



NOVEMBER 2019

OBSERVATIONS FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Prayer

- Teachers for next year at Rain Forest International School!
- My mom's knee replacement surgery mid-November
- Safe travels during the quick trip home I have scheduled over Christmas

Praises

- We made it through our first quarter, first set of report cards, first athletic season, and so much more already...God Is Faithful!
- The many ways God has stretched me through the many changes and steep learning curve of this job.



A few of the NAB Cameroon Missionaries at our Retreat in Kribi – October 2019

“ . . . straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal . . . ”

Philippians 3:13b-14a

Much of this school year has been about adjustment to my new role as the Interim Director at RFIS. So, here are a few observations from an Interim Director –

“Not my circus, not my monkeys . . . oh wait . . .”

For years, my mom and I have often used the expression ‘not my circus, not my monkeys’ jokingly to each other when we are thankful that some crazy circumstance is not our responsibility. “You know there is an easier way to do that, right?” “But this is how we have always done it.” or “But I want to do it THIS way.” “Ok, suit yourself...” this isn’t my problem, and I am not in charge, so maybe I just need to walk away. We realize that it isn’t always our place to intervene. This has been one of the ways of affirming the freedom that comes from NOT being in charge.

Being the person in the Director’s office means I am in charge! Yikes! Sometimes that means I do need to claim that ‘circus’ and tame those ‘monkeys,’ whomever or whatever that may mean in a given situation. There is definitely a sense of satisfaction when order can be found within that chaos, but it is also a HUGE relief to know that being ‘in charge’ does NOT mean I need to be in control. Ultimately, this WHOLE circus is God’s, not mine. God has been continually stretching and growing me in figuring out where that balance point is.

How can someone be THIS busy and still spend SO much time sitting?!

If you have ever been in my classroom, or even seen me presenting at a church, you know I don’t typically sit or stand still for very long. I move, I talk with my hands, I pace. I do NOT sit still. Who would have



guessed that I would spend so much time on my butt or that sitting all day could be so exhausting?!

Though, as a teacher, I thought that I spent a lot of time behind my computer screen; I now realize how small of a percentage of my job was spent there. One of the huge adjustments that has come from moving into the Director's office for the year is that a huge portion of my job is completed while sitting at my desk behind a computer screen. I know it sounds silly, but I remember being surprised by how flattened the cushioning on the previous director's chair was, knowing that it was much newer than the old one I had claimed a couple of years ago...now I understand! A yoga ball I have stashed under my desk as a back-up chair and a portable 'standing desk' have gone a long way in helping maintain that part of my sanity.

People – love um, hate um . . .

Sometimes I just don't 'get' other people! Don't misunderstand me - we have an AMAZING group of people on our campus, both the kids and the adults. However, there are definitely days when they drive me absolutely batty, and quite simply this is NOT something that comes naturally to me! The Lord has definitely stretched me and pulled me far beyond my comfort zone with some of the personality and personnel issues that have come my way.

"Yes, if you are expected to start work at 'X' time, that means you actually have to BE here then, not getting ready to leave your house." "Yep, that part of your job description or 'requirement' really IS something you need to do, not just a general suggestion and yes, that deadline is actually there for a reason, not just to torment you." "No, just because that food has been in the fridge for a couple of days does NOT mean it is

Kristi TenClay

RAIN FOREST INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, YAOUNDÉ, CAMEROON
KTENCLAY@HOTMAIL.COM OR TENCLAYK@GMAIL.COM

free game for anyone else to eat, and no, it is no one's job except yours to wash your coffee cup and lunch dishes."

I know many of these things are cultural, and having arrived in Cameroon for the first time over 9 years ago, they are by no means new to me. However, dealing with them from this position HAS been quite different.

But . . . I'm a teacher . . . I miss my classroom

The challenges have been significant, but probably no more than anyone else would face stepping into this sort of role. Many of them are just the different realities of the job. But all those other things aside, one of the hardest parts of this year has been that I am not teaching. I don't have specific groups of students who are 'my kids.' I have experienced what is probably a 'mourning' of sorts related to the loss of that part of my life and identity. I can't say I am surprised that I miss it, but I will admit the degree has caught me off-guard. I am thankful for the many little opportunities I have had to jump over into that realm from time to time. For example, this quarter I have half of the 7th graders for a little sewing class - and we are having a BLAST!

Over and over again in the trials and the triumphs, I am reminded of the many ways that God is faithful. There is no doubt in my mind that He is stretching me this year, but to Him be the glory. One of the songs that often comes to mind is Andraé Crouch's "Through it All." The whole song is great, but the chorus quite simply says that "Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus, I've learned to trust in God." What more can we ask for?

RFIS NEEDS TEACHERS!

Do you know any teachers who might be interested in joining us in our adventures at Rain Forest International School?

Is God maybe poking YOUR heart about joining us?

You have nothing to lose by looking into it, right? You never know where God might lead . . . ☺

Contact RFIS directly at rfis-recruitment@rfis.org or check out this and other NAB opportunities by visiting <https://nabonmission.org/get-involved/missionary-job-openings/>

