

CHRISTMAS GIVING - WITH A RED NOSE SPIRIT!

Is the thought of Christmas causing you stress already? Well, stop for a moment and think about one of the best known symbols of the season. He appears on Christmas cards, decorations and ornaments and has a bright red nose. Yes, he's Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer, and CASC-aid is taking a fresh look at him this year. And no, we haven't taken leave of our senses...

Along with Christmas, Red Nose Day is perhaps the most prominent day for giving to others in the UK calendar. But the focus of giving is different. It's not about frantic shopping sprees and personal present exchanges. It's about raising money for charities at home and abroad. Above all, it's about having fun doing it. And unlike Christmas, it doesn't incur massive spending, increases in personal debt and other social problems. When did anyone you know get into debt through giving to charity? Because that's what Christmas giving should primarily be about. The Magi (Mt 2:11) were presenting gifts to God incarnate, not to each other.

Last Christmas, we spent a conservative estimate of £22bn on our festivities. It took its toll on many people, and some are paying for it still. By contrast, Red Nose Day is not a known cause of personal debt, far less marital breakdowns or even worse - all of which are commonly associated with modern British Christmases. Can we change the emphasis of our Christmas giving to spend less on ourselves, and get the 'Red Nose' spirit into increasing our charitable giving at Christmas? The results could be life-changing for all of us! There are certain similarities between Rudolph and the Christmas story that might help:

First, Rudolph was an outcast, rejected by his peers. Does this sound familiar?

Second, it was his very unusual and much-derided appearance that Santa used to lighten the darkness of a foggy Christmas eve. Any parallels here?

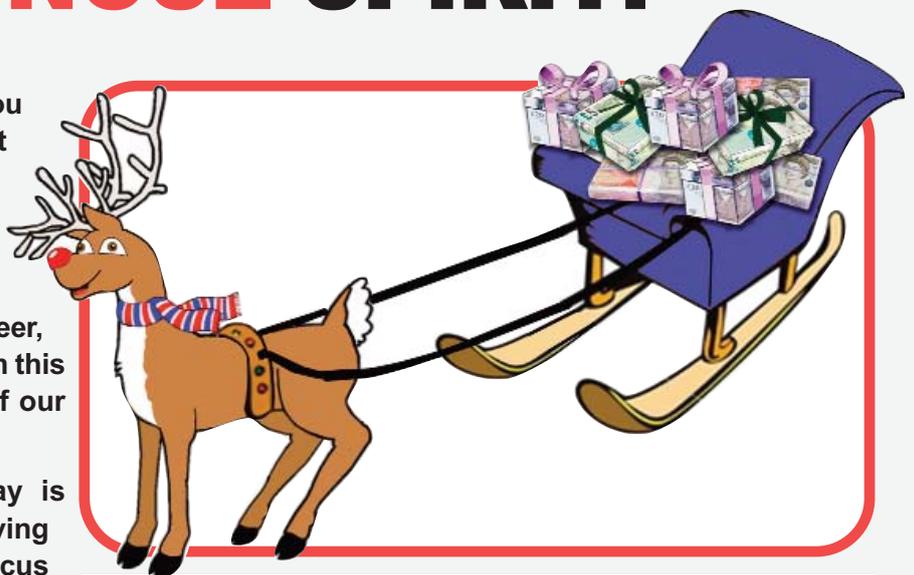
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Read more at www.casc-aid.org.uk! And have a happy, stress-free Christmas!



'God loves a cheerful giver!' II Cor. 9:7

Free resources on the CASC-aid website

www.casc-aid.org.uk/downloads

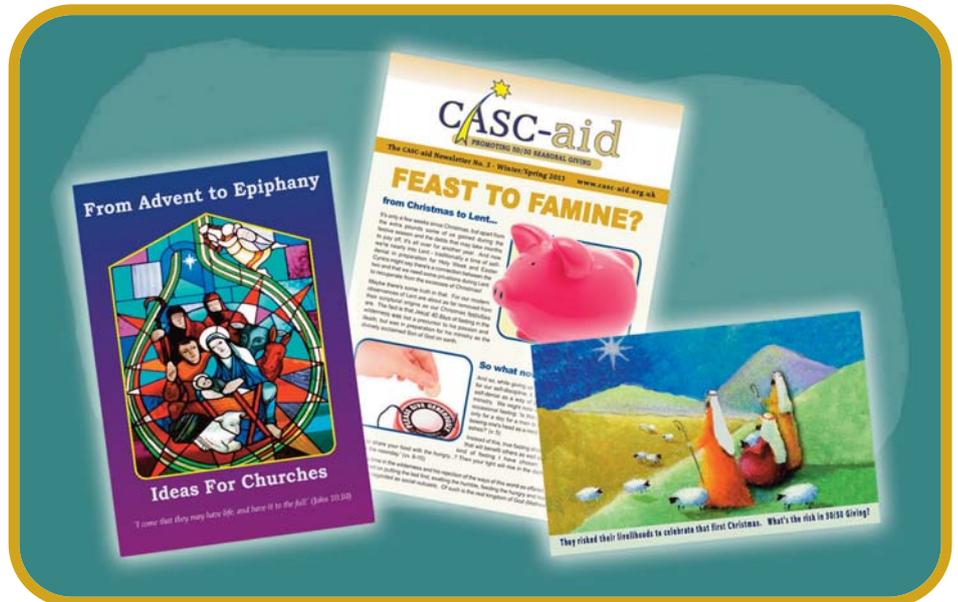
As well as Rudolph, there are some new additions to the CASC-aid website this year to augment the growing stock of free downloads. These are aimed particularly at helping provide ideas for services and study groups in churches, but can also be used to promote discussion in other settings, both inside and outside the church. New resources include:

- **CASC-aid: A Biblical Approach To Seasonal Giving** - in response to requests to explain the theology underlying the 50/50 principle of charitable giving in a single, accessible document

- **What A Party!** New suggestions for discussions or activities that might be appropriate for young people of the 'social networking' mindset

- ...and, from last year: **Omega: Taking A Second**

Look At Christmas - a two-part study for Advent for small groups, with a follow-up guide and leader's notes, in partnership with the Sanctuary (www.thesanctuarycentre.org)



And there are leaflets, other suggestions for talks and services, and music as well! And don't forget the e-cards as a way of introducing people to an alternative approach to Christmas spending and giving!

Study Day on Saturday, 12 October 2013

For the second year running, there will be the opportunity for quiet reflection before Advent at Shepherd's Dene Retreat Centre, Riding Mill, Northumberland NE44 6AF. There will be a £5 charge for lunch, otherwise the day is free. Coffee will be served from 9.30 am for a 10 am start and the day will end by 4 pm. More information from contact@casc-aid.org.uk. Bookings may be made through Julie@shepherdsdene.org.uk (tel. 01434 682212).



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