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HELPING PEOPLE  
WORK WELL

## CHRISTMAS SOLUTIONS

Have you ever been in a difficult situation and then wondered where on earth the solution will come from? Maybe it's a people issue, or a business challenge. Perhaps it is a financial shortfall or budgeting dilemma. Whatever the problem there seems to be no apparent solution.

Someone once worked out that the cost of raising a child was around sixty to a hundred thousand pounds. How this was done and whether it was accurate is less clear but there is no doubt that children create legitimate financial demands - especially at Christmas. For Mary and Joseph their situation was clearly not easy. We know from their accommodation and later on the type of ritual offerings they made to give thanks for their child, that they were not financially well off. Maybe Joseph contemplated how he was going to get through the early months which, given the dash to Egypt, were hardly a financial or occupational breeze.

Then three men arrive with extremely valuable donations. Gold, incense and myrrh. We tend to romanticise this event and see only its symbolic meaning. But in the hard financial realities of the world these represent a significant source of income. Maybe Joseph and Mary kept them as souvenirs of a Christmas never to be forgotten, I suspect they converted them into food, shelter and clothing.

Maybe this Christmas you are needing a solution and don't know where on earth it will come from. The same God who brought stock from the east can be your provider.

It could be, however, God is calling you to be the solution. Your work has been successful this year and you are well able to help someone in need of a solution.

Whether supplier or recipient none of them realised fully that the baby himself was God's ultimate solution to a difficult situation when no one on earth knew how it was going to be solved.

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**Here is a relevant reading for the Dec. 17 Wake Up Call**  
**Matt. 1: 1-12**

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[1] from the east came to Jerusalem

and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east[2] and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ[3] was to be born.

"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'[4] "

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east[5] went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him.

Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.