THE SHEPHERDS WHO GATHER

By Mark Anderson

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PUBLISHED BY

Eldridge Publishing Company
PO Box 14367
Tallahassee, FL 32317
95church.com

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this play to my family, Reverend and Mrs. R. J. Anderson, Kitty, Jane, Tim, Joann, and Sandy. Thanks for your love and support. Most of all, thank you, God, my heavenly father, for the talent you have so richly blessed me with.

Mark Anderson, playwright

STORY OF THE PLAY

The Shepherds are a family in name only. Tyler, a minister who's lost sight of his calling, and Dylan, a cynical news reporter who rejects all religion, are stepbrothers who cannot get along even when their parents and wives try to get them to work out their differences.

Needless to say, fireworks are set when Dylan is assigned to cover the Christmas cantata at Tyler's church, where a well-known (but self-centered) gospel singer is going to appear. When every detail has to be perfect, everything that can go wrong does.

But thanks to the help of a stranger named Mary, more than one soul is saved this Christmas Eve. Like the first Christmas, when Jesus' birth brought the shepherds of the field together, God brings these Shepherds together, too.

Members of the original cast and crew: Kevin Lambert, Tony Roberts, Judy McPeake, Mona Lambert, Judy Henderson, Joshua Compton, Jeff Russell, Rich Compton, Genia Manicure, Paula Compton, Barbara Parker, Pam Compton, and Sandra Roark.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(5 m, 6 w, 1 child)

DYLAN SHEPHERD: A reporter. Very cynical and bitter towards his family and Christianity. Has let his ambition blind him. Father of Shayne. Mid 20s.

TYLER SHEPHERD: A preacher who's lost sight of his calling. Only interested in his church membership growing ... no matter what! Wants to be well known. Late 20s.

BLAKE SHEPHERD: Father of Dylan. Adopted Tyler when he married Judith. A Christian concerned over his sons' attitudes toward each other. Late 40s.

JUDITH SHEPHERD: Mother of Tyler who's tried to be a mother to Dylan. She wants the family differences straightened out. A Christian lady. Mid 40s.

CLAIRE SHEPHERD: Tyler's wife, a Christian. Tries to be understanding of her demanding husband. Wants a nice, peaceful Christmas at home. Mid 20s.

CHELSEA SHEPHERD: Dylan's wife. A new convert, tries desperately to get Dylan interested in God. Mother of Shayne. Late 20s.

SHAYNE SHEPHERD: Dylan and Chelsea's son. (Or daughter with name/pronoun changes) Wants Daddy home for Christmas. Age anywhere from 5-10.

RACHEL ALEXANDER: Gospel star, very self-centered. Demands the star treatment wherever she goes. Belittles anyone who doesn't agree with her.

AMANDA ADAMS: Her assistant. A patient Christian who is concerned about Rachel. Mid 20s.

KYLE GRANT: Dylan's camera man. A quiet Christian who never admits his Christianity to Dylan. Mid 20s.

LUKE WILLIAMS: Maintenance man at church. A soft-spoken Christian who is strong in his beliefs. Early 30s.

MARY: A "saintly" stranger brought in from the snow storm. Shows everyone at church what Christmas is all about. A very caring person. Late 40s.

SYNOPSIS

SCENE 1: Christmas Eve, late afternoon.
SCENE 2: Later that evening.
SCENE 3: Later that night.
PLAYING TIME: 50 minutes.

SETTING

In the sanctuary of Tyler's church, with a Nativity scene and piano at one side.

COSTUMES

Modern dress. Everyone wears nice church clothes and coats except Dylan who wears blue jeans and boots and Mary who wears simple clothes and has no coat.

PROPS

Briefcase; camera equipment; costumes to carry; handkerchief; manger and star.

SCENE 1

(AT RISE: LUKE and CLAIRE are in the sanctuary straightening up).

LUKE: OK? So now you want the lights put up over the manger, right?
CLAIRE: Yes, we need to give it the glowing effect of stars.
LUKE: Stars? Where are they?
CLAIRE: Oh, you mean you haven't found the big star or the little ones yet?
LUKE: No. I've looked with the other decorations …
CLAIRE: *(Interrupts.)* Go check the storage room, Luke. Look behind the Christmas tree box.
LUKE: OK, I'll go see if I can find them. *(Exits.)*
TYLER: *(Enters checking watch.)* Well, it's after four, where is he? He knows Rachel will be here shortly for our Christmas cantata tonight. I can't believe him. He is going to try to ruin this for me.
CLAIRE: Calm down, honey. Dylan will be here. I mean you requested him to cover the cantata tonight. And his producer, Steve, said he would schedule him to cover Rachel's concert tonight.
TYLER: Yes, but I only "requested" him at Mom and Dad's insistence.
CLAIRE: Now look, Tyler, it's Christmas. Leave it alone. You and Dylan can fight the other 364 days of the year. But you are taking Christmas off.
TYLER: We'll see. Where are the costumes?
CLAIRE: Chelsea will be bringing them. She had to go pick them up for me. It saves me a trip back home.
TYLER: Well, we only have two hours to get things fixed up before people start coming in.
CLAIRE: Yes dear, I know. *(Pauses, looks around.)* I'm going to the airport. Rachel's plane lands at 5:15. Is there anything I need to do before I come back?

TYLER: No. Just get Rachel back here as soon as possible. I don't want anything to go wrong, and see to it that she doesn't stop and sign autographs. I don't want her to get stopped by some over-zealous fan. I know how crowded the airport gets during the holidays.

CLAIRE: Now dear, she's a popular Christian recording artist. She's had national television coverage. I just can't throw her in the car and take off.

TYLER: *(Sternly.)* Well. Just do it! I can't do everything, you know!

CLAIRE: *(Wearily.)* Oh, all right! I'll be back shortly! *(SHE exits.)*

TYLER: Now to get those lights working. Luke? Luke? Where is he? We need those lights fixed up now! I feel a headache coming on. *(HE exits.)*

(DYLAN and KYLE enter with a briefcase and camera equipment.)

DYLAN: I am not looking forward to this, Kyle. I can't believe Steve. There were other reporters who could have done this interview. I have my street talk segment to work on. This is definitely not a hot story. Rachel Alexander ... Gospel Star! I can see it now! Somebody else should have covered this!

KYLE: Perhaps. But why not let our "star" reporter cover a star? *(Ironically.)* I mean, I can see Chris or Lane trying to cover Rachel Alexander, the prima donna of gospel music.

DYLAN: Well, you've got a point there. But why would Steve send us here? He knows I don't like any topic that deals with religion. Especially here at this church with my family!

KYLE: All I know is that Tyler requested that you cover the event.

DYLAN: Oh, he did huh? I wonder what that snake has up his sleeve now?

KYLE: He's a preacher!

DYLAN: Same difference in my book.

KYLE: Dylan ... he's your brother!

End of Freeview

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