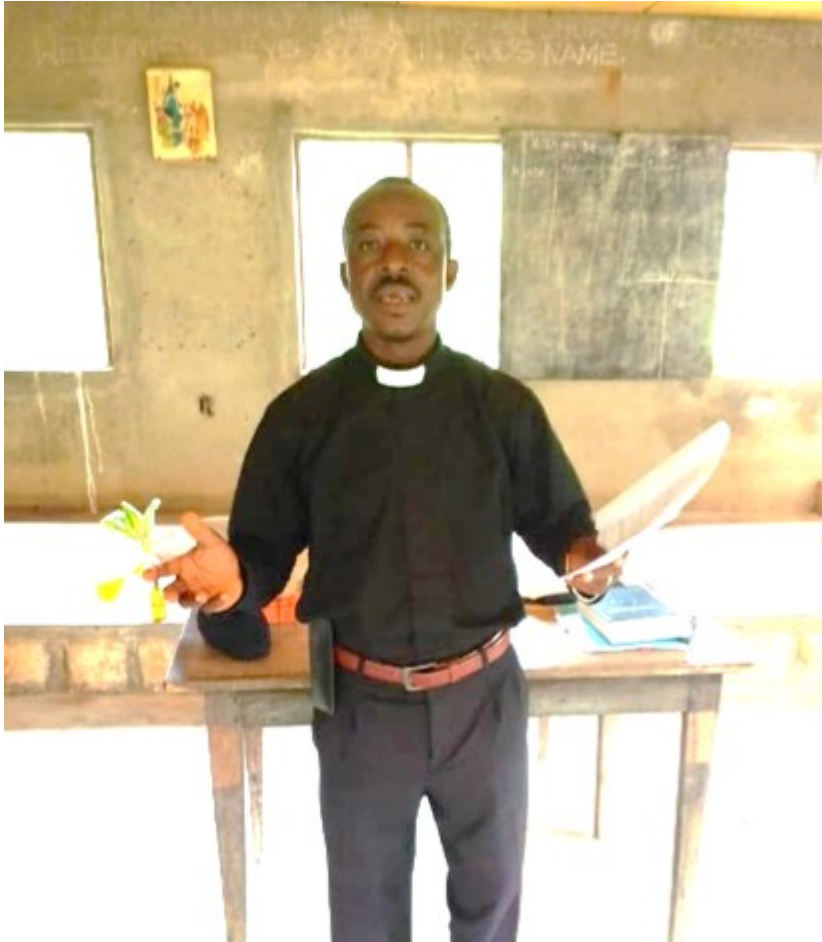


Nsome, a-Yesu (Thank You Jesus)

Eleven years ago, Pastor Mesue Muankume Israel, age 32, had so much leg pain that he got surgery to replace his left hip. *Thank you, Jesus.*



Rev. Mesue Israel teaches at the Lutheran Seminary of Cameroon

Four years ago, though, Pastor Israel, the only professor at the seminary of the Lutheran Church of Cameroon in Kumba, Cameroon, again started having bad hip pain. Same hip.

Thank you, Jesus?

Yes, “thank you, Jesus.” It’s always both.

Both what?

Both praying, "Hasten, O God, to save me; come quickly, Lord, to help me" (Psalm 70:1), and praying, "thank you, Jesus."

"In all circumstances," Paul says. "All" means *all*.

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

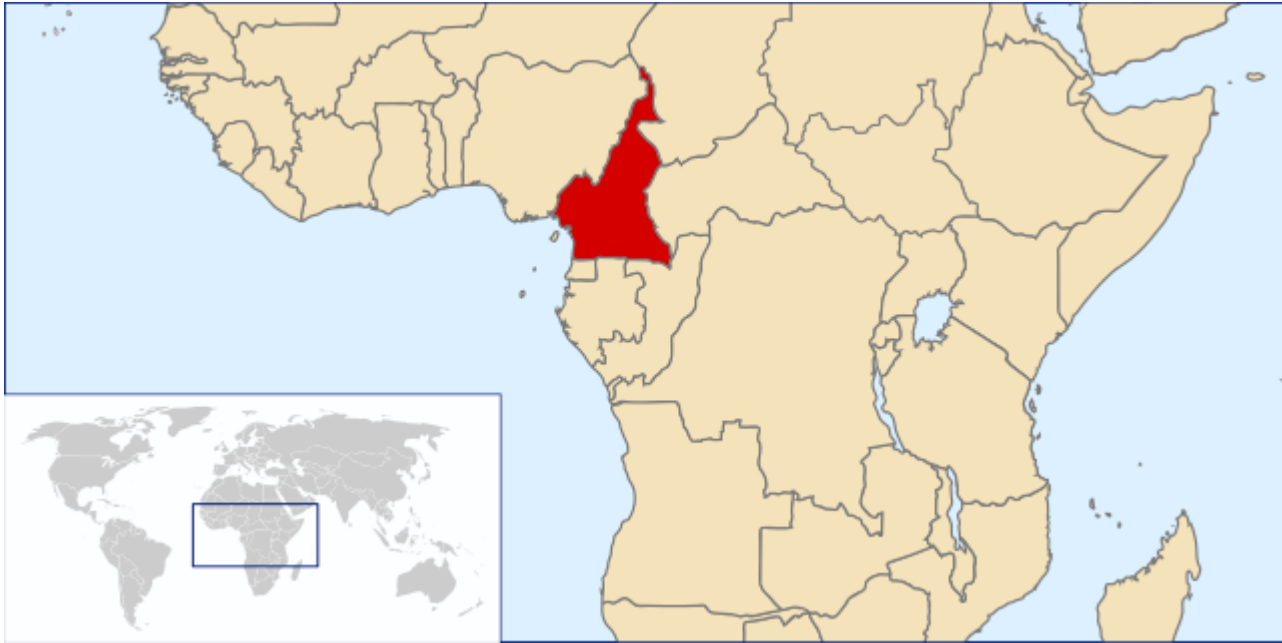


So four years ago, when Pastor Israel was diagnosed with the need for a *second* hip replacement surgery, "Thank you, Jesus"? Yep.

Even though, according to a U.S. surgeon with whom Missionary Dan Kroll consulted, there was too high a risk of infection to have the surgery done in Cameroon?

Still, "Thank you, Jesus"?

Always, "Thank you, Jesus."



Cameroon is located in West Africa

Case in point: Fast forward to October 2021. Pastor Israel, now 43, is in Kumba teaching 7 students who will be pastors in the Lutheran Church of Cameroon. Sometimes he can't stand in class. Surgery is still needed, though pain medications help.



Pastoral students at the Lutheran Seminary in Kumba, Cameroon

Covid-19 concerns lessen in Africa. Plans get made for Pastor Israel and 21 other pastors from Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, and Zambia to meet for a Psalms course in Lusaka, Zambia in late March and early April 2022. "Thank you, Jesus."

Could Pastor Israel stay in Lusaka for a month or so after that course, and get

surgery at a local hospital? Our One Africa Team investigates. Things look promising, we are told, depending on Pastor Israel's future X-rays and blood testing. "Thank you, Jesus."

But the hospital is a Roman Catholic mission, formerly known as the Italian Orthopaedic Hospital, now renamed "Saint John Paul II Orthopaedic Hospital."



A hospital renamed after a recent pope, declared a Roman Catholic saint? No problem, practically. When I go to inquire about preparations and possible costs for surgery, I wear my clerical collar, and everyone receives me warmly. "Thank you, Jesus."

What about funding? This surgery and related matters will cost thousands of dollars. The Lutheran Church of Cameroon can't pay for it. Pastor Israel can't pay for it. He has no insurance to cover it.

Ah, but here *you* come in. "Thank you, Jesus."

The One Africa Team of WELS World Missions and WELS Christian Aid and Relief can fund such needs due to thank offerings you and others like you have given in the past. "Thank you, Jesus."



Really: *Thank you*, Jesus. Thank you for the perfect offering you gave in our place.

Our offerings can't bribe your Father. They can't wow him. Never could. Every forest animal is his; so are the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10).

He told his people of old, "Sacrifice *thank* offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call on me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me" (Psalm 50:14-15).

It felt like a day of trouble right before Pastor Israel's surgery when needed O+ blood donations were not coming in. Then concerned local members of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa jumped in to help. Thank you, Jesus.

So on Thursday, April 21, Pastor Israel had his second hip replacement surgery. Because I was traveling, I couldn't be there, but my faithful pastor, Evans Makowani, and my friend Mr. Remise Zulu were right there with him when he got

out of surgery. Thank you, Jesus.



Very soon after surgery, Mr. Zulu wrote my wife, "Hi, madame. We are still at hospital. Pastor Israel has come outside the operation room. We prayed together and we are chatting with him right now."

That kind of thing is the biggest reason I look back at the surgery, now that Pastor Israel has flown back home to Cameroon, and I say, "Thank you, Jesus."



Ready to fly back to Cameroon

So many people together helped in so many ways.

As you might expect, recovery is taking time. But it continues to go well. "Thank you, Jesus."

Pastor Israel recently wrote me from Cameroon, "I and everyone in my family is fine. And the pains dying down gradually. I got so busy that I have not had time to actually write back. In fact as we speak am in the office. Hope all is well with you too and our brethren over there.

"The good memories can't escape my mind."

Thank you, Jesus.

Or in Akoose, Pastor Israel's Cameroonian heart language: "Nsome, a-Yesu."

Missionary Daniel Witte lives in Zambia

Please pray for those working in fields that are ripe for harvest. Share their story, engage with future news and receive updates. Learn more about our mission fields in Africa and how the Holy Spirit is working faith in people's hearts at <https://wels.net/serving-others/missions/africa>