



Resource Centre

From our Churches

Author: Glen Klassen

Church: Winkler Bergthaler Mennonite Church

Date: December 2009

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

Coming Home for Christmas

A Drama

Staging

The set is designed in two parts. Part one is a coffee shop with a few tables and chairs and cups. Part two is a living room with couch, chair, and fireplace and/or rug.

Premise

The main character (Trevor) is estranged from his parents and other family members. He has not taken their calls, texts or emails for about a year. He is a successful businessman who lives alone but is hard pressed to share anything with anyone - much less with his family. He hates the Christmas season and cares for little else than making and accumulating money – for himself.

Props

Cell phone
Laptop
Coffee cups
Letter

Cast (in order of appearance):

Trevor (middle aged man)
Gabe (younger man)
Trevor's Dad (older man)
Voice of Trevor's Mom

Scene 1:

Lights come up on Trevor who is entering the coffee shop. He is grumpy because it's cold, the shop is full. He is constantly checking his cell phone for texts and emails. There is one open chair at his table. Trevor sits down at the table with his cup of coffee.

Trevor (mumbling to himself):

This place is always full. Can't these people go to a different coffee shop for a change? Doesn't anyone in this city ever work? It's the middle of the day and everyone just wants to sit around and drink coffee. A bunch of lazy, good for nothing...

Gabe (*younger man dressed lightly and shaking from the cold*):

Is it ok if I join you? This place is packed and I just need to sit down for a few minutes. That ok with you?

Trevor (*hesitant*): Um, well, yeah, I guess so.

Gabe: Thanks, I just need to take a break.

Trevor (*notices Gabe does not have a cup of coffee*):

Um, I think you need to buy something if you want to sit here; store policy.

Gabe: Oh. (*Checking his pockets*) Hmm, I think I forgot my wallet.

Trevor: Too bad for you. Guess I'll see you later.

Gabe: Say, could you buy me a coffee? I'm really cold and I'm good for the toonie. I'll pay you back. If you just...

Trevor (*frustrated*): Fine, fine, I'll buy you a coffee.

Gabe: I can pay you back.

Trevor: I don't even know you so, no offence, but how could you possibly pay me back?

Gabe (*extends his hand*): Oh, I'm Gabe.

Trevor: I'm Trevor and I don't shake hands, you know, H1N1 and all that.

Gabe: Right. Well, nice to meet you Trevor.

Trevor (*looking at his cell phone and does not look up*) Um, yeah, nice to meet you too. (*Looks up from the cell phone*) Sorry, your name again?

Gabe: Gabe.

Trevor: So, Gabe, where are you from? I don't think I have seen you around here.

Gabe: I'm just passing through.

Trevor: Does your work take you on the road?

Gabe: You could say that.

Trevor: So what, you a trucker?

Gabe: No but I do travel quite extensively.

Trevor: So what kind of work do you do then?

Gabe: I'm in the messenger business.

Trevor: You work for a courier?

Gabe: You could say that.

Trevor: Local, provincial, national or international?

Gabe: Global.

Trevor (*skeptical*): Really. What's the company?

Gabe: Global Messaging.

Trevor: Never heard of that company. Are you new?

Gabe (*chuckling*): It seems like we've been around since the beginning of time. But we're probably new to your area.

(*Trevor is distracted by his cell phone*)

Gabe: So what kind of work do you do Trevor?

Trevor (*pause, then finally looks up*): Sorry, what did you say?

Gabe: What kind of work do you do?

Trevor (*holding up his cell phone*): Communications. I own a communications company.

Gabe (*under his breath*): That's kind of ironic.

Trevor: What was that?

Gabe: I said that this must be a busy time of year for you then.

Trevor: What makes you say that?

Gabe (*smiling*): Well, it's Christmas; Lots of communicating and messages and texts and calls going out at Christmas; lots of cheerful greetings and celebration and family gatherings.

Trevor (*Looks down at cell phone again*): For some, maybe.

Gabe: Not for you?

Trevor: It's a long story.

Gabe: Well, you bought me a coffee. The least I can do is to listen to your story.

Trevor (*visibly frustrated as cell phone rings*): Never mind.

Gabel: Aren't you going to take the call; check the message?

Trevor: No, I'm not. I haven't taken calls or messages from this person for a long time now.

Gabe: Sorry to hear that. (*Pause*) Who is it? A telemarketer or something?

Trevor: No, it's not a telemarketer. (*Pause, scowling*) It's my father.

Gabe: You don't take calls from your father??

Trevor: I haven't taken calls from either of my parents for almost a year now and still they keep calling. You would think that they would take the hint and just stop trying.

Gabe: I would get into big trouble if I stopped taking calls from my father.

Trevor: Why do you say that?

Gabe: My father owns the company – Global Messaging. He's my boss."

Trevor: Sorry to hear that.

Gabe: Actually, it works out quite well.

Trevor: Oh, yeah? And how long has it been working quite well?

Gabe (*under his breath*): Seems like forever.

Trevor: What was that?

Gabe: It's been so long, I can hardly keep track anymore.

Trevor: Yeah, well, good luck with that.

Gabe: You sound skeptical.

Trevor: I don't bother with talking to my father anymore.

Gabe: What happened?

Trevor: Like I said, it's a long story.

Gabe: You like communicating through that thing?

Trevor: What? You mean my smart phone? It's great. You can send emails and texts and talk to people all over the world in a matter of minutes. It's great for keeping in touch.

Gabe: But do you still get the message?

Trevor: What do you mean?

Gabe: I prefer talking face to face so the message is clear. Personal contact is at the heart of clear communication.

Trevor (*chuckling*): Is that your tag line or something

Gabe: Family motto. (*Pause*) So tell me about your father? What did he do to you?

Trevor: Who are you now, my psychiatrist?

Gabe (*under his breath*): Maybe you need one.

Trevor: What did you say?

Gabe: I said I have time to listen.

Trevor (*finally reads the text, looks shocked*) Um, I don't have time. I need to go. (*Trevor leaves in a hurry*)

Gabe: Yes, you do.

Scene 2:

Lights come up on a living room. Trevor's father is sitting on a chair by the fireplace.

Trevor (*out of breath from running*): Dad, are you here? (*His father says nothing*) Dad, why didn't you respond? (*Dad is still silent*) Dad, what's wrong? Is Mom okay? Your text said that she...

Dad: Why are you here?

Trevor: What do you mean? Your text said that...

Dad: I have been trying to call you and text you and email you for months and you say nothing. You don't take our calls. You don't respond to our emails. (*visibly upset*) Why are you here?

Trevor (*getting angry*): You know why I have not returned your calls Dad.

Dad: How am I supposed to know anything about you when you don't talk to me?

Trevor: Why should I talk to you Dad when all you ever do is criticize me?? I'm never good enough for you!

Dad: I was trying to help you, son...

Trevor: Help me?! How is putting me down helping me ...

Dad: I did the best I could under the circumstances...

Trevor (*angry*): Your best was not good enough!

Dad: I'm sorry, Trevor...

Trevor (*shouting*): Sorry is not good enough!

Dad (*shouting*): Mom is dead! (*Silence and pause*)

Trevor: What? What do you mean? Your text said she...

Dad (*voice is shaky*): There were complications. The stroke was more serious than they first thought. They were about to rush her into surgery. She died about 3 hours ago.

Trevor (*shocked*): What?! Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Dad (*standing up*): I tried, Trevor, but you wouldn't take my calls.
(*Trevor checks emails and texts on his cell phone and slowly looks up when he realizes the truth*)

Trevor: I don't know what to say.

Dad (*sarcastically*): The communications expert not knowing what to say. Now there's a switch.

(*Dad sits down as Trevor looks unsure of what to do next*)

Trevor: Um, are you ok?

Dad: You can go now.

Trevor: Dad, wait a minute, let's talk...

Dad: Oh, now you want to talk?! Get out!

Trevor: Dad...

Dad (*shouting*): Get out of here!

(*Visibly shaken, Trevor leaves as the lights go down*)

(*Lights come up on the coffee shop where Trevor is already seated. Gabe approaches Trevor's table*)

Gabe: Hey Trevor, it's me Gabe, remember?

Trevor (*slowly looks up*): Hi.

Gabe: You ok, Trevor?

Trevor: Not really.

Gabe: What's wrong?

Trevor: Weren't you on your way somewhere? You said you were passing through. Why are you still here? Don't you have a message to deliver to someone?

Gabe: I got a call from my boss. He said there is a message to be delivered right here.

Trevor: Is that so? Well, maybe you should go and deliver it then.

Gabe: I am delivering it...right now. It's for you.

Trevor: What?

Gabe: I have a message for you, Trevor.

Trevor: A message...for me.

(*Gabe nods his head*)

Trevor (*skeptical*): Well, what are you waiting for? What is the message?

Gabe: It's time to come home.

Trevor: What? 'It's time to come home' - that's the message?

(*Gabe nods his head*)

Trevor: Who are you?

Gabe: I told you - a messenger.

Trevor: Did my father send you? Who sent you?

Gabe: My father.

Trevor: Your father?

Gabe: The boss of Global Messaging.

Trevor (*frustrated; puts his face in his hands*): Gabe, this is not turning out to be a very good day for me, so let's get this straight, your father... (*Trevor looks up to find that Gabriel is gone.*)

Trevor (*looking around*): Gabe? Gabe?!"

(Trevor's cell phone rings. He reads the message and leaves quickly)

Scene 3:

Lights come up on Trevor entering his parent's living room to find his dad putting on his jacket.

Trevor: Dad! Are you here?!

Dad: I'm in here, Trevor!

Trevor: Dad, are you ok? I got your text. It said that you were...

Dad: I didn't send a text.

Trevor: What? But I got a text from you that said...

Dad: You sent me a text. I was coming to the coffee shop...

Trevor: I didn't send you a text.

Dad: I have it right here.

Trevor: Dad, I did not send you a text.

Dad: Yes you did, it says right here that you...

Trevor: Ok, ok. Whatever. Can we stop arguing for a minute?

Dad: Ok.

Trevor: Your text said you had something to give to me...something from mom.

Dad: How did you know that? *(Pause)* A number of years ago when her health started to decline she wrote you a letter. I thought you should have it. *(Dad hands Trevor the letter)*

Trevor: I wasn't sure you wanted me to come back.

Dad: I wasn't sure you would.

(Trevor sits down and reads the letter. The voice of Trevor's mom is heard.)

My dearest son Trevor,

I am not sure how many more years I have left so I wanted to be sure that you knew just how much your father and I love you. I have prayed every day for the past year that you and Dad could reconcile what happened so many years ago. I have prayed that you could forgive each other, that you could find healing, that you could experience the love of God. Don't waste time holding grudges and not talking to each other. I will continue to pray for you. If you are reading this letter it probably means I have passed away. Don't be sad. I am at peace with God in heaven. Please make things right with your father. He needs you and you need him.

And never forget that the love and grace of God are steadfast and trustworthy. Take care of yourself. Till we meet again, with all my love, Mom.

Trevor (*wiping tears from his eyes*): Have you read this?

Dad: Your mother wouldn't let me. She said it was only for you.

Trevor (*struggling through tears*): I'm gonna miss her.

Dad (*emotional*): Me too.

Trevor: There are so many things I wanted to say to her...

Dad: Me too.

(*Pause*)

Dad: I'm sorry son.

Trevor: Sorry for what?

Dad: Sorry for everything; for not being a better father to you.

Trevor: It's not that simple, Dad.

Dad: Why not?

Trevor: Because you hurt me. All I wanted was for you to say that you loved me. I just wanted you to hold me. That's all I wanted.

Dad: I'm sorry, Trevor.

Trevor: Sorry is not good enough.

Dad (*shouting*): Then what is good enough? What will it take for me to get through to you? What do you want me to do? I love you, Trevor! I miss you! Please forgive me. (*Pause*) I want you to come home.

Trevor (*quietly*): I can't Dad.

Dad: There's a chip off the old block - stubborn to the end.

Trevor (*louder*): I can't forgive you, dad.

Dad: Is that what Mom wanted?

Trevor: Did you read my letter?

Dad: Is that what Mom would want?

Trevor (louder): Did you read my letter?

Dad: No, I didn't. But it's all she talked about; it's all she prayed about.

Trevor: And what's that?

Dad: That you and I could forgive each other and that you would come home.

Trevor: And how was I supposed to know that exactly?

Dad: Check your phone – all the calls and texts and emails you chose to ignore. That was me calling you. Didn't you get the message?

Trevor (*realizes this is what Gabe said*): "What did you say?"

Dad: You know for all the communication technology out there, it amazes me that you still don't get the message.

Trevor: What message?

Dad: The message from your father – it's time to make things right, to start over, open your heart, receive forgiveness. It's time to come home.

Trevor (*reading a few emails out loud*): Dear Trevor, how do I begin to say how sorry I am? Dear Son, please come home, I want to make things right. Dear Trevor, please come home, I miss you, love Mom. (*pause, loud sigh*) I guess I am not such an expert at communication after all.

Dad: I still prefer face to face communication, it's more personal.

Trevor: I heard someone else say that today, a stranger I met in the coffee shop.

Dad (chuckling): It's Christmas, maybe it was God trying to send you a message.

Trevor (*cell phone rings*): I need to go Dad.

Dad: You are always leaving, always going. Do you think you will ever come home again?

(*Trevor moves to his Dad and the two embrace*) (*Lights go down*)

Scene 4:

Lights come up on Trevor in the coffee shop with a laptop. Voice of Trevor speaks the letter as he types

Dear Dad,

I know this is not face to face but sometimes it's easier for me to put my feelings down on paper, or in this case, in an email. So much has happened today that I am not sure what to make of it all. But one thing I know for sure. I don't want to be angry at you anymore. And now with Mom gone, I want to make things right between us. I do forgive you for how you hurt me. But I also need you to forgive me for not taking your calls and not responding to

your messages. I do want to come home but am not sure what that looks like exactly. So it may take some time to work that out. It's funny how if we let hurt and bitterness and distance grow between us that it's just easier to pretend it's good even when it is not. It's not easy for me to forgive you but with God's help I think I can get there.

You know at Christmas there is all this talk of peace and joy and love and family gatherings and turkey dinners and presents – it all sounds so surreal, like something out of a Hallmark greeting card or a movie. All the years I was growing up you and Mom did your best to teach me about God and faith and following Jesus and being part of a community of believers. I have heard all the Bible stories; I listened to all the sermons. And for all your love and teaching and for all the words of Scripture I have heard I chose to ignore the message. I kept God at arm's length. I did not respond to God's call. I did not want to come home.

But maybe that's what Christmas is about. Maybe Christmas is not so much about peace and joy and love because many people's lives are messy and painful and broken. Maybe the real message of Christmas is that God is calling us to come home and discover God's desire is to love and forgive us, to help us find healing and hope, to start over and find the life we were created to live. Not a life free of pain and disappointment but a life infused with God's presence. Maybe the peace and love and joy are there but I have chosen to ignore the message - and the messenger as well. Maybe Christmas shows us that more than anything else God desires to communicate face to face because it is more personal. Maybe Christmas is about God calling all of us to come home. I haven't prayed for a long time but today I prayed that somehow God would give me the strength and the courage to come home. I think it is what God has always wanted but I needed a 'face to face' to help me get there. I know it's what Mom wanted.

But just a warning: I am not a great cook, pizza and TV dinners are regular fare for me. But maybe it doesn't matter so much what we will eat but that we will eat together. And maybe rather than stuff or cash, I have plenty of both, maybe our Christmas present to each other this year can be working at our relationship and making things right between us. I will see tomorrow, Dad.

Merry Christmas,
Trevor.

P.S. I think Mom is celebrating right now too.

(Trevor's cell phone rings. Gabe's voice is heard)

Trevor: Hello.

Gabe: Hey Trevor, it's me Gabe.

Trevor: Gabe?! How did you get my number? You know, I have a few questions for you...

Gabe: No time, buddy, I have to go. But I do have a message for you.

Trevor: Oh yeah? What does your boss have to say this time?

Gabe: Welcome home, son. Welcome home.

(Lights go down.)