

Accompaniment of the people of Kumbo, Cameroon Sue Kidd, CND



How to reflect on my experience here in Kumbo, Cameroon through the lens of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation? I must confess to being a little intimidated by the invitation. Cameroon has been declared the most corrupt country in the world by United Nations. In spite of regularly bumping into the structures of government and Church, it is the people and especially the children I meet that keep me here.

Over half the population is under 25 years of age, and over half of those are illiterate. I have not yet come across accurate statistics for HIV/AIDS. Many know their status but young people (like young people in North America) feel immune and immortal. Maybe they need that to survive.

Am I here to change structures? (Some days, I think I am and want to.) Whatever impact I may have on the flawed structures here, I choose to work and live within them to be a voice for change. I choose to be here in Cameroon to accompany young people (and not so young people) as they meet each other and God. Among a people for whom hospitality is so important, my North American mind and heart get challenged daily.

This country is beautiful. The mountains of the northwest are spectacular. The vegetation in the rainy season is so lush. Transportation is a challenge (to put it mildly). The people have so little and yes, have so much. I left behind a hectic ministry that I loved but I could not continue at that pace. In the alone times and even in the lonely times here, I am learning about Presence: God's, mine and my neighbours'. And many days I am receiving much more than I could ever offer the people. So, who is poor?

Last night as I stood outside our gate saying good bye to some guests, I heard a baby chick squawking. Its mother, invisible to me, knew that a chick was missing from her brood. As I greeted people going by the mother hen finally showed herself. And in time the young, lost chick found the hen. Eventually, the mother sat on all her chicks, feeding them the grass and twigs she had gathered, and all was well. I am still discerning what this small scene means for me: maybe God too squawks until we are all One. Am I listening? Seeing? Trying?