

Character Plays

This character play has a valuable message. The play depicts a dialog between Dr. Goodword, a faithful counselor, and Mr. Perry Pessimist, who comes to his Spiritual Clinic with a chronic human disorder: overpowering pessimism. The help that the doctor gives Perry comes from the Bible as he guides him toward a more Christlike way of life.¹

The script is short and easy to learn, and with a few simple props and costumes you will be ready to put on a memorable production. Encourage your actors to put feeling into their parts and be sure to have someone behind a camera. Your cast and crew will enjoy watching the play afterward, and so will the rest of the ecclesia. The message never grows old.

The Case of Perry Pessimist

Characters

Announcer, Doctor Goodword, Perry Pessimist, and one or more Bible readers.

Props

The setting is the doctor's office. A desk and two chairs will do. The doctor has a pencil, pad, and Bible on his desk. Doctor Goodword wears a white coat, spectacles, and a moustache. Perry is dressed in dark clothes and sunglasses.



The good doctor is seated behind his desk. Perry sits across from him, head down and slumped in the chair. Perry is overpowered with pessimism. It's time for the camera(s) to roll.

Script²

Announcer: As we glance into the office of Dr. Goodword, in his popular Spiritual Clinic, we find the friendly old physician in conference with a young man of high-school age. The young man, seated across from the doctor, is dressed in dark clothing. His name is Perry Pessimist and he wears a pair of very dark sunglasses. Perry is speaking at the moment.

Perry: I don't think you'll be able to help me, Doctor.

¹ The original Dr. Goodword character plays go back many years. The source is unknown. Anyone with information about the origin of these plays is asked to contact sundayschool@tidings.com.

² The play script has been edited and familiar Christadelphian terms like ecclesia, CYC, and daily Bible readings have been introduced where appropriate.

Doctor: I'm glad you stopped in, anyway, son.

Perry: Well, I guess it won't hurt to talk things over. But I'm sure you won't be able to help.

Doctor: What's your trouble, lad?

Perry: I'm worried about our CYC.

Doctor: The young people in your ecclesia?

Perry: Yes, that's right.

Doctor: What seems to be the matter?

Perry: Well, take their 'Better Attendance Campaign' for example.

Doctor: You're trying to get the young people to attend more things?

Perry: That's right, sir, but it'll never work. I know it won't.

Doctor: How can you be so sure?

Perry: You know how young people are these days. If they like something, they'll do it. And if they don't want to do something, a silly campaign isn't going to help.

Doctor: No?

Perry: No, sir, it won't. And take the ecclesial service thing they've started: the 'Help One Another' project. It won't work either.

Doctor: You don't think so?

Perry: Of course not. If kids won't even come to things, how are you going to get them to help other people? That takes real effort!

Doctor: What do the young people think about these projects you've mentioned?

Perry: Oh, they think they're great. They've promised to come to everything and do everything and all that. But they won't keep their promises.

Doctor: You don't have much faith in your friends, do you, Perry?

Perry: I know human nature, that's all. I don't trust anybody's promises.

Doctor: That certainly must give you a gloomy outlook on life.

Perry: I suppose so, but you've got to face reality. And, you know what? They've got another crazy idea, too.

Doctor: What's that?

Perry: A Bible reading campaign!

Doctor: Don't you believe in Bible reading?

Perry: Of course I do, but I know one thing, Doctor.

Doctor: Tell me.

Perry: It won't work either. Bible reading takes effort, too. They won't do it. All the kids want to do is text on their phones and play video games and stuff like that.

Doctor: *(Spoken firmly.)* Well, I can understand why you might have a hard time getting things to work in your CYC.

Perry: Huh? I'm not sure I like the way you said that, Doctor.

Doctor: No?

Perry: You sound as if you think *I'm* the problem.

Doctor: I didn't say so.

Perry: Well, if you think for one minute that I don't cooperate in these things, you're wrong.

Doctor: I didn't say that either, son.

Perry: I cooperate. But just the same, when I think something won't work, I say so.

Doctor: And your attitude affects everybody else.

Perry: Well, maybe I don't always have the best attitude, but ...

Doctor: But there's more. A lot more. Let me ask you something, Perry.

Perry: Yes, sir?

Doctor: Do you consider yourself to be a Christadelphian?

Perry: Of course! I was baptized when I was 14 years old. I'm determined to follow Christ, but nobody else ...

Doctor: Just a minute, son. How can you possibly follow Christ *if he's dead?*

Perry: Huh? What do you mean? Christ isn't dead!

Doctor: No?

Perry: Of course not! He rose from the dead. He's alive. Don't you know that?

Doctor: Yes, *I* know it. But I am beginning to think that *you* don't.

Perry: What do you mean?

Doctor: I mean just this, Perry. With the outlook you have on life, Christ might as well be dead.

Perry: Really? I never thought of that.

Doctor: Of course all the things you mention are impossible without Christ's help. But with him all things are possible.

Perry: You mean if Christ is alive, I need to trust his ability to make things happen. Sort of like move mountains and things like that?

Doctor: Exactly. With your CYC, all the things you've got planned will fail if you are trusting in your own strength.

Perry: But they'll work if we let Christ work in us? *(Removing sunglasses.)*

Doctor: That's right. Remember Philippians 4:13, Perry.

Perry: What's that?

Doctor: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." And it won't be long before Christ will take away those dark glasses you're wearing and give you a bright new pair instead.

Perry: That's eye-opening, Doctor Goodword! I can't wait to tell the other kids to start letting Christ work in their lives. And I'm going to do it, too. You've been a big help after all.

Reader: "God (did not give) us a spirit not of fear, but of power and love and self-control" – 2 Timothy 1:7.

Reader: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" – Philippians 4:13.

Reader: "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen" – Ephesians 3:20-21.

Curtain.