

A New Christmas Song

Funny thing, as a Kiwi growing up with summertime in Decembers, I used to dream of white Christmases. Such is power of the media – American movies and Bing Crosby's version of White Christmas. Songs influence our thinking - perhaps more than we are willing to admit so it took me a while to realise Jesus' birth wasn't a Silent Holy night with everything calm and bright at all. He might have been Away in Manger with no crib for a bed but the cattle are lowing, the baby awakes the little Lord Jesus no crying he makes seems to be a bit of a stretch? A non crying Jesus?

And then there's the prediction that the new born saviour would have royal blood: back to King David and further back to Abraham. That bit's all good but a closer look at the family tree reveals a tainted lineage of foreign blood and colourful characters. Judah was about to have his daughter in law Tamar burned to death for being a "whore"¹ before discovering he was the one who had used her in this way. Out of the act prostitution came Tamar's twins, the ancestral line of Jesus.

Skip a few generations to King David's great great grandmother Rehab, the sex worker from Jericho and the list of hero's grow. That's right – hero's. Judah acknowledged that Tamar was way more in the right than him as she fought for justice and Rehab is proclaimed a woman of faith in the book of Hebrews.

In our Kolkata neighbourhood silent, holy nights are an impossibility and most people have never seen snow let alone a white Christmas. The cattle are not lowing, they're roaming because that's what they do and there's plenty of crying hungry babies born to homeless mums (moms) on the street. It appears to me this might be a little more like the one Jesus was born into than the one we sing about. Maybe the song Mary sang after she found out she was pregnant is helpful: *he has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.*

And, as for some of the hero's from this community who are not Jesus' ancestors but his sisters.

- Bashanti² has just completed 1 year free from alcohol and is now mothering and helping Deepali to break free of the same addiction.
- Rupa², full of vision continues to lead the Freeset community. Anyone who comes to Freeset and talks to Rupa hears of her vision to see all 10,000 of her neighbours set free.
- Saraswathi² travels from the other side of Kolkata to Freeset every day. At 22 she has been in the sex trade for more than 4 years and having just started is working hard in training.
- Pinky², six years old and mostly blind leads the Freeset community in prayer, in fact it's hard to give others a turn such is her motivation. She's just started school and came 2nd in her class test.
- Sweety², so young to have two boys at school and at 4ft 10 is a tower of strength.

¹ This word is used in the RSV Translation. ² This name has been changed.

God among us: lifting up the lowly.

Have a Merry Christmas.

**Thank you for being part of the Freedom journey in 2008.
We look forward to walking with you in 2009.**

Regards

*Kerry and the
Freeset Team*



We are all in this together!