

SEASONAL LONELINESS - UNWRAPPED



Loneliness is now recognised as a major problem. It doesn't just affect older people living on their own. It affects single people, including single parents, and it affects young people as well. It's even possible to be lonely in a relationship, in a family, or in a room full of friends. Being lonely does not have to mean being alone.

Whatever the individual circumstances, it seems that loneliness peaks for most people around Christmas. One reason may be the commonly held perception that everyone else is having a good time while you are on your own. Another is that the rush of activities before Christmas - parties, carol services, nativity plays and so on - suddenly ceases. And a third is that the shopping spree has finally come to an end, and the reality of being overspent sets in.

Both busyness and spending may be ways of compensating for feeling lonely, because they take your mind off your problems. But the day of reckoning inevitably comes, usually on Christmas Day or immediately afterward.


So there may be a definite connection between the seasonal scourges of loneliness and indebtedness - and CAScaid would argue that there is a solution to both



problems. It is, simply, to emphasise Advent as the season of calm and quiet reflection that it was always meant to be; and to concentrate more activities in the period between Christmas and Epiphany, when we should be celebrating Jesus' birth together - and when there is little on offer elsewhere. This will help reduce spending beforehand, and will also help reduce loneliness afterward, by keeping churches open at a time when they are most needed.

See Ruth Grayson, *Reviving Advent, Reclaiming Christmas*, Grove Books Ltd, Cambridge (2015).

ALTERnativity is producing a resources pack for use in churches entitled *Loneliness...who cares?* Contact info@alternativity.org.uk for more information.



CAScaid would love to hear from you
Get in touch with us at www.christmasgiving.net

CAScaid is an awareness raising campaign only.
It does not raise funds for itself or for individual charities.



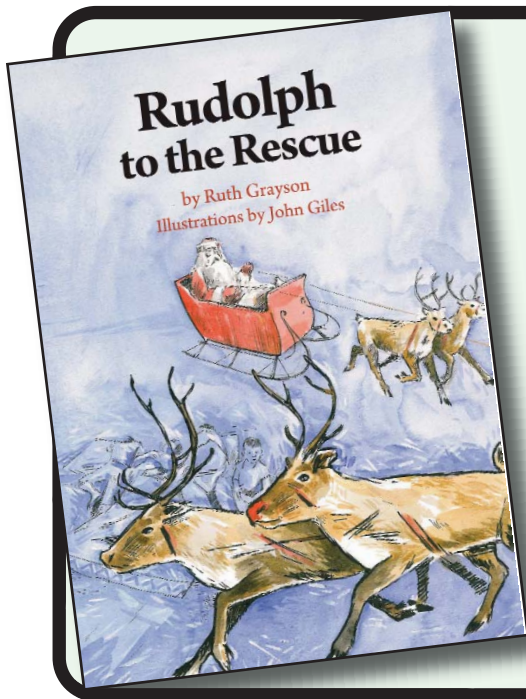
OUR NEW WEBSITE

The CASCaId website has a brand new home: www.christmasgiving.net This not only gives CASCaId a fresh look but also makes it much easier to find in Google searches as well as making it easier to access on mobile platforms. Our main concern is still the amount of overspending and personal debt at Christmas on the one hand, contrasted with poverty wherever it occurs on the other, and we are constantly trying to find new ways of persuading both individuals and churches that it might be possible to reduce both problems by reallocating our Christmas budgets. Have a look - and let us know what you think.



...AND A NEW RESOURCE!

There is now a children's story available as a free download. *Rudolph To The Rescue*, by Ruth Grayson, with illustrations by John Giles (www.christmasgiving.net/rudolph-to-the-rescue). It is aimed particularly at 7 to 9 year olds, their parents, teachers and group leaders, encouraging people to think differently about Christmas spending and giving from an early age. If you would like it tailored to a specific project, please get in touch via the website. This is a free service offered to *bona fide* organisations working with homeless children, particularly with refugees.



Advent Retreat

To encourage people to take some time for reflection at the start of Advent, Ruth Grayson is again offering a day retreat on 25 November at Shepherds Dene in Northumberland.

Further details are available from enquiries@shepherdsdene.co.uk (tel.01434 682212).

