

From our Churches

Author: Arlyn Friesen Epp

Church: Home Street Mennonite

Date: 2003

Scripture: Matthew 25:40

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.

MARTIN THE SHOEMAKER

Adapted from the story by Leo Tolstoy

Cast

Male Actor

Female Actor/Dancer

Child

Set

Cobbler shop, with window

Props

Shoes, coat tree, window with curtains and thermometer, work bench, jacket, hat, scarf, apron, firewood, 2 mugs, tea pot, Open/Closed sign, 2 chairs, basket with apples, baby doll, snow shovel

(Martin comes in from outside, carrying firewood. Puts a log on the "fire.") A brisk north wind tonight. *(Takes off coat.)* These old bones have seen lots of cold winters, but *(checks thermometer on window)*, my goodness, minus 38, in December? That's unusual, even for Siberia. *(Laughs.)* Of course, I remember the winter of '57... *(Puts on apron.)* Now, where did I leave my hammer? *(Picks up hammer and shoe. Sits at work bench.)* Mrs. Robinivich wants her children's shoes ready for Christmas.

("O Come, O Come Emmanuel" played on piano. Martin works on shoes. Gets up to pour himself a drink of tea. Works some more. Gets up. Pulls curtains. Puts "Closed" sign in window. Takes off apron. Pulls out reading glasses. Opens Bible. Reads. Goes to sleep at the bench.)

(As piano piece ends) O come, o come, Emmanuel.

(Brief pause, as Martin sleeps. Music resumes. Dancer enters as part of Martin's dream. He sits up in his dream. Watches dancer. Puzzled.)

Emmanuel? Is that you? *(Dancer reaches for Martin's hand.)* Coming to visit me? Tomorrow? *(Dancer leads Martin to the window. She peers from one side. He the other.)* Watch for you? Outside my window? *(Dancer leads Martin back to work bench.)* Tomorrow? Tomorrow. *(Martin resumes sleeping)*

position at the work bench. Dancer leaves as music fades.) Wouldn't it be wonderful if Jesus came to visit? *(Martin sleeps.)*

(Martin awakes. Stretches. Opens curtains. Turns sign to "Open." Pours himself a cup of tea. Before he drinks, he suddenly remembers his dream. Sets down his cup and goes back to the window and peers around. He sees a woman shoveling snow.)

Oh my, she looks cold. Out shoveling this early in the morning. *(Goes to the "door.")* Come, my friend, come inside. Warm yourself by my fire. Join me for a cup of tea!

(Surprised, she puts down her shovel and comes inside.)

Martin: Sit down. Please. It's another cold day.
Snow shoveler: Record low last night, they said.
Martin: Here, this will warm you up. *(Gives her a cup of tea.)*
SS: You're very kind.
Martin: You're very kind to shovel my walk. It's not easy at my age anymore.
SS: This really hits the spot. Thank you.
Martin: Camomille. With just a little something extra. *(They both laugh.)*
SS: Thank you. Your tea has warmed my bones. Your visit has warmed my heart.
I won't mind the cold as much now. *(She goes outside, picks up her shovel and exits.)*
Martin: If you ever need a break from the cold, you're always welcome.

(Martin puts on his apron. Picks up a shoe. Goes to the window and peers around. Sees nothing. Sits at workbench and begins to work. A few moments later, a woman carrying a small child appear at the window. They are poorly dressed for the weather. Martin walks to the window and notices them. Goes to the door.)

Martin: Ma'am. Come inside. Come warm yourself and your baby.
Mother: Thank you. My baby won't stop crying. *(Martin touches the baby.)* I fear he has the croup.
Martin: Oh my, you need something warmer to wear.
Mother: My husband is away, in Moscow, and won't be home until spring.
Martin: He has work there?
Mother: Some. More than he had here.
Martin: *(He retrieves his jacket from the coat tree.)* Take this. It will keep you and your baby warm.
Mother: No, I can't.
Martin: Please. For your baby's sake.
Mother: You are very generous. Thank you.
Martin: *(As she leaves.)* There's some money in the front pocket. For the doctor.

(Martin returns to his workbench. As he works, he ponders.)

Was I dreaming last night? I never dream. But I remember seeing someone, dancing. Jesus. Promising to be here today. I must remain patient. Ready. How happy I'd be to have Jesus as my guest!

(Outside the window, an elderly woman and child are in an argument. The child has taken an apple from her basket and is trying to run away. The woman has hold of his arm.)

Woman: Stop! You're stealing my apple! Give it back to me!

(Martin goes to the window, then to the "door".)

Martin: Ma'am, let the boy go!
Woman: He's taken my groceries.
Martin: I'll pay for the apple. *(To child.)* You know it's wrong to take things that don't belong to you.
Child: *(To Martin.)* I'm sorry, sir.
Martin: No, don't talk with me. Tell the woman how sorry you are.
Child: I'm sorry, ma'am. Here's your apple. I was just hungry.
Martin: May I buy him the apple?
Woman: *(Let's go of child's arm. Gives him the apple.)* That's okay.
Martin: Looks like a heavy basket.
Woman: At our age it seems to weigh even more.
Child: I'll help you carry it, ma'am.
Woman: That would be nice. *(To Martin.)* Thanks for your help.

*(Woman and child exit together. Child carries basket. Piano again plays, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel."
Martin takes off apron, closes curtain at window, puts up the "closed" sign.)*

Silly, I really thought I'd see Jesus today.

(Pours himself a cup of tea. Opens Bible. Falls asleep. Dancer enters, wearing/holding one item from each previous character: apple, baby's blanket, jacket.)

Another dream? Who are you? *(Dancer puts down the apple beside Martin on the work bench.)* The woman this afternoon? No, who are you really? *(Dancer puts down the baby blanket on the bench.)* The mother with the baby? Who are you? *(Dancer takes off the jacket.)* The snow shoveler? No. No. You're, you're Jesus, the dancer *(The dancer exits. Music stops. Martin awakes. Rubs his eyes and looks down at his Bible.)*

"I tell you, whatever you do for your brother and sister, you do for me."

Now, I understand! Emmanuel has come. God is with us.

(Piano plays the refrain of "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" and Martin exits.)