

## Focusing In . . . January 2009

For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth;  
The former things shall not be remembered or come to mind.  
But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating;  
for I am about to create my Holy City as a joy,  
and its people as a delight. (Isaiah 65:18)

Somehow we think that God created once and that was it – but Genesis tells us that he only rested for one day, so his creative activity must continue on. God is always doing a new thing, his loving creative energies never letting up until we are made new and complete in Christ.

Made in his image, we reflect to our world that same loving creative activity, separating light from dark and bringing order out of chaos. As we enter 2009, there are many places where the world is crying out for creative answers to its constant ills - creative arts, creative thinking, creative alternatives to the same old way we seem to attack our problems. Madeline L'Engle wrote the following as part of an article entitled, "The Other Side of Reason".

"To paint a picture or to write a story or to compose a song is an incarnational activity. The artist is a servant who is willing to be a birth-giver. In a very real sense the artist should be like Mary, who, when the angel told her that she was to bear the Messiah, was obedient to the command . . . I believe that each work of art, whether it is a work of great genius, or something very small, comes to the artist and says, "Here I am. Enflesh me. Give birth to me". And the artist either says, "My soul doth magnify the Lord," and willingly becomes the bearer of the work, or refuses . . . "

I love this idea that God continues to overshadow us with his Spirit and birth new life for the continued salvation of our world. We may not all be literal artists, but the creativity of God can be birthed through each one of us in a unique way. The coming of Christ was the culmination of a new beginning – the final answer to God's re-creative work. We are now part of the story as the Holy Spirit continues to come upon us and breathe new creative life into the staleness of worldly living. God is not finished and neither are we.

I didn't enter 2009 in the best of form, but I refuse to step into this year feeling hopeless that things can ever change and be different. God is never satisfied with the way things are and neither should we be resigned. The story continues so we find our place in it and be glad and rejoice in what he is creating - a city of joy and its people a delight. What a wonderful image and promise! The incarnation continues and it is now your story and my story. I think women are particularly creative and inventive, seeing new ways and approaches to life. As we open ourselves to the working of the Holy Spirit, God will surely do a new thing through us and among us. So may we "magnify" (enlarge) the work of the Lord!