



# EQUIPPING FOR... **EVANGELISM & MISSION**

Produced by Canadian Ministries

## **“Being with” in Evangelism and Mission**

*“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him... They said to each other, ‘Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?’” — Luke 24:30-33*

**H**ow do you understand “being with” as part of your evangelism and mission ministries? We often focus on the tangible results of the efforts we make to resolve the world’s injustices and share God’s love without recognizing how we have been impacted. We may report that we have gathered 100 winter jackets for local distribution or raised \$2500 toward the construction of a new health clinic in Malawi or for the purchase of seeds and livestock in Central America; we may recall the community worship services or the number of meals we provided to feed people attending an Out of the Cold program. These statistics tell the story of our mission activities. But what is the story of being in relationship with people? When have we felt “our hearts burning” and our “eyes were opened”? And when we have had this experience, how did we share it?

**Reflect** on the evangelism and mission activities of your congregation. List all that come to mind. (Note: A reference might be the last annual report of your congregation.)

**Read** the box “Being With.” Re-read Luke 24:30-33 (above). What does it mean for you to “be with” another person? How might “being with” change you? Is “being with” others included in your list of evangelism and mission activities? Comment on this. Share situations where you have been part of a “being with” ministry, or

### **Being With**

“Being with, by contrast, doesn’t start with a problem – or if it does, the problem lies with you rather than with the homeless person. You don’t sit and have a coffee with a homeless person because you’re trying to solve their problem – you do so because you want to receive the wealth of wisdom, humanity and grace that God has to give you through them. You aren’t the source of their salvation: they are the source of yours. If you talk about their problems, you make sure you’re attending to the ones they name and identify, rather than ones you perceive or imagine. Your every effort is to enjoy their being, and share your own, rather than change their reality assuming a script you’ve imposed from elsewhere.” – From “Jesus’ model for ministry: The Power of Being With” by Samuel Wells in *The Christian Century*, June 24, 2015, pp. 30-33

where you see opportunities for this. This resource will share evangelism and mission stories that demonstrate different experiences of Presbyterians and/or their congregations in “being with” people.

**Discuss** how each story reveals a ministry of “being with.” Who is receiving God’s wisdom and grace? How might they have been changed?

**Pray:** God of grace, through Jesus we learn of a world where all is yours and where you reign with love and peace and justice. Help us listen and learn about you from others. We want to have our eyes opened and our hearts burning, so that we might be transformed as the disciples were. Amen.

### “Being with” as a summer student

*Excerpt from Rural and Remote Ministry Grant Report 2015 by Jee-eun Megan Shin. The Kenora Fellowship Centre, also known as Anamiewigummig (meaning house of prayer in Ojibway), is a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

This summer, I served as a student pastor with the Kenora Fellowship Centre and First Presbyterian Church, Kenora for ten weeks. Kenora was a place where the lack of and the need for reconciliation between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population was extremely visible. The economic gap between the two groups was visible even walking down the street. All of the patrons at the centre were Indigenous or Metis people, and many of them suffered from chronic use of alcohol and drugs. Working with such people was challenging, as I felt that there was nothing I could do for them. One of the patrons knew well of Christ and God’s love, yet he confessed that every time he’s sober, he’s haunted by flashbacks and the only way to run away from them was to drink. He felt guilty drinking every day and wanted to change his life, yet he felt helpless, and there wasn’t much I could do except listen and pray with him. Facing people with chronic issues, I often felt helpless,

hopeless and useless. Many of the staff felt the same way.

I noticed that the Kenora Fellowship Centre was not just a place providing shelter, food and relief, but a community where people came as they are, and supported each other. There were stories of some patrons whose lives were turned around because of the Centre, and it involved people, not just works. One of the people whose life has been changed by the power of the community is Sue\*. She told me how she first came to Kenora when she was pregnant in order to be close to the father of the child who went to jail in Kenora. Pregnant, alone and homeless, she stole food from grocery stores to support herself; she was also addicted to prescription pills. It was the patrons of the Kenora Fellowship Centre who brought her to the Centre, and it became a place that provided food for her stomach, a roof over her head, and a place to call home. She told me that she received enormous support from staff and patrons at the darkest moment in her life. She was able to have her child, and now lives on her own, serving as a volunteer at the Centre by helping staff and patrons with their needs. She emphasized that change can happen, and that it certainly did for her. I was deeply touched by Sue’s story. Sue taught me that God works through the community of the Kenora Fellowship Centre who cares deeply about each other. She taught me that God works in ways that we sometimes don’t see or expect, but that the Spirit of God is always at work.

My experience in Kenora provided an opportunity for me to reflect on social change, social justice, and

God of hope. I feel honoured to have heard the stories of people who experienced so much pain and suffering in the past, and to have been part of a community who shared love and pain together. I was able to reflect on the hope in God’s work through the community and my pastoral role within it, and I believe that all that I have learned will enrich my future ministry.

(\* name has been changed)



### **“Being with” as a social activist**

*Story by Vivian Ketchum from A Time for Hope: Worship Resources, (PCC, 2016), p. 23. Vivian is a member of Place of Hope church in Winnipeg and an Anishinnabe woman of Wauzhushk Onigum, a First Nation community outside Kenora, in northern Ontario.*

The bottom of my winter coat has drops of candle wax on it. It's the coat I've worn to vigils for murdered or missing Indigenous women and girls, where I've stood beside other women, holding candles, in a circle to remember a sister – an Indigenous person who was denied the right to safety, protection, and perhaps to life.

I participate in marches and protests that highlight a social cause, usually a denial of a human right in my community. I'm not alone; there are other Indigenous women leaders who are my mentors; women whom I admire, whose names are never in the media.

One of them is Elder Nancy Morrison. A childhood friend of my mother, Nancy is in her eighties and still a strong activist in Kenora. I often see her participating in a march, leading the way with her walker. I admire her for her courage and wisdom. Her wisdom isn't found in a text book; it's lived knowledge.

Another woman I admire is Sheila Redsky from Shoal Lake. Last year in Winnipeg, I walked along side Shelia and over 200 other women. We were voicing our concern about the denial of the right to clean water. Shoal Lake has been without safe drinking water for over 18 years. Sheila and the other Shoal Lake women walked carrying water jugs, along with their signs and banners.

I walk beside these women in solidarity and support. I am one of many people insisting that our communities be made safe, that our women and children be protected and that all Indigenous people have the right to life.

### **“Being with” in worship**

*Excerpt from written materials prepared in advance of the Great Day on Sunday, May 29, 2016 at Thornhill Presbyterian Church (TPC) and provided by Donna Chapman, convenor of the Stewardship Committee.*

Great Day has become an annual celebration at TPC; a time to rejoice in the blessings that God has given us

and share those gifts with others recognizing that all we have is a gift from God. This year we feel called to focus our gifts outward to support the work of the Kenora Fellowship Centre, a mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC).

The PCC's 1994 Confession concerning the harm done to Indigenous children in the residential schools in Canada challenges us with these words: “With God's guidance our Church will seek opportunities to walk with Aboriginal peoples to find healing and wholeness together as God's people.”

We will celebrate Great Day 2016 with special guest David Phillips who worked with the PCC healing and reconciliation program and will share his first-hand experience of the ministry of Kenora Fellowship Centre. The service will be followed by a celebratory luncheon, entertainment by Indigenous performers, and a time of fellowship.

We cannot solve the challenges facing our friends in Kenora but through the special Great Day offering, we can give them a much needed boost. And most importantly, we can let our brothers and sisters know we care and that we uphold them in prayer.

### **“Being with” in outreach**

*From Jen de Combe, Associate Secretary Canadian Ministries, recalling an experience when she was Executive Director of Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, an outreach ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and the Anglican Diocese of Montreal.*

Montreal West Presbyterian Church (MWPC) decided about a decade ago to dedicate its volunteer activities towards Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre. Each week church volunteers helped out in the nearly-new clothing store that provided interview appropriate clothes to women and men who were new in Canada or had been distanced from the workforce. This led to all kinds of volunteering activities from preparing food for the Centre's grade 6 graduation party to flipping burgers at the annual BBQ.

What began as volunteer relationships turned into friendships. The two groups now worship as one family in Christ four times a year, with each service followed by fellowship and a lavish meal. Many

participants now consider MWPC their spiritual home – one participant from the Centre even went on to be baptized. The relationships formed between people in the congregation and in the Centre – from times “being with” one another – have been life-giving and life-changing for all.

### **“Being with” People in Other Communities – Locally, Nationally and Globally**

Here are additional examples of individuals and congregations who, in their ministries of mission and evangelism, talk about “being with” or accompanying others. How do you think the participants in each ministry might be changed? What other examples come to mind?

**St. Andrew’s PC Calgary**, through its **Side by Side Day Program** offers fellowship to people with dementia. It is an informal and relaxed program where enthusiastic and caring volunteers walk alongside participants as friends and neighbours. St. Andrew’s is also walking alongside Varsity Acres PC in Calgary as it starts up its own Side by Side program. (For more information, contact Alice Post, St. Andrew’s PC Calgary at [alicepost@yahoo.com](mailto:alicepost@yahoo.com))

**Paris PC, Paris, Ontario** began a community drop-in ministry in 2013. Out of that emerged the vision of **The Raw Carrot**, a social enterprise that hires individuals who are on social assistance or have barriers to traditional employment to cook up healthy, homemade, fresh and frozen soups and stews that are sold to schools, seniors and others in the Paris community. Dedicated hardworking volunteers support the employees in all aspects of their work. Sometimes someone is unable to work for one reason or another and our amazing volunteers step into the employee’s role so that the business can continue and there is a job to return to when they are ready. (For more information see <http://therawcarrot.com/> or email [info@therawcarrot.com](mailto:info@therawcarrot.com))

**KAIROS Canada** (<http://www.kairoscanada.org>), a partner of the PCC, provides worship and educational

resources for individuals and congregations who want to organize special services, workshops, marches and petitions to support work that

- Defends dignity and human rights for all
- Promotes sustainable energy policies
- Builds right relationships with Indigenous peoples
- Inspires Canadians to seek climate justice
- Links women of courage around the world in common actions to end violence
- Urges companies to respect human rights and ecological integrity

**Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)** (<https://www.eappi.org>) is a program of the World Council of Churches. It began in 2002 as a way to support Palestinians and Israelis in their non-violent and advocacy efforts for a just peace in the Holy Land, respect for human rights and an end to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land. In 2015-2016, Canadian Presbyterians Diane Tait-Katerberg and Gordon Timbers participated. Gordon wrote, “The distinctive vest EAs wear is a visual indicator of our role. To put on the EAPPI vest is not exactly to ‘put on the whole armour of God’ but it does clearly declare our purpose and intention. At our commissioning service... in Jerusalem, Bishop Munib Younan reminded us that ‘accompaniment is an instrument of the Holy Spirit through which we are commissioned to be God’s witnesses for justice, peace and reconciliation.’” (From “Wearing the Vest” by Gordon Timbers at <http://pccweb.ca/missionblog/2016/02/12/wearing-the-vest/>)

### **Canadian Ministries wants to hear from YOU!**

What parts of this resource are most useful? Share your story of “being with” others in mission and evangelism! Recommend a resource! Make a suggestion or ask a question!

Contact us at [canadianministries@presbyterian.ca](mailto:canadianministries@presbyterian.ca) or call 416-441-1111 or 1-800-619-7301 Ext. 271. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/pccconnect](https://www.facebook.com/pccconnect).