

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 2:7

NO ROOM IN THE INN
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A group of us were studying the Christmas story according to the Gospel of Luke. We came to the part of the story where we find the words, "The inn was full." One young man said, "If they had cell phones back then like we have now Joseph could have called ahead and booked a guest house prior to arriving in Bethlehem with Mary. Others in the group agreed and said, "Yes, that is true. However, they didn't have cell phones back then.

However, one elderly man from another part of the Island who was just visiting us over Christmas disagreed with us. He said to the young man, "Yes, what you said is true. However, think again and think more deeply about this. Plenty of us have cell phones today. This is true. However, suppose there is some big event scheduled in Lae (*the largest city near them*) and we all want to attend, we would not all be able to book a guest house or hotel in Lae. Only the rich are able to book the guest houses and hotels. Hotels and guest houses are only available to people who have plenty of money.

We thought more about what the old man said. Was it true that the Inn was full or was it that Mary and Joseph didn't have enough money to rent a room? This kind of question is just speculation, but it is true that Mary and Joseph were not important people (*in the Melanesian pidgin language, "nogat nem" means that someone is unimportant, without influence*). Even so, God chose the two of them to become the mother and father of Jesus, God's son. This insight led us to feel that God is with people like us who don't have status or wealth (*man nating*). God comes to people like us who are regarded as unimportant people (*nogat nem*). We concluded that God is with people who are rich and important as well as people who are poor and dismissed as unimportant people. And, in addition, who was it that first got the news of Jesus birth? Yes, it was another group of people who were looked down upon as unimportant. The shepherds. They were the first to hear the news of this great thing that God had done.

This shows us that God comes all the way down to where we are. God doesn't sit down on high and call for us to come to Him and then just wait for us to come to Him. No way! God comes to all people. God comes all the way down to us, and becomes one with the poor and unimportant people, while also coming close to the rich and important as well. So, now we join with all the angels and sing the song that they sang that night, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to all people on earth. God loves us all.