



KRISTI TENCLAY - Missionary in Cameroon

November 2017

What started out as a pretty crazy year has settled in to what appears to be our new 'normal'. When I wrote my last newsletter, we were already down one staff member who had returned to the US because of medical issues. Within the next week or so, our chaplain had to return to the US for surgery because of an issue with his eye, and Mr. Norbert, a Cameroonian staff member who had worked for the school for nearly 20 years, passed away unexpectedly. As you might imagine, we are all still reeling a bit from the shock of it all. The two staff members who had to go back to the US for medical issues have both returned within the past few weeks with clean bills of health. Student schedules have been adjusted to shift everyone back to their appropriate classes, and attention has shifted back to the routine. Quite honestly, we have had quite enough 'excitement' already for this year, and I think we would all settle quite happily for a bit of the mundane.

During our mid-semester break in October, I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Switzerland for some training. Not only was this training something I had been trying to fit into my schedule for several years, but the trip was a blessed respite from the rising temperatures in Yaounde as well as a dose of beautiful autumn colors that was truly a gift to my heart. My increasingly global circle of friends even provided me with hosts both for the training conference and for the rest of the week I was in Switzerland. Wow, I can't even wrap my head around the ways God has blessed me, and this trip was evidence over and over and over again of His blessings. Both host families were absolutely WONDERFUL, and I can't wait for another opportunity to visit them.

Our mid-semester break was far past true 'mid-semester' this year, and though we weren't so happy about that during those last long weeks before break, we are all glad to have a shorter stretch in front of us between now and Christmas.

In my classroom, life has been quite a bit LESS exciting, but interesting nonetheless. (Well, I think it is interesting, but I am pretty sure there are days my students disagree!) My African Studies students each chose an ethnic group within Cameroon to research. A major part of their research was an interview with someone from that people group. This year's group seemed to have a lot of fun, and their presentations were GREAT! Next week in that class will begin with 'story time' as each student presents an African story or folktale in honor of our recent discussions about oral history, and in the next several weeks each will have the opportunity to research an ancient African civilization or UNESCO World Heritage site. Another thing we do in that class several times each quarter is the discussion of current events. Sometimes I provide them with limitations such as a certain region (North Africa or East Africa) or topic (water in Africa), but other times they have the freedom to choose any recent article

PRAISES and PRAYER REQUESTS

- Please continue to pray with us for reconciliation between the English and French-speaking portions of Cameroon.
- Praise God with us that the two staff members sent back to the US for medical issues have been given clean bills of health and returned.
- Praise God with me for safety of the many miles traveled over mid-semester break!
- Pray for a strong ending to this difficult semester.



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relating to the continent of Africa. Often these are the most interesting and meaningful conversations we have! This past week's discussion included economic opportunities Sudanese refugees are finding in Uganda, a breathalyzer-type test being developed for malaria, and a pretty amazing hair artist in Cote Ivoire (Laetitia Ky – check her out!). What a range of topics! There are only 6 students in the class, and we often struggle to get through all 6 of their articles in a single class period.

Outside my classroom life has been no less busy. This school year we have decided to produce Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Though I am FAR from a Shakespeare fan, I am excited in a lot of ways for this show. First, we are putting some interesting African twists in it, and secondly, we have invited students to work collaboratively throughout the design process. Though 'designing by committee' has more than a few complications and definitely doesn't make my job any easier, it is a whole lot of fun. The kids are enthusiastic and have some GREAT ideas – pray that God shows me how to incorporate them into a single coherent show!

Well, I think I am reaching a good stopping point, and it looks like I have been too long-winded to leave room for pictures again. I know that is the best part for many of you, and definitely one of the things I most enjoy in other people's letters, so I will include a page of those too, even if it has to be a 3rd page. 😊

I hope you all realize how much your support and encouragement mean to me. Thank you for being a part of my journey. I would love to hear from you too! You can find me on facebook or reach me through email at ktenclay@hotmail.com. If you aren't a computer person, my parents collect my US mail at 309 Bluff St in Winnebago, NE 68071. Blessings!

Kristi



The big 'thing' at RFIS at the moment is the Sadie Hawkins dance our 11th graders will be hosting next week. We generally have a couple school dances each year, but these are for the whole community rather than just student events, and it is quite common for students to attend with their friends or even their whole families. Though the nature of our community creates an environment where students spend a LOT of time with one another, often developing deeply rooted relationships that last throughout their lives, the majority of them don't 'date' while they are at RFIS. Nevertheless, there is quite a tradition of elaborate 'will you go to banquet with me?' proposals. Not to be outdone, the ladies have been stepping up the expectations by inviting the young men to the Sadie Hawkins dance in equally extravagant and creative ways. This afternoon one of the young men was sent on a scavenger hunt around campus, collecting goodies (and an entourage including much of the student body) with each clue until he reached the locker of the young lady inviting him to the dance. One, after asking permission from the young man's older sister, invited him with an invitation written on a cup of coffee. Another choreographed a dance with one group of friends ending with other students presenting a written invitation.



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Clockwise from top left: David and Goliath photo challenge during kick-off day, Student council retreat, Middle School practical arts: sewing, weaving, fire safety, changing a tire, how to tie a tie, and introduction to campus flora (jackfruit)



Switzerland (Pictured: Rhine Falls, Stein am Rhein, Zug countryside, Zurich, and Schaffhausen)