



Reflections and Endings . . .

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind can conceive the things God has prepared for those who love him."

1 Corinthians 2:9

The end of June officially marks the end of my service as a missionary of the North American Baptist Conference. Wow! I am absolutely overwhelmed and thankful as I reflect on the past 15 years.

YOU have been such a blessing to me! I thank God for the many of you who have been an integral part of providing me the opportunity to serve at Rain Forest International School. Whether you have lifted me, the school, or the NAB before the Lord from time to time or on a daily basis, I am eternally thankful. The many of you who have reached out and encouraged me, those who have welcomed me into your homes, and the many pastors who have provided me an opportunity to share what God has been doing – you will continue to hold a very special place in my heart. For the many dollars that have so generously been sent in to support my ministry, I thank you. To the often-unseen NAB International Office staff and field leadership who have made sure money gets to the right accounts, tracked down the crazy insurance questions, processed expense reports, proofread newsletters, and done so many things behind the scenes, thank you for your faithful service.

So many people have thanked me for the 'sacrifice' of having served for these past 15 years, and I am still struck each time someone uses that word. Yes, there have been sacrifices, but the blessings and the opportunities have so outweighed them that I

have a hard time seeing any of it as sacrifice. The weights, the heavy times, and the burdens exist, and though they may be different from those I would have experienced here, I do not believe they are necessarily any more or less . . . and what joy that so many of you have helped me to carry those burdens! Perhaps my greatest sorrow in moving on from this chapter is the idea that I may no longer have such faithful prayer supporters and encouragers as I have had through this journey. We need to pray for and support each other HERE, too.

What's Next? That has been one of the big questions looming over me for the past year, and I am excited to announce that I am finally able to answer it to some extent! I have accepted a position teaching at our local Alternative School here in Junction City, Kansas, for the 2025–26 school year! This is going to be a unique opportunity to work with a group of kids who haven't been successful in the regular school setting, many of whom have given up on school and feel like the system has given up on them. A challenge? Yes, but so far I have been impressed by the hopes and dreams of the existing administrators and the ideas they have for changes that will benefit the kids and help them to be more successful. We haven't worked out the exact details of what I will be teaching, but it will likely be a combination of Social Studies, Biology, and supervising some online work. I appreciate your prayers as I continue this transition.

Blessings to you all, and farewell. **If you are interested in continuing to get updates and are willing to continue to pray for me as I shift back into serving here in the US, please let me know, as I would love to maintain a mailing list and contact with you!**

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And a few more parting thoughts/reflections I couldn't resist . . .

Lean into the unexpected! As so many of you have heard me say over the years, Africa was never even on my radar as a possibility. It wasn't expected. It wasn't a part of MY plan, but God has demonstrated over and over again that His plans are better than mine! Does that mean we shouldn't plan? Heavens, no! Plan and prepare and act with the information you have, using the knowledge, logic, and wisdom He has given you to the best of your ability and with stewardship that honors the One who has provided you with those gifts. He will honor your faithfulness; but hold your plans loosely, with an openness to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. You might just be surprised by how the seemingly random and odd circumstances of your life are purposefully designed preparation for moments like Esther's "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

Worldview matters! It is so easy to succumb to this world's perspective that we are completely in control of our own destiny or that we have everything we need 'within ourselves' or even simply that it is possible and enough to be a 'good person.' Sorry, y'all, none of us are capable of being 'good enough,' and without the Holy Spirit, that which is within us will prove itself insufficient in strength and in wisdom over and over again. Likewise, though we bear responsibility for our choices and actions, which play a huge part in our destiny, we have a sovereign God who will not be manipulated by our good deeds and whose hands are much mightier than our mistakes. What a relief that can be!

Seek to recognize God's fingerprints! Our God is alive and active in our lives and in the world around us. Let's learn to do some dusting for those fingerprints! We are so conditioned by this world to claim sole credit for our accomplishments (though not nearly as quick to acknowledge blame) and to dismiss so many aspects of the world around us chance or luck – but let me be perfectly clear: He has a plan, and HE IS AT WORK.