

MERRY CHRISTMAS from a land where the trees are all green and the temperatures are fairly hot!

This has been the most interesting Christmas I've ever had. In all honesty, I have had a very hard time getting in "the Christmas mood" this year. Christmas carols are not constantly playing, there's no snow (or any cold weather for that matter), and no real Christmas tree. There aren't as many Christmas parties to attend, gifts to buy, and most importantly, no family here for the holidays. And yet, I am learning so much more about Christmas this year. It isn't about the weather, the gifts, or the "holiday spirit". The entire season is about Jesus...who He is; that He completely emptied Himself for us and became NOTHING...a lowly human. That God used a God-fearing young girl to bear His Son that would become our Savior...and that He wants to use each one of us. What an amazing gift!

I have now been in Kenya for nine months, which is hard to believe! It took several months to adjust to life in Africa, but life finally seems somewhat normal here. I have learned to look the opposite direction before crossing the street, how to dodge matatus without being run over, and how to take public transport. I can now convert currency without really thinking, and I've learned to adjust my baking for the high altitude. I've also learned that Kenyans hate to say no and will just say 'yes' even if they really mean 'no'. Living in a foreign culture really has helped me to see what I depend on other than God...and many of those things have been stripped away. It has been a great experience to learn true dependency and faith that overcomes fear. I have met some of the poorest people who praise God for the things they DO have such as their health, family, a piece of bread with chai (tea with milk) for dinner, and a piece of tin over their heads. One of the phrases I have come to love here is:

*"God is good ALL the time;
and ALL the time God is good"*



Highlights of the past 9 months:

- * *Being able to share Christ with a Kenyan girl named Maureen*
- * *The opportunity to use photography and hospitality to serve God*
- * *Photography ministry trips upcountry and to the coast of the Indian Ocean*
- * *A safari at Maasai Mara*
- * *I have met so many amazing people from Germany, Switzerland, UK, Australia, NZ, Taiwan, France, & Canada! (lots of places to visit now!!)*
- * *I love the Kenyan church I attend!*
- * *For my visa renewal, I was able to go to Ethiopia & see the land where my Dad grew up!*
- * *The missionary family that I have here in Kenya...they're all so wonderful!*
- * *I have felt so incredibly supported by my family and friends at home! THANK YOU!!*

Prayer Requests:

- * *I have only two months left, and the temptation is to glide...but I want to finish STRONG!*
- * *I have no idea what I will do when I return home and would like to pray for God's guidance & provision (job, place, etc)*
- * *The short-term coordinator here is having some major health issues and may need surgery.*
- * *Once again our house dynamics are changing. This week two of the girls have moved home and another girl moved in.*
- * *Being away from family during the holidays is difficult.*

The woman on the front of the Christmas card is from a small village by Lake Victoria (in Kenya). The church services are often quite long, so the young women often sit near the back of the church and care for their young children.

Thank you!

Thank you to each of you that has made this year in Kenya possible! I have been humbled and encouraged by all of the support I have received: financial, prayer, emails, phone calls, care packages... I am looking forward to seeing many of you in just over two months!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
from Kenya!**

Christy Veer

