



One of the highlights of our week is the Sunday house church fellowship group we attend with other expatriate families. This gathering provides the opportunity to enjoy a potluck lunch together followed by singing and prayer. The children then go to another room and take part in a Sunday school program led by one of the parents while the adults continue with a Bible Study. This past Sunday, our next door neighbours hosted the fellowship.

When our next door neighbours first moved to Tanzania in 2013, they purchased a beautiful hand carved Nativity Scene. The Nativity Scene has a place of honour in their living room. Jannetta was admiring the beautifully carved figures with a few of the young children. One child asked Jannetta how the wood carver was able to make all the hands and faces black. Another child lifted one of the carved sheep to feel how smooth it was while a young girl cradled the baby Jesus in the manger close to her heart.

One little boy had noticed a few other carvings around the living room area. On a windowsill were a number of carved animal toys including some elephants and turtles. He left the group for a short period of time and returned with two, carved, wooden elephants. He asked the young girl for the baby Jesus and placed him back into the Nativity Scene. The sheep were placed in such a way that they surrounded the manger. The last thing this young boy did was to take the two wooden elephants and place them beside baby Jesus. A look of complete satisfaction and joy was now on boy's face. The adults who watched this little boy with the Nativity Scene realized that he had just given the Nativity Scene, with baby Jesus and the elephants, the African context he was familiar with.

This Nativity Scene reminds us of the Bible passage in Luke 2 starting at verse 8 where we read that the angels appear to the shepherds. The shepherds are frightened. In verse 10 we read, "But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for **ALL** people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.' "

Our prayer is that you experience joy this Christmas and peace and blessings in 2016. Blessings, Phil and Jannetta