

Jesus is the Real Thing  
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A radio station call-in program asked: Which is better, a real tree or an artificial tree? I think the program was scheduled for two hours. I'm not sure how long the debate lasted, because I changed the dial after the first two minutes. That was about all I could take.

I have heard these debates before, and it makes me laugh every time. There are those who passionately support (and I do mean passionately) real trees. They preach about the wonderful fragrance of pine in the house, the beauty of bringing nature into your living room, and the real meaning of the Christmas Tree. Then there are those who pooh-pooh nature and go for durability and safety and not having to water a dead tree every eight hours. It's enough to make an angel tree topper cringe.

We get really excited about our Christmas trees, don't we? Some of us (the ones who sadly miss all those Trivial Pursuit games of yesteryear) spout off the history of the tree, saying that the Christmas tree tradition started about 1000 years ago in Northern Europe and spread to Germany around 1520 with the help of Martin Luther. Then these people will pontificate that Christmas trees really took off in Britain when Prince Albert brought one into Windsor Castle in 1830. Of course, these people will all adamantly point out that these were real trees, with real pine needles.

Then there are those (and I am one of those) who have been converted from real tree mania to artificial tree bliss. I know these are words of treason from the daughter of a Scotch pine tree grower, but let me explain why I opt for artificial beauty.

With an artificial tree, there are several things you no longer have to contend with. Such as cutting the cords wrapped around the tree and having them snap back and smack you up side your head. Or pulling the tree slowly off the roof of your car thereby creating new scratches in the paint. Or spending twenty minutes trying to figure out how to drag the tree into the house while simultaneously holding the front door open. Or scratching your face and arms to shreds in order to fill the stand with copious amounts of water. Or gathering up all the needles that have fallen from your tree on its way to your house all the while wondering why the tree looks about half the size as when you bought it.

Whew. Makes me itch just thinking about it.

However, I know this is real: Jesus Christ was born in a manger. His mother was a virgin. He left His home in heaven to dwell among humans. He was despised, rejected, and held in low esteem. He took up our pain and bore our suffering. He was pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities. He healed us with His wounds. He rose from the dead to give us life.

I know you agree with me. There is nothing artificial about Him, for Jesus is the real thing.