

# .t.my Shepherd

The Lord is *my Shepherd*, I shall not want.

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 DECEMBER, 2003  
 VOL. 1 NO.5  
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**HALLELUJAH**  
**Isaiah 9:6**  
 Will be given to us;  
 And the government will rest on His  
 Shoulders;  
 And His name will be called  
 Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty  
 God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.  
 Amen & Amen



**The Candymaker's Witness**  
 A candymaker in Indiana wanted to  
 make a candy that would be a witness, so  
 he made the Christmas Candy Cane. He  
 incorporated several symbols of the  
 birth, ministry, and death of Jesus  
 Christ.  
 He began with a stick of pure  
 white, hard candy. White to symbolize  
 the Virgin Birth and the sinless nature  
 of Jesus; and hard to symbolize the  
 Solid Rock, the foundation of the  
 church, firmness of the promises of  
 God.



**His name will be called...  
 The Gospel of Luke 2:6-16**

**A**nd it came about that while they were there, the  
 days were completed for her to give birth.  
 And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she  
 wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger,  
 because there was no room for them in the inn.  
 And in the same region there were some shepherds  
 staying out in the fields and keeping watch over  
 their flock by night.  
 And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood  
 before them; and the glory of the Lord shone  
 around them; and they were terribly frightened.  
 And the angel said to them,  
 "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good  
 news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; for  
 today in the city of David, there has been born for you a  
 Savior, who is Christ the Lord.  
 And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby  
 wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger."  
 And suddenly there appeared with the angels a  
 multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,  
 "Glory to God in the highest,  
 and on earth peace among men  
 with whom He is pleased."

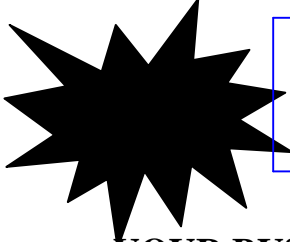


And it came about when the angels had gone away  
 from them into heaven, that the shepherds began saying to  
 one another,  
 "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then,  
 and see this thing which has happened  
 which the Lord has made known to us"  
 And they hurried off and found  
 their way to Mary and Joseph,  
 and the baby as He lay in the  
 manger.

The candymaker made the candy in the  
 form of a "J" to represent the precious  
 name of Jesus, who came to the earth as our  
 Saviour. It could also represent the staff  
 of the "Good Shepherd" with which He  
 reaches down into the ditches of the world  
 to lift out the fallen lambs, who like all  
 sheep have gone astray.  
 Thinking that the candy was somewhat  
 plain, the candymaker stained it with red  
 stripes. He used three small stripes to show  
 the stripes of the scourging Jesus received  
 by which we are healed. The large red  
 stripe was for the bloodshed by Christ on  
 the cross so that we could have the promise  
 of eternal life.  
 Unfortunately, the candy became known  
 as a candy cane a meaningless decoration  
 seen at Christmas time. But the meaning is  
 still there for those who "have eyes to see  
 and ears to hear." I pray that this symbol  
 will again be used to witness to the wonder  
 of Jesus and His great love that came down  
 at Christmas and remains the ultimate and  
 dominant force in the universe today.



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and put the tree together by themselves (with some unwanted advice from little David). And then the kids began to bring friends' home to help in this annual ritual.

As the years passed, the tree suffered lost and broken limbs, and the boughs drooped as the holes in the trunk enlarged. "Maybe we'd better get a new tree," Ralph suggested. The children and I were aghast. How could he think of forsaking our artificial evergreen! That tree belonged to us. He might just as well ask us to get rid of the family pet.

So our plastic tree is 22 years old now. We've forgotten that it is "not a real Christmas tree," for long ago we discovered what was really real about Christmas. We know that unless Jesus Christ is alive in our hearts, even a real tree that smells is an artificial Christmas tree.

Pat Egan Dexter -Gilbert, Arizona  
Guideposts December 1987

**W**hen Ralph brought home the plastic Christmas tree, our children were unhappy. "Oh, no," Carla said, "not a tree that grew up in a factory!"

"Not a tree out of a box," John said as baby brother David squirmed in his arms.

"All the same, it's our tree," Ralph replied firmly. The year before, Carla had developed what the doctor suspected was an allergy to fir trees. Although we weren't crazy about this artificial evergreen it seemed the safest substitute.

"It's too small," John said when we'd assembled the tree, fitting the limbs into the holes drilled in the trunk. "There's no room for presents underneath."

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:16 NIV

It's your responsibility, do it today.



"It doesn't smell right," Carla complained. "It doesn't smell at all," John added. "It's not a real Christmas tree."

I couldn't have agreed more. The antiseptic needles seemed better suited to a hairbrush, the trunk wasn't even brown and the tree's shape was an implausibly perfect cone. "It doesn't have any personality," I later told Ralph. "It looks like what it is, one of a million trees stamped from a machine and glued together."

The next day, Ralph strung the lights, and we decorated the tree with the red and green paper chains the children had made in school, adding the small golden angels I had brought back from Mexico and the carved wooden camels from Israel that Ralph's mother had given us. Putting on a brave front, I served hot cocoa and Christmas cookies, and we listened to Christmas records as we trimmed our fake tree. Maybe it was the familiar decorations, but I thought the tree looked a little better.

The following year, the plastic tree grew three feet as Ralph put it on a box that I covered with a white sheet sprinkled with sparkles to simulate snow. Now the star crunched against the ceiling, and there was room for presents beneath the tree. This time the kids helped me insert the limbs while Ralph sat in his easy chair.

By the third year, the plastic tree had become a fun project. Carla and John followed the diagram

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