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What Happens When A Church 'Grows Up'?

Skit by Marilyn Houser Hamm

June 2002

This is an inspiring invitation, based on dynamic changes that are occurring in partner churches across the world. We encourage you to make use of this brief skit to clarify possibilities for your congregation through Mennonite Church Canada Witness. Have fun!

Voice 1: What happens when a church, like the Colombian Mennonite Church, or the Bolivian Mennonite Church, or the Nigerian Mennonite Church - 'grows up'?

Voice 2: Grows up?

Voice 1: Well, you know becomes more mature. . . .

Voice 2: Do you mean, leaders so skilled in teaching the scriptures that North Americans are not needed anymore to teach?

Voice 1: Well, yes. . . .

Voice 2: And believers that have grown for years in their faith that the church takes shape in that country 'without us'? Getting along WITHOUT us?

Voice 1: Well, yes - and no. . . Not without us. WITH us - but in a different way.



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Voice 2: What do you mean, different?

Voice 1: Well - as partners.

Voice 2: Partners?

Voice 1: Yes; partners - you know - those that walk and work alongside and share in the ministry equally.

Voice 2: You mean, there is no longer a "we"/"they"? Are you sure?

Voice 1: I'm very sure. Now there is "us," and "we together."

Voice 2: What does it mean? Won't we still have our mission workers, and how about our mission partners?

Voice 1: Sure. Our workers - 124 of them relating to MC Canada WITNESS - are still there, and the great mission partner program we have enjoyed is still there. . . but there is more.

Voice 2: I think I'm starting to get it. You mean, the work continues - even expands - but our workers from North America may find themselves alongside workers that the Indonesian church might send, or the Bolivian church might send, or we might even start working and connecting church to church around the world for new ministries - right? Or even, some of these churches may have mission workers in Canada. Right?

Voice 1: Right! That's already happening!

Voice 2: This doesn't sound like how we're used to doing things.

Voice 1: Yep. It sounds more like 'new wine for new wine skins.'

Voice 2: Wow. . . (looks thoughtful, then speaks with new energy)
How do we get ready for this new time?

Voice 1: Start thinking "we." This church, this global Mennonite Church, is a "we."



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Voice 2: (Knowingly now, with growing anticipation) Not us - them - WE. (But then stopping suddenly, and pausing. . . .) But how do we get to know "we"? It still feels so far apart.

Voice 1: Well, Ephesians chapter 2 says that Christ took down the dividing wall between us, and has given us the ministry together of reconciliation. I suggest we start finding ways to get to know one another, to meet one another, to explore what God's Spirit is saying to us, and then to act.

Voice 2: It's a bit scary. . . . this isn't like anything we've done before.

Voice 1: Yes - but think of it as making a new friend - or going somewhere you've never been - and then it turns out so great that you could never have imagined it. I don't think that God is promising us instant success all the time - after all, we're human

Voice 2: (nodding) And Jesus says, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world." If Jesus is with us, even nudging us forward, we can move out into uncertainty - like having faith even when we can't see what will happen.

Voice 1: Exactly. So - ready for an adventure with God?

Voice 2: Hold on to your hat! (Mimes hanging on to hat in a wind). The Spirit is starting to blow some energetic winds our way!

Voice 1: Hey - let's go with this wind and see where it wants to take us! (The two exit with excitement down the aisle - in the direction the wind is blowing!)

Mennonite Church Canada Witness anticipates growing church to church relationships as a part of this new era in witnessing to Christ.