

FROM OLD TO NEW

by Gail Gaymer Martin



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CAST OF CHARACTERS

NARRATOR / MIKE MARSHALL

The chairman of the yearly planning committee

CONNIE

Mike's friend, in her forties. Dressed in, preferably, red.

WALLY WHINER

In his forties, with excuses for everything.
Dressed casually in slacks and sport shirt.

GRACE GOODHEART

In her thirties with good intentions, but not much
follow-through. Dressed in a skirt and blouse.

BILL BUCKS

In his fifties with money, but a selfish heart.
Dressed in a suit.

MOLLY MOTHERS

Homemaker in her twenties with three children.
Dressed in slacks and T-shirt or blouse.

DAN DAWDLE

In his twenties, with procrastination down to a science.
Dressed casually, perhaps in jeans.

ELLA ELDERS

Elderly woman with poor hearing, but a good spirit.

WES WISEACRE

In his thirties with all the answers, but no action.

NOTE: The roles are not gender-specific. Simply choose an appropriate name if substituting a female for a male or vice versa.

INTRODUCTION

Many churches celebrate the new year with a worship service or Christian fellowship. What better way to end the old year and begin the new than to thank God for his blessings and to rededicate one's life? People often use this time for making resolutions, and God's house is certainly a good place to state the new year's resolutions and to ask God to bless them. Whether in worship or fellowship, church is a safe, comfortable and blessed location to celebrate the new year.

This program of rededication can enhance such a New Year's gathering. Following a brief drama, the congregation participates in a ceremony of consecrating their time to God in the year ahead. A perfect way to ring out the old year and ring in the new!

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PRODUCTION NOTES

This program may be used appropriately for either a worship service or part of a Christian fellowship gathering. Used in worship, it may replace the sermon. As part of a fellowship event, it may come before or after a dinner, potluck, or other activity in the church fellowship hall.

A narrator begins the program by setting the stage and introducing the brief drama, "The Old Has Gone; The New Has Come!" which is both humorous and pointed. Following the short play, the narrator concludes the program by involving the audience in a rededication of their lives. The first narration and play runs approximately fifteen minutes. Two Bible verses serve as the focal Scripture: Matthew 16:19-21 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

PRE-ACTIVITY

Those in attendance are asked to bring with them a basket, box or container — decorated or plain, but marked with identification. These receptacles will hold examples of items that regulate their time: clocks, watches, calendars, Day Timers, appointment books, palm pilots or other hand-held scheduling devices, and any other object that governs their days and weeks.

STAGING

The narrator may speak from a podium or lectern, or he may stand front and center of the viewers. The drama's staging is a simple half-circle of nine chairs that may be on a stage, chancel, or in the front of a room. Seated from left to right are: Grace, Bill, Wally, Connie, Narrator/Mike, Wes, Molly, Dan and Ella.

The narrator begins the program and may read from a script, or his monolog may be memorized. At the end of the monolog, he joins the players. When he takes his seat, the drama begins.

Players' lines may be memorized or read from note cards concealed in the calendars and Day Timers used as part of the drama.

If clip-on microphones are available, they may be used. Otherwise, vocal volume will be a consideration during rehearsals.

Players will dress in their own clothing as designated in the character descriptions.

PROPS

Each character will have with him or her a pocket calendar, hand-held scheduling device, Day Timer or appointment book. Other props needed are:

Bill: A wristwatch

Wes: An appointment book with pages that may be torn out

(NARRATOR takes his place front and center or at a podium. The chairs are arranged in a semi-circle or centered in front of the audience.)

NARRATOR: A new year. A fresh start, a time to review the past, a time for change and growth, a chance to “do it right” this time around, a time to keep promises, a new batch of resolutions. Isn’t that what the new year means to most of us? We review the past year with wishes, what-ifs, and maybes, then promise ourselves wiser decisions and strong commitments in the future.

But ... (Pauses, looking over the audience.) And there’s the crux. We live a life of “buts,” along with our “what-ifs.” Promises are easy to make — and easier to break. We promise our mates we’ll clean the garage, help with the dishes, listen when they talk, or not spend every Sunday in front of the TV. We promise our children we’ll be home on time for that ride they need, or we agree to let them bring a friend along on vacation (except we don’t tell them we get to choose the friend). Wives promise they’ll perfect the budget, never make us eat okra or go on a diet, and vow they won’t say a word or ask a favor while we’re watching our favorite sports teams. But ...

And think of the promises we make to the boss, our coworkers, our relatives, our friends, the neighbors, members of our favorite organizations, and to our church family.

“I meant to do that, but ... “ (Pause) And then there are our promises to God.

PLAYLET — The Old Has Gone; The New Has Come

(Characters begin to take their seats, walking in ones or twos, speaking silently to one another, waving in greeting, as the director designates.)

NARRATOR: Let’s take a look at a church planning meeting on

1 any Saturday afternoon at Somewhere Christian Church
 2 in Anywhere, U.S.A. It's the end of the year. Time for a
 3 fresh start, time to review the past, time for change and
 4 growth, another chance to "do it right," a time to keep
 5 promises. Does that sound familiar? (NARRATOR [MIKE
 6 MARSHALL] slips off his suit jacket and picks up a Day Timer.
 7 As he steps toward the group seated, CONNIE joins him.)

8 **MIKE:** Hi, Connie. Thanks for coming.

9 **CONNIE:** No problem, Mike. You couldn't keep me away. (She
 10 gives him a knowing smile. They join the others. MIKE nods in
 11 greeting to those seated and motions CONNIE to take the seat at
 12 his right hand.)

13 **MIKE:** (To the group) I want to thank you all for coming.

14 **GRACE:** I'm so happy to be here. Thanks for inviting me. (WES
 15 folds his arms over his chest and rolls his eyes.)

16 **WALLY:** (Whining) I hope we can make this quick. I'm a busy
 17 man. As soon as Dora heard I was leaving the house, she
 18 gave me a list a mile long. I'll be running errands all
 19 afternoon.

20 **MIKE:** Sorry, Wally. I realize it's the busy holiday season, but
 21 the church's work goes on no matter what. I'll be as brief
 22 as possible. Hopefully today, we can focus on our purpose
 23 and find time after the holidays to begin our work.

24 **WES:** Then could you cut to the chase, and let's get busy. (He
 25 pulls out his Day Timer. Others locate their pocket or purse
 26 calendars, appointment books, etc.)

27 **MIKE:** Sure thing, Wes. But first —

28 **WES:** (Cuts him off.) And who's your friend?

29 **MIKE:** Oh, sorry, everyone. This is Connie. She's a good friend
 30 who keeps me in line. (He gives CONNIE a pat on the
 31 shoulder.) I thought she'd help move the meeting along.
 32 (Each greets CONNIE in his or her own way.)

33 **MIKE:** Anyway, as I was saying, I'd like to begin with a Bible
 34 verse, and then we'll pray.

35 **ELLA:** Play! We haven't started the meeting yet!

- 1 **MIKE:** I said *pray*, Ella. (*ELLA nods. He shakes his head and grins.*)
 2 In Matthew 6:19-21, the Bible says, “Do not store up for
 3 yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust
 4 destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store
 5 up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your
 6 treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Lord, as we
 7 plan the work of your church today, help us to be patient
 8 with each other and mindful of your Word, for where our
 9 treasure is, there our heart will be also. Amen.
- 10 **ALL:** Amen.
- 11 **BILL:** (*Irritated*) A-ha! I wondered why I was asked to be on this
 12 committee. Now I know. Treasures! Right! You’re after my
 13 money. I want you to know that I give a good amount of
 14 money to this church. You can’t get blood from a turnip.
 15 (*ELLA leans forward, trying to hear.*)
- 16 **ELLA:** (*Loudly to DAN*) What’d he say?
- 17 **DAN:** “You can’t get blood from a turnip.”
- 18 **ELLA:** (*To BILL*) Bill, yer an ol’ skinflint. (*BILL’s mouth drops open.*)
- 19 **MIKE:** (*Holds up his hand for silence.*) Excuse me. Let’s get on with
 20 the meeting. And please, remember our prayer. (*Looks at*
 21 *BILL.*) You’re right, Bill, the word “treasure” certainly
 22 includes our offerings, our gifts to God. But we have other
 23 gifts to offer. What about our talents? And our time?
- 24 **MOLLY:** I’m a mother, Mike. That’s my talent. And I don’t have
 25 the time.
- 26 **BILL:** You want the time? (*He pulls up his sleeve and checks his*
 27 *watch as GRACE stares at it.*) It’s four-thirty! Time to get
 28 going, I’d say. (*Chuckles at his joke.*)
- 29 **GRACE:** That’s a nice-looking watch, Bill. Must be expensive.
- 30 **BILL:** (*Proudly*) You can say that again. (*He shows her.*) A Rolex!
- 31 **MIKE:** Let’s get back to business. Molly just said she has no
 32 talent or time to spare.
- 33 **CONNIE:** I know I’m a guest, but might I say a word?
- 34 **MIKE:** Sure, that’s why you’re here. (*Others nod in agreement.*)
- 35 **CONNIE:** Molly, being a mother, you have many wonderful

1 talents. You're a caregiver, a chauffeur, *(She grins)* a nurse,
2 and a cook. And so many other things. Those are all
3 talents.

4 MOLLY: Well, sure, but I do that for my family. How does that
5 help the church?

6 CONNIE: Well, let's see. When you cook a casserole, it's not
7 much work to make two. How about making dinner for a
8 shut-in or new mother? Or after dropping the kids off at
9 school, you might give someone who can't drive a lift to
10 the doctor, pharmacy, or grocery store. A little time and a
11 great gift.

12 MOLLY: I could do that. I'd never thought about it before.

13 CONNIE: And I'm sure you pray. You all pray, don't you? *(They*
14 *respond with head nods.)*

15 WES: OK, you can add me to the people-who-pray list. I do that
16 anyway.

17 MIKE: That's great, Wes. And what do you pray for?

18 WES: Pray for? Good weather when it's a home game. Health.
19 My knees have been killing me lately. Listen, I pray for all
20 my family's needs.

21 CONNIE: Prayer is important and wonderful. We can talk to
22 God and count on him to listen to our needs. He's our
23 heavenly father and we're his children. Like real life.
24 *(Turns to MOLLY.)* How often do your children need your
25 help, Molly?

26 MOLLY: *(Chuckles.)* When don't they? They call me a hundred
27 times a day. Mom, I need this. Mom, make Debbie stop
28 teasing me. Mom, I'm hungry.

29 GRACE: *(Lets out a loud moan.)* Oh, no! *(Everyone turns her way*
30 *with various expressions of surprise.)*

31 MIKE: *(Frightened, jumps up and gapes at her.)* What is it?

32 GRACE: Oh dear, I forgot to bring the cupcakes. I promised to
33 bring a little treat for everyone, remember? *(They all*
34 *breathe a sigh of relief, and MIKE sinks back into his chair.)*

35 MIKE: Next time, Grace.

- 1 **CONNIE:** (*Returns her gaze to MOLLY.*) So, your children ask for
2 your help hundreds of times a day.
- 3 **MOLLY:** Maybe more. (*MOLLY chuckles.*)
- 4 **CONNIE:** And how many times a day do they thank you?
- 5 **MOLLY:** Thank me? (*Laughs.*) You're kidding.
- 6 **CONNIE:** Maybe that's an element we can all add to our prayers.
7 To thank God daily for his goodness. We can be the kind
8 of child we would all love to have.
- 9 **MIKE:** Praying is one thing we can all do. And we can pray
10 anywhere and any time of the day. Many things can be
11 done in our home. But we also have some administrative
12 jobs we need to talk about. We haven't filled our slate for
13 the church administrative board. And we can use another
14 deacon and, at the least, two more elders.
- 15 **ELLA:** Yer doin' what for the elderly, Mike?
- 16 **MIKE:** (*Speaks louder.*) I hope many things, Ella. But we need
17 elders for the church.
- 18 **ELLA:** That's right, Mike. We need to do a lot for the elderly of
19 the church.
- 20 **MIKE:** (*Smiles and shrugs.*) As I was saying, we need to study
21 how we can recruit leaders.
- 22 **DAN:** Well, don't look at me. I'm no leader.
- 23 **MIKE:** And workers.
- 24 **DAN:** Well, don't look at me. (*Pauses.*) Listen, I volunteered to
25 paint the church basement. Don't forget that.
- 26 **WALLY:** How could we? You had to work that Saturday. Guess
27 who painted the basement? Me.
- 28 **WES:** Funny thing, Wally. I remember you showing up when
29 we were cleaning the paintbrushes.
- 30 **GRACE:** Mike, I know I forgot the cupcakes, but I'll volunteer
31 for anything you ask.
- 32 **WES:** (*Sarcastically*) Just don't make it anything more
33 important than cupcakes.
- 34 **ELLA:** The Bible. Now that's the way to spend our time.
35 Everyone should read the Scriptures. I don't go to bed at

- 1 **night without reading my Bible.**
- 2 **MOLLY:** Me, too. *(Her shoulders sag and she droops her head.)* Well,
- 3 **I mean to.**
- 4 **CONNIE:** Ella is right. Bible study is a must.
- 5 **WALLY:** Don't get me started. I hear the Bible in church every
- 6 **Sunday. Isn't that enough? If you're trying to build up the**
- 7 **Bible study group, count me out. I don't have the time.**
- 8 **WES:** *(Rips out some sheets from his appointment book and leans*
- 9 *across to WALLY.)* Here you go, Wally. Now you got plenty of
- 10 **time.** *(WES chuckles. WALLY snatches the pages.)*
- 11 **MIKE:** Let's get back to our meeting. You all know what we
- 12 **want to accomplish. So give it some serious and prayerful**
- 13 **thought.** *(He opens his Day Timer.)* Now, let's set a meeting
- 14 **date. How about a Monday night?**
- 15 **BILL:** Can't. **Monday Night Football.** *(The other men nod in*
- 16 *agreement.)*
- 17 **MIKE:** *(Flips through the pages.)* All right, let's try for a
- 18 **Thursday.**
- 19 **GRACE and DAN:** Can't. **Bowling.**
- 20 **MIKE:** All right, you tell me. What's good?
- 21 **WALLY:** All I got free is Wednesday. I hate taking my only night
- 22 **home to sit through a meeting.**
- 23 **BILL:** Wednesday's not good for me. I have my investment club
- 24 **meeting. And Tuesday's the Lions Club.**
- 25 **ELLA:** Those little things are so sweet.
- 26 **DAN:** What're you talking about?
- 27 **ELLA:** Lion cubs. Saw that same TV show on Tuesday. Those
- 28 **little rascals were —**
- 29 **DAN:** He said he has the Lions Club on Tuesday.
- 30 **ELLA:** If people would just speak up!
- 31 **MOLLY:** Mike, will child care be provided? It's hard to get a
- 32 **baby-sitter for every meeting.**
- 33 **GRACE:** Here's an idea. We could save time if we stay home
- 34 **and meet in a chat room on the Internet.**
- 35 **CONNIE:** Excuse me. Could I ask a question?

- 1 GRACE: Sure, Connie.
- 2 CONNIE: Please, take a minute to think about this. (*Speaks*
3 *slowly.*) What's the best gift God ever gave you?
- 4 BILL: (*Softly, but loud enough to be heard*) Hmmm? I suppose it's
5 not my Porsche.
- 6 ELLA: That's easy. Our Savior, Jesus Christ. Best gift we'll
7 ever get.
- 8 CONNIE: That's right. I hope it's the same for all of you. (*She*
9 *scans the crowd as they squirm.*) Now, let's do this. Imagine
10 the moment when sin first came into the world. Eve just
11 ate the fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and
12 Evil, and God had told them if they ate from the tree, they
13 would die. (*She looks over the crowd.*) But did God forsake
14 them? Did he say, "Too bad! I'd come up with a plan to
15 save you, but I have bowling on Tuesdays. And
16 Wednesdays, I go out to dinner. Oh yes, and Friday, I have
17 my banking to do. I'm too busy." (*She pauses.*) No, he had a
18 plan before the world was made. He offered his Son,
19 Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice, to be born and to die so that
20 we might have salvation. Are you still too busy to give an
21 evening or two to the Lord? (*Silence as they squirm, looking*
22 *uneasily at their calendars.*)
- 23 GRACE: You know, if I make a note when I volunteer to do
24 something, I'm sure I'd remember. God's done so much
25 for me.
- 26 BILL: I've thought about serving on the church board. As you
27 know, I run my own business. A good business, too. I guess
28 I have to admit it. God's blessed me for sure.
- 29 DAN: I'm a procrastinator, but when you put it like that,
30 Connie, how can I say I don't have time for the Lord?
- 31 CONNIE: I don't know, Dan. How can any of us say it?
32 Sometimes a little prodding and a little reminder helps us
33 to put things in perspective.
- 34 MIKE: Connie's helped us all see things a little more clearly.
35 So what do you think? When can we meet?



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