



Steph's News

CHRISTOS KYRIOS (CHRIST IS LORD)



Volta à Bíblia

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that another year is almost over, and that we have reached the end of the pastoral course with another group of three year students. This doesn't mean that our relationship with them is over, but the formal part as students and teachers has finished and we continue now as co-workers in God's kingdom. We will miss having the daily contact with them that we have enjoyed over the past three years, but look forward to a new phase in our relationship.



Having visited some of our former students during the year and held



S. Herron
C.P.7
Macia
Mozambique
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stephanievab@yahoo.com

VAB Phone: +258 823164210

seminars at some of their home villages, we felt that it would be helpful for them and for us if we continued the relationship by inviting some of them to come and work alongside our staff in teaching the three month course next year. To this end we have invited four of our graduates - Martins, Carlito, Pita and Nelson, to join with some of our staff.



If it proves fruitful and helpful we may expand the programme to include other graduates in different parts of the teaching programme. We have realised that many of the students go back to very isolated areas where they lack the encouragement and help of fellowship with other mature believers. Often they are carrying heavy loads of leadership but with little in the way of wise counsel to help them. We hope that these opportunities to come back and spend time with us as well as sharing what they have learnt with others will be an encouragement for them.

We also feel that here at the school we will benefit greatly from their God given gifts and from their intimate knowledge of the spiritual realities "on the ground" in the villages from which many of our students come, helping us to better reach and disciple those coming to us for training.

Sadly, this year's end also brought the ending (at least for now) of a nine year working relationship with Jonas Mbazima who has done excellent work here at Volta à Bíblia - teaching, translating from English into Portuguese and

Shangaan, and in the area of administration. Jonas resigned at the end of the year due to unresolved problems between him and his wife which have affected his ability to continue working effectively with us. We will miss him, (he and I have shared an office for many years and I appreciated tremendously his love for the Lord, his hard work and his sense of humour!).



Here at the Bible school things are rather quiet with all the students and most of the staff having left for the Christmas break. Pedro and Alice Cossa are here with their children to help look after the place over the holidays, and Willem and Carol

are also here off and on. There is plenty to keep us occupied between the geese, the dogs, the chickens, the veggie gardens, car maintenance, lesson preparation, fencing, picking up mangoes, visiting and day-to-day stuff.



Pedro, with the help of some family members built a house for the family to live in when they are

here in Macia for the boys' schooling. They completed it in a week (!) apart from hanging the door, which is only waiting for hinges and a lock.



With Christmas only a couple of weeks away I was struck by something I read in John's Gospel (chapter 18:37) where Jesus himself says, "For this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

Here are some other things Jesus says about why He came:

"It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:31-32)

"I have come into the world as a light, so that no-one who believes in me should stay in darkness." (John 12:46)

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword." (Matthew 10:34)

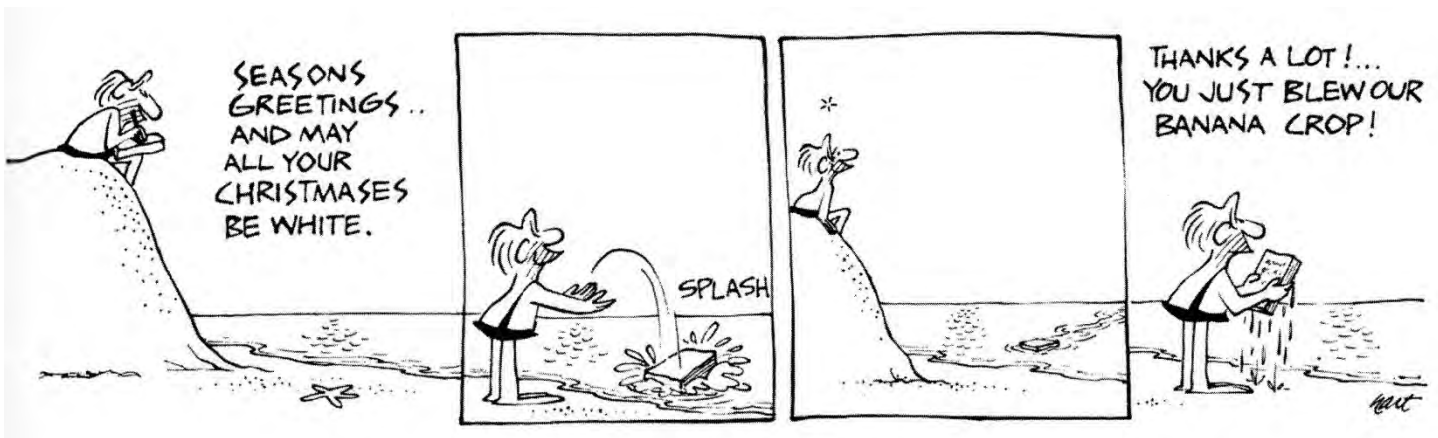
"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

Paul's words remind us of the true meaning of Christmas:

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners - of whom I am the worst."

(1 Timothy 1:15)

As we celebrate His coming and head into a new year, let us listen to Him, heed His call and come to Him humbly in repentance, live in the light, live our lives to the full for Him, fighting for what is right, serving those around us, and giving thanks always for our Lord and Saviour, who came!



God Bless, Merry
Christmas,
love *Stephanie*
(and Danny).

