

## **BIRTH**

### **the Christmas Experience**

#### **MOTHER**

What is your experience? -

Mary - 'I am the Lord's servant' - experience of enabling life, yet not being in control. Is 'servant' a term you would use to describe bringing a life into the world.

For a parent 'servanthood' soon turns into a role of responsibility. Can the sense of hope be sustained and how?

'Flesh of my flesh' - yet children have a life in their own right. What is the experience of letting go?

Luke 1. 26-38 (The Annunciation),

#### **WHO'S THE DADDY?**

There at the very beginning - accident or decision? - (see Sophie Heaman article)

What's it like as the 'spectator' at the event?

Does this help us reflect on God's role in the incarnation - giving responsibility to humankind?

Luke 1. 68-79 Zechariah reflects on the birth of John - High hopes for your child.

#### **WHY SO MANY ANGELS?**

These are all those who have a caring oversight and who will adore and wonder.

Modern day births may be attended by the midwife, anaesthetist, nurse, consultant, (surgeon). Life is precious and is cared for in a special way at its beginning. Might this give an insight into the 'heavenly host' who were around for the birth of Jesus?

Relatives and friends all turn up to visit at the earliest opportunity. As with shepherds and Magi, here is an expression of interest and care for this new life and hope.

The shepherds returned to the fields and the Magi to their own land. Can we imagine the impact of their visit to Bethlehem on their own futures?

#### **GRANDPARENT**

An older generation have a real awareness of challenges and risks of life, experienced through changes in history. Many in the older generation cannot understand the young or 'modern life', so a new birth is very much a mark of faith in the future. Many are fearful for the young but a birth is hope and displays a trust and confidence. The potential for any new life is enormous.

Luke 2. 22-35 Simeon, the old man in temple can see what the parents cannot - 'I have seen your salvation ...'

#### **CREATIVE PROCESS**

We often use the term 'birth' to describe the creative process, whether it be giving birth to an idea, a business or project. **start - development period - pain - fruition - wow!**

Why use this terminology? What are the similarities with human birth?

Creative process - how far can we understand anything creative as sharing in what God is doing?

Beauty, justice, peace, right relationships etc. are all things that are created within our human experience. Do our reflections on 'birth' help us in such things?

Matthew 24.8 All these are the beginning of birth-pains

Romans 8 19-22 All creation groans .....

Who are we in God's process of new birth? Mother/servant, non-participative father, caring father or angels ....?

#### **BORN AGAIN!**

What does this mean for us?

Reflect on: God's new life, a hope for what lies ahead, a life of dependency, increasing responsibility,

John 3. 1-8 Nicodemus and Jesus

Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

## **A CHALLENGING VIEWPOINT**

Sophie Heaman - The Guardian 141025

*“all children are accidents, really, born from chaos; every successful sperm the ruthless winner of a wild race against millions. (The only sin any of us could possibly be born with is survivor’s guilt, at leaving all the other swimmers behind.) Whether you were born of a love that lasted or of a love that ran out; whether your parents wrote each other wedding vows or lawyers’ letters; whether you were conceived against the side of a Winnebago at Glastonbury, in the broom cupboard at Nobu or in an embryology clinic full of human hope – a baby is a baby.*

*Call it a one-night stand, call it a “thing”, an affair, call it love. But you don’t get any brownie points in life just because your parents planned your arrival and longed for you for years. It’s what you do next that counts.”*