# Sharing the News

# A Light-Hearted Christmas Pageant

### Format

There are many versions of the Christmas story that, despite including inaccuracies, have been accepted into the everyday telling of the Nativity story. “Sharing the News” offers gentle correctives to some of these misconceptions. The pageant takes the form of a television newscast, screened shortly after Jesus’ birth. The characters—Anne Angel, a Shepherd, Lisa and Tony Lamb, and The King—are interviewed by reporter Mike Handler. Each character offers scripturally-based accounts of the Nativity story, but their accounts often include inaccuracies. The news anchor, Truth Checker, offers clarification.

To keep the pageant’s message universal, the setting is not specific to time or place. Jesus might have been born in a stable some 2000 years ago, but in our hearts and in our lives, Jesus is born each and every Christmas.

### Characters

Truth Checker (news anchor): source of information that clarifies the Nativity story

Mike Handler (reporter): excited and amused

Anne Angel: joyful, smiling, and friendly

Shepherd: righteous surfer dude; occasional moments of seriousness

Lisa and Tony Lamb: well-dressed couple with accents that hint at privilege

The King: Elvis impersonator

The characters are stereotypes, so a little hamming is okay. Minimal costuming is required as the emphasis is on the dialogue.

### Staging

The news anchor is seated at a desk or table on one side of a stage, or on a raised platform, and the interviews take place on the other side of the stage, “on location.” Although the following dialogue has been framed into scenes, the interviews will flow from one to the other without breaks. However, if your church decides to include the pageant within the framing of your worship, the scene format will provide useful breaks with each scene ending with the news anchor’s comments.

## Scene 1: Anne Angel

**Truth Checker (TC):** Good evening, good people of (*church name*). I’m Truth Checker, and this is Everyday News. Tonight, we bring you the story of a mysterious event. Standing by is our roving reporter, Mike Handler, who has been on the scene listening to the reactions of witnesses. We go now, live, to the scene. Mike?

**Mike Handler (MH):** Thank you, Truth. A heavenly light, a choir of angels, wandering seekers, and the arrival of a king. It’s been a strange night, with even stranger stories to tell. One of the first witnesses to tonight’s events is with me right here…Anne Angel. Ms. Angel, can you tell us what happened here?

**Anne Angel (AA):** (*hands clasped with excitement, then stretched out wide with head tilted back*)Hallelujah! Yes I can! I bring you glad tidings of great joy! Tonight, in this town, is born to us a child who will change the world! His name is Jesus. Hallelujah!

**MH:** (*chuckling nervously*) Okay (*regaining composure*) Uh, Ms. Angel, how do you know this child is so special?

**AA:** Because suddenly there was with me a great multitude of the heavenly host filling the sky and singing, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!” And Mike, that doesn’t happen every day! (*joyful laugh*)

**MH:** (*smiling, enjoying the interview*) In addition to you, was there anyone else who heard this song? Who can confirm your account?

**AA:** Well, sure! They’re right over there. That’s the Shepherds! (*looking in the direction of the Shepherds and calling out to them*) Hey! Shepherds! (*turning to MH*) They were in the fields, abiding, when it happened.

**MH:** (*to camera*) This is definitely a first for me, Truth. Not just an angel, but many angels! Singing! Wings and harps and all! I’m not sure what to make of it, but it’s a pretty fantastic story.

**TC:** Right! Of course, Mike, we can’t say for certain that these angels had wings and harps. After all, in the Bible, an angel is a messenger of God and often takes the form of a stranger who offers fresh insight and a comforting word.

**MH:** (*innocently*) So they don’t live on clouds and eat cream cheese?

**TC:** No, Mike. That’s just a commercial.

## Scene Two: A Shepherd

**MH:** (*turning to next interviewee*) Okay, good to know. Well, Truth, I’m standing here with a shepherd. Mr. Shepherd, can you tell us what happened tonight?

**Shepherd (S):** (*surfer voice; happy to be interviewed*) Hi Mom! Hi Dad!

**MH:** Mr. Shepherd…?

**S:** Oh! Yah, it was super cool! There was all this light, and those angels cranked the tunes, like “Gloria,” and then (*suddenly serious*) this really chill voice told us to come here to find a baby.

**MH:** A baby? Was this baby missing, or hurt?

**S:** Nah man, he was totally safe! He was just a little dude with a big heart, and when we saw him, man, we knew…we knew he was gonna’ be something.

**MH:** You say “we”?

**S:** Oh, yah. Me, my sisters, my brothers, the whole Shepherd family. (*seriously, but still in surfer voice as though quoting scripture*) All the shepherds came to witness what the angels had foretold. (*looks into distance, absorbed in thought*)

(*Pause for effect; MH looks to where S is looking, trying to see what he seems to be seeing.*)

**MH:** Uh… (*getting back to reality*) Right! And where did you find this baby?

**S:** Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger, dude!

**MH:** A manger? You mean, like a trough that livestock drink from?

**S:** (*confused*) Yah...I guess so.

**MH:** And his parents were there?

**S:** (*certain, and yet suddenly amazed thinking about it*) Yah...!

**MH:** Mr. Shepherd?

**S:** Yay?

**MH:** His parents; can you describe them?

**S:** Oh, sure! His dad, I mean, sort of his dad, like he was… and he wasn’t… I dunno’. Anyway, he was kind of an older dude, with gnarly hands, like he works with them a lot. His mom, though, she was all quiet and peaceful. We told her about the angels and stuff, and she kind of smiled, but she also looked a little worried.

**MH:** Well, I’m sure it’s been a strange night for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Shepherd.

**S:** No problem, news Dude.

**MH:** (*to camera*) So, Truth, it seems that this special child was not lost, but was found by the Shepherds in a manger—a rather odd place for an infant.

**TC:** Thank you, Mike. Of course, I remind our viewers that we know from archaeological and linguistic evidence that it is just as likely that this child was born in a cave, and not in a stable. Mike, are there any other witnesses to tonight’s events who can confirm Mr. Shepherd’s story?

## Scene Three: Lisa and Tony Lamb

**MH:** As luck would have it, Truth, I’m standing by with a witness who says she can confirm these accounts. Ma’am, can you introduce yourself?

**Lisa Lamb (LL):** Yes, my name is Lisa Lamb, (*to camera*) L-I-S-A-L-A-M-B, (*bleating like a lamb*) Laa-aa-mb. And I was there when the baby was born and the Shepherds arrived.

**MH:** And what was the mood?

**LL:** The mood? You wanna’ know the mood? It was crazy, you know!?

**MH:** So this was, in fact, a very special birth?

**LL:** (*sarcastically*) Well sure, if the word of God is anything to go by.

**MH:** And you, Ms. Lamb…

**LL:** Mrs.

**MH:** Pardon me!

**LL:** Mrs. Lamb. I’m Mrs. Lamb.

**MH:** Oh, I see. Is Mr. Lamb here tonight?

**LL:** Of course he is! How do you think I got here in this dress? (*shouting, not angrily, but distractedly*) Tony! Tony! (*impatiently*) Tony! (*insistent*) Tony!

**Tony Lamb (TL):** (*wearily*) Right here, honey.

**LL:** Tell the man what we saw.

**TL:** Well, actually, I didn’t really see it, honey…

**LL:** (*unimpressed*) Then tell the man what I saw, Tony.

**TL:** It’s just like she said. A baby, the parents, the shepherds, the whole bit.

**LL:** (*prompting*) And the king. Tell him about the king!

**TL:** (*disinterested*) Oh yeah. After a bit, some kings came.

**LL:** (*exasperated, bleating at Tony like a lamb*) Ba-aa-aa! You’re getting it all wrong. (*to MH*) There were three kings, from far away in the East. And one of them looked really familiar. I mean, at first I wasn’t sure, but then I knew. I’m positive I know him from somewhere.

**MH:** Well, Mr. and Mrs. Lamb, thank you for your time.

**LL:** Come on, Tony. Let’s go. (*complaining*) This coat isn’t warm enough.

**TL:** We could gather closer to the manger, with the ox and the donkey…

**LL:** (*incredulous*) The ox and the donkey? Are you crazy? Sometimes I wonder, Tony. Sometimes…

**MH:** (*to camera*) There you have it, Truth. The Lambs can confirm the arrival of three kings from the East.

**TC:** Thanks, Mike. At this point I’d like to remind our viewers that it is pretty clear from the gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth that we can’t be sure when the magi came, but it was certainly a while after Jesus was born. In fact, it’s also not clear that these visitors were even kings, or how many there were, or even if they were all men. Mike, is there any way to clarify these points?

## Scene Four: The King

**MH:** Well, I do happen to have one more witness to tonight’s events who is willing to talk. (*chuckling*) Very willing to talk, in fact. (*to The King*) Sir, your name is…?

**The King (K):** (*Elvis impersonator, with sunglasses*) I’m The King, baby.

**MH:** (*unsure*) Okay, Mr. King, I…

**K:** Not Mr. King, baby. Just (*making big hand gestures indicating his name in lights*) “THE KING.”

**MH:** Right… “The King.” Can you tell us where you were when all of this was taking place?

**K:** (*singing*) “Well, since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell. It’s down at the end of that lonely street there and it’s called… (*dramatically, sadly*) Heartbreak Hotel.”

**MH:** (*quizzically*) Right! Perhaps you can tell us what you saw and heard?

**K:** First I heard this singing, man, and then I saw this light in the sky, movin’, and I knew it was guidin’ me somewhere I just needed to be. So I jumped up and followed it, and when it stopped and stayed put, I went into this tiny little room, and there he was. The King.

**MH:** You mean, another king?

**K:** Not just another king, baby. The real king.

**MH:** I don’t understand…

**K:** (*humbly, removing sunglasses*) The real king, man. The king of our hearts. (*singing*) “Love me tender, love me true, all my hopes...” (*moved*) That kinda king.

**MH:** (*trying to understand*) So, you’re saying, that the baby that was born is…what?

**K:** Nothin’ less than the eternal love of God incarnated in beautiful human form, baby.

**MH:** That’s quite a handle for a baby born in a stable.

**K:** Sure is. But he’s not in the stable anymore. (*dramatically*) He has…left the building.

**MH:** Well, where is he now?

**K:** (*pointing to chest*) He’s in here, baby. He’s in our hearts.

**MH:** Thank you, Mr. King. (*to camera, wrapping up*) It turns out that this is more than just a story about a baby born on one special night; it’s a story for people in all times and places, reassuring them of the love of God in their midst and alive in every person. (*noticing The King walking away*) The King, uh, (*stumbling*) sir, uh…is there anything you would add to describe tonight’s events?

**K:** (*coming back, grabbing the microphone, singing*) “It’d be a blue Christmas without you…” (*to an invisible crowd*) Thank you, San Diego! Goodnight!

**TC:** Well folks, there you have it. The King has indeed left the building. The birth of this child, Jesus, is a gift from God. A gift that cannot remain in the stable, or on the pages of our scriptures, but a gift that must be shared with all the world. A gift of love that knows no borders or boundaries. A small but mighty gift, moving us to seek peace and justice for all. That is our story.

All of us here, we wish you a good night, and God bless.

*—Andy O’Neil i**s minister at St. Paul’s United Church in Riverview, NB*