

THE MISPLACED CHRISTMAS

By Cheryl Harrison

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STORY OF THE PLAY

Everyone wants this year's Christmas pageant at church done right - that means done their way. So the pageant committee gets together for a meeting, and what a meeting! Kevin, the young assistant pastor, wants something new and different, a laser light show! That would get attention. Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Barnes, elderly sisters, want the choir to wear new robes, specifically red robes. They wouldn't make them, of course, but they would certainly supervise. Pastor Steve suggests Nancy, a new convert, present a reading but the elderly sisters object and Nancy backs off. Barbie, the church's youth director, feels the young people should definitely be involved, Mr. Birchfield argues for the older folks, and Mrs. Walls, a new church member, thinks it should center around the nativity scene. Trouble is, the Baby Jesus prop can't be found and, according to the elderly sisters, if the church's own teens didn't steal it, probably that other church down the street did because they are jealous. Several days after the fruitless committee meeting, Tom, the church custodian, suggests searching for the Baby Jesus in the last place left to look, the file room. The committee finds it there, on top of some the old records about the church's first Christmas pageant. Written by the elderly sisters' great-grandfathers, the records reaffirm what everyone lost sight of - that a Christmas pageant should involve all members of the church, but most of all should center around the Child, the Christ of Christmas. The little miracle unites the committee and Pastor Steve offers a prayer of gratitude. An optional ending really shows the pageant, a beautiful nativity involving the youth of your church and a soloist.

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CHARACTERS

PASTOR STEVE: Godly man, Pastor of First Church, concerned for spirituality of his congregation.

LINDA: Pastor's secretary.

KEVIN: New, young assistant pastor with progressive ideas.

MRS. BARNES/MRS. HILL: Two gossipy ladies who always run the show.

NANCY: New convert at First Church.

TOM: Church custodian; an insightful and sensitive Christian man.

MRS. WALLS: New member of First Church.

BARBIE: Church youth director.

MR. BIRCHFIELD: Elder member of the First Church; uses a cane.

EXTRA TEENS: For optional nativity scene.

PLAYING TIME: Approximately 40 minutes, longer with optional nativity ending.

TIME: Modern day.

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SYNOPSIS:

Scene 1 - A few weeks before Christmas.

Scene 2 - An evening, a few days later.

Scene 3 - A morning, several days later.

SETTING: Pastor's large, comfortable study with one or two exits and one window. It contains the usual office furniture including a desk with a chair behind it, phone, wall decorations, copy machine, bookcase, books, and coatrack. At one end of the office is a long conference table. In Scene 2, Tom sets up 10 folding chairs on the upstage side. A spotlight will be useful for the optional nativity scene.

COSTUMES: Modern dress with two changes. Can wear or carry coats. Nativity costumes for extras if optional ending is desired.

PROPS: Scene 1: Book and watch for Linda. A long list for Mrs. Hill. Bible for Pastor. Book for Nancy. Scene 2: Wrench for Tom. Easel/with laser chart for Kevin. Briefcases for Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Barnes. Plate of brownies and napkins for Mrs. Wall. Tablet and pen for Linda. Cane for Mr. Birchfield. Scene 3: Basket of files, baby Jesus, old documents.

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Scene 1

(AT RISE: PASTOR is sitting at his desk studying. There is a KNOCK at the door.)

PASTOR: (Looking up.) Come in.

(Enter KEVIN, new young assistant pastor.)

KEVIN: Hello, Pastor Steve. Have you got a minute?

PASTOR: Sure Kevin, come in and sit down. (HE sits.)
What's on your mind?

KEVIN: Well, I've been thinking ... it's about this Christmas committee you told me about, you know, the one in charge of the annual Christmas show.

PASTOR: (Laughing.) Well, Kevin, we don't actually put on a show, you know. It's just a committee we have to finalize plans for our annual pageant. What about it?

KEVIN: I was just wondering if you'd like me to handle the pageant this year. I know I've only been here a short time, but I do have a lot of new ideas and -

PASTOR: Oh yes, I'm sure you do and we want to hear them, but I've found that it's best if we allow other members of the congregation to be involved in this project also.

KEVIN: I don't know if all of the membership will ... ah ... ah ... appreciate, yes, that's the word ... appreciate some of my ideas. I'm sure they're a lot different than you're use to but I thought that if you gave me the go ahead I could just try some new things and avoid the hassle of a traditional committee mind set.

PASTOR: (Gets up from behind desk to sit on edge facing KEVIN.) Well, Kevin, we usually just go with a traditional nativity scene and some Christmas carols. Our main focus is to keep the message simple and yet allow it to reach out to those in our community. I want this to be a great pageant this year. Frankly, Kevin, the church needs it. You see, I've been concerned for some time about some of our members. Everyone seems to be so busy

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and wrapped up in their own lives that they have no time for the very Christ of Christmas. This just has to be a special pageant ... *(Realizing HE has gone on and on.)* Oh, but I didn't mean to concern you with my burdens. Tell me, have you done some different things with the nativity?

KEVIN: Well, I've never actually done this before, but I'm sure we could make it work.

PASTOR STEVE: What is it?

KEVIN: It's really different but I know you're a progressive kind of a minister and with your support and all -

PASTOR: What is it?

KEVIN: It's a laser light show!

PASTOR: A what !!!

KEVIN: A laser light show *(Demonstratively waving HIS hands wildly up in STEVE'S face.)* Come on Reverend, it'll be great. Just imagine it -

PASTOR: *(Standing up.)* Oh, I'm sorry Kevin, but I don't think we're ready for a laser show here at First Church, not in this century anyway.

KEVIN: But Reverend, it's perfect. It'll be as bright as the Star of Bethlehem itself and of course, it will be computer controlled. Picture this - *(Holds hand up.)* the building is dark and in the middle of a revved up rendition of "Silent Night" the lasers begin.

PASTOR: Lasers! Computers! Revved up "Silent Night"! Slowww down, Kevin. Please!

(KNOCK at door and LINDA enters. She notices shock on PASTOR'S face as she returns book to bookcase.)

LINDA: What's wrong with you? *(Looking at PASTOR.)* Are you all right?

PASTOR: Of course I am. Just a little overwhelmed, that's all.

KEVIN: You can thank me for that. I've been sharing some of my ideas for the Christmas pageant with Pastor Steve.

LINDA: Must be electrifying!

End of Freeview

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