

know if this message will get to you but at least I can tell Jesus I done what He said to do.

Signed, Benny and Rascal.

*Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Ephesians 3:20*

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## **God's Design For Special Missionaries**

by  
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Wondering if her laptop was going to last much longer in all this salty humidity she opened the cover. Patty then turned it on to check her email almost as a last resort, to feed her own soul. As she began removing all the spam messages that cost her precious time before the generator was turned off, she saw a message from someone she didn't know. The subject line all in capital letters seemed to shout, "GOD AIN'T DONE YET!"

Patty's printer ink had long since ran out so she couldn't print this precious message or anything else. The message went something like this:

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You don't know me but I live in a little place in that isn't even listed on any of Nevada state maps. We've got enough wind and sand all around us it seems like we're on another planet. I have no idea where I got your email address from but it just seemed to light up on my computer like God wanted me to email you. Me and Rascal (that's my seeing eye dog, sleeping under my bedroom desk) want to obey God when He says we should tell others about Him, so we're doin' it now. My daddy got a gadget for my computer that I plug my earphones into. When I move my cursor around on the computer screen, the earphones tell me what the words and numbers are, around the cursor arrow. The earphones will say the words green, red, yellow, golden and others. These words don't mean much to me 'cuz I was born blind. Daddy whispered to me one night that mama cried for a month when I was born. Mama thought God was whippin' her since I can't see. My computer has a Bible in it and I can read it every day that way. I know you're busy doing important things so I'll just share with you a favorite verse of me and Rascal. I don't

planet that Patty Neese wanted to do more than sit on the breezy hillside with the children around her and share the majesty of God's provision and passion.

Her place of ministry was a small Pacific island about half way between Hawaii and Australia. Patty has been laboring with love to the hungry families for over two years. The grown-ups are just now starting to talk about building a palm tree school that Miss Neese can also use as a church. The weather has been more than rough on the people, the electric generator, and Patty's only communication link with the outside world – her laptop.

It just seemed that her hopes were doomed one day at a time. Just recently one of Christ's questions from the cross was becoming her's also, "My God my God why has thou forsaken me?"

She couldn't count the number of times she'd examined her life, present day attitudes, and actions looking for that unconfessed sin that had so terribly dishonored God to discard her mission efforts.

The island's electric generator was started and ran for about an hour as was customary three times a week. As the microwave communications link was being turned on, Patty Neese prayed with every ounce of self that God would show her what was wrong... what more she could sacrifice to continue the vital ministry. Her Bible was still open as she had just read again the verse that seemed to apply to all the billions of people on the earth except her and the little island in a big ocean...

***But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*** 1 Corinthians 2:9

## Introduction

Among other things, our Heavenly Father is deeply committed to advertising. He wants everyone to hear over and over the majesty and mission of Heaven's greatest gift to man... His own Son Jesus Christ. He has been placing in our midst those that have been given His special attention for mission fields we can't quite enter.

The message of these missionaries of God's special design is to help us see how we foolishly think we know what 'normal' means to God. When you see someone that doesn't fit your 'normal' description, ask God for a measure of His love to cherish that person as having the same invitation to salvation and Heavenly service offered to you and I.

Let the spirit of Dynamite Pete's stories reach every fiber of your being that you would learn the deeper riches of God's design, grace, and provision for 'whosoever.'

[~]

pain and discouragement we experience here is instantly turned into personal passionate love when viewed through God's eyes. Those are the same eyes that looked down from a broken body on the cross that fully understood Heaven's plan and purpose for each hurt and heartache.

Becky explained very slow and clearly that God loves us so deeply just as we are, that He sent His only Son Jesus to the earth and then the Cross to shed His blood just like an old testament sacrifice to pay for our sins. She helped the Challenged Charlies to memorize in unison, "Sin is doing things we know God doesn't like. Sin is doing things we know God doesn't like." But all this means nothing unless we obey Him and invite His Son Jesus into our heart and be saved.

Even before the last day of camp, this history teacher turned missionary hurriedly phoned her pastor in North Carolina. As excitedly as she could and still make sense, she explained all that had happened in her little art class that had just finished. She said that if her church could donate some modeling clay, she could include blind kids in the Challenged Charlies. I see history in the making....what do you see?

Whether it's worthless kites, computers, or a child's self esteem, God provides more than we can imagine.  
[~]

## #11 – Ain't Done Yet!

**I** *DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN HOLD OUT!*" was Patty's heart cry. But each time before, her missionary eyes would look into those 16 pairs of dark little eyes still begging for more of heaven's light for hope and purpose. There was nothing else on this

As Becky chose words of great empathy, she'd have given anything to change places with any one of the Charlies for a day to get them to see God gives wings to all sorts of things that don't look ordinary; lopsided kites, arms, or broken spirits.

The history teacher led her outdoor art class in adding lines and boxes on the face of the kite; not understood by any of the students. Donna's comment about the added lines not making any sense was countered with Becky's "Just trust me for now. Stick with me, you'll enjoy the outcome." Barbara's mental motor came to a stop hearing Becky's word "trust". She could only figure it was because the word was never used at home and therefore not clearly understood.

In a moment, a gesture or two from the able-bodied helpers queued Becky to make her move. "Now class take your kite picture and lay it on its side so the big side of the kite is pointing up." It was a real effort for some of the artists but mission accomplished.

It took no real effort at all to recognize this worthless kite had become a store front. As Becky continued to add a few dressup lines and erase parts of others, she explained about "two-vanishing-point perspective drawing. The art teacher compared the 2 perspectives with human perspective and God's way of looking at things.

A teacher's heart pounded within her as she saw Larry's face start to make a smile; tough thing to do for him. "Inside" smiles had been burned away by a heartless gas furnace a painful eternity ago.

The kite's final metamorphous became an evangelism mission in an inner city of most any large city. Becky watched the pairs of eyes drink in the evangelistic message probably shared at one of these missions.

The adult helpers all shook their heads in agreement with Becky's statement to all the Challenged Charlies. "All the

# **Dynamite Pete**

## **God's Design for Special Missionaries**

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## #10 – Challenged Charlies

The sounds of the kids singing "At the Cross" was replaced with the summer camp breeze through the pine branches. The occasional sounds of the grazing horses in the sunny meadow kept wooing the children's attention away from the wheelchairs most sat in, and the body braces a few wore.

Becky stood at a poster board in front of the small group and drew a large cross with 2 straight lines. "Ok, Charlies! What's that remind you of?" Tom wasn't able to raise his arms easily so piped up with, "a Cross. But it's too long on the right side." With plenty of eye contact, Becky said clearly that some very exciting things are learned when starting with a cross. She didn't dwell on the point but connected the ends of the lines to form a kite, though lopsided it was. Terry had to have his pencil retaped to his hand and was then able to follow with the rest of the Challenged Charlies, in drawing what Becky did.

Jenny said she'd flown a kite some, before the accident, but was sure the lopsided one the group was drawing, wouldn't fly... "It doesn't look like a real kite -- it's worthless." Mitch heard Jenny's evaluation of the kite, as he looked down at feet that'd never again touch a diving board and a left hand that made archery impossible. His long face whispered to his feet and arm, "Yeah... worthless."

Becky ached deep inside. She'd volunteered to help with the Challenged Charlies at camp this year. The majority of the year found her in front of a history classroom in a small North Carolina town. But her willing spirit leaped with a "Yes" when invited to share her moderate art talent with the campers.

## #9 – Church Steps Sermon

**M**y teeth were chattering big time. The winter wind delivered a real bite as it crossed the church front steps on more than one Sunday morning. But it was more than worth it to safely escort the many silver haired ladies across the somewhat slippery parking lot. Seeing folks smile big as they entered church and its warm hospitality kept me diligent at my post.

Many of the folks entered the side driveway to park in the rear of the church. As I stood on the church steps waiting to apply my ushering skills I'd see children waving from the distant cars entering that side driveway. With tired arms I'd return the wave and smile to those children.

In no time many of the parents would wave and smile through the car windows on their way to hearing songs and sermons about God's 'In spite-of' love and His will for their lives.

Oh sure there were plenty of cars that produced no waves or smiles. 'Chances are they were still fretting about burdens, budgets, and broken dreams. Worse yet, they'll probably carry the same discouraging thoughts into the service and never hear the sermons of the Savior's provisions for our todays and tomorrows.

Out on the cold front steps a voice asked my heart, "Gramps – are you waving only at those you are sure will wave back?" or "Gramps – are you doing what you're doing because of who and what they are?" I'd ask myself, "Or am I doing service because of who and what I am?"

My answers then as they still do now, tempered by thinking of Salvation's Sacrifice on the Cross. Why did Jesus die on the Cross for my sins? Is it because of how important I think I am? Or because of Who Jesus Christ is? [~]

## #1 – Earthquake Warning

**A** **WARNING STRONG AND CLEAR** would have been helpful before first meeting **DYNAMITE PETE**. Pete was a friendly looking fella around retirement age. His sandy colored mustache covered his mouth and almost touched his beard that also needed trimmed. His dark brown eyes were framed by small round glasses that felt more at home close to the end of his nose. His partial loss of hearing caused him to always speak louder than most.

As he lay in a hospital bed adjoining mine, I cherished each story he told as though I had lived it myself. Often I couldn't wait for the nurse to finish testing so the stories could continue.

**DYNAMITE PETE** worked 14 years in a dynamite factory but was almost killed once. I was laughing so hard I never heard all the details but it had something to do with a new man on the job. Evidentially, while the new guy was working, Pete snuck up behind him and banged a bucket real hard with a wrench. The new guy chased Pete around the plant till they both were too tired to do anything but laugh.

When you hear Pete speak you'll soon notice he is in no hurry about most anything. Some folks might criticize or make fun of him, but that just shows their immaturity. More than that, it robs them of lessons learned in a world we'd all like to spend much time in.

In spite of his 'apples of gold' stories, I still wish I'd been warned about his night time habit. I was barely awake at 3 am when I heard what sounded like deep rumbles of an earthquake. Almost not wanting to breathe, I waited to see how badly my hospital bed would shake. It took only half a minute for me to realize it wasn't an earthquake but someone

snoring – it was DYNAMITE PETE snoring so hard I thought he'd set off the nurse call button or something life-threatening.

In spite of how much it costs to sleep in hospital beds now-a-days, I spent the whole night camped out in the visitor's day room on a couch just long enough for a 3 year old child. He'd already explained to me that he'd not slept in 2 days. His explanation of his poor health included words like Agent Orange and Viet Nam. He being a veteran of combat I felt like my military service didn't qualify me to disturb someone who had put his life on the line to defend my freedom.

It humbled me to my roots to see how many ways God has, to protect and provide for me.

[~]

## #2 – No-Hurry Norbert

Pete told me about No-Hurry Norbert. Anybody that met Norbert could see right off that Norbert was slow – and he didn't care if you told him so. No-Hurry Norbert was really aggravating in that sometimes you'd see it was foolish to be in a hurry about most anything. Norbert wore an old straw hat most of the time. The hat had two holes in it to allow his long ears to stick up through – No-Hurry Norbert was Pete's mule.

Pete's neighbor gave the slow stubborn mule to him for free. Norbert wasn't good for anything so the mule was given a new home with earthquake-snoring DYNAMITE PETE. Now there's no sermon, scripture, or Sunday school class to tell you so, but you can learn some powerful lessons about God by studying mules. You can work your way through two juicy apples watching a mule and still have the

fancy French fries Sunday school teacher but Wally began pinning Bible verses to his lapel and had folks thinking about scripture even before they got their coats off. My, how Wally had a baker potato love for verses being uncovered and shared.

He felt a tug at his coat one day. The little fellow asked, "Hey mister. Can I help you make the people smile coming in?" Small Potatoes Wally gave a half-hearted nod. Another tug on Wally's coat came with, "What's your name mister? My name's Chip. My buddies nicknamed me 'Potato Chip.'" "

The next Sunday morning before worshipers began arriving, Wally pinned a verse on the shirt of Potato Chip. Moments later a lady was walking up the sidewalk. Potato Chip shot out the door and stopped right in front of her. "See my verse, lady? Do you see it? It includes 'faithful over a few things'. Can you find it in the Bible?" He didn't wait for an answer but took her hand and led her to the door like they were king and queen.

Holding the door open, Wally smiled and started his sweet potato welcome. But the only thing that came out were tears. Tears from eyes of 'Small Potatoes.'

You'll often get the feeling that the Dynamite Pete story teller behind the lengthy mustache and bristly eyebrows told his stories more because of who and what he is, rather than any smiles or thanks from his listeners.

He reminds me of the sermon I learned on the church steps about what should motivate our actions and service.

[~]

And things were not very good at home either. Wally was faced every day with fussing parents. He couldn't count the number of times he had to get his own supper from the freezer. Pop those tater tots in the microwave and push button 3 – no muss no fuss.

One of the few things that really took his mind off being small potatoes was seeing them through the glass door holding hands. No. Not potatoes holding hands but the people. It was almost captivating. Wally was sure there had to be at least a few couples that pulled into the church parking lot still fuming and fussing then quickly switching on their 'hi pastor' smiles.

But how he loved seeing so many couples walking to the door hand in hand. The truth be known, Wally pretended that his mom and dad were one of those couples walking up the sidewalk like they once walked down the aisle. He would hold the door open and give them his best sweet potato welcome.

Now, one time pastor gave a sermon entitled Discipleship In All Things. The sermon got lots of starch with his 'there's a job for everyone at church to do.' Wally decided that sermon was for everyone except the church's 'small potatoes' and thumbs that don't look normal.

There was some kind of inner joy Wally got opening the church door for folks. Oh sure it helped the older folks, but it was even more fun opening the car door for the people that came to hear God's life-changing Word. It made the ladies feel pampered when he gave them a big smile. He always got a smile and thank you in return. You'll find none of those at Wally's house. Is it strange that Wally felt he was making them think of themselves as hot potatoes?

He thought, "I guess I can be 'contented small potatoes' making others set their hearts toward God as they come through the church doors." And no he'd never be a

same unanswered question: 'Why would God ever waste His time making anything as stubborn and slow as a mule like Norbert?'

Well, DYNAMITE PETE's story is about to teach us. He continues:

It must have been about the second week in May. Thursday gave perfect weather when the phone rang. After the customary greeting and a short pause, Pete said, "Sure Emmett. C'mon over and we'll chat a spell. See ya in a little while."

When Emmett arrived, the car doors opened and out came Pete's old fishing buddy, Emmett's daughter Lucy, and his 3 yr old granddaughter, Angel. Lucy and Angel were dressed in anything but fancy clothes. Their expressions made it sadly clear their paths in life were rocky and uphill all the way.

While Emmett and Pete sat in the front porch swing, they began some of those 'the one that got away' fishing tales. Lucy carried little Angel out back to see and touch the animals hoping for a strained smile or two. No-Hurry Norbert moseyed over to the ladies hoping for a carrot or ear of corn.

Out front the fishermen had about finished their fourth tale when they heard loud little-girl giggling from the corral where Norbert was. They almost ran to see what was causing the laughter in the little angel. At first all they saw was Norbert walking in a large circle with a wash tub following him. A closer inspection showed the rope around the mule's neck and tied to the wash tub handle.

There couldn't have been a happier angel in all of heaven as the one wrapped in the back porch rug inside the jittery wash tub. Lucy had complete peace about Norbert's slow steady pace. If it hadn't gotten dark, the old mule and the giggling angel would have made more trips around that corral than the moon around the earth.

As I listened to the end of Pete's mule story I asked God to show me how a slow pace in thinking or acting can sometimes put me in the company of angels.

[~]

### #3 – Toilet Prayer Meeting

**T**asting the blessings of God is something very hard to be patient for," began one of DYNAMITE PETE's stories.

Our little country church was taking shape amid every obstacle Satan could throw at us. The shell was up but no concrete flooring in the basement classrooms. The walls of the offices and sanctuary had no insulation or drywall as yet. The January winds were howling their best outside as our small dedicated band of Wednesday night worshipers visualized pews and pulpit someday filled with plain country folks hungry to hear God's promises for their lives.

The small group shared their prayer requests and praises for God's delivered goodness. Electric heaters warmed just two rooms in the building. The ladies met for prayer in the pastor's office while all of us men went to the heated bathroom. Its plumbing was operational and protected from freezing by the heater.

Dynamite Pete's story was really getting good, but boy is he slow.

The men brought as many folding chairs into the bathroom as would fit. Pete said the only place left for him to sit was on the toilet. Each man thanked God for His provision and requests were fervently sent to God's throne.

After prayer time was concluded, the ladies asked the men why they had to flush the toilet to pray to God.

Marcy was the only one in the room that couldn't hear her own halting words that appeared above the tape, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

God's Word, beyond vocal cords, was Fenting's heart scream, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

He always finished with, "Now do you see?"

Ned's 'visits' are slowing these days, a condition of the AIDS virus he was born with...and a reminder to the ten year old, that time is running out fast.....

Normal Ned's question for you ... **"Want some tape?"**

[~]

### #8 – Only Small Potatoes

**H**e was only small potatoes. No – you don't understand. Wally was about the same height as most of his fellow teens. He was a bit 'looked at' because of his deformed left thumb. If you asked him, he'd mumble something about a birth defect. But it really bugged him that he was really just small potatoes.

Wally had often pictured himself as sort of a big baker potato, preaching sermons every Sunday and making super important church decisions. He would even have liked to fit in as Shoestring potatoes, leading the choir or teaching a class. But no chance, he was just small potatoes. Why, he wasn't even worth getting' skinned for whipped potatoes.

Tap, tap, tap, tap Ned continued on his mission, to the next cubicle in the small managed healthcare facility. Turning to another unknown Bible page, Ned held his Bible out to Bates and stated the usual request, "Bates, read me a verse will ya?" "Now, Ned! hold it a little to your right! You know I can't reach out or come to it!" Ned remembered something about a spinal something or other.

Bates' deep voice finished the verse and watched the blind fingers find the taped edge and then the taped page. "Read the verse above the tape, will you?" The deep voiced verse could be heard by most everyone in the room...ahhh what music... ahhh what a hymnal.

Tap, tap, tap 'Normal' Ned approached the location of Marcy's speaking. Marcy has never been blessed with being able to hear God's Word or any other for that matter. 'Normal' knew things'd be a little slower with Marcy... but so what, music's music.

Tap, tap, tap, tap. God's hymnal was held out to Mr. Fenting. Surgery had left him with speech done only with pencil or finger language. "Read a verse for me, will ya?" Shortly the tight squeeze on Ned's hand said, "OK, what's next?" You just had to be there, two holding onto God's Word; one can't see and the other can't speak... oh, what a choir they are.

The fingers found the tape, "Read the verse above the tape, will you?" A moment later, 'Normal' felt Mr. Fenting raise the hand that held the tapping stick high in the air with a stance never possible on Ellis Island.

You'll want to know when the whisperer read the verse above the tape you heard, "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

I'll always be angry at that nurse that sent me to x-ray instead of asking Pete the reason why he pulled THE handle. [~]

## #4 – The Whomper Slingshot

**L**aying in my hospital bed, I spilled my water glass laughing over the shortest of Dynamite Pete's stories. Before Pete began his story he looked both ways like he was going to share a government top secret. He then began with a caution. "Be super careful who you tell this story to, because someone else could get hurt besides Harold."

You could fancy up the accident by saying the 6 boys were testing some principle of Physics or trajectory or something brainy. The truth really is just they wanted to see if they could make a gigantic sling shot. It consisted of two strong Birch trees, and 6 bicycle inner tubes all tied together. The boys all stretched the tubes to see what kind of power it could deliver. The leader shouted NOW! To let go all at once.

The experiment would have been a resounding success except Harold was standing in the wrong place. Now Harold's heart is in the right place but many times his attention and mind isn't. Quite often he'll take a bit longer to decide what he'll say or do. That's the way God has made some of us. Nobody is better or worse but you do have to really keep your eye on the ball...er...bike tubes.

There was so much town excitement, the newspaper had to run the report of the accident in 3 consecutive issues. Harold was quoted as saying, "my liftoff was thrilling but the landing was rather 'touch-and-go. I sure am thankful for Harper's haystack being where it was, or I'd still be in orbit." [~]

## #5 – Trash ‘n Treasure

No one knows when it started or, for that matter, where it'll end. Jeffery Hemp, one of our Sunday Evening ushers first noticed it. Not quick to prejudge someone else's little one, he felt it his duty to monitor the situation.

It was Denny again. Now, he's not a problem in the strictest sense of the word. But Denny isn't quite like most of the other seven year olds in church. And mind you, it's not that folks show up on church work day dressed just like Denny when he's got his Sunday best on, either.

Every single Sunday Evening, it happens just like setting your watch. While all the other children are scooting up and down the halls full of life and laughter, Denny quietly moves down one pew and then up the next. Every Sunday he covers the whole church. And you won't discover at first glance he's gathering used bulletins, either. The only other clue to the case Jeffery has learned, is that Denny takes them home. And doesn't bring them back.

If you asked the Fenton family, this month's custodians, they'd chuckle and mumble something about, it being a help to them. Jeffery hadn't thought much more about it for the next three months or so.

And then it happened!

Any usher would remember what happened that Wednesday, March the 14th with the detail required of a defense lawyer. Beulah Benning, our Missions Committee chair person excused herself out of their meeting taking that beat-up lunch bag with her, heading for the Pastor's study. Beulah wiped her nose once more as she handed pastor the

## #7 – Normal Ned

Oh-oh! Here comes 'Normal' Ned !" one nurse cautioned another. The clicking of the tapping stick used by the blind, like Ned, could be heard even around corners. Besides his stick, he also carried his Bible, with a grasp like unto a soldier's sword. But that's where the 'normal' of Ned ended.

The Bible Ned gripped wasn't a Braille Bible but one just like yours and mine. When asked one day, Ned grinned back, "... don't own a Braille Bible and don't need one!"

The nurse's caution continued, "Now Ned will ask you to read a verse or two." Just do it the best you can but don't add any comments, or you'll be sorry." True to form 'Normal' Ned walked in the direction of the whispering voices, and then stopped. He opened his Bible to a page and asked one of the two whispering nurses to read any verse.

That was another strange thing about 'Normal'... He thought of his Bible as a sort-of hymnal. In his mind's eye he believed the greatest music ever voiced, was someone reading God's Holy Word out loud; especially if there were others to hear also... yes it was music to his ears.

Then, as every time before, Ned would run his fingers along the edge of the pages and find the piece of tape. He'd open to that page and again locate the piece of tape on the page and with a caring smile, "Read the verse above the tape, will you?" The reader did as he was told and Ned ended the encounter with, "Now do you see?"

The nurse added a description to her caution, "Though 'Normal' Ned has been totally blind all ten years of his life, he'll insist that you, or whoever is reading the verses at the time, is blinder than he is..."

computer's insides. Gramps found an old keyboard. The keycaps were removed, sitting in a pile nearby.

He worked quickly hoping that little Hopeless didn't wander off. Seating himself on the floor near Hopeless, he spread out the letter keycaps and started lining up the alphabet. His heart raced with the thrill of teaching the little ragamuffin, with her messy hair and dark brown eyes starved for signs of unconditional love.

The orange colored sun that forced its rays through the dirty cracked windows was moving low in the sky. With upturned eyes that would melt the heart of any football player, she asked, "Mr. Gramps. If I promise to bring them back tomorrow, can I borrow your computer keys?" The reply, "Sure. No problem." His heart said, "I'll give you my heart too, if you ask." They hugged and each went their own way.

The next afternoon, Gramps was sitting on the rickety chair and little Hopeless came in and gave him a hug that grandpas love, the world over. She didn't have the computer keys with her, so Gramps reminded her of yesterday's promise to return them. She pointed toward the door she had come in. "The bus station lady is here." A middle aged lady with about the same appearance of little Hopeless, cautiously came through the door. In her hand was a discarded bread wrapper with the keycaps inside. She walked up to Gramps and asked, "Will you teach me, mister?"

You can learn all sorts of things with computers, or even parts of them. Try it.

[~]

bag inviting him to see the startling contents of the bag, It was the bag that Denny had carried his lunch in all week.

In all of his 23 years as a pastor, proclaiming the good news of Christ's Blood payment for our sins, he'd never seen this before.... Seeing them for the first time, a description doesn't come easy. First attempt would be they were small scrap books... probably the size of the church bulletins. Each one was held together with discolored string tied in a knot no boy scout ever saw, that made it a clumsy stack of nine sitting on pastor's desk.

Careful inspection indicated that each of the nine was unique in content. Denny's paste-up capability would bring a smile from any newspaper typesetter but all would agree a lot of tedious work was evidenced by this little seven year old. Well, anyone knows a book has to have a cover, or a title page, or something that says "start here".

But the nine little books said it all. Each page had ragged-edged pictures big and small pasted with great care; placed with great love. Beulah wiped her nose for the umpteenth time assuring pastor all the contents must have been cut out of church bulletins. Some pages contained a phrase or verse you know you've seen on a bulletin cover.

One page showed a clipart of a little boy with his hands folded in prayer and in letters written with an orange crayon, the letters "ME" and an arrow linking the two. The last piece to Jeffery's case was answered when Pastor pulled a used envelope out of the bag with directions written with that orange crayon,

"GIVE TO BEHT NUTON"

...pretty clear instructions, right? It's crystal clear; the lunch bag contents are to be sent to our missionary Beth Newton once you've seen the three books that have Denny's testimony in them.

Some pictures cut out of the programs used during the missions conference and that orange crayon of love again, speaking across oceans of difference and indifference appeared an “I”, a big round heart, next to a picture of a missionary holding a bible that appeared in a Sunday School Class take-home paper.

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As Pete began another one of his spellbinding stories, I wished I could almost climb into his world of people with physical and mental challenges of their own. This was true as I heard of little Hopeless. This is her story as she met unconditional God’s love with silver hair for probably the first time.

[~]

## #6 – Little Hopeless

Gramps sat all alone in the old condemned building staring at all the walls and corners, with a troubled heart. He had so many times, thought of tearing down the old structure. His heart told him the old building was no more needed than he and his gray hair were.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw the door open just a bit with a slow mysterious creak. In a moment a clump of long dirty hair began to appear. Next 2 dark brown eyes of a little preschooler cautiously peered around the door, spied Gramps and disappeared. A few minutes later the little girl peered in again. Without a word, she shyly entered the old building with her back against the wall, opposite Gramps.

Her dirty face, ripped clothes, and matted hair easily stereotyped her as a castaway in anyone’s book. The old gentleman and the little ragamuffin carefully watched the other wondering who would move first. Not really knowing

why, Gramps slid out of the old rickety chair and sat on the floor Indian fashion, as best as his stiff joints would allow. He slowly picked up a short piece of string lying nearby and started winding it around his fingers like weaving a rug. The little lady watched with increasing interest.

Gramps started tying a little knot in one end of the string and she moved next to him to get a closer look. In tender tones, Gramps said, “They call me Gramps. What’s your name?” “Hopeless” came the matter of fact answer. “No. No. I mean what is your name?” he asked while risking a touch on her shoulder. “Mama says I’m hopeless. The lady that sleeps behind the bus station says I’m hopeless. Well, I guess I’m Hopeless. Mr. Gramps, is Hopeless my name or a disease I got?”

Out came a big bandanna from the well worn bib overalls just in time to catch the first tears on the old gentleman’s face. In careful movements the little girl laid her head against Gramp’s leg and let out a long deep sigh. The weary pained fingers took the bandanna and wiped some of the dirt off the face of little Hopeless.

The old building was so quiet he could hear the restful breathing of a little one searching for someone to care. The stare of the old gentleman returned to the walls and corners of the old building whose future of purpose seemed hopeless. Maybe the name of the building should be Hopeless too.

The old gentleman’s knee was killing him, but what a way to go... sharing restful moments with someone that hurts too. He didn’t dare move a muscle.

Maybe an hour later, little Hopeless woke up but was in no hurry to leave the calm caring corner of the condemned building. Occasionally the neighborhood computer club brought junk pieces of computers to the old building that had no electricity. They tried to discover things about a