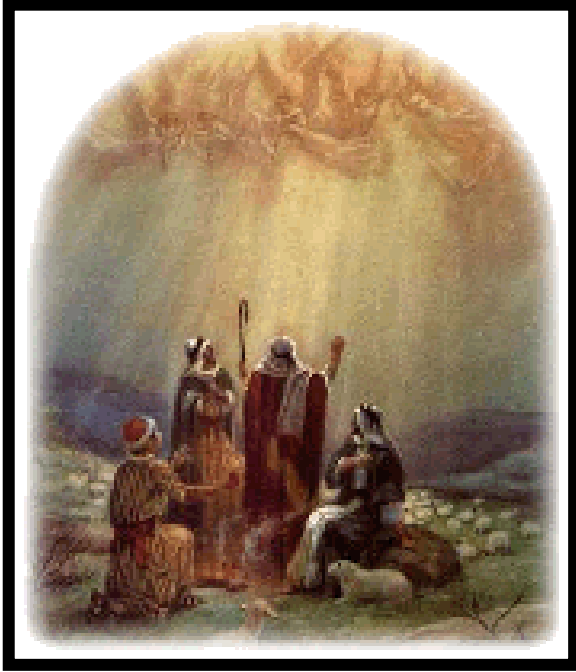


## Ordinary Folks Living Extraordinary Lives

One of the wonderful features of the Christmas story is that it is the story of the ordinary people and the extraordinary way God reaches out to them and uses them for good.



The angels came to the "plain folk" of the day, the shepherds, and shared God's good news with them. The shepherds were poor. They didn't have great clothes or wonderful houses in which to live. They were the common labourers of their time doing the work in society that others didn't want to do. They were people with no influence in their society. They were nobody. Yet it was to these people that God sent an angel the night Jesus was born to tell them ***"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."*** (From Luke 2) They were the ones who were given the task of finding the baby and then telling others what they had seen and heard.

People often feel overwhelmed by the money, power, and plans of others. Particularly at Christmas it seems there's great pressure because we "can't afford" to do what others are doing - whether it is gifts or parties. We feel "less than", "not worth much", and "second class."

Christmas is for everyone, but especially for those who feel little, who feel poor, who feel vulnerable. It's to US that Jesus is born. ***"Unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given."*** (From Isaiah 9) Into our ordinary lives Jesus comes and says, "I have good news

for you. Do not be afraid. Your life can influence your world in amazing and wonderful ways. You don't have to be rich. You don't have to be a 'pretty one.' You don't have to be a person with a powerful place of influence." You simply need to be yourself and be open to the good news. Share that and see what an amazing gift it will be to others and what an incredible influence it will have for good.

Sometimes we feel we're even less than a simple ordinary person. We are very much aware of our character defects. We wonder how a person with our history, our problems, our addictions could possibly do amazing things. It's at such times that amusing songs like, "Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer" have a wonderful lesson for us to hear. Rudolph's glaring problem was a big red nose. It was something that brought ridicule and laughter from the other reindeer around him. Yet it was his nose, as the story goes, that was useful to Santa in guiding the sleigh on Christmas Eve night. The wonderful spiritual principle is that God can use even our character defects, when they are transformed by His loving power and put to use in His loving plan. ***"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*** (Romans 8:28)

This Christmas God wants to use you and I to bring good news to our world. Will we let God transform our ordinary flawed lives to become people of great influence and good news? What will we do this Christmas to do good?

