

# The Bible in the language of the people: Local woman to serve with Wycliffe outfit in Africa

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EDENTON — A little girl's dream of becoming a missionary is about to come true for Holly Emmerich of Edenton.

On Oct. 2 Emmerich will be at the airport in Raleigh ready to start a journey that will take her to work as a full-time site coordinator and volunteer recruiter with the Wycliffe Bible Ministry in the African nation of Cameroon.

Emmerich, who is perhaps best known for her performances in Rocky Hock Playhouse productions written and directed by her parents, Jeff and Gloria Emmerich, has also spent the last few

years working as a supervisor at a group home for mentally ill adult women.

She gave her final performance in a Playhouse production last month in "Jacob, Prince of God." Emmerich described the experience as bittersweet.

"It was a big part of my life," Emmerich said of her 13 years with the acting troupe led by her parents. "I knew I wasn't going to be in any more shows — at least for a while — that I was beginning a new chapter in my life, and that one was coming to an end for me."

For her parents, too, there is a sense of joy in the work their daughter will be doing — but it is clear they will miss her.

"I'm trying to imagine what it will be like standing at the airport on October 2 saying goodbye," Gloria Emmerich said.

Gloria Emmerich, who described her daughter as a precious gift from God, said that her children — Holly also has a brother, Ben, who lives in Minnesota — are the center of her and her husband Jeff's world.

"Ben lives a long way from us," Gloria said. "But having Holly fly halfway around the world to work in Africa is harder to come to grips with. Knowing she is in God's hands is what will get me through."

Jeff Emmerich noted that Holly was no stranger to mission work, as he and his wife had served in the mission field as well.

"Holly grew up traveling with us when we were 'road' evangelists," Jeff said. "She went with us on ministry trips to Australia multiple times, as well as to New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Barbados, St. Croix, England and to American military bases in Spain, Italy, Belgium and Germany. I think the traditional culture shock most missionaries experience will be minimized (for Holly) because of all that foreign travel and experience."



Holly Emmerich, who earned a bachelor's degree in special education from Elizabeth City State University, said that all that travel and varied experiences so early in her life had led her to have an adventurous spirit and to be resourceful and creative, as had participating in her parents' theater productions.

Deborah Bartow, vice-president of recruiting for Florida-based Wycliffe, said that as a site volunteer coordinator, Emmerich would be responsible for identifying new service opportunities to strengthen Wycliffe's network of translators and partners already at work in the field.

"In a brand-new role, Holly will act as onsite recruiter, reaching remotely from Cameroon to assist, support and encourage new staff in America as they prepare for long-term assignments in Africa," Bartow said.

Through Emmerich's efforts, Bartow said, doors will be opened that will result in expanded relationships and a more timely completion of about 80 unfinished Bible translations in native dialects in this highly strategic location.

Holly said that while French is the common language that those in Cameroon share, the goal of putting a Bible in their own dialect is one that has a deeply personal meaning for her.

"In America we take it for granted that we can have a Bible," Holly said. "We don't have to worry about being killed just for owning a Bible. My passion is to get Bibles into the hands of all those who want one so much that they are willing to risk their lives to have one."

Her parents say they believe Holly is equal to the challenge.

"Compassion is Holly's middle name," Gloria Emmerich said, noting that during middle school and high school Holly raised thousands of dollars for humanitarian organizations such as Operation Smile and the Children's Miracle Network.

"Gloria and I have been stunned more than once by Holly's boldness," Jeff Emmerich added. "She seems so quiet and shy. But a passion for the Lord drives her."

Holly's new life in mission work also offers people in the local community the opportunity to be a part of the effort. To live and work in Cameroon for the next two years, Holly will need \$2,128 per month in ongoing financial support. Anyone interested in supporting her work is encouraged to visit [www.wycliffeassociates.org/DONATENOW](http://www.wycliffeassociates.org/DONATENOW) and make a donation to Holly Emmerich's ministry account #M10622.

More information about her approaching journey and the community's opportunity to support her in this important work is available on the Rocky Hock Playhouse website. Holly Emmerich may also be reached by phone at 482-7446.

She said that she is stepping out in faith to make this journey and believing that those who read her story will be moved to help her reach her goal. She likened her effort to the Bible story of Jesus multiplying the fish and loaves given to Him by one little boy who offered the Lord all he had.

"Jesus asked the boy to give Him what he had," Emmerich said, "and in the end, it was enough. He just asks us to give what we have, and He uses it to bless people. I believe that God will use my work to bless others."