

A strange place to be born....

As we approach Christmas I look at the story, as I do every year, and discover something new in the words I read. This year I see a reflection, as if in a mirror, of what our society can be like today.

A young woman, a long way from home who has only had her partner by her side for comfort in her lonely pain, wraps a new baby in old cloths and places him in an animals feeding trough because there is nowhere else for him to sleep. She is in a strange place far from home and doesn't know what the future is for her child.

So many people didn't see the need of the pregnant woman so she and her partner had to find a place of warmth among the animals where she could give birth to her child. Poor woman, poor child, it should never have happened in such a busy town so we cleverly spin stories which attribute blame to the innkeepers who were all too busy until one of them offered a place in a stable because it's the only space that he's got.

At least that innkeeper did something, but he is vilified by all the people who did nothing because he allowed a woman to give birth to her son in the mess of a stable. What a scandal!

What is the scandal of this familiar scenario? The fact that society did not want to see the needs of the woman and all those around the world she represents or that someone broke all the health and safety regulations to provide her with the only space he had?

It might happen this year in the poverty of a shanty town in Africa; in the uncertainty of a tent in a refugee camp; on the cramped decks of a boat at sea or on a street near you. We don't see it until it is a crisis and then blame others for not doing something sooner!

I read the story this year and it tells me that some people even visited the child and his parents, rejoiced in what they saw, but still left him where he was for someone else to find.

If you see this child, please meet him in that strange place and give him a home.

Richard Becher 2015