



KRISTI TENCLAY - Missionary in Cameroon

May 2019

As is true every time I write a newsletter, I am sitting behind my computer wondering what bits and pieces of my life here may seem newsworthy or interesting enough to share with you all. I am blessed beyond measure, and yet it is often difficult to articulate the many things God is doing. In general, life quite simply IS. Most aspects of my life are relatively routine. So, maybe I will just walk you all through a typical week...

Monday starts out my work week. As with most school days, I am up at about 5:45 and make my way up the hill from our compound to Rain Forest International School sometime between 6:30 and 7:00 to make final preparations for my 1st period class (7:30). It is SO wonderful to live so close and be able to walk back and forth! We have an all-school assembly each morning at about 8:35 for announcements and whatever else our student-led worship team has prepared. This time is filled in many different ways from day to day, but Mondays are usually reserved for prayer. Assembly is followed by 'break' – something that seemed quite strange to me during my early years here, but I have really come to appreciate that 10-15 minute gap before jumping back into academic pursuits.

The day progresses with a variety of meetings and classes, each day of the week a bit different. Our schedule is quite unique and a bit strange to us Americans, as each day of the week is different, and each time a class meets it is at a different time of day. For example, my 9th grade history class meets at 11:24 on Tuesdays, 1:16 on Wednesdays, and 9:08 on Fridays. The variety is nice, but if I didn't keep a copy of my schedule posted at my desk. I don't think I would even remember when I am supposed to be going to what class! My Monday schedule includes 2 meetings: a meeting with my prayer partner/mentor and our Administration Team.

School officially ends at 3:22, and I head home at some point in the next hour or so. Mondays are great, because though I leave in the morning with the house a mess, a stack of the weekend's dirty dishes beside the sink and wastebaskets full, my place is clean when I get home – counter cleared, floors washed, etc. Mary comes to clean two mornings a week, and I am SO BLESSED by her work! I often load a TV show from one of my hard drives and watch that to wind down before figuring out supper or settling in to work on whatever grading I have brought home. (I am currently working through the Netflix series, *The Crown*).

Supper depends on how ambitious I am (since everything is made from scratch here), and my evening is generally filled with a combination of grading, facebook, laundry, and any variety of tasks from sewing to reading and from cleaning out the litter box to previewing curriculum materials. Monday evenings often find me making a last-minute market list and texting it to Celestine because I forgot to drop it off in the morning. Celestine is the hostel's cook, and she graciously picks up eggs, fruits, and vegetables for me when she goes in to do market shopping for the hostel. I don't know WHAT I would do without her! Off to bed, hopefully by 10 (though we all know how THAT goes...) for the cycle to begin again in the morning.

Tuesday's are much the same, with a few twists. I have no 1st period class, so I often meet with another staff member to exercise before school which gives me just enough time to shower at school and make it to assembly. I spend one class period meeting with the student I mentor, and after school we have a staff meeting.

PRAISES and PRAYER REQUESTS

- Praise God that we have a few new teachers 'on the way' but pray earnestly with us that the Lord will raise up the prayer and financial partners they need to get here in time for the new school year.
- Continue to pray for our search for RFIS's new Director and pray for me as I step into the Interim Director position for this coming year.
- Pray that as I transition into the role of Interim Director that I will do so in a manner that truly reflects Godly stewardship and servanthood.
- Pray for peace in Cameroon, and that God's glory will be evident in the midst of the chaos so many are experiencing.



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When I walk back down to our compound after staff meeting, I stop in the hostel and pick up my fruits and vegetables – all neatly washed and ready to use.

Wednesdays have a modified schedule that starts with “class meeting,” during which each grade level meets individually with their staff advisors. The older grades generally use this time to plan upcoming events, but there is a lot of flexibility for advisors to do whatever they feel is most needed. For example, I am a 9th grade class advisor this year and we have spent time on everything from group devotions to learning how to use their planners/agendas and from explaining school policies to playing games. That is followed by Chapel, about an hour-long worship service with music led by our student worship team and a ‘speaker’ of some sort. The rest of the day is pretty much normal with the exception of a Development Committee meeting some weeks.

Thursdays are wonderful! I have no officially scheduled meetings, and only teach two classes, so I have TONS of time to actually get work done! After school is ‘small group’ time. Students are encouraged to join a small group Bible Study that meets from 3:30-4:15 each Thursday. Participation is optional, but we are not allowed to schedule anything else during this time to make sure we don’t interfere or discourage involvement.

My **Friday’s** start out much like Tuesdays with exercise (when I ambitious enough to actually do it!), but at the end of the day I don’t generally head home as quickly as other days. Nearly every Friday after work a group of 3-6 of us go out for a dinner at what has become our favorite restaurant: Dr. Schwarma. It isn’t exactly what you would expect in Africa, but it is on our side of town, is relatively quick, the staff knows us and our regular orders, and the food is GREAT. (And cheap – did I mention that? My regular meal is only about \$5, and I don’t think I have every spent more than \$7 there)

Saturdays are a bit LESS routine, but there always seems to be something going on. For most of the year there are athletic games and/or tournaments scheduled on Saturdays. And though we have no official sporting events during this last quarter, it is no less busy. Just to give you an idea in April: 6th – Carnival (and event we host for the extended community), 13th-Drama rehearsal, 20th – Easter Weekend, 27th Drama production. May 4th – Sports Evangelism trip and SAT exam, 11th-Staff Appreciation Dinner, and 25th – Banquet (kinda like Prom).

On **Sunday** mornings, I generally wake up at my normal time and enjoy a more relaxed and extended time for devotions. I often take a cup of tea and my breakfast out on my porch, listen to the bugs and birds, and take the time to realize how beautiful this place is. Most weeks I then ride into town with the hostel to attend the international church. About every other week we go a little further into town after church to visit a grocery store where the kids can buy snacks, toiletries, etc. This year I have actually managed to do most of my grocery shopping on those trips instead of making full shopping trips into town. In theory I spent the rest of Sunday resting and truly experiencing Sabbath, but to be honest, that doesn’t happen as often as it should.

Sound at all familiar? Isn’t a whole lot of life for most of us just ‘routine’? Sometimes I take a lot of comfort in that routine, especially when it seems that straying from it is generally the result of something going “wrong.” However, I think our routines tell us a lot about ourselves and our priorities. It reflects what is important enough to make it into my ‘routine’ and what only ‘fits’ into my schedule when I ‘have time.’ By no means am I presenting my routine as any sort of model, but to be perfectly honest, it is revealing to me as I read through this account the many things I did and did not mention. For example, even though I aim to spend time in the Word each morning, I didn’t list that. Just recognizing that makes me take a step back and evaluate WHY. Is it because I am only doing it when I feel like I ‘have time’ instead of truly imbedding it into my routine? I’m not sure I can even answer that question, but the realization tells me that I should spend some time thinking and praying about it. How about you?

Are the things of God the defining framework for your routine? Or is your faith something that only really matters when you ‘have time’?

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