

Parks' Adventures in Africa

SAM AND AMANDA PARKS
 SERVING THE LORD IN NAIROBI, KENYA
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As I was considering continuing ministry and really wondering if I was equipped to influence students, I received this letter from an 8th grade girl at WNS. I am sharing this with you so you can see my inspiration for working with Campus Crusade for Christ.

Hey Mrs. Parks,

It's only been two weeks since you left but we all miss you and me especially. I can't believe you won't be coming back. Even though I'm leaving I thought you would be still be here so it would still feel like we're all here together! History will never ever be even the least bit enjoyable without you there to teach it.

You were so easy to get along with and so much fun to talk to. I have had the worst days of my life here and you were always there to talk to. It was you who picked me back up and put me on God's road again when I had walked away. You know how weak I am both physically and emotionally and you are one of the only people who ever cared. I could get along with you much better than any of my siblings and are so much easier to talk to then even my parents. You are going to be one of the coolest moms (if you ever get over your fear of children.)

We may have had a lot of other teachers stay longer than you did but none of them knew us like you did. You were always there to help and to love.

I got a book that I'm having every one sign in and writing letters. I have most of my teachers and it's so sad that one of my absolute favorite ones can't be here to write the kindest words any one could say to a short

REDIRECTED LIFE TAKES A TURN

So what does it look like for God to open or close a door? That's what we've been wondering this past couple of months or so.

First of all, Amanda really felt led to go back to Ohio early to be with her. Thankfully, my school affirmed the decision for me to leave school three weeks early.

The results Lynn's first surgery were really hard to swallow. One thing was for sure: we were glad I was there with the family. Amanda called me at 3am in Kenya to tell me the news about Lynn. From that point on, we had a sense that we should move back to the US. We *really* want to be closer to Lynn as she's fighting this cancer and recovering from these surgeries. Anything else started to seem hard to imagine. So we decided to pray about.

That Saturday, we decided to move back to the U.S., without any immediate plans of returning to Kenya. It was a tough, scary decision. But the interesting thing was that, for Sam, all of the uncertainty he had been feeling about the previous decision faded. He had remarkably less stress, anxiety, worry, etc., then

he and I would have thought. Instead, we actually feel good about the direction we're going.

So, from two separate continents, we moved our lives to the other side of the world again. Except this time, it has to happen in less than a week. Its really sad for both of us to leave. Kenya has become like our home. Its sad for us to say goodbye to our friends, co-workers, and church, not knowing if we'll see them again. I even left thinking I would be returning. But we can really see how God has been equipping us and preparing us for this, never letting us become too comfortable with the idea of staying. And we can really see how God is sustaining us now - he's given us energy and strength and all that we've needed.

Back in America

My mom had surgery on the 27th, and just returned home today, the 3rd of June. She had her bladder and kidney removed and a full hysterectomy. We just got the report today that her pathology on the lymph nodes came back clean, so it looks like they got all the cancer. Hallelujah! She has a long road to recovery, but we are so thankful for the good news.

AMANDA'S OPPORTUNITY MINISTERING TO THE WORLD FROM AMERICA!

Almost immediately after returning to America, God put college ministry on my heart, but I figured it was too late to get on campus this fall. But, it looks like he is providing a path.

I am praying about and working hard towards ministering on Bowling Green State University Campus with... international students! And the best part is that there are over around a HUNDRED Kenyans on campus. I don't have a lot of details to give everyone yet, but we have met with the campus directors at BGSU, and all of us are excited about how I contribute. God has prepared me in a lot of ways to step into this ministry.

We will update you VERY soon about this ministry. I will be raising full support, so please prayerfully consider staying on our support team and joining with us in leading international students to the Lord. We will let you know how you can do that shortly.

What should I do with my monthly support? Good Question!!

As we make this transition back to life in the US, we are asking any of our interested supporters to stand with us during this time. Returning missionaries with the West Nairobi School go through a transitional period of 3 months where they still receive some benefits and financial support so they can relocate, find jobs, etc. You can continue to send your support as usual through the end of August, and it will be sent to us in the United States. Thank you so much for your faithfulness to our ministry this year!

REFLECTIONS ON THE YEAR

A BIG "THANK YOU" TO OUR SUPPORTERS

Well. After all the preparations, all the travels, all the adventures, the struggles, the prayers, the surprises, and all the ways we've seen God doing his thing, we've come to the end of our year in Kenya. What can we say but "thank you" to all the people who have support us with finances, prayers, letters, etc.? To say that "we couldn't have done it with out you" sounds a bit trite, but nothing could be more true.

In our last newsletter, we wanted to

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help and to love.

I got a book that I'm having every one sign in and writing letters. I have most of my teachers and it's so sad that one of my absolute favourite ones can't be here to write the kindest words any one could say to a short and not the prettiest or most popular girl in the school. If it's not to much trouble you could always type one out and I'll stick it in my book. I don't want to sound like a brat but you are always so encouraging and always know what to say! I didn't mean to bother you but I just wanted to say you will always be in my heart and prayers.

Love you,

Heidi

Needless to say, I almost cried when I got this sweet letter. It was such an encouragement and blessing from the Lord to know that we had some small impact on a student. I hope it encourages you to know that God is using your prayers and support to impact lives.

reflect on what we've seen God doing in us, through us, and around us in Kenya this past year. Thinking through all that's happened, we can't help but think of those well-timed emails that kept us going, those surprise support checks that arrived at just the right time, and those phone conversations that reminded us why we were there. We're overwhelmed with the feeling that we were not alone but part of a team, a team that includes those we now get to come home and spend time with, swap stories with, and enjoy each other's company. (We are sad to leave, but we're also thrilled to be coming home!)

Our transition to Kenya was hardly easy. Within the first two weeks, we were both bed-ridden with dysentery. Different types of dysentery, strep, malaria, and worms followed. I (Sam) was taken to jail (briefly) for a traffic offence, and was robbed by a thug who jumped into my car! We basically locked ourselves in our apartment for the month of January while tribal violence almost tore the country – and even our own neighborhood – apart. 1500 people were killed, half a million chased from their homes, and the economy was brought to its knees. Through all that, we were learning how to trust in God, persevere, and how to speak truth into a situation.

Most of the significant things we saw God doing in us and through us, though, came in the everyday, mundane experiences, in continuing to seek out God and trying to follow in obedience. Amanda spent most days going through history lessons with young teenagers. She was able, though, to offer them a view of history through a biblical perspective. She played a part in enabling missionary families to stay on the field, and through doing things like eating

lunch with her students, mentoring in out-of-school situations, and just having honest conversations with them she was able to have an impact that would be impossible in an American setting. She was a part of a small Bible study with Kenyan young women, and not only made great friends, but they sought God in ways that go beyond any ethnic or cultural differences.

Sam spent half of his year studying in a university, building relationships over cultural lines. Over the course of the year he was able to start a young men's group with some Kenyan guys, where they were able to journey towards God together. In January, he started working with a Christian development organization called World Concern. He was there to do some pretty dramatic relief work in the midst of the election violence, directly helping people in urgent need in the name of Christ. Again, it was often in the mundane daily experiences that we experienced God at work. Most of Sam's work was centered on offering technical help within World Concern's economic development program. He worked mostly in village banking – creating rural financial services that help the poor start and expand their own business and agricultural projects – where he helped create training modules and evaluate the process. He saw how God was at work through the attempts of World Concern, and he even saw a member of his evaluation team come to Christ!

We have endless stories we can, and hope to, share with you all. We're sad to be leaving Kenya, but we feel so blessed by everything we've been able to learn, experience, and do. Thank you all so much for the ways that you have enabled this! We hope that be involved with this project has been just as rewarding for all of you!

PARKS' PRAISES AND PRAYERS

Praise God Amanda's mom's surgery was successful and the pathology results came back clear now!

Praise God Sam was able to move us out of Kenya so quickly.

Praise God that the doctors are working on Amanda's migraine problems, and they seem to be on the right track.

Praise God that the dentists here were finally able to fix Amanda's teeth.

Pray for Amanda's broken foot to heal and that her migraines will be healed also.

Pray that God will work out a way for Amanda to get on campus at BGSU working with Campus Crusade as soon as possible.

Pray that Sam's transcripts and paper-work can get corrected so that he can graduate in August.

Pray that we will be able to work out a situation with the dentist in Kenya who made some mistakes with Amanda's teeth that were very, very costly to fix in the United States.

Pray that Sam will find a job quickly that he would thrive in and be able to serve the Lord.

Pray that the WNS will be able to quickly find a replacement history teacher for next year.



Amanda, Heidi, Ji-yeon, Kate, Natasha and Sam getting ready to Kayak down the rapids at camp on the 8th grade class trip.

KWAHERI KENYA!

A YEAR IN PICTURES

