Seasonal material/Advent

from today's news

AIM

To put the well known story of the Nativity into a contemporary context.

INTRODUCTION

The weekend of 18/19 December 2010 has been characterised by bitter weather conditions which have lead to the closure of much of the UK transport system in the south of the country, This was a main news item as was the contention that this would limit the Christmas 'getaway' for some. But did everyone want to 'getaway' and is this what Christmas is about? You may want to use this story to suggest ways of telling the Christmas story that chime in with contemporary social issues and attitudes.

From today's news: 19.12.2010

On the busiest weekend of the season, the great Christmas getaway was halted yesterday when Heathrow airport, the UK's biggest, was closed due to adverse weather conditions. Hundreds of people had to spend the night in a cold Arrivals Hall and passengers complained of the lack of heating. A BAA spokesperson said that blankets and food had been handed out.

There were also reports that a failed asylum seeker, known only as Mary, who was due to be deported from the UK yesterday with her fiancé Joseph, gave birth in the left luggage area. The baby was placed in one of those metal trays you see going round and round on luggage carousels. UK Boarder's Agency refused to deny or confirm the claims that were reported by a startled collection of airport staff; cleaners, baggage handlers and the like. When asked if the baby would be detained in the nearby Harmondsworth Centre with his parents the Government Minister said there would be a debate about Children in Detention in Parliament in the New Year.

Three members of a UN delegation on their way to high level talks and in transit through Heathrow tried to give the family some assistance. However, their gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh were confiscated by Security as being just the sort of thing that might be used to create a major security incident. They were told to go home by another route.

Meanwhile mobile phone footage of Mary taken by other passengers is the only record we have of this event, now circulating on U-Tube. She appears serene and when asked said 'I trust God'.

Prayer: God surprises earth with heaven …

When odd-dressers live rough on the margins,
when angels appear in our dreams,
when babies are born in unlikely circumstances,
it's no wonder we wonder at it all.
God of surprises,
earth and heaven meet here,
in prophets, angels and this baby.
May this season be a new opportunity to meet with you
and travel on in hope with your unlikely ones.

Amen.

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EVALUATION

Please try to answer these questions for yourself and for others who will use this material:

1. What was the most helpful thing?
2. What was the least helpful thing?
3. What would you like to try now?

THE NEXT STEP

The text below is an example of the next step. Write your own based on this example.

If you want more starters please revisit the menu. If you want to do onto a main course 'Remembering him' is a Bible study that includes some remembering activities. For Desert try Kennings and Cookies. If you want to know more about Remembering the Bible see the document in the Training section of the website. There are other main course Bible studies available.

Acknowledgements

This material is copyright to Janet Lees (janet@bobjanet.demon.co.uk). She is the URC Vision4life Co-ordinator. The Prayer was written by Janet Lees for Issue 50 of Roots on the web (see www.rootsontheweb.com).

HOW TO FEEDBACK TO VISION4LIFE?

If you wish to offer any feedback – brickbats and bouquets are equally welcome! – you can do so in various ways.

You can email the Vision4Life steering group and the coordinator about general issues via the website or at admin@vision4life.org.uk

Website issues can be dealt with through web@vision4life.org.uk

If you want to make contributions or ask questions about other V4L years you can email:
Year 3 – Transformed for Evangelism: evangelism@vision4life.org.uk