

# LILLENAS

# drama

## NEWSLETTER

## In This Issue

- 2 Dear Drama News
- 4 Postscript
- 6 Worship Moments
- 7 News and Views
- 9 Repro Script



## The Power of a Moment

by Kimberly R. Messer

That moment. It just can't be beat. It's that moment of experiencing the perfect combination of a dramatic story and song. A moment that propels you from your seat or pew to a new world, a new understanding, and sometimes even a new decision about your life.

Growing up on theatre, I've experienced many moments like these, and I continue to experience them as I attend performances from Broadway stages to churches across the country.

I will never lose my amazement over how the whole thing works. It's always wonderful for me to see people come together to present a message in a living, breathing way through drama.

As I grew up, it wasn't very kosher (for lack of a better word) to be into theatre. The church had long since loosed it's original embrace of the medium as a way to communicate the gospel to the masses. So, it's no surprise that I never thought that this love and hobby would ever lead me anywhere in ministry. Nevermind that all my church friends thought I was some weird drama freak.

Instead, I was encouraged to use my vocal talents at church.

And I did. And it was a lot of fun. But by the time I got to college, I knew I wanted to continue working on the stage and not necessarily through the music program. Dramatic Arts became my degree of choice—tempered only by the more reliable, “you-can-pursue-drama-but-you-better-study-something-you-can-build-a-career-on,” Communication Studies degree.

During that time, I wasn't aware of how much God was working on the drama frontlines outside of my world. I didn't know that God was opening doors and dispelling myths about using drama in our sanctuaries. He was speaking to people about the power of drama. The power of a moment.

After college, I supported my theatre habit by waiting tables in Nashville. And when I moved to Kansas City, I planned on doing the same. But God had a different plan that led me to Lillenas Publishing Company. Suddenly, I was doing the very thing I never imagined would happen—using my love of drama in ministry and getting paid for it. God is good.

God has taught me a lot in the last few years about the uniqueness of using drama in the church, and all along the way He's reminded me of the power of a moment. He's shown me that lives can change even after seeing a short 5-minute sketch. At every

event whether I'm teaching or performing, I hear stories of impacted lives. People come to me to tell me how just a few minutes of experiencing some drama and a song together stirs hearts.

I spend the good part of each day working on creating and finding moments that help people come face to face with God. Thankfully, He placed me with a company that is dedicated to this endeavor through communicating with music and drama. My love for both makes this job not so much of a job.

As you look to create moments, we have the resources for you, and we are dedicated to continually developing new ones for the changing church. Check out our family of sites at [www.lillenas.com](http://www.lillenas.com) and peruse our catalog. We are adding more drama and music pairings that have been tested by the Lillenas Dramatic Company and that are easy to use.

I really believe in the power of a moment. I know God can change our lives in a minute, in a second really, when we come face to face with Him. I hope that this week, you'll propel your congregation to a new world, a new understanding, and perhaps even a new decision about life through the power of a moment designed by God. Bless you as you minister!

# DEAR DRAMA NEWS

## Changes to Scripts

I attended your conference last month and am a writer. One of my group said that they were told that you may change up to 30 percent of a play you purchase for use. Is that correct or was she mistaken? Thanks for your help.

Melanie Henry  
Via E-mail

Melanie,

Thanks for your inquiry. No, you can't change a script because you've purchased it. In fact, even minor changes are a no-no unless the publisher and sometimes the author as well grants you permission. Nothing under government copyright can be changed legally without permission. See Stacey's "P.S." article on page 4 for more details.

Ed.

## Freebies

We are wanting to start a drama team at our church and I would like to know if there is any free information that you can send me. We would really appreciate anything. Thank You.

Vickie Herndon  
Via E-mail

Vickie,

Yes, there's a wealth of info that we provide. This newsletter for instance is free and features lots of articles and a free script. In addition, our website, [www.lillenasdrama.com](http://www.lillenasdrama.com) is a great place to go for more articles, a free script of the month, resources and a place to network on a message board with other drama enthusiasts.

Our catalog is free and lists over 1000 scripts and additional how-to resources for ministry. For starting and existing teams, we have some drama kits that offer tried and true material. Try the **Drama Ministry Basics Kit** (DNZZMD-314) or the **Sketch Book Kit** (DNZZMD-607) found on-line and in the catalog.

In addition, I would encourage you to sign up for the Lillenas Drama Ministry Service (LDMS), a monthly e-mail

that gives you updates on new releases and discounts on books.

Of course for training, I invite you to come to our conference next February 5-7 for the best teachers and classes on drama and music ministry offered just about anywhere.

God bless your budding ministry. Let us know what else we can do to help!

Ed.

## Taping Performances

What are your policies regarding videotaping of a performance?

Teddy Payne  
Via E-mail

Teddy,

We primarily administer print rights on Lillenas product, so you need permission from the author to videotape a performance. We contact the author for you, and we need the following information: the purpose of the taping, who the viewing audience is, size of audience, and air dates if the video will be aired on TV.

Most of the time permission to video is granted, but you need a license and may have a fee to pay before you can begin taping.

Ed.

## Bookings

I'd like to know how to go about booking a Christian performer for an evening at our church. We need to have an idea about availability, fees, and our responsibilities.

Claire Lunde  
Via E-mail

Claire,

Check out our column about this very question on page 10 of this newsletter. It will give you a listing of some of our author's performing ministries.

Ed.

## Recurring Characters

I have recently purchased your book **What A Character!** (DNZZMP-831) and have totally enjoyed your Granny Glockenspiel character. I

would like to know if there are any other publications with Granny and/or the Judge? If not, are you planning on more? I thank you in advance for your time, and for your ministry. I know we will enjoy bringing these characters to life!

Kathy Johnson  
Rehobeth Baptist Church

Kathy,

Thank you for your enthusiastic response to this book by Torry Martin. Sadly, "Granny" does not appear in any of our other current published works, but you can find "Judge Mental" in **Under the Circumstances** (DNDNZZMP-820). There's a special on this book on page 11 of this newsletter. Check it out!

Ed.

## Lillenas drama newsletter

A publication of Lillenas Publishing Co., Box 419527, Kansas City, MO 64141 (816-931-1900).

E-mail: [drama@lillenas.com](mailto:drama@lillenas.com)

Your contributions are invited. We are in need of "News and Views" articles, reports, and photos of your productions, and letters that advise us of what you're thinking. Sorry, but photos cannot be returned.

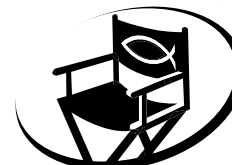
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Manuscripts may be submitted to the above address. Please enclose an SASE with them. Write for Playwright's Guidelines.

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Kimberly R. Messer, Editor

LILLENAS®



DRAMA

# BACKSTAGE

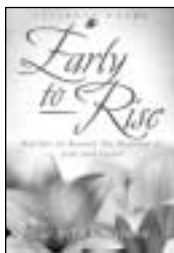
## New Releases



Developed with the help of teens and performed this summer for over 9000 youth from across the US and Canada, **No Limits: The Script Book** (DNZZMP-849) is the youth resource you've been looking for. This book works. Try it today.



**Can't We All Just Get Along** (DNZZMP-851) is Martha Bolton's latest look at dysfunction in the family. Let them get a laugh and a truth at the same time. Order now.



Facing the challenge of communicating Easter themes to today's world isn't that far off on the calendar. **Early to Rise** (DNZZME-59) tackles the challenge and delivers short sketches with heart and punch. Not your average Easter collection.

COMING SOON...

All the Best Programs for Kids 2  
Available this December!

Lillenas **MUSIC and** **Drama** Conference  
February 5-7, 2004  
In Greater Kansas City

Thursday Night

Friends of the Groom

Friday Afternoon

Lillenas Dramatic Company

Friday Afternoon

Torry Martin

More details in the enclosed brochure . . .

**Visit [lillenasconference.com](http://lillenasconference.com)**  
**for info and to register!**

# PostScript

by Stacey A. Schnarr



Editor's Note: This column usually appears on the back page as a P.S., but the article was so important, I decided to bring it inside this time. Enjoy!

## Copyright Laws & the Drama Director

The other day I was talking with someone who wanted to make changes to a sketch, and he said, "Once we pay for a sketch book don't those scripts become ours to do with what we want?"

I gasped.

Sometimes I forget that folks who are new to drama ministry may not be familiar with copyright laws and the ethics of working with an author's intellectual property. So, here is a little refresher on what copyright law means to you and your drama ministry.

Copyright is protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S. Code), granting authors and other artists the exclusive privilege to control reproduction, distribution, and performance of their creative works. This means you cannot photocopy, perform, edit, videotape, etc.

a script without following the author's stipulations as set down, most likely, by the publisher of the script.

Following copyright laws will give financial and moral support to authors who invest their time and energy in creating new works for us to perform. Many of the playwrights Lillenas Drama publishes are full-time writers. Writing is what they do for a living. And for most of them it's a ministry too, but it is still how they feed their families. The best way to say 'thank you' to a playwright who has written a wonderful script, is not loaning your scripts to the church down the street. Instead, respect copyright laws and ensure his or her work is treated with respect. In return, that author will be encouraged to continue creating new scripts.

**Louis E. Catron, professor of theatre, explains it well in an arti-**

**cle on his website called "Copyright Laws for Theatre People."** (<http://faculty.wm.edu/lecatr/copy.htm>) I recommend every director and producer check out this article. Here is one of the great analogies about Copyright Laws you will find there:

"The copyright laws say that a playwright owns his or her play with precisely the same legal certainty as a person owns a car or someone owns an apartment complex. Can you "borrow" that car without the owner's permission for a five-week cross-country trip? Can you arbitrarily decide to "remodel" an apartment, which you rent, knocking out a wall here, rearranging this door to be in that other wall, or walling off that window and cutting a new one? Of course not. When you get hauled into court, even a dream team of lawyers won't help much.

Do directors have a right to "borrow" a play by producing it without permission of the legal copyright holder or his/her representative? Can directors "remodel" a play by shifting scenes, changing characters, deleting or adding lines, or excerpting a small scene from a whole play? No. Not legally. If directors are free to take such actions, we're forced to believe that a car hijacker is "liberating" a car or the apartment vandal is showing "free expression."

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Copyright laws protect an author's work from theft and misuse. Directors and churches need to understand these copyright laws so they can prevent violating the law, which can bring major legal problems and hefty fines. Remember, “I didn't know” will get a stern lecture about “ignorance of the law is no defense.” The copyright notification is printed clearly in every book.

Lillenas Drama's copyright policies can also be found in the *Frequently Asked Questions* section of [lillenasdrama.com](http://lillenasdrama.com), as well as the inside front cover of the latest Lillenas Drama Catalog. If you do feel the need to make a change to a script, it is often not that difficult to inquire

about. As for Lillenas, just send a letter, fax or e-mail to our office that outlines the script changes you'd like to make. We will quickly share your request with the author and get back to you about the decisions made. Two helpful hints: (1) allow plenty of time for this process (2) have a backup script in case permission is not granted.

A couple of other myths we hear often are:

*“If I make up my own script, but base it on another work, my new work belongs to me.”*

False. U.S. Copyright law is quite explicit that works based or derived from another copyrighted work is the exclusive property of the owner of the original work. If you write a script using settings or characters from somebody else's work, you need that author's permission.

*“If we don't charge admission, we don't have to get permission or pay royalty.”*

False. Audience = performance.

Performance = permission required and royalty payment.

Copyright is still violated whether you charged money or not.

It's sad to note that some great playwrights have left the Christian drama scene because their scripts were often stolen or tampered with. As Christian artists, our reputation should be one of the utmost integrity in ministry. Let's begin to change the attitude of “everyone else does it” and educate each other on how we *should* do it.

If you have any questions concerning copyright policies on Lillenas Drama Resources, please contact us at [drama@lillenas.com](mailto:drama@lillenas.com) or join a discussion on our message board at [www.lillenasdrama.com](http://www.lillenasdrama.com).

Helpful websites to learn more:

UNITED STATES COPYRIGHT OFFICE

<http://lcweb.loc.gov/copyright/>

COPYRIGHT LAWS FOR THEATRE PEOPLE

<http://faculty.wm.edu/lecatr/copy.htm>

Hear Ye,  
Hear Ye!

Or rather,  
Read Ye . . .

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❖ Conference Info

❖ Free Scripts

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# WORSHIP MOMENTS



## *Drama and Music Pairings for Your Worship Services*

**F**inding that right combination of music and drama is not always an easy task. This column is designed to help you find great pairings from both of these mediums that will enhance your worship services. We've tried and tested these pieces in front of crowds for you so you can be assured the two pieces work together.

### For Christmas

"Victory Report" from *Body, Mind & Spirit* is a monologue for one female about the frustrations of Christmas. The character sorts through the mail to find junk advertisements, letters about how great life is from friends and family, and a Victory Report from someone in ministry. Feeling very unvictorious, she complains to God a bit, and wonders what is wrong with her. She sees a catalog with a pewter nativity set in it, but the manger is missing the baby Jesus.

As she relinquishes the sarcasm and asks God to be real to her, she prays, "Please tell me You're not in that pewter manger Lord. . . a place that's only reserved for a few who have their acts together." The piece ends in a beautiful moment that is perfectly followed up with the use of the song, "Good News."

"An angel brings good news" is the repeated theme of the music which provides a great contrast to all the junk

mail the monologue refers to. It begins softly and encourages the listener to behold the wonderful gift Jesus is. The song grows steadily and builds to a warm medium, then ends softly again.

Start your music immediately at the line, "Please, please. . . I need You to come into this manger and bring a little light. . . please."

## RESOURCES

<i>Body, Mind &amp; Spirit</i> (DNZZMP-824)	\$17.99
Downloadable script, "Victory Report" (DNZZ10528)	\$10.00
<i>Good News</i> (DNZZAG-1136)	\$ 1.45
Stereo & Split-Trax Accom CD (DNZZMU-2556T)	\$19.99
Orchestration (DNZZOR-2556)	\$54.99

To read or purchase this downloadable script and to hear, "Good News," visit [www.lillenasdrama.com](http://www.lillenasdrama.com)



Visit [www.dramasketches.com](http://www.dramasketches.com)



for over

1000 Downloadable Scripts!



# NEWS AND VIEWS

Production Shots and Tips from  
Drama Ministry Teams, Troupes, and Groups

## Footprints of a Pilgrim

Submitted by Thom Sneed

We used *Footprints of a Pilgrim* (DNZZMP-835) as a tie-in to our faith promise weekend. We emphasized Ruth Graham's missionary heritage and her lifestyle of obedience. This provided us a good backdrop for raising our congregation's awareness and appreciation for missions. The audience flowed into the presentation and easily followed the storyline presented in readers theatre style.



Thom and Robin Sneed in Oregon, OH Church of the Nazarene's presentation of *Footprints of a Pilgrim*.

## Caution to the Wind

Submitted by Jeanan Jackson

The Women's Ministries of Windwood Presbyterian Church recently sponsored a performance of *Caution to the Wind*, a romantic comedy in one-act from a collection of plays called *The Celestial Helix* (DNZZMP-804) by Anita Higman.

The audience laughed in all the right places, and they praised the work of Higman. The performance was part of a celebration of the talents and spiritual growth of the women at our church.



Windwood Presbyterian Church's performance of *Caution to the Wind* featuring Christine Roskamp and Glenn Dissinger.



## *Planning Your Spring Production?*

The plays listed above are perfect for Valentine's Banquets or Spring Dessert Theatre. Find these and many more plays on-line at:

[www.lillenasdrama.com](http://www.lillenasdrama.com)



## spotlight on...



Jeff & Kim Frame

As writers of one of our latest releases, *Early to Rise* (DNZZME-59), this talented team that hails from Nashville, TN have a wealth of experience in pretty much all the aspects of production. They have shared their talents staging productions at the collegiate level as well as in their church. In their off-production time, Jeff serves as a professor of theatre, and his wife Kim, teaches elementary school. They will be teaching and sharing some of their great insights at our conference next year.

**Jeff, you teach a drama ministry course at Trevecca Nazarene University. What are some of the most important concepts you try to get across to students in this class?**

That question immediately brings some other questions to mind: Why do we use drama in ministry in the first place? If we don't understand how it can serve as an appropriate, powerful tool for ministry and expression, then we can't use that tool very effectively. I think sometimes we try to carve "stone statues" with paintbrushes and pencils because we don't what tools to use, or when and how.

Another question is, how do we balance our passion for storytelling onstage with compassion for those with whom we help tell that story? And since theatre depends more on the power of suggestion than on the power of depiction, how do we incorporate that power into worship, outreach, and community life in our churches? I think these are some of the most important concepts I teach in drama ministry.

**Which idea would you say is *most* important overall?**

Ultimately theatre is about relationships—relationships among characters, among actor-director-designer, and between the artist and the audience.

And when we surrender all our artistic gifts to Christ, drama *ministry* means that these relationships depend entirely on our relationship with God. Sandy Meisner described the art of acting as "living truthfully in imaginary circumstances." That's it right there! To "live truthfully" as artists speaks to our longing for authenticity in Christ as a result of His grace in our lives.

**Concerning *Early to Rise*, how did you have the scripts "tested" as they were written?**

Several ways. The most enjoyable, of course, was performing

some of them in worship at our church, Trevecca Community Church of the Nazarene. Nothing better and more practical

than seeing your work come alive from the page to the stage! At other times, we chose to workshop some of the sketches as staged readings, either in the drama ministry course at TNU or among invited friends in a closed session.

**How important is that to the scriptwriting process?**

The best scripts are those that not only tell an important story or have something urgent to say, but also those that are really stageworthy.

The script must sound right, look right, and take advantage of the things that theatre does best in performance. The only way that's going to happen is if you can hear dialogue spoken out loud, see the action physicalized in a real stage space, and/or watch situations unfold in a some form of theatrical context. So, yes, testing takes scripts beyond being blueprints (as Tennessee Williams calls them), and turns them into real houses that won't fall down dramatically when performed. Extremely important!

**Kim, come on—give us your best tip for costuming our church's Christmas and Easter productions!**

Don't use bathrobes!! Bathrobes always look like bathrobes! If you're doing a play, musical, or sketch that requires biblical costumes, go the extra mile and make them. There are a lot of really easy patterns available to build these. Have a day where several people meet to make them. Some can pin and cut patterns while others sew them together. Make it an all-church project and involve more than just those who are in the production. A lot of people want to be involved but don't necessarily want to be the ones onstage.

If you're doing productions that don't require biblical costuming—don't limit yourself to the local fabric store—use the hardware stores, thrift shops, craft stores as resources as well. Another suggestion is to borrow costumes from other churches and local theatres. Whatever you do—stay faithful to the production. Costumes are an important element in a production and should never distract from the message of the piece.

**Can you tell us more about the research you did when writing "Spin Doctors" and "Which Came First, the Bunny or the Egg?"**

cont. on page 10



LILLENAS  DRAMA

REPRO SCRIPT

## Is Anybody Listening?

By Carol Ferguson Hunt

(Note: You may photocopy this script for your personal use. Please be sure to include the copyright statement.)

CAST: BUSINESS SUIT—Man in business suit  
 NATIONAL COSTUME—Visiting missionary  
 RUNNING TIME: 6 minutes

*(Two men stand back-to-back in the center of the platform. Both are obviously North American, but one wears a business suit and one foreign clothes, like a Japanese kimono or African caftan. NATIONAL COSTUME stands immobile while the BUSINESS SUIT, who appears to be a typical in-charge male, is agitated and fidgety as he paces, fiddles with his tie, and runs his hands through his hair. Eventually, he speaks.)*

BUSINESS SUIT: No matter how hard I try to hide it, I have a feeling everyone knows. Certainly my wife does and we have not talked about it at all. But she's figured it out and tiptoes around the subject as wary as a . . . a cat in a kennel full of hunting dogs.

What's my problem? Well, I'll tell you what it is. Missionaries are coming to our church again, that's what! And I don't like it! Not a bit!

I admit my attitude is poor, to say the least. And I don't talk about it to anyone much because everyone else seems so pleased when time comes for the missionaries to visit again. And I'm not sure why I feel this way. It's true that when I was a kid, Mother always asked the missionaries to stay with us even though we didn't have a guest room. Guess who had to give up his bed to the visitors—that's right, I got a quilt on the floor. But I don't think that's the reason.

They just seem so . . . *good*, those missionaries. Always smiling and quoting scripture. Living on the other side of the world and vowing that's where they want to be. Come on. Do you mean to tell me they like doing without paved roads and super markets? Or being jammed into those huge, filthy cities along with millions of people without enough air to breathe? And having to learn to speak another language just to buy a new toothbrush?

No one can be happy and spiritual about that, can he? I wish just once I'd hear one complain about something or admit to getting angry or discouraged or homesick or *anything* human or normal. Then I might find out I liked 'em, and would listen more carefully when they tell about what they do.

That's my problem, I guess. They make me uneasy

because they're so blooming *good* all the time. How can I relax and enjoy when confronted by Mr. and Mrs. Perfect?

*(BUSINESS SUIT subsides into muttering and shaking his head as he becomes less audible. Before BUSINESS SUIT subsides completely, NATIONAL COSTUME stirs and begins pacing and talking to God—not reverently bowed in prayer—but glancing and gesturing toward the ceiling as he complains.)*

NATIONAL COSTUME: Isn't there some other way we could get this job done?

Must I always and forever make a fool of myself like this? *(Gesturing at his costume.)*

I'm glad to be one of your "sent ones,"—most days, that is—but it's a hundred times easier doing it in \_\_\_\_\_ (name country of origin of costume) than coming back here to talk about it. I mean that, I really do.

Driving up to yet another church, grinning and shaking hands with people who are not sure why I've come—they don't read their church newsletters—and after I explain who I am, they clearly lack enthusiasm that I showed up to bother them.

Now, I know you keep atoms and molecules straight with one hand and our world turning with the other, so I'm not telling you how to do your job. But I do wonder, couldn't you create another way to involve your people here with your beloved world? I'm not getting the job done so I think you're making a mistake depending on me.

I try to be cheerful and upbeat and answer all questions. I try to make it sound as if missions are the exciting thing going. I never let on that I have these problems, that I'm shy and would rather be home reading a book. Nor do I talk about any of the discouraging stuff in our work. They don't know I fail sometimes, or lose my temper, or fight with my wife. I figure I shouldn't let on about the hard parts and blow the missionary image, so you're the only one who knows about that stuff.

And, you know, sometimes when I'm supposed to be lining up all the scripture verses and sermons for my missions presentation to the next batch of disinterested

cont. on page 10

REPRO SCRIPT  
(cont. from page 9)

strangers, I'm wishing I had a real friend here at home, another guy maybe, who likes me because I'm me. Some human being to whom I could tell the hard stuff and he wouldn't think I'm the most unworthy servant on your list.

Do you have anyone like that for me, Lord?

*(The two men stand back-to-back for a moment longer, each looking disturbed and unhappy. Then, without ever looking at each other, each walks off the platform in opposite directions.)*

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[www.lillenasdrama.com](http://www.lillenasdrama.com)

SPOTLIGHT ON  
(cont. from page 8)

Our goal with these sketches is to raze the "mythology of the hare" which is so prevalent in our culture around Easter time and to re-direct our focus back again solely on Jesus. Our research for these two particular sketches surprised us because we discovered that most of our fun family traditions belong to the worship of ancient pagan deities. Although we projected this mythology fictitiously into the "Spin Doctors" encounter, that absurd dialogue fairly accurately describes what actually happened among Saxon farmers during Teutonic celebrations of the 8th century and beyond!

# BOOK THEM NOW!

**Use the listing below to get acquainted with some of our authors who are also performers, and book them for a day, an evening, or weekend in your church.**

## *Jeff Barker*

Northwestern College Touring Theatre Ensemble  
Plays for Churches and Schools  
Contact: [dme@nwcsiowa.edu](mailto:dme@nwcsiowa.edu)

## *Torry Martin*

Christian Comedian  
Booking info: [www.torrymartin.com](http://www.torrymartin.com)  
Contact: 865.774.4444

## *Chuck Neighbors*

One Man Shows & Workshops  
Booking info: [www.mastersimage.com](http://www.mastersimage.com)  
Contact: [drama@mastersimage.com](mailto:drama@mastersimage.com)

## *Jeff Smith*

Illustrated Sermons, Interactive Programming, & Educational Training  
Booking info: [www.saltandlightmin.org](http://www.saltandlightmin.org)  
Contact: 804.743.870

**Many more links to our author's websites can also be found at  
[lillenasdrama.com](http://lillenasdrama.com)**



# Fall Sale!

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## Full-length



### FOOTPRINTS OF A PILGRIM

*A Dramatic Presentation of the Life of Ruth Bell Graham*

Reading Copy DNDNZZMP-835 ~~\$8.00~~ \$6.29  
 Production Pack\* with BONUS listening CD DNDNZZMPK-835CD ~~\$85.00~~ \$75.00

*\*(includes scripts, Graham family photos and music cues, and recording of original performance)*

## One-act



### THE CELESTIAL HELIX

*And Other One-Act Plays*

Reading Copy DNDNZZMP-804 ~~\$8.00~~ \$6.29

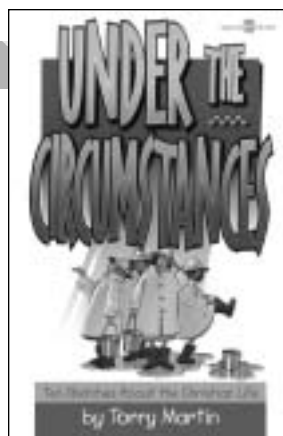
## Sketches



### BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

*Sketches for the Christian Walk*

Book DNDNZZMP-824 ~~\$17.00~~ \$12.59



### UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES

*Ten Sketches About the Christian Life*

Book DNDNZZMP-820 ~~\$17.00~~ \$12.59

Sale ends December 15, 2003.

For more details on each book visit [lillenasdrama.com](http://lillenasdrama.com) • Order on-line or call 1-800-877-0700

# Celebrate Longevity— *Building for Endurance*

By Grace Goodall

Director of Class Act, Sharon Strawn



It's celebration time at Mission Valley Church of the Nazarene (MVCN) in San Diego, CA, as their drama ministry, called Class Act, reaches its 20-year milestone. They praise God for the astounding success of this unique ministry. Class Act is a dessert theater where secular, comedy and farce, three-act royalty plays are performed theater-in-the-round style. The audience, sitting at tables around an elevated stage, is served dessert at intermission and beverages during breaks. The dessert theater format appeals to people in all walks of life, so unchurched friends and family members feel comfortable coming to the church. In this non-threatening atmosphere they are invited to attend upcoming events and other church programs.

Class Act's success is based on three prerequisites: a solid foundation; financial stability; and vital ministry.

## The Solid Foundation:

Building an enduring drama ministry is a lot like building and maintaining a house, both require vision



Class Act's *Charley's Aunt*

and a solid foundation. A designer first envisions a house and then lays a firm foundation on solid ground before building. Repairs and upgrades over time ensure the house's value so long as the foundation remains secure. Similarly, in 1984 Class Act began when

God gave Director Sharon Strawn a vision for using secular drama for outreach. MVCN committed itself to supporting this ministry, thus laying its foundation on the solid ground of evangelism. With drive and perseverance, Sharon devoted herself to building the drama ministry as envisioned, making adjustments and upgrades over the years. Now, 20 years later, the ministry celebrates its enduring longevity because Sharon remained committed and MVCN faithfully provided a firm foundation, even through three changes of senior pastor.

## Financially Sound:

By design, Class Act is financially sound because it is self-supporting. A donation price is set, currently \$15 per ticket, to cover all production expenses. Excess funds result and Class Act uses them to further ministry objectives. For the first few years excess funds purchased props, costumes, lighting and other equipment for future productions. In 1990, Class Act began donating proceeds to other ministries. Last year, proceeds of \$1500 supported a mission project in Russia. Thus, Class Act has not only been totally self-supporting, but it has faithfully contributed to other ministries.

## Vital Ministry:

In addition to its ministry of providing an opportunity for outreach, Class Act is also a small-group ministry. Class Act provides a point of entry into other programs and activities at MVCN for every person who attends its performances. The congregation-at-large uses Class Act to reach out to family members and friends. High school and college students are reached when they come to critique a performance as part of their class assignment. Similarly, nursing and psychology students attend in order to examine a play's content. Additionally, there are occasions when dignitaries, such as the playwright's wife or the parent of a Hollywood actress, attend and are impressed by the professionalism and quality they observe.

As a small group in itself, cast and production members enjoy fellowship and spiritual support during the six weeks of rehearsal and week of performance. Since it is a requirement that all participants be currently attending MVCN, each production helps build relationships between persons not otherwise connected within the congregation. New participants may also be newcomers to the church, so Class Act provides a vital witness to God's love through fellow participants. Class Act is truly a unique ministry for its participants and all who attend.

There is good reason for celebration at MVCN. God has preserved and blessed their drama ministry because Class Act stands on a solid foundation, remains self-supporting, and faithfully provides its unique and vital ministry. Class Act's most recent production was of Joe DiPietro's *Over the River and Through the Woods* on October 9-11, 2003. For inquiries about any past production, contact Sharon Strawn by calling the church office at (619) 287-3211.

*Editor's Note: Congratulations to Sharon and her ministry through Class Act!*