holy Spirit in their lives and in the Church, as well as the call to holiness and mission. We also taught the Five Keys of Unbound—repentance and faith, forgiveness, renunciation, taking authority, and the Father's blessing. All of these were taught to help participants live in greater freedom.

Fr. Graham Keep and I alternated giving the teachings and leading prayer. Additionally, Fr. Graham preached at each of the daily liturgies, offering inspiration and reinforcement of the retreat content. Our talks were translated into French by two Cameroonian translators the first week, and by team member André Villeneuve the second week. Father Jude Thaddeus Langeh, CME, Major Superior of the Claretians, helped with logistical planning and organization and joined our team for the first week in Ngaoundéré.

Fr. Graham and I prayed individually through the Five Keys with leaders in both dioceses, who were open and willing to be vulnerable with us. All expressed that they felt a great sense of peace, healing, and freedom.

In both clergy retreats, the participants put the teaching into practice, praying with one another in small groups through the Five Keys. We called on the Holy Spirit, inviting them to be open to a deeper commitment and personal renewal. Many of the priests shared their appreciation for the retreat's format and how practical and relevant it was to their lives and ministry. We sensed that the Lord did a deep work in many hearts.

A HIGHPOINT OF THE CLERGY RETREATS

A turning point of the first clergy retreat came on Wednesday morning, after a review of the teaching on forgiveness. The power of the Holy Spirit was palpable, and there was a sense that this was a moment of monumental change for the diocese. The bishop asked for forgiveness from his priests, and the priests sought forgiveness and reconciliation from each other. Many remarked that they felt free, inspired, renewed, and empowered to live their priesthood with much greater energy and fruitfulness. Participants shared that this newfound peace and freedom allowed them to pray authentically and genuinely for the first time in many years. There was an overwhelming sense of joy and gratitude in the room!



Participants responded to Unbound teachings by seeking forgiveness and reconciliation.

A DAY WITH CHARISMATIC LEADERS

On Saturday before the second clergy retreat, we led a day of renewal for about ninety lay leaders in the Charismatic Renewal. We presented the Five Keys, with teaching and prayers related to each Key. The participants were very open, hungry to learn, and receptive to how the Keys could help them in their lives and in their prayer ministry with others. We also led them in prayer for a renewed empowerment for mission in the power of the Holy Spirit. Fr. Graham taught about singing in tongues. Although many were used to praying in tongues, they had not previously sung in tongues.

One fun aspect of the day was the “clap blessing.” The leader led everyone in a clapping ritual, culminating in throwing their hands forward as a gesture of blessing. The people received it with joy, throwing their hands up with a whoop of praise to the Lord!

Fr. Graham taught a song that the Lord had given him during our first full night in Cameroon. The song was call-and-respond: “Who are you?”—“A child of God!” Then—“I’m a beloved child of God, I’m a beloved child of God!” Everyone had fun singing this simple chorus, reinforcing the foundational importance of knowing our true identity.

A FREE SUNDAY IN BAFIA

During the weekend at the retreat center in Bafia, we met eight lay missionary families from France. They had all made a commitment to serve the needy through humanitarian and development projects for two years. We were impressed with their witness and depth of faith. Between the eight families, there were twenty young children running around! The parents asked Fr. Graham to share a teaching with them about forgiveness. Father Graham led them in praying through the Five Keys, which was very moving for them. What a wonderful and serendipitous opportunity!

GRATEFUL TO SERVE

We all agreed that our shared mission experience was humbling and powerful. We felt privileged to be a part of God’s obvious anointing and blessing. Serving together, we experienced authentic unity and a genuine complementarity of gifts.

We truly praise God for a very successful mission, and for the opportunities to preach the Good News and promote renewal in Cameroon! Thanks to all who have provided financial and prayer support to make our missionary efforts possible.



THE CHOICES WE FACE

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www.renewalministries.net/the-choices-we-face

MAY GUESTS & TOPICS:

More Than Conquerors

// Heather Khym

Heather Khym speaks at the 2022 Lift Jesus Higher Rally about our deep need for Jesus to help us be exceptionally victorious in hardship. (05/07/23)

Healing Through Forgiveness

// Fr. John Burns

Fr. John Burns talks about God bringing healing and freedom into places of deep brokenness and suffering. (05/14/23)

God the Father Rules the World

// Michael Dopp

At the 2022 Lift Jesus Higher Rally Michael Dopp offers a word of hope, reminding us of God’s sovereign care for the world. (05/21/23)

Strategic Grandparenting

// Mike Shaughnessy

Michael Shaughnessy, pictured above, is the founder of Grandly. He shares his vision for inviting grandparents into youth ministry. (05/28/23)



We spent a day with lay leaders in the Charismatic Renewal, who were eager to learn about the Five Keys.

