

God's Love Announced to Shepherds
By Roy Goodlet

During this time of the year you have turned on your television sets and have seen the Grinch slithering around Whoville. You saw George Bailey being saved by Clarence the angel just as he was about to jump off the Bedford Falls bridge. Ralphie was wishing for a BB Gun while his younger brother had so many winter clothes on that he could not put his arms down. Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer saved Christmas. And in the midst of all of these scenes we heard Linus help us to discover the true meaning of Christmas when he recited Luke chapter 2.

Put yourself in the mind of God for a moment. After making plans from the beginning of time, after including notable Bible people such as Abraham, Moses, King David and the many prophets, You were ready to announce the most amazing, incredible, joyous news ever. This event would top anything that had happened in history. It would be so incredible that it would literally change the course of history. You were ready to announce the birth of your only Son, Jesus Christ. He would be the Savior of the whole world. He was the One the nation of Israel had been waiting and hoping and praying thousands of years for. Finally, the time had arrived for His coming to earth in the flesh! Who do you announce it to? Who do you tell? Who do you invite to come and see?

There is only one announcement of Christ's birth recorded in the Scriptures, only one invitation from God for anyone to come visit Mary and Joseph and the infant Jesus. He did not gather up all of the royalty on Earth. He announced it to a bunch of smelly shepherds.

Why do we associate ourselves with the shepherds? We may not resemble the shepherds on the outside. We possibly even smell better than they did. Maybe it's because we consider them to be average, good, decent and respectable people, and that is who we want to believe we are. We also believe that they were hard working people who worked daily to get by in this world, and that is who we believe we are. We believe that they can be lonely, forgotten about and often looked down upon. At times we feel that way too.

In Jesus' ministry he said, Matthew 9:12-13, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick...For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." Jesus came for the average, good, decent, hard working, lonely, forgotten about, looked down upon people. So, this story is not just a story of God's love for some shepherds. It's a story about God's love for us.

*Roy Goodlet is a retired minister and a member of Murphy Church of Christ.
Email him at royfcc@yahoo.com.*