

## UNLIKELY MESSENGERS: A Christmas Pageant

Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, MD

Written by Tim Hughes

December 18, 2016

**Michael will begin with a musical introduction. A soloist will sing the first verse of “Go Tell It On The Mountain” and then invite the congregation to sing the chorus. Then EVAN and SPENCER will come out onto the chancel steps with two handheld microphones and two binders. They walk down the center aisle towards the rear of the sanctuary as Spencer says his lines.**

SPENCER: Welcome to the Christmas Pageant everybody! It’s a very old story but we believe there is always something new to hear in it. That’s partly because we are different every year. And partly because everybody tells it differently.

This year we are adding in unlikely messengers – stories from all over the world and all over history. Because the Good News is for every time and place. And so we present the Christmas Pageant. Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

CONGREGATION: Thanks be to God.

### Scene 1: The Good and Terrifying News

**(EVAN and SPENCER both start towards the back of the pews where MARY stands alone.)**

EVAN : Once upon a time, there was a young woman named Mary who lived in a town called Nazareth. Mary was engaged to a carpenter named Joseph, who was a pretty nice guy. But one day, when Joseph was at work, God sent a mighty angel named Gabriel to visit Mary.

**{Gabriel comes fluttering in from the Narthex.}**

SPENCER: Mary was frightened, because Gabriel was very powerful. But Gabriel said to her: **“Greetings favored one! The Lord is with you!”** *(wait for Cecilia to repeat)* Mary was very confused. Gabriel said to her: **“Do not be afraid, Mary. *(wait for Cecilia)* For you have found favor with God. *(wait)* You will have a son, and you will name him Jesus. *(wait)* He will be great!**

EVAN : *(wait for Cecilia to finish repeating previous line)* Mary didn’t know what to do. She asked Gabriel, **“How can I have a baby? *(wait for Sarah to repeat)* I’m not even married yet!”** *(wait)* Gabriel said, **“The Holy Spirit will come to you *(wait)***

**so the child will be holy when it is born; (wait) he will be called the Son of God.”**  
(wait)

SPENCER: (wait for Cecilia to finish previous line) Mary thought about saying no, believe me – she kind of wanted to! But then...she said yes, and Gabriel departed.

All characters freeze. PATTI FLOWERS COULSON steps up to the lectern to deliver the first monologue, “Lily Pads.”

### **Monologue 1: “Lily Pads” by Annie Lamott <sup>1</sup>**

*Tim: Annie Lamott is a celebrated author and humorist, known for her salty humor and her raw authenticity. She has been sober for many years now, but reflected in her memoir, Traveling Mercies, about coming to Jesus from the depths of alcoholism.*

I got pregnant in April, right around my thirtieth birthday, but was so loaded every night that the next morning’s first urine was too diluted for a pregnancy test to prove positive. Every other day, Pammy, who still lived in Mill Valley with her husband, would come by and take a small bottle of pee to the lab that was near her home. I did not have a car. I had a very stern conversation with myself a year before, in which I said that I had to either stop drinking or get rid of the car. This was a real no-brainer. I got around on foot....

On weekends, I went to the flea market....If I happened to be there between eleven and one on Sundays, I could hear gospel music coming from a church right across the street. It was called St. Andrew Presbyterian, and it looked homely and impoverished, a ramshackle building with a cross on the top, sitting on a small parcel of land with a few skinny pine trees. But the music wafting out was so pretty that I would stop and listen. I knew a lot of the hymns from the times I’d gone to church with my grandparents...Finally, I began stopping in at St. Andrew from time to time, standing in the doorway to listen to the songs. I couldn’t believe how rundown it was, with terrible linoleum that was brown and over-shined, and plastic stained-glass windows. But it had a choir of five black women and one rather Amish-looking white man making all that glorious noise, and a congregation of thirty people or so, radiating kindness and warmth...

I went back to St. Andrew about once a month. No one tried to con me into sitting or staying. I always left before the sermon. But it was the singing that pulled me in and split me wide open....

Eventually, a few months after I started coming, I took a seat in one of the folding chairs, off by myself. The singing enveloped me. It was furry and resonant, coming

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from “Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith,” by Anne Lamott. Anchor Books, New York, 1999.

from everyone's heart. There was no sense of performance or judgment, only that the music was breath and food.

And one week later, when I went back to church, I was so hung over that I couldn't stand up for the songs, and this time I stayed for the sermon, which I just thought was so ridiculous, like someone trying to convince me of the existence of extraterrestrials, but the last song was so deep and raw and pure that I could not escape. It was as if the people were singing in-between the notes, weeping and joyful at the same time, and I felt like their voices or *something* was rocking me in its bosom, holding me like a scared kid, and I opened up to that feeling – and it washed over me.

I began to cry and left before the benediction, and I raced home and felt a little cat running along at my heels, and I walked down the dock past dozens of potted flowers, under a sky as blue as one of God's own dreams, and I opened the door to my houseboat, and I stood there a minute, and then I hung my head and I said, "Screw it: I quit." I took a long deep breath and said out loud, "All right. You can come in."

## Scene 2: No Room

**(Attention shifts back to the real of the sanctuary. Mary is pacing anxiously.)**

SPENCER: Eventually, Mary realized she had to tell Joseph. She waited until he came over one night for dinner. **(Joseph enters casually.)** She said "**Joseph, I've got some big news, (wait) I'm gonna have a baby. (wait) I know it is hard to understand, but the baby belongs to God.**"

EVAN : *(wait for Sarah to finish)* Joseph was confused and angry. He wanted to divorce Mary quietly, but that night Gabriel came to him in a dream, and said "**Joseph, I know it's sounds crazy, but it's true. (wait) The baby is from the Holy Spirit, (wait) and he will save his people from their sins.**"

SPENCER: *(wait for Cecilia to finish)* Joseph went to Mary, and said "**Mary, I want to believe you. (wait) I DO believe you. But we can't stay here. (wait) The Emperor wants to register everyone in the world (wait) so we have go to Bethlehem. (wait) But there's just one problem...(wait) we won't have anywhere to live. (wait) And I only have this old donkey for you to ride on.**"

**(Anthony emerges from the narthex in the Donkey costume, making a donkey noise).**

EVAN : *(wait for Marcos to finish)* Mary was worried, but trusted in God. So she, Joseph, and the donkey made the long journey to Bethlehem.

**Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem**

*O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight*

**(During the song, Mary, Joseph, Donkey, EVAN , and SPENCER travel down the aisle to the front, just before the front of the pews. INNKEEPER leaps up from front pew to block their path).**

SPENCER: When they finally arrived in Bethlehem, they were very tired, and Mary was really pregnant, because the trip had taken many months. Joseph went to the door of every hotel in town, but there was no room anywhere.

EVAN : Finally, one innkeeper said to them, **"I don't have any rooms left, (wait) but you can sleep out in the barn. (wait) It smells terrible because of all the animals, (wait) but it's all I have to offer.**

SPENCER: Mary and Joseph had no choice. They went to the smelly barn and met all their new animal friends.

### **Carol: The Friendly Beasts**

- 1. Jesus our brother, kind and good  
Was humbly born in a stable rude  
And the friendly beasts around Him stood,  
Jesus our brother, kind and good.*
- 2. "I," said the DONKEY (**DONKEY moves up steps**), shaggy and brown,  
"I carried His mother up hill and down;  
I carried her safely to Bethlehem town."  
"I," said the donkey, shaggy and brown.*
- 3. "I," said the COW (**COW comes out and sits**) all white and red  
"I gave Him my manger for His bed;  
I gave him my hay to pillow his head."  
"I," said the cow all white and red.*
- 4. "I," said the SHEEP (**SHEEP come out**) with curly horn,  
"I gave Him my wool for His blanket warm;  
He wore my coat on Christmas morn."  
"I," said the sheep with curly horn.*
- 5. "I," said the DOVE (**DOVES come out**) from the rafters high,  
"I cooed Him to sleep so He would not cry;  
We cooed him to sleep, my mate and I."  
"I," said the dove from the rafters high.*

*6. Thus every beast by some good spell,  
In the stable dark was glad to tell  
Of the gift he gave Immanuel,  
The gift he gave Immanuel.*

**(All animals, Mary and Joseph settle in on steps. Innkeeper and Donkey can sit down. EVAN stays near steps; SPENCER moves to balcony to get ready for Shepherd/Angels)**

EVAN : Since there were no beds in the barn, Mary and Joseph slept on the ground. Joseph had taken one of the mangers that the animals ate out of and lined it with hay, so they would have a place for the baby Jesus to sleep. The night that Jesus was born, Mary wrapped him in strips of cloth, and laid him in the manger.

**(JESUS is brought out and placed in MARY's lap).**

All actors freeze. Kirk Fulton (Philip) and Anne Heuisler (Magda) come forward.

## **Monologue 2: "Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed" by Philip Haille <sup>2</sup>**

*Tim: The village of Le Chambon is a small commune in Southern France. During World War II, the people of Le Chambon hid and housed thousands of Jews who were fleeing Nazi Germany. At times, the number of Jewish refugees was greater than the population of the village itself. Philip Haille traveled to Le Chambon in 1979 to interview Magda Trocme, the wife of the deceased minister who led the effort.*

**Philip Haille:** Long after the war, Magda Trocme summarized for me what all the work meant for her at the time:

**Magda:** I have a kind of principle. I am not a good Christian at all, but I have things that I really believe in. First of all, I believe and believed in [my husband] Andre; I was faithful to his projects and to him personally, and I understood him very well. Second principle: I try not to hunt around to find things to do. I do not hunt around to find people to help. But I never close my door, never refuse to help somebody who comes to me and asks for something. This, I think, is my kind of religion. You see, it is a way of handling myself. When things happen, not things that I plan, but things sent by God or by chance, when people come to my door, I feel responsible. During Andre's life during the war many people came, and my life was therefore complicated.

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<sup>2</sup> Excerpt from "Lest Innocent Blood Be Shed: The Story of the Village of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There," by Philip Haille. Harpers and Row, New York, 1979.

**Philip Haille:** Her ‘principle’ did not involve any abstract theories, but only a feeling of responsibility to particular people – first of all to her husband, and next to anybody who happened to come to the door of the presbytery. And this feeling is not one of overflowing affection; it is practical and abrupt, like Magda herself. The sentimental, sometimes mystical love cherished by poets, philosophers, and saints was not for her.

In Deuteronomy, a city of refuge is a place that takes responsibility for the life of the refugee who comes there; that is to say, it is a place that commits itself to protecting the refugee who comes to its gates. Its members do not leave those gates to look for the oppressed; they stand at the gates ready to take responsibility. Deuteronomy 19:10 reads: “I command you this day to protect the refugee, lest innocent blood be shed in your land.” Magda Trocme hardly ever speaks of God, and she does not think in terms of innocence and guilt; rather, she thinks in terms of people in trouble, in terms of doors that open, in terms of her own stubborn decision to keep her door open no matter how tired or distraught she might be. Despite her secularism, she was an effective gatekeeper for a city of refuge.

### **Scene 3: A Child Shall Lead Them**

EVAN : Out in the country that night, the shepherds who worked the night shift sat out in the fields, watching their sleeping sheep. They were very bored.

SPENCER: Suddenly, the sky lit up like a fireball, blinding the shepherds. Angels of the Lord appeared!

**(The angels appear from behind pews in the rear balcony, with spotlight. Michael plays some angelic music.)**

EVAN : The shepherds were terrified! **(Shepherds make terrified noises)**

SPENCER: The angels said “**Do not be afraid** (*wait*), **for we bring you good news!** (*wait*) **to you this day in the city of David** (*wait*) **is born a Savior who is the Messiah.**”

EVAN (*wait for angels to finish*) The shepherds were completely speechless.

SPENCER: The angels continued “**You will find the baby in a barn** (*wait*) **wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger** (*wait*). **Go, and find the baby tonight!**”

EVAN : (*wait for angels*) The shepherds nodded their heads but still could not speak.

SPENCER: Then the angels said in their loudest voices “**GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST** (*wait*) **AND ON EARTH PEACE,** (*wait*) **GOODWILL TO ALL!**” (*wait*) And then the angels disappeared.

EVAN : When the shepherds could finally see again, they turned to each other, and said, “**This baby sounds amazing!** (wait) **We should get going.** (wait) And they did, finding their way to town, and the barn where Jesus had just been born.

**Carol: Angels We Have Heard on High**

*Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains  
Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly, sweetly through the night  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their brief delight  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo  
Gloria, in excelsis Deo*

**(Shepherds travel from transept to steps. Angels come down from balcony and sit. SPENCER and EVAN both travel to right transept with Herod and Herod's Guard. And then...all freeze.)**

**Monologue 3: A Child Shall Lead Them**<sup>3</sup>

**Tim:** *PJ Vogt is a contributor for the radio show, This American Life. While researching a piece on Girl Scouts – or Girl Guides, as they are called in many other countries, he discovered a little known story about a concentration camp during World War Two. During the war, Japan invaded China and built a concentration camp in the town of Chefoo, which primarily held British and American citizens. Inside this camp was a very unlikely Girl Guide group, created to entertain the children imprisoned there.*

*PJ Vogt found the story so incredible that he tracked down a survivor of the camp, a feisty 82 year old woman named Mary Previte. This is an excerpt of their conversation.*

**Mary Previte (Chrystie Adams):** I remember now the ritual of going to Japanese quarters to get the coal dust and carry it back.

**PJ Vogt:** Like making a new pencil from pencil shavings, except the coal is heavy. And it had to be passed bucket by bucket in a line of Girl Guides. Then the shavings were mixed with dust and water and dried in the sun. It was long, hard work.

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<sup>3</sup> Excerpted from “Captain’s Log,” aired on *This American Life* on June 26, 2015. Audio and transcript from the episode can be found at <https://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/559/captains-log?act=1>

And then at the end of it, you still had to go use that recycled coal in a pot-bellied stove and keep the stove lit so that everybody would be warm. It sounded horrible, like a childhood from a Charles Dickens novel. Except Mary remembers it as being surprisingly fun, a game she could win.

**Mary Previte:** I and my partner, Marjorie Harrison, we won the competition in our dormitory of which stove lighting team made the pot-bellied stove in the winter turn red hot more times than any other girl in the camp. Well, you know, here I am, 82 years old, and what do I choose to tell you? I won. The pot-belly turned red more times with me and Marjorie Harrison than any other girl in our dorm.

**PJ Vogt:** When you describe it, it sounds like you're describing summer camp instead of describing a concentration camp. Did it feel like summer camp? Did you ever—

**Mary Previte:** Well, I never was in a summer camp. So I can't give you a-- no, no, no, absolutely not. When you had guard dogs, bayonet drills, electrified wires, barrier walls, pill-boxes with armed guards in them, you weren't in a summer camp. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying this was Fun City. I'm telling you, we lived a miracle where grownups preserved our childhood.

**PJ Vogt:** There probably aren't many places on earth where you have less reason to be cheerful than a concentration camp. But it turns out, in a place like that, being able to be cheerful, to have a positive outlook, it's not dopey or silly. It's how you survive. How you tell the story matters.

**Mary Previte:** For example, one of the things that we sang when the Japanese were marching us into the concentration camp was the first verse of Psalm 46.

(SINGING) God is our refuge, our refuge and our strength. And on it goes. In trouble, we will not be afraid.

All of these words just sung into our hearts. That sticks. It's like you've got a groove sticking in the gramophone record. I am safe. I am safe. I am safe.

**PJ Vogt:** The first Chefoo brownies warded off despair for four years, until finally, on August 17, 1945, they were rescued.



**(Attention shifts to the Columbarium aka Herod's Palace).**

#### **Scene 4: Power Plays**

SPENCER: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem, King Herod was hanging out in Jerusalem at his castle one day while his guard was patrolling. Suddenly a group of wise people came up to the castle. **(Wise ones emerge from the Narthex with CAMEL, following the STAR and walk up right-hand aisle. They are stopped at the steps by LEAD GUARD)** The guard stopped them, saying "What business do you foreigners have here?"

EVAN : *(wait for GUARD)* The wise ones said, "We have traveled a long way from the east. *(wait)* There's a strange star we've been following **(point to STAR)**, that tells us a holy baby has been born in Bethlehem."

SPENCER: *(wait for wise ones)* Herod got very interested and he invited the wise ones in. He said to them, "Go see this baby in Bethlehem *(wait)*. Pay him homage, and then come back to me *(wait)* so I can go see this baby Messiah for myself *(wait)* To worship him, of course. **(All freeze.)**

#### **Monologue 4: Power Plays**

*Tim: Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German minister and theologian in the Lutheran Church. As Hitler rose to power, he became increasingly alarmed at the willingness of German Christians to align with the Nazis. He gave the following speech at the Fano Church Conference in 1934. Many of the attendees present had already sworn their allegiance to Hitler.*

#### **Andrew Foster Connors:**

There shall be peace because of the church of Christ, for the sake of which the world exists...

How does peace come about? Through a system of political treaties? Through the investment of international capital in different countries? Through the big banks? Through money?...Through none of these, for the single reason that in all of them peace is confused with safety. There is no way to peace along the way of safety. For peace must be dared. It is the great venture. It can never be safe. Peace is the opposite of security. To demand guarantees is to mistrust, and this mistrust in turn brings forth war. To look for guarantees is to want to protect oneself. Peace means to give oneself altogether to the law of God....

Why do we fear the fury of the world powers? Why don't we take the power from them and give it back to Christ? We can still do it today. The Ecumenical Council is still in session; it can send out to all believers this radical call to peace...

We want to give the world a whole word, not a half-word –a courageous word, a Christian word. We want to pray that this word may be given to us today. Who knows if we shall see each other again another year? <sup>4</sup>

### **Scene 5: Gifts In The Dark**

EVAN : So the wise ones began following the star to Bethlehem. **(Wise ones and EVAN leave transept following the star towards steps. Herod and guards leave sanctuary through right chancel door).**

#### **Carol: We Three Kings**

*We three kings of Orient are  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar.  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.  
O star of wonder, star of night,  
Star of royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

**(WISE ONES walk up to ensemble on chancel steps. STAR travels up steps and disappears. GUARDS and HEROD exit through right front door.)**

EVAN : The wise ones continued traveling to Bethlehem, not knowing Herod’s plan. When they got there, they found the star hanging over the barn where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived **(Light is illuminated on chancel balcony)**. They were overcome with joy, and knelt to worship the baby. Then they gave him the gifts they brought on their long journey. **(Gifts are presented)**

SPENCER: The wise ones and the shepherds wanted to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. But the wise ones were warned in a dream not to tell Herod. **(All freeze).**

### **Monologue 5: Gifts in The Dark <sup>5</sup>**

*Tim: The famed African American author and essayist James Baldwin, already famous for his memoir Go Tell It On The Mountain, published a new book of essays in 1962. It contains an essay written in the form of a letter to his fifteen year-old nephew,*

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<sup>4</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, “The Church and the Peoples of the World.” Delivered at the Fano Conference in 1934.

<sup>5</sup> “My Dungeon Shook: Letter To My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation,” by James Baldwin. Included in *The Fire Next Time*, Vintage Books, New York, 1962.

*anticipating the Hundredth Anniversary of the Emancipation of Slavery in 1963. Baldwin wrote the following words to his nephew James:*

JOSHUA THOMAS: Now, my dear namesake, these innocent and well-meaning people, your countrymen, have caused you to be born under circumstances not very far removed from those described for us by Charles Dickens in the London of more than a hundred years ago. (I hear the chorus of innocents screaming, "No! This is not true! How *bitter* you are!" - but I am writing this letter to *you*, to try and tell you something about how to handle *them*, for most of them do not really yet know that you exist. I *know* the conditions under which you were born, for I was there. Your countrymen were *not* there, and haven't made it yet. Your grandmother was also there, and no one has ever accused her of being bitter. I suggest that the innocents check with her. She isn't hard to find. Your countrymen don't know that *she* exists either, though she has been working for them all their lives.

Well, you were born, here you came, something like fifteen years ago; and though your father and mother and grandmother, looking about the streets through which they were carrying you, staring at the walls into which they had brought you, had every reason to be heavyhearted, yet they were not. For here you were, Big James, named for me - you were a big baby, I was not - here you were; to be loved. To be loved, baby, hard, at once, and forever, to strengthen you against the loveless world. Remember that: I know how black it looks today for you. It looked bad that day, too, yes, we were trembling. We have not stopped trembling yet, but if we had not loved each other none of us would have survived. And now you must survive because we love you, and for the sake of your children and your children's children....

Well the black man has functioned in the white man's world as a fixed star, as an immovable pillar: and as he moves out of his place, heaven and earth are shaken to their foundations. You, don't be afraid. I said that it was intended that you should perish in the ghetto, perish by never being allowed to go beyond the white man's definitions, by never being allowed to spell your proper name. You have, and many of us have, defeated this intention; and by a terrible law, a terrible paradox, those innocents who believed that your imprisonment made them safe are losing their grasp on reality. But these men are your brothers - your lost, younger brothers. And if the word *integration* means anything, this is what it means: that we, with love, shall force our brothers to see themselves as they are, to cease fleeing from reality and begin to change it.

For this is your home, my friend, do not be driven from it. Great men have done great things here, and will again, and we will make America what America must become.

### **Conclusion: Go Tell It**

SPENCER: Like I said, the wise ones and the shepherds wanted to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus. But the wise ones were warned in a dream not to tell Herod.

EVAN : So instead... **(All characters huddles around MARY, JOSEPH, JESUS, then come and whisper in EVAN's ear)** they decided to tell the world!

SPENCER: Because believe it or not, not everyone knows. And because believe it or not, when you tell the story yourself, you begin to understand it differently. You *hear* it differently. **(All Freeze).**

### **Monologue 6: Go Tell It** <sup>6</sup>

*Tim: Novelist Barbara Robinson tells the story of a rowdy group of siblings – the Herdmans – that terrorized an entire town of children. When the Herdmen gang showed up out of nowhere to become the improbable stars of the local church Christmas pageant, it ruffled some feathers.*

#### **Joseph Reichelt:**

The first pageant rehearsal was usually about as fun as a three-hour ride on the school bus, and just as noisy and crowded. This rehearsal, though, was different. Everyone shut up and settled down right away, for fear of missing something awful that the Herdmans might do.

They got there about ten minutes late, sliding into the room like a bunch of outlaws about to shoot up a saloon...

The thing was, the Herdmans didn't know anything about the Christmas story. They knew that Christmas was Jesus' birthday, but everything else was news to them – the shepherds, the Wise Men, the star, the stable, the crowded inn.

It was hard for to believe. At least, it was hard for me to believe, but Alice Wendleken said she didn't have any trouble believing it. "How would they find out about the Christmas story?" she said. "They don't even know what a Bible is. Look what Gladys did to that Bible last week." ...

So they just didn't know. And Mother said she had better begin by reading the Christmas story from the Bible. This was a pain in the neck to most of us because we knew the whole thing backward and forward and never had to be told anything except who we were supposed to be and where we were supposed to stand...

"What's that?" they would yell whenever they didn't understand the language, and when Mother read about there being no room in the inn, Imogene's jaw dropped and she sat up in her seat. "My God, not even for Jesus!"

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<sup>6</sup> Excerpt from *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*, by Barbara Robinson, Harper Collins, 1988.

I saw Alice purse her lips together, so I knew that was something else Mrs. Wendleken would hear about – swearing in church.

“Well now, after all,” Mother explained, “nobody knew that the baby was going to turn out to be Jesus.”

“You said Mary knew,” Ralph said, “Why didn’t she tell them?”

“I would have told them,” Imogene put in. “Boy, would I have told them! What was the matter with Joseph that he didn’t tell them? Her pregnant and everything,” she grumbled.

“What was that they laid the baby in?” Leroy said. “That manger?” ...

“That’s just the point,” Mother said. “They didn’t have a bed in the barn, so Mary and Joseph had to use whatever there was. What would you do if you had a new baby and no bed to put the baby in?”

“We put Gladys in a bureau drawer,” Imogene offered. “Well, there you go,” Mother said, blinking a little.

**(At this point, Michael begins playing ‘Go Tell It On The Mountain’ intro beneath the monologue).**

When we got home, my father wanted to hear all about it. Mother told him all about the rehearsal, and when she was through, she said, “It’s clear to me that deep down, those children have some good instincts after all.”

**(Soulful Sisters gather to left of the nativity tableau and sing “Go Tell It On the Mountain.)**

*While shepherds kept their watching  
Over silent flocks by night  
Behold throughout the heavens,  
There shone a holy light...*

*Go tell it on the mountain,  
over the hills and everywhere;  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
that Jesus Christ is born.*

*The shepherds feared and trembled  
When lo! above the earth  
Rang out the angel chorus  
That hailed our Savior’s birth...*

*Down in a lowly manger*

*Our humble Christ was born  
And God send us salvation,  
That blessed Christmas morn...*

*He made me a watchman  
Upon the city wall,  
And if I am a Christian,  
I am the least of all....*

EVAN: This concludes our Christmas pageant. This is a story that can bring hope where there is despair. Comfort where there is fear. Peace where there is war.

SPENCER: It's an old story. But it also really isn't. It's your story and its our story. It's GOD's story.

EVAN & SPENCER: So go tell it!

EVERYONE (singing): That....Jesus Christ is born!

**(Musical flourish as all pageant participants and singers take a bow.)**