**Carol 17 – Away in a manger**

Now I add this by request not because it is a personal favourite. We have to recognise that just as “All things bright and beautiful” has been instilled in previous generations so too has Away in a manger. It is a staple of nativity plays and busking carols, it is the cute “ahhhhh” moment as well as the hoped for stillness of the crib scene.

There still goes up a cry from many that the middle verse was omitted from the United Reformed Church hymn book as being unrealistic and out dated. As I have mentioned about other Carols, ,maybe sometimes we shouldn’t delve too deeply and we should embrace the setting and emotion such Carols evoke. Let’s start where people are and work from there.

The Carol itself was first published in the late 19th Century and at the end of the last century was ranked joint second in popularity. Although sometimes ascribed to Martin Luther the carol is a wholly American creation though different tunes are used each side of the Atlantic.

Almost every line has variations and tweaks but the third verse is believed to have been added later and various Bishops and authors claim they created it.

The Carol is not without controversy if you delve a little deeper. The “no crying he makes” was at one time thought to imply Jesus wasn’t fully human as all babies cry. Most accept that the first lines set the scene and we don’t need to worry too much.

In America the “mueller” melody is most well used whilst in England we prefer “Cradle song”. You’ll find both below to listen to and enjoy.

Long may we continue to teach children about Jesus’ birth through this, and other songs but also long may we remember the artistic interpretation. We hope to teach and remember that Jesus grew into a miracle making, tough teaching, table turning, justice calling man who changed the world. Let’s not leave him silent in a manger for long.

**Versions to enjoy**

<https://youtu.be/3cHqj2ah2tA> Engage family singing, lyrics

<https://youtu.be/gMfyGbt43rM> Makaton

[Carol Accompaniments (Celebrating Christmas at Home) - Salvation Army Music Index (samusicindex.com)](https://samusicindex.com/celebrating-christmas-at-home/carol-accompaniments) Salvation Army

<https://youtu.be/OmLsEUWK4u4> Mueller version with images. Choral.

<https://youtu.be/ihZDADb795E> Totally different tune by a Welsh choir.

**Away in a manger**

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay

[Verse 2]
The cattle are lowing, the poor Baby awakes
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the night sky
And stay by my side till morning is nigh

[Verse 3]
Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care
And take us to Heaven to live with Thee there