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UP, UP AND COMPETE!

By Tere L. Turner

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DEDICATION

This book is lovingly dedicated to "The Ready for Christ's Time Players" drama ministry team. Their love of excellence is surpassed only by their love for the Lord. Coaching this group of dedicated young people has been one of the greatest joys of my life.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

Have you had trouble finding competition pieces for your teens? Whether for Christian school fine arts competition or state-wide church competition, this is the book for you! Included in this award-winning collection are eight monologues and seven speeches suitable for competition. (* by titles indicates a national first place winner). Your teens will also enjoy using them as devotional lead-ins to spice up youth meetings. And as the teens' teacher/director, you'll enjoy "The Why's and How's of Christian Youth Drama Ministry" at the back of this script.

PART ONE: MONOLOGUES

*MALCHUS

WHERE ARE THY ACCUSERS?

PETER

A GOOD SAMARITAN

SIMEON

VASHTI

A STRANGER IN A STRANGER LAND

LOVING HANDS

PART TWO: SPEECHES

*THE LIE

FISHING

THE SINS OF THE PHARISEES

POVERTY

LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

TIGER

IS IGNORANCE A SIN?

MALCHUS

STORY: How Jesus changed Malchus' life.

CHARACTER: Male, biblical costume.

My life used to make sense. I understood the world and my place in it. The boss would say, "Malchus, jump!" Then, I'd say, "Yes sir, your high priestly - ness! Jumping, sir! How high, sir?" It wasn't complicated. I didn't have any second thoughts or divided loyalties. After all, I was on the side of the good people.

But everything changed a few nights ago when I went with a group of soldiers to arrest a Galilean troublemaker named Jesus. I should have been ready for a fight; after all, there was that time in the temple. Jesus had gotten mad, made a whip and drove the money changers out! He turned over tables, released the doves and everything! Boy, the boss sure was mad! But anyway, the boss's informant assured us that Jesus didn't usually behave like that, so I just wasn't as careful as I should have been. When we first got to the garden I thought it was going to be easy! The informant went up to Jesus and gave Him a kiss, which was our cue to move in. But all of a sudden one of Jesus' followers drew a sword and lunged at me! The guy was aiming for my throat! But, thanks to my cat-like reflexes, I got out of the way just in time! Well, almost in time. I stepped back just in time to see MY RIGHT EAR LAYING ON THE GROUND! The guy was hollering at Jesus to run, and to be honest, if Jesus had run He would have gotten away because Jesus was NOT a priority at that point. I was trying to keep from bleeding to death! But Jesus didn't run. Instead, He picked up my ear off the ground and slapped it back on.

What? You say that you find my story hard to believe? Well, take a number! The boss didn't buy it either! When I told him about Jesus and my ear he got real mad and told me that what I was saying was blasphemy and that I'd better never, NEVER say it again. "How can the truth be blasphemy?" I asked. He just got madder and told me to leave. Later, the boss called me into his office and asked me if maybe I was "mistaken" about my ear. "After all," he said, "it was dark and in the confusion ... maybe the sword just cut a piece of your turban." Yeah, right! Like I don't know the difference between a piece of cloth and my own skin! But I could tell from the boss's tone of voice that he was not interested in hearing the truth ... so I just told him what he wanted to hear and didn't think anymore about it. That is until today. Today I heard the most incredible rumor. People are saying that Jesus is alive! Now, I know He was dead when we took Him off the cross. The boss says, "The disciples stole the body!" And, you see, that's my dilemma. Because every time I look in a mirror or touch my ear I have to wonder, could it be true? Could Jesus be the Son of God like people are saying? I don't know! All I know is the bad guy saved my ear, and the good people are telling lies about it, so I have to find out the truth. I'm going to find the guy who cut off my ear and ask him. What was his name again? Oh yeah, Peter.

The End

WHERE ARE THY ACCUSERS?

STORY: The woman who was caught in the act of adultery.

CHARACTER: Female, biblical costume.

I was so scared! My hands still shake when I think about it. I know what I did was wrong! My life was such a mess; I can't even begin to explain all the problems that made ... adultery ... seem like a good idea.

I know that crowd sure didn't want to hear any excuses. When they caught us, they grabbed me and dragged me through the streets. People spat on me, hit and kicked me. All the while they were calling me the most awful names! Someone in the crowd hollered, "Stone her!" and I'm sure they would have, too, if it hadn't been for that man, Jesus.

I don't know why they brought me to Him, but they threw me down at His feet and told Him what I'd been caught doing. I was humiliated! I'd never been so ashamed in my life! Jesus said something to the people who were there but I was so heartsick, I wasn't even listening.

Jesus didn't say one word to me! He didn't even look at me! He just bent down and began writing in the dirt! "Oh, He must really hate me," I thought, "Why doesn't He say something? Anything!"

Finally, after a very long time, He spoke. And with the kindest voice I'd ever heard, He asked me a question, "Woman, where are thy accusers?" The love in His voice stunned me. I couldn't even answer Him. "Woman," He asked again, "is no one left to condemn thee?" "No one, Sir," I finally managed to choke out. "Then neither do I condemn thee. Now go, and sin no more."

I felt free! For the first time since I could remember I felt clean and beautiful! I should have said something to Him, but I didn't. I didn't know how to even begin to thank Him for what He'd given me. I just hugged Him and ran away.

I never saw Jesus again ... that is until today. When I saw Him, they were dragging Him through the streets! There was a crown of thorns smashed into His head! He'd been beaten so badly, I didn't even recognize his face, except for His kind, gentle eyes. I would have known those eyes anywhere. It was awful! Even after He fell to the ground the people were still punching and kicking Him. Someone in the crowd yelled, "Crucify Him!"

I started to run away, but I didn't because for just a moment, those gentle eyes met mine. I saw His tears. He saw my tears, and through all His pain ... He smiled at me. Jesus smiled ... at me!

The End

PETER

STORY: *Jesus changed Peter from an arrogant, self-righteous follower into a useful disciple.*

CHARACTER: *Male, biblical costume.*

I've always been a hothead! "More guts than brains," as my father used to say. It's just that when I believe in something, I go all out ... and I believed in Jesus! I knew He was God's Son! When I said that I would die for Him, I meant it! So why did I keep failing Him? Well, I can give you the answer in one word, pride. I was determined to follow Jesus my way, not His.

Like the day Jesus told us that He had to go to Jerusalem and be killed there. I was outraged! I told Him that I would never allow such a terrible thing to happen to Him. I thought Jesus would be pleased to have such a loyal friend but instead of the pat on the back I was expecting, He called me Satan ... and told me to get behind Him! I never said so but I was a little bit offended by that comparison. After all, I was only looking out for Him.

In the garden the night Jesus was arrested, He asked me to stay awake and pray. Now, I tried, I really did, but it had been a long day and we'd eaten a huge supper. I didn't see the harm in a short nap; after all, there was always time to pray later, right? So I fell asleep. Jesus came back twice to wake me up and remind me to pray. The third time He woke me up, time had run out, the soldiers had come for Him.

Well, I knew how to handle that situation! I wasn't going to let them take my Lord without a fight! So I drew my sword and cut off the ear of Malchus, a flunky on the high priest's payroll. "Run, Jesus!" I hollered. Maybe I'd slept through prayer time but I'd come through for Him when it really mattered, right? Wrong. Instead of making His escape, Jesus picked the guy's ear up off the ground and put it back on! What a waste of a miracle! Then He gave me one of His "why did you do a stupid thing like that" looks that I'd come to know so well. I had failed Him again.

I hate to admit it but the stunt in the garden was nothing compared to what I did later that night. Jesus warned me, He told me that I would deny Him three times before the sun came up, but I didn't believe Him. "Maybe the others, Jesus, but not me!" Yep, me. I'm still not sure how it happened. One minute I was in the high priest's courtyard, waiting for my chance to rescue Him, when a servant girl asked me if I was one of Jesus' followers. Before I knew what was coming out of my mouth, I said "NO." I don't know why I said it but after I'd denied Him the first time, the lie came out easier twenty minutes later when she asked me again. "Look, I already told you, I don't know the guy." By the time a man by the fire barrel asked me about Jesus, I'd gotten so good at lying I even had the nerve to bring God into it! "I swear by God Himself, I don't know that man!" I never would have believed that I could do that to Him, but it's amazing how low you can sink when your pride gets in the way.

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Have you ever been caught in a lie? Boy, I was. Just about the time I'd denied knowing Jesus for the third time, I saw Him looking at me, and the look in His eyes made me want to cry. I would have understood if He'd looked at me in anger or disgust, but Jesus looked so sad. I knew I'd broken His heart.

As I watched that toad, Malchus, and his pals drag Jesus away, I wondered how he could be a part of hurting Jesus after what He'd done for him earlier that night. Then I remembered how much Jesus had done for me, and how I'd just betrayed Him. Realizing that I wasn't any better than Malchus, well, that was too much! I ran away, too ashamed to face anybody after what I'd done.

After Jesus came back, I heard that He was looking for me. When I saw Him on the shore I was so happy that He was alive but I was afraid to face Him after what I'd done. I knew He must hate me and the worst part was knowing that I deserved to be hated. Still, I had to talk to Him so I jumped into the water and swam to shore, prepared to beg for His forgiveness and hope He wouldn't destroy me. You have to remember, I'd seen Him raise folks from the dead and I figured ... well, you know what I figured! That's why my meeting with Jesus was such a shock.

"Peter, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these," He asked. Before that night in the courtyard I would have thrown my chest out and bragged about how I loved Him more than anyone else on the planet, but not now. I didn't have that kind of pride in me anymore. All I could do was hang my head and say, "Lord, you know I love You!" He smiled at me and said, "Then feed my sheep."

Can you imagine it! He chose ME. Not the confident bragging me, but the humble, wind-knocked-out-of-my-sails me, to help spread the message of His kingdom! See, I'd finally learned the lesson Jesus had been teaching me for so long. He never needed a man who had great confidence in his own abilities. What Jesus needs is people who are willing to follow Him ... His way.

The End

A GOOD SAMARITAN

STORY: Someone who missed an opportunity to tell another about Jesus.

CHARACTER: Male or female, nurse's uniform.

Have you ever wondered about the Good Samaritan, the kind stranger who went out of his way to help someone who was in need? It's funny, I never gave much thought to what the Good Samaritan was like. I never thought about it at all, in fact. That is until today. You see, today I went to a funeral. Mrs. Anderson's funeral.

My name is Chris and I'm a private duty nurse. Most of the people I care for are sick and dying. Mrs. Anderson was 65 years old and she was dying of cancer. I wish I could tell you that Mrs. Anderson was special to me, but she wasn't ... she was just another job. I don't mean to sound hard or unkind, it's just that I see so many patients.

I only had one real conversation with Mrs. Anderson before she got too sick to communicate. I wish now that I'd made the most of our one opportunity to talk. I wish I'd used that one chance to talk to her about Jesus and salvation, but I didn't. I know I should have and I wanted to ... I just didn't know how to bring up the subject. She had a Bible and Christian objects in her house so I assumed that she was saved, but I never made sure.

I had spoken with her son and daughter-in-law a few times and they seemed like nice people, but I never got to know them. I'd never even met Mr. Anderson. See, I work the night shift so I was always gone before he woke up. I wasn't there the day Mrs. Anderson died.

A few years ago I got into the habit of going to the funerals of my patients...it gives me a sense of closure I guess. Anyway, today I was sitting in the back of the little church listening to the minister talk about the life of Catherine Anderson. Funny, that was the first time I'd ever heard her first name. Suddenly, I felt so out of place I knew I had no right to be there. I wasn't her family; I didn't know her or love her. I hadn't even cared enough about her to make sure she'd be in heaven when she died. I'd never felt guiltier about anything in my life! I thought about sneaking out, and I probably would have except that I couldn't find a way to leave without calling attention to myself ... and the way I was feeling, that was the last thing I wanted to do. Finally, mercifully, the service was over!

As I walked through the reception line, the place where friends and family come together to share their grief, I didn't know what words of sympathy I could offer, or even had a right to offer, given my lack of concern for Mrs. Anderson's salvation while she was alive. I was a stranger.

I shook hands with the widower I'd never met and introduced myself, "My name is Chris, I used to sit with your wife on Friday and Saturday nights." He grabbed both of my hands and smiled. "Oh, yes," he said, "you're the one my Catherine always said made her feel so safe." A second later Mrs. Anderson's son grabbed me and hugged my neck, "Chris, I'm so glad you came! You have to meet my sister!"

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I was stunned! It amazed me to learn that I'd had so much impact on a life when that life had almost no impact on me. I realized at that moment that if I'd had the courage to talk to Mrs. Anderson, really talk to her about the thing that mattered most, she probably would have listened to me! I had no idea that my just being there had made such a difference to that woman and her family.

Anyway, this whole experience has made me wonder about the Good Samaritan. Maybe he wasn't some unusual, selfless, saint-like person. Maybe instead, he was just an ordinary believer, like you and me. Maybe he never knew how much his just being there meant to the man on the side of the road. Maybe he had the courage to talk to the man, or maybe, like me, he only wished he had.

The End

SIMEON

STORY: A man who believed God's promise that he would see the Savior before he died.

CHARACTER: Male, biblical costume.

PROPS: A walking stick or cane, chair or bench to sit on.

I can die a happy man! The Lord has kept His promise to me! I have seen the salvation of Israel. Many years ago, when I was a young man, the spirit of the Lord came to me. Now, some would call this a blessing, but let me tell you, it is no gentle thing to be visited by a just and holy God! Why, just being in His presence will remind a man that he is nothing! Just a dirty, sinful creature! I haven't looked at my life the same way since that day.

"Simeon!" the Lord called, "I have chosen you. Go to Jerusalem and wait. For you have been chosen to see the salvation of Israel before you die."

I was pleased to be chosen. Still, the word "die" bothered me a little. As I said, I was a young man back then. When I told my family about the Lord's visit, they asked if I'd been drinking! But I knew what happened! I left for Jerusalem that very day.

Now, I had only been to Jerusalem a few times, for the required feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. The only place I knew was the temple, so that's where I went and that is where God told me to stay. Stay and wait.

Well, I waited. I made sacrifices. I prayed. And when the Spirit moved me, I would prophesy. Not that the rulers of the temple ever listened to the things God told me to say. "Crazy Simeon" they called me. Prideful men. I wish they knew what it's like to be in the presence of a holy God. Then they would listen more and talk less.

I came to the temple as a young man and now I am old. I had waited for so long, I was beginning to wonder if maybe I was "crazy Simeon," until today. Today, I saw Him! The most beautiful little child! His parents brought Him here to dedicate Him to the Lord. The minute I saw Him, I knew! I don't know how I knew, but I knew! It was Him!

Anna, a wise woman who lives in the temple, she knew it too! I think about all the wise rulers who passed right by this wonder Child and never even suspected who He was! See, I told you; they should have listened more and talked less.

His mother let me hold Him! She was such a lovely young girl; I almost wish God hadn't given me words to speak to her. I told her that her Son was the salvation of Israel and a light unto the Gentiles! I also had to tell her that much heartache lie ahead for her. It will be as if a sword will pierce through her soul because of this Child. She and her nice young man were kind to an old man, they marveled at my words, but I don't think they understood the meaning. Still, God told me to inform them.

God has made His face to shine upon an old man! Anna is even older than I am but she plans to stay around and see what becomes of that precious Child. Not me! I think I would rather die now, while the face of that Child is still before my eyes and I know in my heart that God has kept His promise!

The End

VASHTI

STORY: About Esther from the perspective of her predecessor.

CHARACTER: Female, fancy "Persian queen" costume.

PROPS: A bench or chair.

My life was wonderful, before that stupid festival. I don't know if you're aware of this, but "festival" is the Persian word for drunken blow out, and this festival lasted 187 days! Now, don't get me wrong, I like to party as much as the next girl, but a queen can only stay up late for so many nights in a row before her looks start to go! And a girl simply cannot allow that to happen. I mean, even my name, Vashti, means desired one, and no lady is desirable with bags under her eyes!

So, now you can better appreciate the awful predicament I was in when Ahasuerus, the king and unworthy cad that I married, summoned me to his party. Can you imagine? Me, Vashti, Queen of Persia, being summoned like some dancing girl! Just so my husband's drunken friends could gawk at me? I don't think so! And that's just what I told the servant who came to get me.

All of my friends said I did the right thing. "Stick to your guns, girl!" they told me. Of course, now these same good friends won't even speak to me! They actually blame me because the king got mad and issued a decree that wives have to obey their husbands. "That every man should be lord in his own house," were his exact words. Those big babies! I lost more than any of them, he replaced me!

At first I thought it was a joke, you know, just to teach me a lesson, but he actually started looking for a new queen! He found one too: Esther. What kind of a name is Esther, anyway? She sounds like a houseplant or something.

What? Is she pretty? Well, I guess she's nice enough looking in a sweet, simple, gag-me-with-a-spoon kind of way! Her looks won't last though, especially her legs. It's all that time she spends on her knees praying! You know it's got to be taking its toll. Not that I would ever embarrass her by telling her so!

Her political skills aren't very good either. My spies tell me that our dear queen has been seen in the company of a Jew named Mordaci. What? Well, yes, he is the same Mordaci that Haman, honored this morning. Yes, he was dressed in royal robes and led through the streets by Haman himself and on one of the king's own horses, no less. But, and try to stay with me here, he's a Jew! I mean how smart do you have to be to realize that you don't associate with a group of people that the king has ordered to be exterminated within the year! I would never make a mistake like that!

Oh, and speaking of Haman! I saw him this morning, strutting through the palace and bragging about how he's been invited to a banquet in the queen's "private chambers." Another mistake! If I were going to have an indiscretion, and I've been around long enough to know that there couldn't possibly be another reason for a "private" banquet, I sure wouldn't choose him! Doesn't Esther realize that Haman is a weaselly little man who loves to brag?

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Well, for the king's own good I've made sure he will get word of Esther's little tryst with Haman. As soon as he catches them and disposes of that little queen wannabe, I might just consider taking him back. After all, a girl has to look out for her future. Besides, I'm sure he finally realizes what a good thing he had in me. So, I'll just sit right here and wait for the fireworks to start. Oh dear, I do hope I look all right!

The End

A STRANGER IN A STRANGER LAND

STORY: About the activities in Jerusalem from the perspective of a non-Jewish observer.

CHARACTER: Male or female, biblical costume.

I've been living in Jerusalem for about a year now and the more time I spend around the locals, the stranger they seem. Did you know that the Jews only have one God? It's true! But the rules for worshipping this God are so complicated that nobody can seem to do it right. A while back a Jew from Nazareth tried to simplify things. You would have thought that the people would welcome this, but most of them didn't.

The reformer, Jesus, was a teacher, and from the very beginning the man caused a stir! You see, Jesus taught with authority, not like the other Jewish leaders. Jesus also had a new message for the people. He said that the Hebrew God actually loves His people and has a plan for their lives! Can you imagine such an idea? It was such a strange and wonderful message that at first many people followed Him.

I've heard the most amazing stories about Jesus. I was told He once fed five thousand men with only two fishes and five loaves of bread! His followers say that He healed the sick and lame and even drove out demons! They swear that one of His best friends had died and was actually in his grave for four days when Jesus brought him back to life!

I'll bet you're wondering why the Jewish leaders didn't welcome such an amazing man. Well, it all comes back to those complicated rules that I told you about. See, Jesus told the people that the Hebrew God is so powerful that He can look right into a man's heart! Jesus taught that such a great God didn't need temple rituals. Jesus said that all anyone had to do to please this God was to turn away from his or her sins and follow Him.

Well, as you can imagine, the leaders were outraged! They began to plot against Jesus, but every time they tried to discredit Him they just ended up looking foolish. When all else failed, they persuaded one of His best friends to betray Him for twenty pieces of silver. The Jews came with Roman soldiers and arrested Jesus in the middle of the night and put Him on trial right then and there! The whole proceeding was most irregular.

I hate to admit it but when I saw Jesus, I was disappointed. He didn't look like anything special; in fact He'd been so badly beaten that He almost didn't look human. His eyes were black and His face was swollen. His back was an ugly mass of ripped skin and blood. He was pitiful to look at. As if the beating wasn't bad enough, some brave soldier had taken a bunch of thorns, twisted them into a crown and smashed it into His skull. "King of the Jews," that was the joke. Pretty sick, wouldn't you say?

I kept waiting for the man of miracles to defend Himself but He didn't. Pilate couldn't find a reason to condemn Him but being a politician, he wanted to make the Jewish leaders happy. I guess he hoped that the beating Jesus endured would be enough to placate the Jews, but they wanted Him dead. Finally, Pilate gave in.

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The soldiers dragged Jesus out of the city to a hill called Golgatha, which means the place of the skull. There they nailed that good man to a cross and hung Him between two thieves. I heard Him say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." I was stunned to think that Jesus wasted His last breaths praying for the very people who had done this to Him. I can't explain it but it was as if the whole earth went into mourning when He was dying. The sky grew dark, the ground rumbled and I couldn't help but wonder if His God was crying up in Heaven.

What? Is that the end of the story? Well, according to His followers that was just the beginning! See, after three days no one could find Jesus' body. The official explanation is that His followers stole the body in the middle of the night and started a rumor that God raised Him from the dead. That sounds like a reasonable explanation except that the Jewish leaders are killing themselves trying to round up all of Jesus' followers. There is one man in particular by the name of Saul who has been so brutal that it makes me wonder what they are so afraid of.

There just has to be more to the story and I've decided to try to find the truth about Jesus. His life has touched mine in a way I just can't explain. Anyway, the events of the past year have been so strange that I doubt if anything like it will ever happen again. There's one thing for sure, though, it could only have happened in Jerusalem.

The End

LOVING HANDS

STORY: A mother's prayer for her child.

CHARACTER: Female, casual dress.

PROPS: A shelf or toy box, toys, broken toy, bed with sleeping child, blanket.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Because doing a monologue from poetry presents special challenges, I have included stage directions. Also, In order to achieve believability it is very important that the actor not perform poetry with the singsong voice that we are taught in school. Like all drama, poetry needs to be real.

(A MOTHER enters the bedroom of her sleeping child and looks around at the toys and clothes that lie on the floor. She sighs and begins picking up the toys and putting them back on the shelf. She looks over at her sleeping child, stops working, looks up and smiles.)

Heavenly Father, strong and dear, bless this child lying here. She's said her prayers and brushed her teeth, in a moment she'll be fast asleep. You've brought her through another day of love and work and time to play. Her skinned up knees and *(Looks at broken toy in HER hand.)* broken toys, I've kissed her hurts away, Lord, thank You for another day. But I know children everywhere aren't warm and safe like mine so I pray that loving hands will tuck them in tonight. And I pray soon they all will be loved and fed and warm and free and happy - like my child and me, like my child and me.

(Finishes picking up toys. Tucks blankets around the sleeping child, continues HER prayer.)

Loving Jesus, kind and mild, help me raise this precious child. Help me teach her all I should. Lord, let her choices all be good. Bring her through the troubled days, and when temptations come her way. Please, hold her hand, keep her strong and drive her doubts away. Please guide her, Lord, through every day. Still, I know children everywhere aren't warm and safe like mine. And so I pray Your loving hands will tuck them in tonight. And I pray soon they all will be loved and fed and warm and free and happy - like my child and me, like my child and me.

(Picks up dirty clothes and starts to leave the room. Stops at the door and finishes HER prayer.)

For the sake of children everywhere, please, God, hear a mother's prayer.

The End

THE LIE

SPEECH: Discusses the only lie Satan ever told and how it devastated mankind.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

John 8:44 “Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.” That Bible passage fascinates me, especially the last part, “for he is a liar and the father of it.” To me it seemed that if Satan were the father of lies, he would be the father of “them” and not of “it.” After all, there are a lot of lies in the world.

Then one day I realized that Jesus, as always, had it right. When you get down to it, there really is only one lie, but that lie has separated man from God ever since that day in the garden. The lie was a simple one: that we can, by our own action, “become as God.” Simple? Yes, but it was our downfall. Remember, the father of the lie convinced Eve that she would “become as God” if she ate the forbidden fruit. Eve sinned because she believed that lie ... and we’ve been sinning ever since.

The lie worked in Babel. Man believed and tried to build himself a tower to Heaven. Also, Babel is the place where man first began to worship the stars and planets, turning away from God’s guidance altogether! At the time it was a huge step away from God, but today, thousands of years later, it seems harmless and even normal not to seek God’s will for our lives. I have friends, even Christian friends, who call the psychic friends hot line and read their horoscope in the newspaper and never even think about what it really means. See, with every generation the lie gets stronger and easier to believe. The lie works.

The lie is the cornerstone of every religion except for Bible-centered Christianity. Religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism center on the concept of many lifetimes spent working ones way up the food chain! From bugs to reptiles to mammals to men and finally, to gods. No reliance on a Savior, no need to repent ... and no real salvation. So many lost people trying so hard to earn salvation. Wasting their only life on the lie.

What’s even worse, though, is how the lie has found its way into so many so-called Christian churches. Too many churches that profess Jesus are, in reality, teaching salvation by works. You’ve heard them: “If you’re a good person,” “If you help the poor,” “If you belong to the church,” “If you give money” you’ll get into Heaven!

Please, don’t misunderstand what I’m saying here. I believe that doing all those things is important. The lost people around us can’t see into our hearts, they can only watch our lives and our good works show them God’s love in a tangible way. However, when Christians substitute their good deed for God’s plan of salvation, we settle for an easy believeism that appeals to our vanity and leads us away from God. These pseudo Christians are dangerous because they make the lie respectable and keep many who want to serve God ignorant about the truth.

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So, how can we fight the lie? What can believers do to neutralize Satan's powerful weapon? I wish I had all the answers, but I don't. I do know that I discovered the lie because I read my Bible, so I plan to keep looking to God's Word for guidance. I also know that from now on whenever I see the lie at work in the world around me, I won't be afraid to tell people that Satan is a liar, and the father of it. Will you help me? Will you tell your friends not to buy the lie?

The End

FISHING

SPEECH: Explores Jesus' promise to make us "fishers of men."

CHARACTER: Male or female.

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus invited a couple of young net throwers to follow Him. He promised to make them "fishers of men." Have you noticed that fishing is becoming a lost art?

As a group, Christians should be great fishermen. We've been given all the equipment that we need to go fishing. We've attended the best schools and been taught how to fish. We've received expert instruction regarding the need for fishing and we even know where the fish are. Yet, in spite of all of all this, there doesn't seem to be as many lines in the water as there used to be. I guess I can understand why, after all, fishing isn't much fun. You have to get up way too early. You can't do it from the comfort of your own home. The weather is usually bad, and well ... fish stink.

Nobody likes the odor of fish and to be a good fisherman you have to get dirty. Have you ever noticed that in spite of the fact that you spent the day surrounded by water, you always go home from a fishing trip reeking of fish and covered with grime? Then, as if that bit of irony isn't enough to convince you that fishing stinks, you have to consider the risks involved with fishing.

Fishing can be dangerous! Every angler has war stories about unexpected storms that sunk his boat or the time his motor quit working in the middle of the lake, just as it was getting dark. He'll tell you about the hidden log that tore a hole in the bottom of his boat and the hook that almost took his eye out.

It's interesting that Jesus promised to make us fishers of men and not golfers of men or tennis players of men or bowlers of men. Most of us would find any of these activities more pleasant, or at least less dangerous than fishing. But Jesus said fishers of men. I think Jesus calls us to be fisherman because wants us to step outside of our churches. We need to take off our Sunday clothes, put on our hip waders, pack up our tackle boxes and go fishing! He doesn't promise that we'll stay clean and fresh smelling. He didn't say that we'd never take a hook or hit a log. He just said to go fishing.

Now, where and how we decide to fish is up to us, but any good fisherman will tell you that the best fishing spots aren't near the shore or in clear, shallow water. To catch the best fish you have to go to the most uninviting parts of the lake and take some risks.

Remember, fishing is hard, smelly work and the only good thing about it is catching great fish. The Master Fisherman gave every Christian a stringer and told him to fill it up. So how much fishing have you done lately?

The End

THE SINS OF THE PHARISEES

SPEECH: Explores the dangers of being a self-righteous Christian.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

Have you ever heard the saying that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions? Well, that proverb was probably written about the Pharisees! Of all the people Jesus encountered during earthly ministry, the religious leaders were the only ones He ever treated unkindly. Jesus constantly referred to them as whitewashed tombs, vipers, blind leaders and hypocrites. He just didn't cut these people any slack!

According to the Bible, just about the only sins that Jesus didn't treat with compassion were those of religious people. Have you ever asked yourself why? I have. Like you, I've been taught the standard Sunday school answer, "Because, as God's people, they should have known better." And, yes they should have. But according to the Bible, all sinners should know better. (See *Romans 1:20*) The simple truth is that all of us know the difference between right and wrong, there's just a quirk in our fallen nature that makes us choose wrong a lot of the time. If we use our pat answers and Sunday school logic, Jesus should have been much tougher on the woman at the well and the thieving tax collector. If we buy into the idea that Jesus only loves sinners who "don't know any better," what we're really saying is that we have no hope. Now, maybe I'm a little dense but I just don't believe that Jesus is a "one shot" Savior. So I began looking for another answer. I found it in Jesus' scathing condemnations of the religious.

For just a minute, put everything you think you know aside and ask yourself why Jesus was so hard on people who were trying to obey God while treating real sinners with kindness and mercy. You have to dig for the answer to that question, but it's surprisingly simple once you find it. Jesus wasn't hard on the religious people around Him because they were bad people. Quite the contrary, the sins that the Pharisees committed were "good people" sins. In fact, we wouldn't and don't recognize many of their actions as sin. But Jesus does.

Since the sins of the Pharisees were committed by good people who loved God, why was Jesus so inflexible in His dealings with them? Well, the truth is that Jesus treated the religious the way He did because He understands His creation better than we will ever understand ourselves! Jesus was and is constantly exposing the sins of the religious because He understands that by nature we human beings are prideful creatures, and that we especially take pride in doing what's right! Please, listen to that statement again; we are prideful creatures who are especially proud of ourselves when we're doing what's right. Jesus understands how very thin the line between dedicated believer and self righteous Pharisee really is. He also knows that everyone of His children will cross that line at some point in their earthly walk. It doesn't matter how hard we try, we just can't help it! As Christians, Phariseeism is an occupational hazard that sneaks up on us when we least expect it.

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There's one important feature that sets the sins of Phariseeism apart from all other sins: Unlike most sins, which we fall into by straying away from God, the closer we walk to God, the more susceptible we are to achieving the sins of the Pharisees! When you think about it, it's actually quite an accomplishment when we get to the point in our walk where the Devil can use our love for the Lord against us. See, Satan can't use lukewarm Christians to achieve the sins of the Pharisees.

As Christians, when do we achieve the sins of the Pharisees, and if we are of any use to God at all, we will achieve them! There are only two things that we can do. We can either stop, step back and remember that we are nothing. We can bear in mind that we're just hell-bound sinners who were snatched from the flames we deserved by God's mercy. We can remind ourselves that we don't have even one little reason to be self-righteous. Or if we're so far gone, so full of our self-serving goodness that we've forgotten what it feels like to be a lost soul, we can hang on to our pride and live out the rest of our lives on the wrong side of religion ... as Pharisees.

The End

POVERTY

SPEECH: Examines Jesus' love for the poor and the Christian's responsibility towards them.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

Jesus loves the poor. It's a fact. He doesn't ignore them. He doesn't tolerate them. He loves them. I used to wonder why so many of His people don't share that love, then I realized that Christians are blessed. We might not have everything that we want, but most of us have everything that we need. I'm not even sure that most of us understand what poverty is. I know I didn't, until the other day when I found a letter to the editor in my local newspaper. I'd like to share it with you.

"Listen to me and I will tell you about poverty. Please, listen without pity; the poor cannot use your pity. Instead, listen with understanding.

"Poverty is dirt. I've heard some of you say, "Anybody can be clean." That's easy to say, but we need to understand that today, somewhere in our great country, a mother is washing her child's clothes in a sink with cold water. She'll hang them up in a cold room hoping that they'll be dry before her child needs them. Why doesn't she use hot water? Hot water is a luxury. The poor do not have luxuries.

"Poverty is having to ask for help. Let me tell you how that feels. First, you find out where the agency is that you have to visit. When you arrive everyone is so busy. Finally someone comes out to help you. They call your name, loudly. They don't mean to embarrass you, but it does. Then, you sit in a little room and over a big desk you tell the whole shame of your life to someone you don't know, and who probably doesn't care. And after recounting all the bad choices that brought you to this place, you find out that ... oops! This wasn't the person you needed to talk to after all! You know you will have to tell your embarrassing life story several more times today. But maybe ... just maybe you'll get the help you need.

"Poverty is looking into a depressing future. Some of you won't let your children play with poor children so, in time, they will turn to kids who are allowed to play with them. The kids who will teach them how to steal and cheat to get what they want.

"Some of you say, "But there are schools." Yes, there are schools. But poor children don't have paper, pencils, or crayons. Most important, they don't have health. They have worms, they have infections. These kids don't get enough rest sleeping on the floor. Not all poor children suffer from hunger, but many, many of them suffer from malnutrition.

"Poverty is cooking without food and cleaning without soap. Poverty is an acid that drips on pride and hope day after day, until they're gone. Some of you say you would do something in that situation. And maybe you would, for the first week or the first month, but what would you do year, after year ... after year?"

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Wow, that was a powerful letter. It sure got my attention. Yes, Jesus loves the poor. See, the poor understand that they are totally dependent on Him for the very necessities of life. The same necessities that most of us thank Him for, only in passing. Jesus knows that the best the poor can hope for in this world is that one of His followers will take them by the hand and show kindness in His name. Show just one of them God's love and the way out of poverty. He also knows how often that doesn't happen.

The End

LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF JESUS

SPEECH: Examines Christian witnessing.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

I think it's interesting that when we get saved, we receive the "mind of Christ" but not necessarily "the eyes of Christ." I have to confess that until recently I didn't care very much about the unchurched kids I go to school with. Let's be honest, lost people can be very hard for Christians to tolerate! Many of them drink, cuss, take drugs, sleep around and do other things I just don't want to deal with. So, I stayed away from those kids ... until God started dealing with me about witnessing to my classmates.

Now, I was pretty sure that God was wasting His time on them, but He's the boss. So I started really letting them have it. I told them that they'd better clean up their acts or they were going to Hell. They didn't listen, of course ... but God told me to keep witnessing.

After a few weeks of that, I really got discouraged so I talked to a lady who goes to my church. I chose her because, unlike me, she's a first-generation Christian who'd been just like those kids before she got saved. I'd hoped that she'd have some magic phrase that would get through to my sinning classmates, but she didn't. Instead, she asked me what I saw when I looked at them. When I told her what those kids were like, she shook her head and explained that I was the real problem.

She told me that I'd never be a useful witness until I gave up my own, human eyes and started looking at the world through the eyes of Jesus. That was tough! His eyes just don't see people the same way mine do. Unlike me, Jesus really does love sinners, every sinner, no matter how ugly or disgusting their behavior is. And only eyes that are truly His can look at a drug dealer or a child molester and see a beautiful, precious soul worth dying for.

I've learned that my perception of human value is fatally flawed, so I traded my vision for His. What a difference! With His eyes I can finally see sinners with real compassion in my heart ... but more important, with Christ's eyes I see myself the way He sees me.

I stopped being so self-righteous about the sin in other people's lives when I saw my heart with His eyes. I know now that sometimes I look as nasty to Him as my sinning classmates look to me. Only, His eyes can see all my ugliness ... and look past it to how much I need to be loved, and He loves me! I discovered that in Christ's eyes no lost soul is too repulsive to love, and no Christian is righteous enough to judge someone else with his own eyes.

If you can't seem to find genuine love in your heart for lost, sinful people, please, ask yourself whose eyes you're looking at them with ... yours or His.

The End

TIGER

SPEECH: Illustrates the need to witness to a lost world.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

Some fifty years ago a very special man stood up in a room full of strangers and spoke eight words that changed his life: "My name is Tiger and I'm an alcoholic." I know that the story is true because Tiger is my grandfather, James R. Koski.

Tiger, the son of an abusive, alcoholic father, had been drinking from the time he was a teenager. By the time he stood up in that meeting and made that life saving confession, he'd hit rock bottom. Due to his long history of drinking, Tiger had been in and out of jail; he had lost the right to drive, to own a gun or to vote. He'd had a child taken away and a failed marriage to his credit. Still, saying those eight words was the hardest thing he had ever done. See, Tiger is a very proud man and admitting that his life was a failure was an assault on his ego that he almost couldn't face.

As he stood up in that AA meeting, Tiger knew that all the eyes in the room were on him, and he thought about walking out the door or sitting back down. But in the end, because his life was on the line, Tiger said the words.

How could a man find the nerve to swallow his pride and spill his guts like that? Well, Tiger was able to do it because he knew that he was in a room full of other drunks! Tiger was among brothers who had been where he was. They knew how hard those eight words were to say, so they gave him their total support, and a safe place in which to confess. Tiger couldn't have confessed his shame to a room full of prohibitionists, people who had never taken a drink or experienced its tragic consequences.

I'm telling you this story because I believe it has some lessons that we need in our ministering efforts. See, I think Christians forget how we look to the unsaved people who come into our churches, people who need support and a safe place to confess. To an unsaved man, woman, teenager or child, the people within the church look shiny, sinless, clean and perfect.

I hate to say it, but many Christians are so proud of our nice, white robes that we're willing to let think people think that we've always looked like this! Of course, we would never tell them that we're perfect. But our silence gives some the impression that their sins are somehow "too bad to be forgiven" and that they can't "measure up" to the holiness that they see in the people around them.

And it's not that we want them to believe those things! It's just that telling them the truth would expose us as, well ... sinners. We know that people can't tell by looking at us that Jesus cleaned up a huge, ugly mess when He touched our lives.

Now, maybe we just don't want to be reminded of what we used to be, or maybe our pride won't let us admit just how filthy we were, but too often we just sit there, quiet ... thankful that our secret is safe!

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Now, please don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that we should behave like sinners! Jesus calls us to be "holy" and "set apart," but as Christians we have an obligation to let the lost know that we used to be as dirty as they are. Like the recovering drunks in Tiger's AA meeting, we need to give the people who come into our churches the love and support that only fellow sinners can offer.

Believe me, I understand that it's much easier on our pride to let visitors look at us from a safe, shiny distance, but these are precious, eternal souls who need us. If we put our pride ahead of their needs ... if we insist on putting our good names in the community ahead of our great commission in the world, we'll continue to leave many visitors to our churches defeated, isolated, and unsaved.

The End

IS IGNORANCE A SIN?

SPEECH: Illustrates God's hatred of sin and His love for sinners.

CHARACTER: Male or female.

If we commit a sin out of ignorance, does God hold us accountable? I believe that the Bible is crystal clear in answering that question. In Leviticus, Chapter IV alone, there are six separate laws instructing the children of Israel in how to atone for the sins they committed out of ignorance. However, it is in the New Testament that we find the most compelling proof that God holds all sin to account.

Please, close your eyes for a few minutes and travel back in time with me, to Jerusalem. We are visiting a great and terrible day. The day that Jesus died, for our sins. In your mind's eye, look at the dried blood from the crown of thorns and the torn flesh on His back. Listen to the vicious taunts of the crowd as He staggers through the streets, carrying the cross on which He will soon die. Listen to the ringing of the hammer as it strikes the iron spikes, piercing His hands and feet. Then, if your stomach can handle the sight, watch His face twist into a mask of indescribable agony as the cross is lifted high into the air, and then allowed to fall into a hole in the ground.

Did that mob know who it was they were treating in such a manner? Would anyone be foolish enough to nail God to a cross if he knew who He was? No, I think it's safe to say that those people acted out of ignorance.

But just because we were ignorant doesn't mean that we weren't guilty. And even though humanity had no idea of how deeply we had offended God, Jesus knew. He also knew that if He didn't intercede on our behalf, His Father would surely take terrible vengeance on us. See, if we had not been in mortal danger, it just wouldn't have made sense for Jesus to waste His last few minutes on earth pleading with His Father to forgive us.

I really believe that the prayer Jesus uttered from the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was all that saved mankind from being destroyed that day. Do you remember? The sky turned black and there was a terrible earthquake. It must have seemed that the whole world was trembling under God's impending judgment.

That prayer, uttered from the cross by a dying Savior, should be enough proof for anybody that God holds all sin to account, even sin committed out of ignorance. But strangely, that same prayer is also the best news that mankind has ever received. Because Jesus' dying prayer was answered, we know that He has the power to forgive our sins.

Because Jesus intercedes on our behalf, that day from the cross and today from His throne in Heaven, the temple veil has been torn in two, giving all of us personal access to God.

The End

THE WHY'S AND HOW'S OF CHRISTIAN YOUTH DRAMA MINISTRY **By Tere Turner**

For the last seven years I have had the privilege of serving the Lord as the drama coach for "The Ready for Christ's Time Players" drama ministry team. If you are also blessed with the privilege and responsibility of working with young people, you've experienced firsthand the uphill battles Christian youth workers are faced with in today's society. I hope that in addition to experiencing the frustration that comes from competing with an ungodly world for the hearts and minds of our children, you have also experienced the awesome blessings that God bestows on the adults who accept that challenge.

Surprisingly, in my position as a drama coach, my foremost problem was not, as one might expect, finding young people who were willing to use their talents to minister to the people around them. The actors on my church drama team take the responsibility of witnessing to others very seriously. In fact, seeing the love that these kids have in their hearts for the lost souls around them has truly been my greatest blessing. However, that dedication on the part of these remarkable youngsters also created my greatest challenge as a drama coach.

Our drama team was always looking for "material with a message" to perform and to be honest, we couldn't find very many pieces that the actors liked. What we did find were a lot of "cutesy" pieces with no real message and a lot of "preachy" material that the kids didn't think would touch the hearts of people their age. Because we had such a hard time finding material that we believed would speak to young hearts, a few years ago I began writing material for our group to perform. This collection of monologues and speeches is the best of those writing efforts.

This book is dedicated to individual drama and speech efforts. There is one obvious disadvantage to beginning a youth drama ministry program with monologue or speech projects. Initially, most young people are intimidated by the prospect of getting up alone in front of a group and performing. If you have enough young people in your church who are interested in drama ministry, I recommend that you begin by doing group projects. If, however, you are in the position of having to begin with individual efforts, don't be too concerned. The upside of starting with individual drama is that in some ways you're skipping a step; after all, one of the goals of a drama ministry program should be to get your actor to the place where he or she is confident enough to stand alone and witness. Another advantage to working with only one or two actors is knowing that you will have more time to help them perfect their individual performances.

If your church or school has never used drama as a teaching or witnessing tool before, you may be asking yourself if the benefits of a drama ministry program justify the time commitment and funding that a Christian arts program requires. I believe that the answer is a resounding yes for the following six reasons:

- 1) When Christians with similar interests are brought together they form solid friendships. Studies indicate that to young people in today's culture, friendship is of supreme importance and kids feel compelled to fit in somewhere. Because of the high value our youth place on friendships, a support network of Christian friends is vital if our young people are going to succeed.

2) Youth that are united in an enjoyable common ministry learn how to work together to achieve Christian goals. It's a real blessing to see young people become active workers in your church.

3) The faith of our children is defined through the Biblical truths they learn and how they learn them. Drama allows our youth to learn (and yes, even question) Christian values in a casual environment. This might not sound important, but studies have found that Christians who grow up with the attitude that faith is a normal part of every activity are more likely to succeed in their walk. A drama ministry program takes Christian values out of the Sunday school classroom and makes them the focal point of a fun activity in which kids want to participate.

4) The confidence to be a bold witness increases when young people are given a forum where they can publicly express their faith. Be honest, most of us don't witness because we don't know how. Drama ministry teaches witnessing skills and instills the confidence to speak boldly.

5) Youth who grow up participating in Christian ministry programs are more likely to continue their education at a Christian college or university.

6) Churches that maintain active youth ministry programs such as drama have more young people who grow up, stay in church and use their gifts and talents in God's service. Remember, a lifetime of Christian discipleship starts with a small spark! For many young people that spark can be ignited with an arts program.

Now that you have an appreciation for the value of including a drama ministry team as part your churches youth program, the next obstacle you face is figuring out who is qualified to coach the team. Well, since you've expressed enough interest in Christian drama to pick up this book, my guess is that you are the perfect person to coach the team! There are only three requirements needed to be a great Christian drama coach. They are:

- 1) A genuine love for the Lord and his word.
- 2) A genuine love and concern for young people.
- 3) A genuine love of excellence!

The actual mechanics of good drama can be explained in just a few minutes. Teaching young people not to turn their backs on the audience and to speak loudly and clearly are concepts that no one needs to tell you, so I won't insult your intelligence. Instead, I'll use this space to warn you about the most common mistake I see at drama competitions and tell you how your drama team can avoid making the same blunders.

The most common error that drama/speech coaches make is not expecting enough from their actors. Remember, the only thing that good acting or great oratory has to be is believable, so impress upon your actors that a good performance is not just reciting lines of dialogue, it's becoming another person. Keep in mind that a script is nothing but words typed on a piece of paper. It's the feeling and believability an actor brings to those words that make them valuable. In individual drama every eye in the room is on one person and if your actor breaks character for even a second or two, people will notice! I've instilled this concept into my actors to the point that if they make a mistake, they actually do it in character! I remember one young actor who was playing an old man forgot his line and the boy actually said, "Oh, what's that word again? I knew it a minute ago!" Initially, I was

mortified but because he didn't break character, the audience had no idea that his mistake wasn't part of the monologue! If you can teach your actors these kinds of skills (we call them recovery techniques) their confidence will grow quickly. Another important part of your job as a drama coach is to help your actors avoid talking or moving in ways that aren't natural. A simple rule of thumb is this: if it looks or sounds phony to you, it will look and sound phony to your audience. You'll be amazed at the excellent acting you can get from even the youngest children when they know you won't settle for a less than believable performance.

Making a good speech is somewhat different than performing a monologue. In oratory there aren't any characters, costumes or sets for your performer to hide behind. The only tools he or she has are voice, facial expressions and body language, all of which are essentials of good acting. But a speech also requires that your actor convince the listener that his or her position is the correct one. It's the passion which an actor brings to a speech that makes it convincing. As with a monologue, during a speech every eye in the room is on one person and if the performance isn't believable, people will not be convinced!

Other critical issues that a good speech or drama coach needs to consider are the age and especially the gender of the youngster who is performing. Gender is an especially important consideration in casting a speech because in many conservative denominations females do not preach. If you belong to a conservative denomination this is a restriction that must be considered in order to avoid offending people; however, this restriction does not mean that females should not give speeches.

In the last two years four of my female drama team members have won top honors at national speech competitions in spite of my denomination's built-in bias against female speech presentations. In order to keep a speech from sounding like preaching I encourage my female orators to take on an imploring tone in places where male orators would naturally take on an authoritative tone. I also encourage my female orators to cultivate a softer, more pleasant sounding voice than is normally required of male drama team members. I've heard arguments against the value of teaching females to present speeches since preaching may not be in their future. I believe, however, that all of us are called to be witnesses and need to learn the necessary skills.

Another common mistake drama coaches make is not adapting the part to fit their performer's speech style and oratory abilities. The words (even my words, so beautifully written!) aren't the most important part of the monologue or speech. The pieces contained in this book are good but they are not the Bible! There's no law that says you can't rewrite a line or change something if it makes the performance work better for your orator or actor, as long as it doesn't compromise the Biblical truth you are trying to convey.

I explain the concept of acting to my drama kids by telling them to say their lines like they are talking to one of their friends. This is especially important during a speech because the actor actually is talking to the audience! The other approach I use (you may not want to use this example, it's inherently risky!) is to tell them that acting is like lying. Not surprisingly, most children understand the concept that when telling a lie, you have to make your audience believe it!. I explain that the difference between acting and lying is

that now they are channeling their inborn instincts for good instead of evil!

Above all, listen to your actors! If they tell you that people their age “don’t talk like that,” believe them (I learned this the hard way!) and let them help you make changes. Remember, this is a team effort!

I’m sure you’ve gotten the impression by now that I stress excellence as a major goal of any youth drama ministry project. While your top priority in starting a program may not be to create great actors, one of your highest priorities should be to create great people. I firmly believe that instilling the love of excellence in our young people is essential to accomplishing that goal. If you’re tempted to settle for less than the very best work your drama team is capable of producing, we need go back to the why of Christian youth drama for a moment and review. I understand that bad acting, mumbled words, forgotten lines and other mistakes are charming in school plays and church programs; but when drama is used as a ministry tool we need to expect only the best efforts for the following reasons:

1) The most important reason is because it’s for God. We need to teach our children early that our Savior is entitled to their best efforts.

2) When actors have to really explore a character and feel the things that the character is experiencing, they get a better understanding of God’s word and of themselves.

3) An important reason for having a drama ministry program is to teach young people how to witness. If your drama team is ever going to experience the joy of touching hearts for Jesus, their work actually has to be good enough to touch hearts. I beg you, please don’t cheat your young people out of that victory!

Now, before you begin your drama ministry I want to take a minute and reassure you about all the technical aspect of starting a Christian drama team. Yes, there will be a lot to do and it will overwhelm you quickly if you let it. Please, don’t worry! I promise, you don’t have to shoulder the burden alone or be good at everything to make a drama ministry work! I learned a valuable bit of information a long time ago, which I want to pass on to you: don’t worry about the things you don’t know how to do, God has already provided everything you will need! For example, I am a good writer/director who has absolutely no ability whatsoever to design sets, play music or make costumes. God, knowing my shortcomings, placed people in my church who possess the gifts and talents, which I lack. When I asked these wonderful people for help the results were amazing! It is my sincere hope and prayer that God will bless your drama ministry. I pray that your efforts as a drama coach will instill a love for “The Great Commission” in the hearts of your young people that will last a lifetime. I also pray that your group’s drama team ministry will touch the lives of many for the kingdom of Jesus, our Lord.

Yours in HIS service,

Tere L. Turner