

# NEW YORK -- 2011

This time, it's my ninth trip to West Africa; I am traveling alone. I began my trip in Los Angeles, then flew to New York, then Casablanca, and finally Ghana, where I remained for about a week. After Ghana, I took the plane for Douala, Cameroon, where I visited several villages thanks to my Cameroonian colleague, Kila Balon.

In Accra, Ghana, I met two of my students, Garrett Morris and Lisa Wong, as well as Alex Mensah, who served as driver and translator. By this time Peter Sewornoo was living in Switzerland, where he was studying economics. Lis had flown to Accra at the beginning of summer and was living and working in an orphanage. Garrett visited Lisa later. During my visit, Lisa came along to see the villages in the Cape Coast area, and Garrett traveled with me the whole week.

Both Garrett and Lisa were officers in the Fair Trade club in the Department of Food Science and Technology at California Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo, California.

This trip to Ghana is quite different from the others. In addition to the five villages, I had arranged for us to visit one of the 12 villages that participated in the Millennial Village Project--near Kumasi. Also, we visited a gold "mine" in that area and we interviewed an officer of the UTZ certification project at his office in Kumasi. And, at the end of the trip, I gave a seminar at the University of Ghana about my planned Cocoa Study Center .



I stayed at my son James' apartment. He and his friend Lennon had taken off to Connecticut, so I had this beautiful spot all to myself! Its located on East 57th street in the area known as "Hell's Kitchen" where all the ocean liners docked before WWII. Top left: a model of the Mayflower combats the current with its diesel engines. Top, right: a terrace at the 40th floor, overlooking southern Manhattan. Bot-tom, left: a small lawn that is offlimits to dogs!

At Kennedy airport, I meet Evariste, who by this time had obtained his visa and was working to bring his family to live in the U.S.

Once I arrived in the Casablanca airport, I found a hotel room and slept the entire day, as I was quite tired. At 6 or 7 PM, I returned to the airport, as the flight to Accra left at 8 PM.

## ACCRA



I arrived around 3 AM in Accra; Alex was waiting for me. I was so happy to see him! He's a man of great heart and good conscience. In the morning, I meet Garrett and Lisa. Top, left: we looked for some place to eat breakfast. Redd Lobster, a Chinese restaurant, served us a good breakfast, although it sadly was missing the lobster. Top, right: we bought the usual tools (machetes and boots). Middle and bottom: we visited Global Mamas, a Fair Trade store that sells products sold by 400 Ghanaian women who are part of a cooperative representing all regions of the country.

## CAPE COAST



We visited Cape Coast Castle (for me, the fifth time: see pages 12-13; 42-44; 107; 116; 214)

## EBEKAWOPA



We arrived, as always, around 8 PM. This time the Reverend Sampson, knowing that I had brought with me two young students, hooked up a sound system so that the youth of the village could dance with the young Americans. Bottom left: the controller for the solar system that Carissa Nakano had installed during the previous year (payed for by Project Hope and Fairness). Bottom right: gifts to the village chief.

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Top, the palm oil factory. Middle left: Garrett and Lisa in Rev. Sampson's cocoa orchard. Right, a chicken house.



Lisa, Alex, and Garrett share breakfast if Rev. Sampson's house.



One of Rev. Sampson's sons removes the palm fruits and puts them in a big pot to boil them before transferring to a press.



The young often have time to play.



Top, left: the Sampson kitchen. Top, right: an oven used to bake large loaves of sandwich bread, which is quite popular. Left: Garrett making fufu. Middle, right: the son of Rev. Sampson cuts his hair and gives him a shave. Right, bottom: a mortar used to grind vegetables in preparation of a soup, which is a sauce often served with fufu, banku, and kenke.



Left: gift exchange. Right: a young girl standing next to her mother who is extracting palm fruits.



Adieu, Ebekawopa!

## MMANIAYE



We visit Mmaniaye, a village where people are constantly making things, they are that industrious. Top left: a woman makes fufu. Right: a woman decorticates corn cobs. Middle left: a young girl pounds palm fruits before pressing out their oil. Right: the cocoa farmer removes bits of fruit flesh from fermented cocoa beans. Bottom left: this woman is carrying her sewing machine and her baby to the next job. Bottom, right: the gift exchange ceremony.



# ADIYAW

Left: I present the chiefs with scarves for the women and (right) chocolate for everybody. Below left and right: I do the same for Adiyaw.



# GYAWARE



The last of the five villages that we visit is Gyaware (see pages 132-135; 180; 219-220)



Upper left: children show off their wooden pens. Upper right: unwrapping one of the pens. Below left: I think the title of this picture should be “Dignity.”

Below, left: our visits done, we drove toward Kumasi. On the way, we encountered the gold fields, where men stand in water all day and sluice dirt to extract the gold. I saw several dozen workers, a few of them Chinese. Gold Fever!!

Below, right. Once our visits to the gold fields, to the UTZ official, and to the Millennium Development Project were complete, we drove back to Accra where I gave a seminar about the Cocoa Study Center.

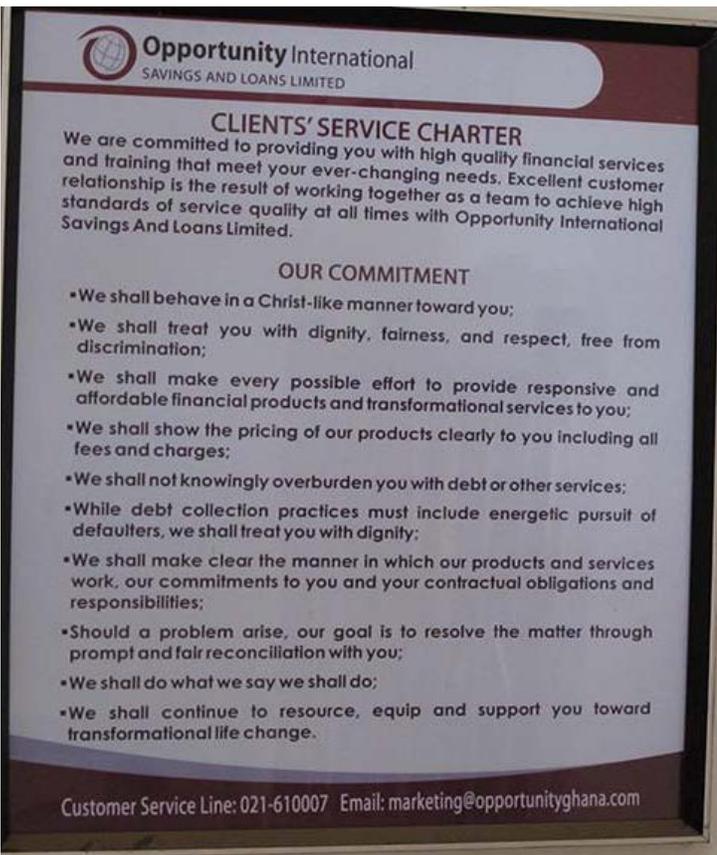
## GOLD



## SEMINAR



# CHAPTER 10 MILLENNIUM VILLAGES PROJECT



Before starting the whole trip, I contacted the Millennium Villages Project (a partnership between The Earth Institute and the UN), requesting the chance to visit their village, Bonsaaso, which was coincidentally located on the road to. During the visit, I learned that after 10 years of the project, the following had been accomplished:

1. The mean yield of corn had grown from 2.2 to 4.5 metric tons per hectare.
2. The schools are all connected to the internet.
3. Public toilets had been built.
4. Chronic malnutrition had dropped by a factor of 66%.
5. Births in the clinic had doubled; during pregnancy, the average mother had visited the clinic four times; this represented an increase of 50%.
6. Members of the community visit the clinic at least once per year--four times the previous rate.
7. HIV testing had tripled.
8. More than 200 kms of roads had been fixed.

# DOUALA

I left Accra for Douala, where I met Kila at the airport. [This year, I did not visit Ivory Coast because of the civil war.] We drove straight to the Union des Eglises Baptistes du Cameroun, which is a series of guest-houses where one can find an air-conditioned room looking over a lovely garden and right next to a swimming pool. And right next to all this is the port on the Wouri River where are docked many ships bound for foreign ports with Cameroonian goods. (right).

Below, we visit the offices of AGOA, African Growth and Opportunity Act, an agreement between the US and African countries to diminish or annul tariffs on certain products.



Left, the Palace of the Bell Kings, build by the Germans in 1905 in order to make friends with the most powerful of the local leaders. The building was completed in 1905.

Unfortunately, the city of Doala has done nothing to preserve the dignity of this building, which should be surrounded by trees instead cars, trash cans, and roads.





Top, left: a monument to French, British, and Belgian soldiers who died liberating the Cameroons from the Germans in 1914. Below, left and right: examples of art in the exhibition, “Doual’art”.



Left: we bought solar lights in a Total gas station. We also bought pickaxes, shovels, hammers, 120 machetes, and 36 pairs of boots, sharpening stones, and two cases of workbooks for young students. Right, our lunch includes the traditional dish, *Ndole* (southwest corner of photo), which is made with “bitterleaf”, *Vernonia Commun.* The white bits are *egusi*, which are squash or melon seeds.

## LIMBE



Top, left: Kila and the driver in front of a plaque commemorating Alfred Saker, a British missionary who founded Limbe and called it Victoria. The name was changed after independence. Top, right: part of the Bay of Amboise. Bottom, left: Limbe has a lot of tourist potential--thanks to the local fishing and restaurants. But unfortunately, Limbe is also the center of the Cameroonian oil industry.

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On the beach, near the fishmongers, one sees fishing boats in the process of construction.



Not far from the beach, in the direction of Limbe, one finds the botanical garden, established by the Germans in 1892 in order to study the growing of tropical plants with commercial potential. We will learn more about this garden in the next chapter (11).

We left Limbe for Buea, which is about 30 km to the east--870 meters higher up the volcano known as Mount Cameroon.

## BUEA



Top, left: a nursery belonging to a cooperative. Top, right: the home of Cameroon's (Kamerun's) German government from 1901 to 1910, when it moved to Douala. Bottom, left: SOWEDA, which manages the agricultural development of Southwestern Cameroon. Bottom, right: Mount Cameroon, the fourth highest mountain in Africa--a 4,020 meter-high active volcano. The clouds are just humidity off the Atlantic, not smoke from an eruption. On the side facing the ocean, it rains more than 1,000 cm (394 in.) per year.



The university of Buea has over 13,000 students. Considered the best university of Cameroon, UB has students at three levels: Bachelor's, Master's, PhD. It is divided into 7 schools: Arts, Education, Sciences, Health, Social Sciences and Management, Dramatic Arts and Modern Art, Agriculture, and Veterinary Medicine.

Left: cows strolling down the road toward Ekona.



## EKONA



Ekona is about 10 km east of the university, close to the eastern flank of the volcano where one turns north to reach the other side. Ekona is an agricultural research center. Well before the current civil war which will continue as long as Paul Biya is president, I had thought of establishing a cocoa study center in Ekona. On the right, the inside of a greenhouse.



In the greenhouses, one sees several projects under way. Above, right: here's one of the projects--to encourage villages to grow mushrooms.



## MUNYENGE



On the other side of the volcano--on the northern flanks--is Mungenge. Right: tools for the cocoa farmer--in the village chief's garage.



Above, left: the chief's throne, carved in ebony. Right, the house of a cocoa farmer. Below: Munyenge after a conflict between the government and the rebels in 2018. The village is 90% destroyed and more than 30,000 fled to Nigeria. In the two English speaking provinces (Southwest and Northwest Cameroon), more than 437,000 have lost their homes. The number of dead, including many small children, is in the thousands. It's a civil war between the government which has been brutal and terroristic in its behaviors and the rebels who have behaved similarly. But the fight over the formation of a separate country, Ambazonia, has its roots in the intransigence of President Paul Biya, who has overseen extensive corruption--similar to President Donald Trump. See pages 5 and 6 for more details.

## KUMBE



Kumba, a city of 400.000, is located well to the North of Mount Cameroon. We visited a research center dedicated to the growing, harvesting, and processing of coffee and cocoa. Top, left: a sign about a project for growing Robusta coffee beans, which are used in dehydrated coffee. Right, an oven for drying cocoa beans. It works on a wood fire and so the beans acquire a smoky aroma. Middle, left: a perforated drum, used in equatorial regions to dry beans over a fire. Right, another type of dryer--always over a wood fire.

Bottom, left: an example of shade growing, where bananas or plantains serve to shade the cocoa seedlings and young trees.

# DSCHANG



We drive up an escarpment into the region known as the “Grasslands”, the part of Cameroon with the densest population. This area is at an elevation of 1.000 to 2.000 meters, and was favored by European missionaries as they were less likely to die of malaria. Middle, left Dschang has a university with a big agriculture school. Bottom, left: a sign about management of resources in the Congo basin.



Left: Dr. Julius Tangka, a charming man who loves his work which is in Appropriate Technologies, that is, the application of relatively simple, accessible technologies to energy and agriculture. For example, he built a metal box with drawer and in a separate machine, burnt agricultural waste to produce carbon monoxide that powered an internal combustion engine which turned a fan. The resulting hot wind dried the beans without producing a smoky flavor and used less carbon in the process. To the right, the Museum of Cultures, a fabulous exposition on the cultures of Cameroon.

## BAFOUSSAM



We stopped in Bafoussam, the third largest city in Cameroon; it is the capital of the western region. Kila's sister fed us a very good breakfast. Above, two young boys playing outside his sister's house.



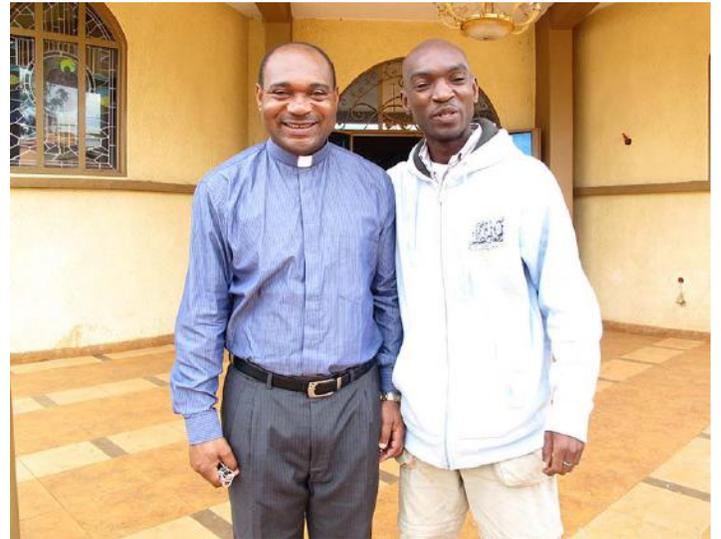
Left, the leaves of bitterleaf (*Vernonia amygdalina*) drying. The fresh leaves are used to make *ndoleh*. Dried, the leaves make a nourishing tea. The stems are used as toothbrushes. Right, the breakfast that we ate at Kila's sister's house. On the table we see from left to right: pieces of baguette, an omelet and halves of avocado. Top left in the picture, we see a plate of *Safou* or "Cameroonian Plum". If there is one food of Cameroon that I miss the most, it's this excellent fruit. It is not sweet, the flesh is floury and resembles the aroma of turpentine. It's especially good roasted and eaten as a snack or as an accompaniment.

## BANDJOUN



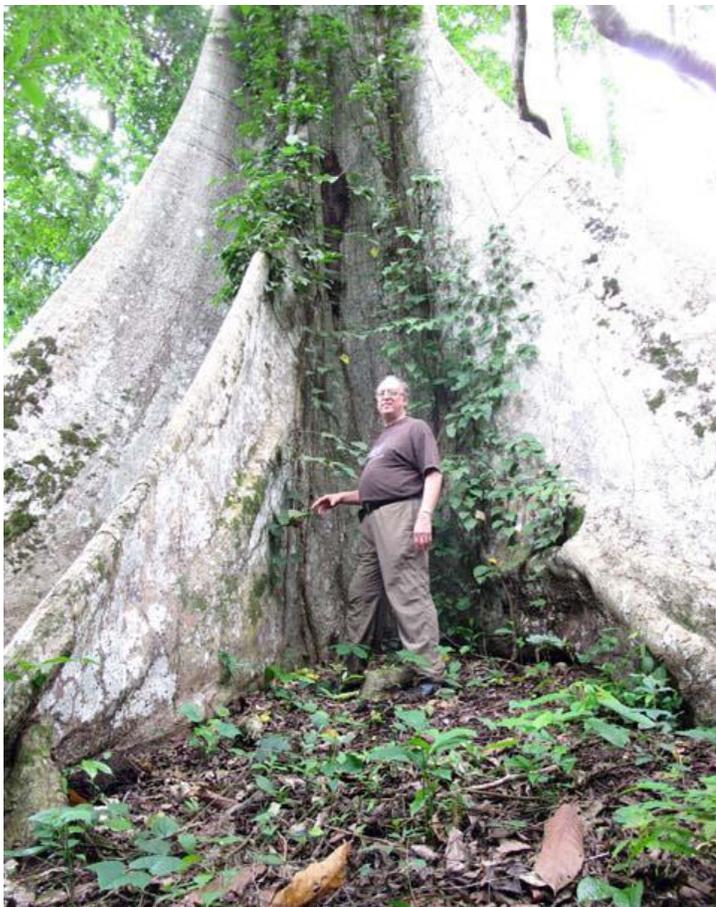
We visit the cathedral in Bandjoun, which was built thanks to the generosity of Fotso Victor, a native of the town, who is very rich and very generous. Left, the original church, made of bamboo. Right, two very good friends in the churchyard.

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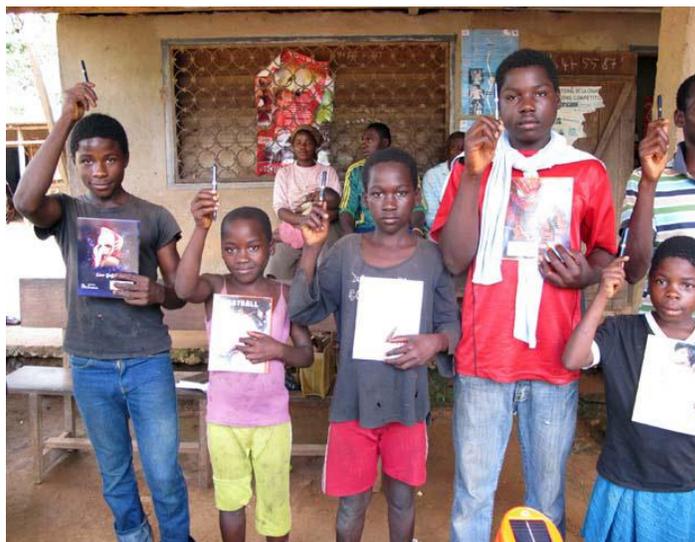
Top: the cathedral built by M. Victor Fotso. It is decorated with some of the most beautiful woods of Africa. In the middle, left: the altar supported by the globe with Africa facing the congregation. Middle, right: Father Serge Tchinda with Kila. Bottom: a bridge over the Sanaga, which spans from the Central African Republic to the Atlantic--a little less than 1,000 km. It's one of the biggest rivers of West Africa.

## BAFIA



The village of Bafia is named after a region in the Central Province that is about 120 km to the north of the nation's capital, Yaounde. The commune of Bafia has a population of about 53,000. To get to the village, we left the main road and drove through the forest for about half an hour. Once we arrived, we started by visiting a cocoa grove. Top, left: a giant living tree that is almost 100 meters in height. Top, right: termites, the enemies of cocoa which convert cellulose and lignin to carbon dioxide in their digestive tracts. Bottom right: cocoa pods. The ones on the right have Trinitario blood; Trinitario pods are usually red. These have the amelonado shape with a Trinitario skin; probably, the beans are less astringent than pure Forasteros.

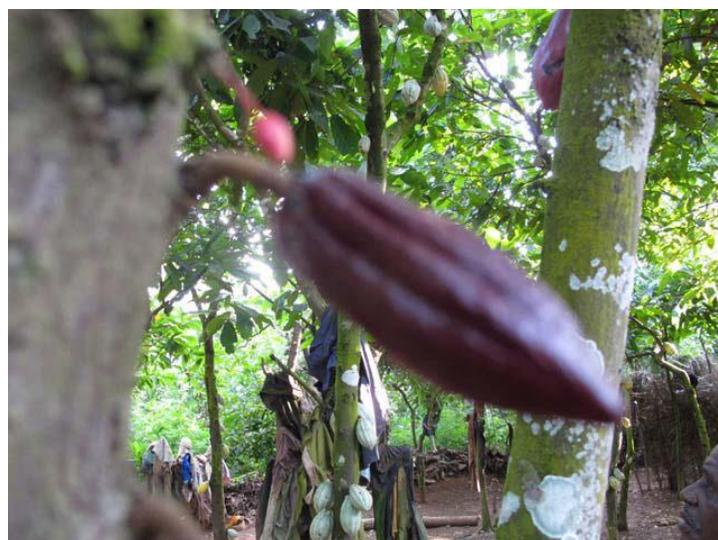
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We contributed our gifts: the solar lights (left and right) and the workbooks and pens (middle right). Bottom left: shovels and pickaxes with handles. Bottom right: the gift ceremony.



Top left: pens for the children. Right, PH&F scarves for women. Middle, left: cocoa pods suffering from disease because of lack of phytosanitary products. Middle right: cocoa beans drying. Bottom right: a little pod (cherelle).



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I love construction that uses mud and wood. Upper left: this wall really drew my eye. Upper right: a pig, which means the owners are Christians as Muslims do not eat pigs. Bottom left: this farmer shows off his cotton bush; I didn't think to ask him what he does with a boll or two. Right, African eggplants.

## OBALA



We continue our trip to Obala, a city of 37.000 which is close to the cascades of Nachtigal (named after the German explorer). We visit Telcar Cocoa, Ltd, the biggest buyer of cocoa in Cameroon; the owner is female..



## YAOUNDE



We arrive in Yaounde about 10 o'clock in the evening and we get up at 3 AM because Kila had arranged an interview on the radio. We had to come back, so we walked around a little and admired some of the government buildings such as the one on the right.



Above is an old German church, constructed toward the end of the 19th century. Right, a monument dedicated to liberty.



A friend of Kila's, Jean-Claude, wants to show us his piece of land which is south of Ebolowa, the capital of the southern province. South of Ebolowa, one really starts to see the forest primeval, what's left of it. The road is really good because the government wants to encourage the exploitation of forest resources in order to put money in the treasury. In fact I saw a 2 km square patch of land piled 30 feet high with tree trunks ready for export. Environmental terrorism à la Indonesia and Brazil.

## EBOLOWA



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Top left: a school for forestry management. Top right: a truck spewing diesel exhaust. Middle left: President Paul Biya has overseen the development of one of the world's most corrupt governments. Bottom, left: a public parc belonging to the Minister of Education The park is right across from the Center for Tourism. Right, a sacred tree designated as such for its success in growing right on top of a rock. At least some trees get respect!

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Above, Jean-Claude's land. He offered part of his land for a cocoa study center. Left, Jean-Claude buys a lizard for dinner and right: the lizard prior to consumption. It was delicious, although this trip to the south has greatly saddened me about the future of our poor planet.

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The last days of my trip include these events: Breakfast with the two wives of the Minister of Education and the Mayor of Ebelowa. Kila comes from a ruling family, so he has certain privileges. Then we took the bus to Douala. The next day, I had a meeting with an old acquaintance, the CMO of Barry Callebaut--Cameroon, Mr. Bart Willem. Then we meet with Mr. Pierre Etoa of the National Cocoa and Coffee Board (NCCB). Mr. Etoa gives me a really good idea: to promote the production of cocoa as a beverage. He says that not only are cocoa mixes a lot easier to store (don't require AC), but Cameroonians like anything said to promote health, and cocoa mixes could contain African herbs brewed for anti-malarial properties and for other health promoting purposes.



Since March of this year (2019), Mr. Willem works for a packaging company in Madagascar called Newpack. He left Barry Callebaut in 2013, two years after this photo.