

Woman Gives Birth to Child Who Is Only a Year Younger Than She Is

Tina Gibson gave birth to a daughter named Emma last month. The mother was 25 years old at the time. Her daughter was 24. How is this possible?

Tina and her husband Benjamin married seven years ago, but the couple assumed they could not have biological children because Benjamin has cystic fibrosis, which often results in infertility. They fostered a few children until Tina's father suggested embryo adoption.

This is the process by which couples who use in vitro fertilization (IVF) donate unused frozen embryos to other couples. The Wrens went to the National Embryo Donation Center in Knoxville, Tennessee, where they received a donated embryo. It turns out, that embryo had been created through IVF and frozen twenty-four years earlier.

Tina gave birth to the baby she received. She told reporters, "This embryo and I could have been best friends." As it is, they are now mother and daughter.

If Tina and Benjamin had another way to become pregnant, it seems likely that they would not have chosen this route. But they know that their new daughter is indeed a miracle.

Responding to 'Unexpected Opportunities'

Many of the choices we make aren't really choices. If we have only one option, it becomes the best option.

For instance, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will begin making lethal viruses. Dr. Francis Collins, director of the NIH, explained that such research is necessary to "develop

strategies and effective countermeasures against rapidly evolving pathogens that pose a threat to public health.” Research involving the influenza virus, severe acute respiratory syndrome (known as SARS), and Middle East respiratory syndrome (or MERS) will now proceed.

The NIH would rather not develop these dangerous pathogens, since they could threaten millions of lives if they are not stored properly or escape from a lab. But the only way to create a cure for such diseases is to understand them, and scientists cannot understand them if they cannot study them.

In other news, Chick-fil-A continues to receive applause for violating its policy not to open on Sundays. Since opening his first restaurant in 1946, founder Truett Cathy closed his stores on Sundays so employees and customers could go to church and spend time with their families.

However, the mayor of Atlanta called at 10 p.m. last Sunday to ask for help. A major power outage had halted flights and stranded thousands of passengers at Hartsfield-Jackson airport.

In response, the company mobilized staff and team members to make and deliver sandwiches to those responding to the emergency. CEO Dan Cathy and other company officials also distributed sandwiches and bottled water to passengers after the airport’s power was restored. According to the mayor, 2,000 meals in total went out to weary travelers.

The company made the same decision in Orlando, Florida, after a mass shooting at a gay nightclub last year. Employees provided food to people who were donating blood and to law enforcement officers responding to the tragedy.

Clearly, Chick-fil-A would rather not have opened on these Sundays, but there was no other way to offer the service they rendered. As Truett Cathy said, “We change the world, and ourselves, by our response to unexpected opportunities.”

The Baby Born to Die

In yesterday's *My Utmost for His Highest* reading, Oswald Chambers advised us, "When you find yourself face to face with a person who is spiritually lost, remind yourself of Jesus Christ on the cross. If that person can get to God in any other way, then the cross of Christ is unnecessary."

The same is true of Christmas.

If it were not necessary for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem's stable and die on Calvary's cross, he would not have done so. Our Savior gave up splendor in heaven beyond our ability to imagine (see Rev. 4:2-11) to become a helpless infant born to peasant parents and lie in a rough feed trough. His life on earth was marked by weariness (John 4:6, Matt. 8:24), homelessness (Matt. 8:20), and rejection by his own family (Mark 3:21; John 7:5) and the crowds he served (Matt. 27:23). He suffered horrific torture (John 19:1) and execution (v. 23).

Worst of all, he bore our sins on his sinless soul (2 Cor. 5:21), a cost none of us can begin to understand.

I fear that we take Christmas for granted. Many in our culture ignore Jesus' birth completely, while others pause only briefly to consider his incarnational sacrifice before proceeding to open presents, eat a meal, and watch football. Even those who are most devoted to him can all too easily overlook the price he paid to become one of us that we might be one with him.

But if there were another way to save our lost souls, Jesus would have taken it. He was the only baby in all of human history who knew his life and death before his birth. And he would be born to die all over again, just for you.

When last did you thank Christ for Christmas? {eoa}

This article originally appeared on The Denison Forum.