

Happy Christmas 2009

Dear Friends,

As the Christmas season begins we would like to wish you a joyous Christmas and a happy new year.

The last 4 months have been exciting and challenging for us as we have moved and set up home in Togo, West Africa. We have been adapting to heat, humidity, French language (and others), a different culture with different customs. God has been good and has been with us all the way. He has enabled us to laugh much and He has comforted us in times of difficulty and He has shown his compassion through the gentle kindness of the Togolese people.

The story of the first Christmas touches the life of a carpenter, Joseph of Nazareth, the man betrothed to Mary. As all fathers in Jesus' day Joseph would have taught Him about carpentry as well as bringing Him up in a devout Jewish home. Have you ever wondered about the skills of carpentry that Joseph would have taught Jesus?



I was pondering this thought as our neighbour here in Togo, Mauuli, is a carpenter and he has revealed to us his excellent craftsmanship. He has transformed the wooden container that our belongings were shipped in, into beautiful pieces of furniture, (three bookcases, two tables and two cupboards). What to a shipping company was cheap wood used to contain and protect our valuables is now beautiful and useful, all having received the unique touch of the carpenter. How similar is this to what Jesus does with our lives. He, as a carpenter, using the tools of the Holy Spirit, transforms us into a new creation, unique

and precious to Him. So this Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus let us offer ourselves to the carpenter of creation that He may create out of us something beautiful and may all the glory go to Him the creator and redeemer of the world.

Then let us all with one accord sing praises to our heavenly Lord, who has made heaven and earth of nought, and with His blood mankind has bought. The First Nowell (Anonymous)

With our love

Sheila, Michael, Srijana and Saffron

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Question: Why would we buy a small Togo flag which has a window sucker attached to it? If you know the answer email us (michael.holland@methodist.org.uk) and if you're right we'll send you a prize. We'll post the answer after Christmas on our blog: www.keepingeyesfixed.blogspot.com