

19<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Babies

**“Where did you come from, baby dear?  
Out of the Everywhere into here.”**

George MacDonald, *At the Back of the North Wind*

I know how babies are made. I got my education in my early teens from the “big boys” at school, more than I ever did from the *Sex for the Growing Christian Boy* booklet which my mother handed to me on my fourteenth birthday – without another word of explanation! But I know how babies are made, and I’m happy with the extent of my physiological knowledge.

But from the births of my own children to the arrival of my grandsons, and through all the conversations I’ve had with parents in my ministry, I know there’s more to the arrival of babies than the mechanics of how procreation works. There’s a spiritual element to every birth.

In religious terms, we might talk about a child being “a gift from God”, and I’m happy enough with that. It conceptualises an “otherness”, a bigger dimension to the creation of a child than simply a sexual union. But, if we have no religious beliefs or any God framework within which to operate, is there still not mystery and wonder in the birth of a baby?

We had a baby no more than a few days old with us in church a couple of weeks ago. She was beautiful, sound asleep (for no more than a nanosecond, her father suggested ...) and was instantly surrounded by an adoring host of loving and admiring people. There wasn’t one person who wasn’t smiling, whose day wasn’t made better by meeting that baby, and whose life hadn’t been altered by that little one’s presence. Mysterious? Of course. Wonderful? You bet! Spiritual? That too.

Scotland’s eighteenth-century poet, George MacDonald, wrote of a baby coming “out of everywhere into here”. George MacLeod, the founder of the Iona Community, used the phrase “Eternity dipping into time” in one of his prayers. These images convey the same meaning for me. Babies come from an “otherness” to the here-and-now, from “everywhere into here”, from “eternity into time.” Perhaps if I’d learned *that* in my teens rather than pondering *Sex for the Growing Christian Boy*, I might have been more prepared for the mysteries and meaning of life than I was.

### **A prayer for today**

*Touch me with the mystery of your blessing, Lord, in unexpected ways. Amen*

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