

# Abundant Living MINISTRIES

Encouraging Christian Living Since 1978



**Question:** Our family just lost a much-loved relative. Although I know that he was a Christian and is certainly in heaven, I admit that the whole idea of dying is hard for me. It makes me fearful just thinking about it. And my uneasiness makes it even more difficult to talk positively with my children. Any help with such a tough subject?

**Response:** What a practical question! As we all know, death is a very real part of life. Each one of us will experience it, unless Jesus returns first. But it is understandable to have fears about something that we have never experienced before.

My mother-in-law told me how she used to dread going to church as a child. She would sit on hard wooden benches and listen to dreary singing and sermons that droned on forever. Often her mind wandered. She would fidget and squirm, trying to get comfortable and wishing she could somehow escape. One Sunday she was horrified when she heard the preacher say, “Heaven is going to be glorious. *It will be like being in church for all eternity!*” Well, she made up her mind pretty quickly that heaven didn’t seem so appealing after all!

In reality, heaven will not be an everlasting dull church service ... it will be wonderful, beyond our wildest imagination. Something that has helped me look at

death and what lies beyond, in a very different way than my mother-in-law... a much more positive and exciting way... is an example from a baby!

As a childbirth educator for almost forty years, I never ceased to be amazed by the birth process. For nine months, a tiny baby grows within his mother's warm uterus. The Bible calls this cozy nursery a "womb." In the first months, the baby has lots of room to float and move. It is the only world the baby knows, and he is comfortable in his nice warm abode. He can't begin to conceive of anything beyond his little environment. As the weeks roll by, however, the space in that "room" grows tighter and tighter. He begins to feel cramped, and one cannot help but wonder if he doesn't sense a restlessness to be freed from what has become a confining, and not-very-comfortable, nest.



By the time the baby is about six months along in development, he is beginning to hear pretty well. By eight months he is hearing very well. Granted, the sounds he hears are muffled by the barrier of his mother's flesh and organs that separate him from the outside world. Nevertheless, he is learning to recognize voices and particularly the voices of his parents. Inside the womb, the baby opens his eyes. It is pretty dark in there and, on top of that, he is submerged in fluid, so whatever sights he manages to make out, must appear very dim and blurry.

Then, somewhere around the nine-month mark, the baby begins to feel a new sensation... the walls of the uterus begin to contract and the baby is now being squeezed and pushed in a way he has never felt before. He must wonder what on earth is happening to him. The labor and pushing might take hours, and then suddenly... BIRTH!

The child who has lived safe and secure inside its mother, is suddenly awakened to a world he could never

have possibly imagined... a world of sound and color, of laughter and beauty... and best of all... a world where he suddenly sees his parents face-to-face! The voices that he learned to recognize before birth are now crystal clear. The visions that were blurred and shadowy are now crisp and sharp.



**The visions that were blurred and shadowy  
are now crisp and clear!**

Those who get to witness childbirth frequently, marvel at the instant bond between the newborn and their parents. As the infant gazes intently at his parents' faces, he is enthralled with their voices. It is like that tiny brain is thinking, "So these are the faces that go with the voices I have learned to know over these months! But oh... this is so much better, seeing them face-to-face and hearing them clearly!"

The longer I live, the more convinced I am that much of the universe is designed by God to help us understand important spiritual truths. And I have been struck by how similar birth is to death...

When an individual puts their faith in Christ for salvation, he begins a new life. It is undeveloped and immature at first, but gradually that person begins to grow and mature.... much like the developing baby in the womb. The believer learns to recognize His heavenly Father's voice and seeks to see things as He sees, although the Divine voice often seems muffled and His face remains hidden.

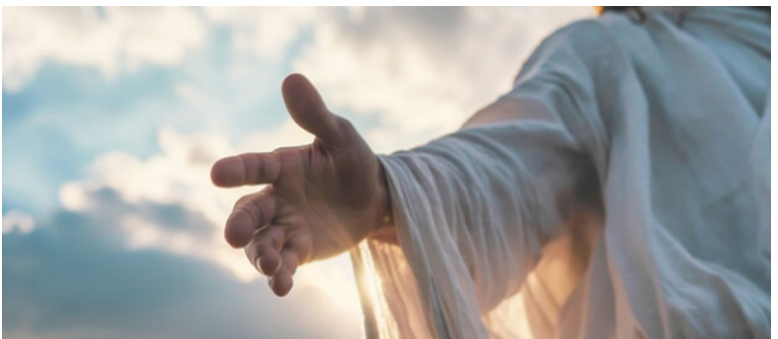
Earth is the only "nursery" the believer knows. When he was a child, that world seemed a wonderful place of adventure and discovery. It seemed safe and comfortable. But as a believer grows old, that same world doesn't seem to fit him as well.... the physical body becomes increasingly limiting, his environment uncomfortable. He

begins to feel weary of waiting. He begins to long to be released from the confines of earthly humanity.

Then suddenly, that child of God finds himself being nudged, pulled, pushed. He may very well wonder what on earth is happening. It is death... the short (or, like labor... sometimes painfully long) journey into a whole new world. But at the end of this journey, he suddenly opens his eyes to a scene so vast and vibrant, wildly beyond anything he had ever imagined, so much more spectacular and colorful and amazing than the earthly "womb" he had lived in for so many years.

And then... wonder of wonders... a familiar Voice... only now so much more close and clear! For the first time, he looks into the tender loving eyes of his heavenly Father! He must think at that moment, "So this is the Face that goes with the Voice I have strained to hear throughout my life on earth... only now that Voice is crystal clear. Now I see in exquisite detail, the beautiful Face of the One I have already come to love!" It is similar to what Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 13:12, *Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*

Those who get to witness the birth of a baby, rejoice and cheer... but this is a small party compared with the enormous celebration among the rejoicing angels and waiting loved ones who witness a believer's arrival in heaven! Why does Psalm 116:15 say, *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints?* Death is precious to Him, because it is the arrival of the treasured child He has carried so long. He has been waiting for and preparing for His child. That's why Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:54-55, *When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true; "Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"*



It is true that many of us don't like to think of the death of those we love or even of our own death. But, let's view death as an amazing process... just like the astounding miracle of birth. Let's picture it as an arrival into a dazzlingly beautiful new world... into the arms of the One who made us and has loved us and has always been with us! He is eager to welcome us HOME!



*Written by  
Sharon Charles*

# Contact Information

<b>Mailing Address</b>	400 E 4th Ave, Lititz, PA 17543
<b>Physical Location</b>	541 W 28th Division Hwy, Lititz
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.AbundantLivingMinistries.org">www. AbundantLivingMinistries.org</a>
<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org">info@AbundantLivingMinistries.org</a>
<b>Phone</b>	(717) 626-9575 (voice or text)
<b>Facebook</b>	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/alm4u">www.facebook.com/alm4u</a>