

November-December 2004, *Equipping*

A Moment for Celebration

We invite you to share the following story with your congregation. It should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.

CUBA: Celebrating gifts in the church and a request for prayer

Pastor Guillermo spoke softly but passionately. His small congregation in central Cuba is growing. It has 14 church-plants, initiated and nourished by persons from his congregation. They have two full-time “missionaries” who devote their time to nurturing these budding groups. One of these missionaries is a younger woman with two small children. She is well educated, very committed, and has obvious pastoral and leadership gifts.

Pastor Guillermo confided in me that the congregation could no longer afford to pay her monthly salary beyond October. They desperately want to keep her on at least till the end of this year. She is doing an excellent job. He is afraid that if she does not receive her monthly salary, she will need to look elsewhere for employment. And perhaps worse, she will become disheartened.

He said that he was not asking for money. He was asking only whether our church could pray for his church, so that God would show them clearly how they could move ahead. I promised him we would be praying for them.

I also asked how much they needed to keep this young mother working full-time in this important ministry. “Six dollars,” he replied, “if we could find six dollars per month then she can keep working.” He hastened



to add that in the course we were teaching that week we had emphasized the importance of discovering and encouraging the spiritual gifts of all members of the church. “I believe that teaching is worth more than money,” he said. “It will help my congregation come up with six dollars a month. I think we’ll find our way.”

I so desperately wanted to reach into my pocket and pull out a twenty-dollar bill and give it to Pastor Guillermo. But he, in his quiet and confident manner, had again taught me what in my head I already knew. Instead of providing economic power that they cannot sustain, it is better to empower economic potential that they can sustain.

Please pray for Pastor Guillermo, for the congregation, for the young missionary mother, and for the 14 church plants that they are nurturing. And pray for Mennonite Church Canada Witness as we sensitively relate to this growing and dynamic church on your behalf.

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— A moment for celebration by Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS*