



KRISTI TENCLAY - Missionary in Cameroon

August 2017

Greetings from Cameroon!

It is at times like these when quarterly newsletters seem SO far apart. It is hard to believe how much has happened in only 3 months! Within a month of my last newsletter, I had already have packed up my life and said farewell to my Kansas community to move to my parents' place in Nebraska, packed up my life and said goodbyes there, returned to Cameroon in time for RFIS graduation, and moved back into my apartment here in Cameroon. Yes, it was a whirlwind of a time to say the very least. In some ways life has slowed down immensely since then, for during the 'summer' we function somewhat on Cameroonian time. However, even during those times, there has been much to do, and you all know I don't sit still for long.

There were some puzzling electrical problems that have plagued the person renting my apartment for the past year which I had the misfortune of also encountering several times during my first few weeks in country, especially after heavy rains. I only got zapped a couple of times before I learned how to use several appliances quite adeptly without actually TOUCHING any of the screws or bare metal on them – hint: there are bare metal screws in the door of your dryer that carry current quite effectively, and depending on your lint trap, that might too! However, when someone took the time to examine my washing machine, which had not worked for several months, they discovered that it was the source of all the electricity coming back through our system. Though I don't think that could have happened if the grounding was all working properly, I am thrilled to report NO SHOCKS since!

Somehow I ended up with the school's finance department on my plate in the month-ish gap between one person leaving for home assignment and the volunteer who will replace them arriving. That was . . . an experience. We live in a mostly cash economy here. Though there are some stores and such downtown that cater to the international community by accepting credit cards, the VAST majority of tasks are accomplished with cash. For example, at one point we purchased over 3,000,000 cfa (a bit over \$5000 American or \$6000 Canadian at the moment) of metal for a construction project we are currently in the midst of, and the largest bills here are 10,000 cfa. That means the worker who went to purchase the metal had to carry over 300 bills by hand to make the purchase! Those bills all have to be counted – repeatedly. They get counted by the branch finance office when they were picked up for me, counted by me when they arrived, counted by me when they are dispersed to the employee, counted by him when he signs for them, and counted again by the business receiving them. I have a much

PRAISES and PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God that I arrived safely in Cameroon WITH all my luggage and that I was able to settle in before school started.
- Praise God for his provision of hostel Parents (Ryan and Krista Ginn through World Team), for their support coming through rapidly, and their safe arrival here in Cameroon. Pray for them as they settle in and get to know the kids.
- Please continue to pray for reconciliation between the English and French speaking parts of Cameroon.
- Please pray for the RFIS staff as we seek to encourage and support Julia (the teacher who is leaving for medical reasons) and work out the details of covering her teaching load and other responsibilities.



North American Baptists, Inc.

North American Baptists
1219 Pleasant Grove Blvd.
Roseville, CA 95678
(916) 797-6222

serve@nabconf.org
www.nabconference.org

Kristi TenClay
309 Bluff St PO Box D
Winnebago, NE 68071

ktenclay@hotmail.com
www.tenclay.org/cameroon



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greater appreciation for the convenience of using my debit and credit cards EVERYWHERE in North America!

The time I spent on campus doing the finance work while most of the other missionaries were gone was a HUGE blessing in that it really enabled me to get to know some of our Cameroonian staff better. I also discovered that my multi-tasking abilities are dramatically reduced the moment I enter the finance office but that I can enjoy the concrete nature of such work – at least when I KNOW what has to be accomplished. However, the lack of understanding of the big picture of finance for the school, within SIL (whose finance department we are a part of), and of regular monthly procedures can make the transition in and out of it difficult.

I returned to relatively regular hours at school mid July when most of our Cameroonian employees returned from their summer 'leave' time. That first week was mostly finance office stuff related to all the supplies and projects they needed, but I was able to escape for most of a day to get downtown and purchase a new washing machine for my apartment. YEA!!!! Though I have had access to the hostel's laundry facilities, it is wonderful to have my own laundry room up and running again.

The next week teachers returned for a week of preparations for the coming school year. One of those days was spent off-campus in a corporate Spiritual retreat that included all school staff from the gardeners and custodians to the administration and from the teachers to the cooks. I will admit that days like that can sometimes be daunting, and the attempts to get national and expatriate members of staff to interact more can be artificial at best, but this year it was GREAT. I know part of that was probably the conscious choice to go into it with a positive attitude, but it was also well done by all involved from the games to the speaker (who spoke on "Emotionally Healthy Spirituality" - check out the book by Peter Scazzero), to the location (owned by the parents of one of our students) and the food (catered by a business run by former students).

The rest of the week was mostly the typical collection of meetings, policy discussions, etc. Though, as with that first week back at most schools, it was also sprinkled with a lot of catching up on each other's lives and families and trying to escape for a few minutes here and there to do some lesson planning. The NOT so normal part of the week involves a colleague's medical situation. It is a long story that I don't have space to go into, and she seems to be fine at the moment. However, it does mean that she is currently working on details to return to the US for further medical testing. Pray for her, her doctors, and the additional financial stress that she will be navigating from both the return to the US and medical costs. Though she is going because of the necessity of further medical tests, it doesn't appear that her medical evacuation insurance is going to help much (if at all), and it sounds like the medical insurance she has through her mission is pretty dismal too, so I don't know what that will mean for her in the long run. One of the lessons I am taking from the whole situation is that I need to be asking some questions about the details of MY medical evacuation insurance!

Blessings to you all as the physical seasons and rhythms of life continue to shift. I know we all make comments in our newsletters about the fact that we would love to hear from you . . .we really mean it! You can email me at ktenclay@hotmail.com. Regular mail is a bit more complicated here (and much less reliable), but if you don't use email, you can send letter and/or pictures to me at my parents' address (309 Bluff St, Winnebago, Nebraska 68071) and they can scan them and email them to me. Hey, kids, that means you too! My fridge is bare except for magnets that are just begging to hold up some of your artwork!

In Christ, Kristi TenClay

(Sorry it is so long this time . . . but couldn't skip the pictures, so here is another page for those 😊)



Clockwise from top Right: Produce from my trip to Bamenda (SourSop, Peppers, Passion Fruit, Guavas, and 'plums'), RFIS construction crew – first pouring cement for part of the structure of our new athletic complex and then taking a break and a meal together, an odd little fruit - mangosteen, two pictures of Trinity Volleyball camp led by Didier, (shown in the next picture with two of his daughters), and lastly the cows I shared the path with while hiking and one of the beautiful views during my hike in Mbingo.

