



Silver Hair Learning From Green Hair

Leader's Guide

by
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Introduction

Green hair, and other similar appearances of youth have had their meaning changed by Satan from the S.O.S. distress calls that they are, to the 'stay away - unclean' warning signs the lepers of long ago had to wear.

This resource is meant to :

1. call attention to the church's responsibility to reach youth with the Gospel, regardless of hair color.
2. To realize those youth have a direct impact on that church's ongoing life and growth.
3. Draw the humility and compassion into silver-haired folks and see the talents and rich spirit of youth by learning how to lead from behind.
4. the METHODS and flavor of reaching the hearts of these youth may be tweaked toward today's agendas but the MESSAGE of the Bible will not change one comma.

The setting is small intercity church setting about creating a website, that ultimately involves every generation of the church.

Green Hair (in Red Eyes) **Website**

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#1 – A Bee in My Britches

Come on! Come on! Come on, you slow poke!” But the computer paid no attention as it blindly went through its boot-up programs. Tanner would squirm and speak to the old computer like he was a newspaper reporter with the news that would be read in thousands of living rooms. The words he typed got backed up with almost every paragraph that was typed. “This is powerful stuff that'll change people's thinkin’,” he spoke to the computer monitor as he glanced again, at his scribbled notes. If someone asked, he'd characterize his computing with the phrase, “A bee in my britches!”

But those were the times of long ago and far away. These are the days of silver-hair, short-term memory, sore and aching joints. His labored hearing clearly the tic-toc of the old pendulum wall clock just like the one in his classroom a million years ago. There were no thoughts of computer keyboards back then. He couldn't count how many times he asked ol' Grinder McGreedy how she, and he, were supposed to find a word in the dictionary if you didn't know how to spell it in the first place.

What a contrast it is now. In one ear, Tanner heard the tic-toc of times almost forgotten, and in the other ear he'd hear the computer beep of a typed word not found in its digital hard-drive dictionary. His mind had great trouble sorting the train of thoughts that kept racing through his head, like the steam-puffin' express delivering the mail. That's probably not right either... now it's all email and such.

It was no help at all, when 'lil Deeter came over last Tuesday evening. Every silver-haired person loves their grandchildren – at least for a little while. Deeter's mom had her all dressed up in pink frilly clothes that easily captured every grandfather's heart. Some phone books and a pillow were stacked in the computer chair and 'lil Deet eagerly climbed on top of them. In a split instant she had her hands on the mouse and ready to play a newly installed toddler graphics game. Every time Tanner tried to show her how to make the program do this thing, or that – Deet

shoved his hands away with an attitude like, “Look out world here I come, frilly britches and all!”

The tic-toc sounds in his quiet computer room brought his thinking back to the task at hand – without an ounce of enthusiasm. “Oh, here we go again, another web site I'll design that'll quickly become tired, outdated, and forgotten, just like me.”

But in the shadows of his thinking, James Tanner Maston knew that God was up to something. He's always got a top-notch plan, custom designed for those in frilly pink training pants and those in worn out bib overalls that shine best when they've sweated through a full day's work – and lovin' it.

It's those shadows of God's workshop, that we can't easily see into, with tri-focal glasses and a 7-cell flashlight. Somehow, we slowly sense a bit of Heaven's shadow workshop actions by polishing up our 'want-to bones'. Is it too simplified to push our 'want-to bones' to pay attention to only what is possible with God, and climb up in his chair of service – and breath, “Look out world. Here I come for Jesus' sake!” And each time the world of aches, pains, and poor memory try to interfere, we'll tell them to shove off, with the determination of 'ol Grinder McGreedy and her burden to change the young lives at the ink-well desks in front of her.

From that shadow workshop in Tanner's heart, came the spirit's voice, boldly stating, “I Promised! The silver-haired grandfather closed his eyes hoping to better see in that workshop. His one hand still touching the computer keys as the other hand was lowered to rest on the desk. The touch of the fingers recognized the feel of his computer manual – unlike any other. Opening his eyes, he saw far more than his fingers touching his computer manual – his open Bible, he saw many verses underlined during stormy skies of years gone by. The shadow workshop voice repeated, “I promised!” Tanner's fingers were touching a grandfather's workshop verse, if there ever was one.

Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. (And a few verses later:)

For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper. Psalm 71:18; 72:12

McGreedy and I say, “polish up your 'want-to bones'. NOW!”
[~]

#2 – Oil Can Computing

Strange as it seems, anyone young or old, if they want to do their best computing, needs to know how to do what ol' Tanner calls 'Oil Can Computing'. His best always happened on Saturday afternoons in his quiet little church, with no one else around.

Dressed in his favorite faded bib overalls with pencil and note pad in the chest pocket and two screwdrivers in the leg pockets. The always ready oil can and rag were in one hand. A couple Saturday's ago, the pastor smiled as he saw the silver-haired oiler walking from room to room in the church. Pastor knew the oiler wouldn't find many door hinges to lubricate, or hinges to tighten, but Pastor could recognize a labor of love, when he saw some, with or without bib overalls. The pastor probably never did learn the real purpose of oiler's rounds – especially his use of his free hand.

For some reason, not easy to explain, James Tanner Maston was touching every wall, every door and window inside this intercity church. When Tanner had things to think out, shape up like the Bible's directive, 'Let all things be done decently and in order', he's grab his oil can and head for church. Somehow, his touching all the building surfaces, put him in touch a little with that shadow workshop that God is always busy in. His oil can tours were a heartfelt way of saying to God, “Jesus, I ain't much, anymore. But I'm here with my 'want-to bones' at the ready.

Many times, Tanner had decided God had put him on the shelf permanently, 'cuz of some unconfessed sin or not having a pure enough heart. “Oh well. Let's see if this door squeaks...”

Part of the thoughts under that silver hair tried to piece

together some things he'd need to create for the church website, the pastor had asked for. Many pictures were taken, and wall poster content was also noted.

As he tightened up the screws of that top hinge, he reminisced over the many many websites he'd done for other churches, and never charging them one red cent. And maybe that was part of the problem with them being neglected and becoming a real digital eyesore to the world. A cliché might be, 'Freely Gotten, Freely Forgotten.' “OOOO. I'd better bring my wood glue with me next time and glue up that chair.”

But there were times in his youth that Tanner did things not at all appreciated – especially by God. There was that time when he helped two other boys tip over Brannigan's out house. Maybe that was why God was holding him back from front-line service. He didn't know.

His short memory did serve him some today, as he remembered the pendulum wall clock in the Rockin' Chair Rockets classroom. And then the cardboard computers the primary class was using to connect God's love with computing. The Brannigan mindset asked the question, what would happen if I switched the two. What would happen if I put the wall clock in the primary's class (up high where it wouldn't be touched) and put the cardboard computer and cinnamon paper-mache mouse in the Rocket's classroom.

Hindsight painted a bold vivid picture of the commotion caused by moving the Rocket's wall clock. “Blast off” didn't begin the description.

“Time heals all wounds” almost didn't prove true in the switch described above. It was pretty slow, but somehow the incident brought the Rockets and the Cinnamon Primaries together. Is it possible that some of God's Shadow Workshop results were seen in this month's Soup Supper Fellowship. More than ever before, silver-haired seniors were partnering with youngins with lots of smiles and hugs. This partnering even included youth struggling with war-like home times and finding things to wear that wouldn't cause snickers from others. Never-the-less, Tanner decided never-again, was he going to switch clocks – tic-toc or

otherwise.

Tanner, our silver-haired church website designer, knew that websites are saturated with links; connections that if clicked on, will propel you to the next connection. Something like touching a chapter title in a book table of contents, that instantly jumped you right to that desired chapter page. In websites their fancy names are 'hyperlinks'.

But the oil can man discovered a link far more powerful than any website can have. It's a link between two generations starved for hugs and attention born nowhere else but in Heaven's Shadow Workshop. Get your oil can or dust rag ready – have a peek. Don't Wait...NOW!
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#3 – Visit Another Planet

They did it again. Someone's left the light on, in the basement,” pastor spoke to the steering wheel as he started into his inter-city church parking lot. Just then, his headlights spotted Tanner Maston's ol' clunker. The thought flashed through his mind, “anyone who doesn't believe in present day miracles, needs to look at that 'bucket-of-rust-pickup' and wonder how Tanner keeps that thing runnin'.”

Pastor whistled a little as he came closer to the basement room with the light on. “Well... hello Tanner! I had just visited Jim and Donna's and their brand new little bundle of joy. I noticed the light on as I was heading for home. What's happ'nin'?”

Silver-haired Tanner replied, “Hi ya Pastor. I didn't want to disturb your super busy schedule. While you were visiting the new baby and parents, I was visiting another planet.” He let the words cook a little, with the expected result of a confused expression on Pastor. He then continued, “Can I explain my visit to you?” Tanner knew he'd get an OK, otherwise Pastor would wonder all night, what the old church member meant by 'visiting another planet'.

“Now, visiting another planet my way, doesn't take any

rockets, space suits, or even months in orbit. I'll tell you what. Let's just do it." Without a hesitation, Tanner said, "You come do just what I do. It's simple and won't take long." Just like most Saturday Oil Can tours, Tanner and Pastor slowly walked around the basement Sunday School room with one big chair and about 15 chairs only preschoolers could fit in.

"Pastor. What we want to do is connect our hearts with God's heart and the heart of the teachers and helper in this room. See, this is super important – especially for silver-haired folks to do, 'cuz the ones sitting in these little chairs will someday be making decisions on how this church is to be run, and its spirit."

"Now the next thing we want to do is touch each chair, with more than a tap, and giving some real thought about the little one who'll be sitting in that chair this Sunday. We both know that so many families in our inter-city church are on the hairy edge of calling it quits. Many of these youngin's hear arguing from morning till night and even the night through. Their refrigerator is empty except for a couple cans of beverage that only adults drink."

The rough calloused hands of Tanner pointed toward Pastor for emphasis, as he said, "Pastor, it almost scares me to think God puts such great love on these little ones, He's assigned an angel to guard each one – are we doing enough? Are we doing all we can, or are we just providing Sunday babysitting services for them?"

"You're quite a bit younger than I am, Pastor, so you don't know about living in a world that had no televisions. You were born with them in fairly easy reach. Me. My world started even before there were electric typewriters, with eraser ribbons and such."

"Pastor, you've been to preacher college and I haven't. I was happy to make it through high school," Tanner said with a sheepish grin. If you'll take a drop of advice from an old man like me, please give serious thought and prayer to what I'm about to say."

"The first step of seniors recognizing their opportunity and responsibility to our church's future, is to understand these children and many before them, can't imagine what life would be like without computers. Their thoughts of life are saturated with on-line this and computing that. Pastor, I know many of my generation

consider computers as a tool of the devil and something to be feared. But we both know the Bible tells us it is one of God's gifts to be used to magnify Him and build up the saints.”

Tanner knew he was speaking to a very tired pastor of his church. But his purpose was to begin building a not-so-tough bridge of love and understanding between two generations, that are worlds apart.”

“Pastor, I know I'm 'preaching to the choir' when I say this, but my old Bible tells me it contains the directions to build this bridge between our church goals and the outreach to the future leaders God has put within our short-range radar, as they say today. One of my favorite verses ends with the Bible's promise of itself, *'thoroughly furnished unto all good works'*.” 2Timothy 3:17.

“I got only one other thing to add, Pastor. I don't know nothin' about rocket fuel, space stations, and such. But I am certain of the fuel needed to reach the planet and hearts in these little chairs. The fuel, we all possess. The fuel to reach hearts, young and old, is in Psalms 126:6 *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.* It's tears.” No doubt, you'd got unused tears.

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#4 – David Barker

The church turned quiet as its pastor walked to the pulpit, placing his hands on each side, like he was hanging on. His eyes moved all along many of the filled pews as he began to speak. “Thank you all for coming to our evening service that I promise is going to be really exciting. I've invited this person here to share his fascinating testimony with you, and evidence he's from another world. WOW! I'm all excited already. David Barker, will you come out and meet the many people who've come to see you?”

First appeared a dog you'd characterize with a happy tongue that matched his wagging tail. His harness was held by a man about 25, with a cane in the other hand. As David walked toward

the pulpit, the dog slowly kept pace with him.

“Thank you all for coming this evening. I've come at your pastor's invitation to share my heart with you. First off, I should say that this dear friend with tongue on one end and tail on the other, is Barker. Umm, you'll have to trust me, he is a barker too. At another church meeting, he barked once and shook the shade on their piano lamp. I'm David Glish, and as you can see I'm from another world – and that's what I want to talk to you about.”

“Unlike your world, my world has no rainbows, sunrises or sunsets, or birds in the trees. Colors in my world have very little meaning, except blue is cold like an ice cube and red might burn your fingers. My world has very few smiles and pictures of anything. Some people would tell me that God is punishing me for something. But the very opposite is true. Barker and I are here to tell you that we both are bridge builders. These are not steel and paint bridges to carry cars, but a bridge that is alive – that breathes and moves. Though my words probably seem strange, you'd better take my words to heart – from mine to yours. Here's one reason why.”

“I am an on-line customer service manager for the credit card company whose plastic you likely have in your pocket or purse. Though in one sense, I'm from another world, I have quite probably talked to some of you on the phone, using my computer without a monitor. Each weekday, Barker quietly rests beside my company desk while I have my audio headset in place. You'd really think I was from another planet seeing all my other teammates have keyboards, mice, and monitors at the ready. But me? No monitor. I don't need one.”

“If you were to call me for help with your account, your voice would come into the left side of my headset. The special program in my computer speaks the words and numbers near my mouse cursor and I can hear them in my right ear. That way I can read your account data and we can work together to make life better for you and your finances. Do you see? I hope so, 'cuz I can't,” Dave said with a smile. “I wouldn't have a job without computers, and some of you with pacemakers wouldn't even be alive without them... or you wouldn't be able to hear me without

computerized hearing aids and cochlear implants.”

“Now, I have Barker to help me around town, and using my soft soled shoes, I could walk out here being careful to step on that rope laying on the floor over there. But I want especially to talk to you silver haired folks about the bridge than needs to be built, with your hands, from the shoes you walk in, to the little chairs in the classrooms below us. Your first step in building this living breathing bridge is to understand that most all our youth were born into a world that has never been without computers.”

“You, Pastor, and I need to share God's love and the Bible's promises with a bit of computer flavor. God has provided many non-technical ways to do this – even if you've never trusted computers. Pastor has told me that some of you are designing an on-line website for your church that includes maps and such.”

“I'll tell you what. If you'll invite me back, we'll have a little WOW workshop and learn how to make toddlers key designers in that website. Building breathing bridges is fun but they should be painted with tears, for the hearts from another world God gave you.”

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#5 – Gittin' In Touch

Sunday Evening Share Time took on a whole new emphasis about two weeks after David and Barker visited the small inter-city church. Matti walked toward the podium dragging Clementine along behind. Matti was dressed in her housekeeping work clothes with a bandanna tied around her head, just as she always does when cleaning the church each Tuesday.

Ol' Gerdie in the back row gasped deeply putting her hand over her mouth, looking all around her to see if anyone else found this gross disrespect of the pulpit so appalling. It was just her.

Matti began to speak with, “Thank you for letting me stand up here with Clementine my vacuum cleaner, and my work clothes. I have a strong purpose in giving you all a bit of a shocking insight to something I've been learning the last couple of

weeks. Clem and I were doing our usual housekeeping duties in the teen room down stairs... You know, I just thought of something. Why are all the classrooms for the youth in the basement? Is this an “out of sight, out of mind” kind of thing. Yes, I know it's hard to look at their odd 'out of this world' appearance, sometimes. But that's what I want to tell you about.”

Matti let go of Clem's handle, making sure it stayed upright. “So anyhow, getting back to my teen room experience... using my dust rag I was wiping down all the needed surfaces, when I took a deeper look at the chairs that this church's future leaders are now sitting in. I laid down my dust rag but kept on moving my hand slowly over the same surface I'd just dusted. Now listen carefully. Me and Jesus go back a long way, and I love restoring beauty to His house we worship in.”

“It seemed Jesus was speaking to my heart, 'Matti. I've given you time FOR dust rags. And I've given you time WITHOUT dust rags. You might call it Getting in Touch time. And Matti I've given you a mind and heart to decide which ought to come first, before the other.’” Matti slapped the pulpit hard enough to make sure everyone knew she meant business. She continued, “In a moment I sat down in a corner chair of that classroom and quietly looked at every part of the walls, tables and chairs.”

Matti looked at Pastor and held up a hand like she was taking an oath of honesty, and said, “Pastor. I tell you the truth, it's like I had opened a door just a crack and could hear teen voices saying, “we're drowning in all these technology dead-ends, that don't give us peace and don't give us a reason for living”.

“I've since found out from a teen that constant inner spiritual pain is so tormenting, they try to hide that inner pain with outer pain by literally repeatedly cutting themselves.” Matti wiped her nose with a pocket tissue and continued. You don't have to believe this, but I think the green hair, black clothes, and facial jewelry are actually calls to us for help. I think those help cries all say pretty much the same thing, “Is there anyone that cares enough about me and my world, to at least just listen to my heart, instead of starting off preaching to me?”

“Folks. I got just one more thing to say, and then me 'n

Clementine will go sit down. My Grit in Tough moments have made it clear to me, we don't need church gadgets and gimmick programs to reach youth, especially teens. We don't need to quote scripture like a seminary student, or make them start memorizing verses. And you and I don't need to know a bunch of computer stuff. All we need to do is listen – and I don't mean interrogate. My grandpa called that listening as 'leading from behind'.”

“And that leading from behind or getting in touch is not hard. All ya gotta do is pretend like the teen knows more than you do, and let them teach you.” With just a bit of a smile, Matti reached out and took hold of Clementine and said, “God has given us silver-haired folks lots of empty hours in each day, for a purpose. I think He wants us to go back to school. He wants us to 'lead from behind' and get in touch with our youth. The secret is simple. Our generation is the best prepared to just LISTEN. Listen Before You Leap on the attitudes and appearance of youth and their Help Cries.”

Tom Steen jumped to his feet, and blurted out, “Matti, I got a couple extra screwdrivers and three old computers your teens – I mean OUR TEENS, could tear apart while seniors are listenin' and learning!”

Pastor was quickly scribbling notes for a vision everyone needed to see. Building a bridge between two worlds using computer junk and... and using... and using tears for help cries. [~]

#6 – Green Hair Graphics

A knock at the Pastor's church office door was made by Matti Gless. “Pastor, can I talk to you a minute? It's sort-of important, I guess. She was welcomed in, and offered a comfortable chair as the pastor switched off his cellphone ringer.

“I don't know what to make of it, pastor. But two days ago I found this drawing taped to my Clementine – that's my vacuum. I have no idea who drew it or why. The pastor of the inter-city

church he loved so much, was handed the pencil sketch drawing. The mysterious artist had drawn a lady in something of a way that Matti dressed when she was cleaning. Right next to her was a sketch barely recognizable as a vacuum cleaner. On the other side of the vacuum was drawn a teenage girl. Both people were drawn with the style you see pretty often among young-adult artists. The eyes were a little oversize with the head tilted down in a sad pose. The hair was drawn with long almost straight lines that all came to a point, like broken jagged glass. The posture of the teen girl was definitely drawn as with a broken spirit – a broken heart and probably broken dreams.

“Well, Matti, who did this sketch of you, your vacuum, and a teenage girl?” Matti showed a stressed expression on her face as she confessed, “I have no idea who or why? I thought maybe you might know. But on the wall of the teen room I did notice another drawing in somewhat the same style. I'll take you down there and show it to you.” Pastor accepted and they both went downstairs to look at the sketch. The two compared the drawings and agreed they were done by the same person – probably a teenager right there in their church.”

“Matti, look closely at this sketch of you and your vac. Look up in the hair area. Right here there's just a touch of green. It almost looks like the artist was going to give the teen figure green hair and then decided not to.” A few minutes, then, “Matti, we've got a teen girl that comes pretty often, that wears a lot of green hair. Would you like to visit her and see if there's any connection? If she is the artist, maybe she would like to help Tanner with the church website. Why don't you also take along a good Plan of Salvation tract you can share with her, as God so moves.”

“WOW! You're a really good artist. But I bet you can't draw a sad girl looking at one of those flat computers,” were the words Matti put on a sheet of paper. She taped it onto the vac handle, where the original sketch had been found. With lots of prayer, Matti hoped her note would 1) compliment the artist, 2) challenge the artist.

Two days later, the beautiful sketch appeared. Matti made a Xerox copy of the sketch then retaped the original to Clementine's

handle with another request. Now I need you to draw me standing behind the sad girl with my arms around her, planting a small kiss on her hair. I bet you can do that. I sure hope so. 'Cuz that's how my heart sees your picture. Oh. One more thing. I need you to color the teen's hair green.

“I've blown it! I've been too pushy! I'll never find out for sure who the artist is. Clementine and me are just not the kind of servants God needs to reach teens!” Matti (and Clementine) were working on the last room of this week's cleaning. She was startled when someone tapped her on the back. Matti turned in an instant.

Standing in front of her was a teen girl with red swollen eyes full of tears... and... green hair. Before Matti could say a word, the teen said, “I sure could use that hug now. My world has really been wobbly this week.” That hug that both had been craving, was followed by a little kiss on each other's cheek and more hugs.

Now what you read here does not say that every S.O.S. for help has to contain green hair. But it does say that we all need to be constantly watching for those cries for our help, in whatever form they come. Jesus heard our cries for His help with our sinful nature. He more than met our need for love and forgiveness with His shed blood on the Cross of Calvary. But He wants us to spread the word – The One Who loves us most has every hair on our head counted – no matter the color.

Humbly tell Him about your world and then listen as He tells you about the world in Eternity where He wants you to live with Him.

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#7 – The Poster That Grows

Hi Rachel!” came the greeting from the church's cleaning lady – Matti, to her teen friend, followed by a question. “Whatcha drawin'?” “Oh – mornin' mum.” There was a short pause and then Rae stated, “Matti, it warms my heart that you let me call you 'Mum', even though you're not my mom. It puts me

in mind of a little string that goes from my heart to your heart. I guess it's kind of a hint that a part of me belongs to you.”

Ray tapped her drawing with a finger and said, “you asked me about my sketch here. Well, Mr. Tanner asked me to make a sketch for him to use on the church website he's putting together. He wants a girl with a less than polished appearance looking at a large poster on the wall in front of her. He wants the poster to say, 'SIN IS THINKING AND DOING THINGS WE KNOW GOD DOESN'T LIKE.'”

“Well, Mum, I started out with that, but then I decided to draw the girl touching the edge of the poster with some amount of firmness. It was like the meaning of the poster was traveling through her outstretched arm into the girl. As I kept sketching, it was like I was inside the girl in my drawing. She hungered for some stability in her life; some truth that might give a drop of meaning to all the hurt inside.”

“So while I'm still sketching, I feel there needs to be a shadow in the picture, er, the poster in the picture, I mean. Have I got ya confused, Mum?” Mum gently shook her head no. “I didn't know where to put the shadow, but I thought of the Cross that I see pictured all around the church here. It was tough, but you can see here that the Cross' shadow falls across the poster.”

“Now, Mum. When I try to explain this, you're going to think I'm even more weird than my green hair and black fingernail polish. But here goes. I was just finishing the Cross shadow near the bottom of the sketch, when I had the urge to extend that shadow out of the poster and onto the girl's arm. The Cross shadow made a connection to the hurting teen. The girl's hand was making connection with the poster, while the poster was making connection to the girl, using the Cross shadow.”

“Rae, your sketch is wonderful. Umm. Would you mind if I made a copy just for myself? I want to think more about the girl and the poster as I clean the sanctuary. Would that be OK?” “Sure,” was the matter-of-fact reply. Matti's brisk step toward the office copy machine gave her the privacy to blot away the tears. It was tears released from her own eyes that had just glimpsed the heart of a teen, God had placed in her life. Matti returned shortly giving

Rae her original of the sketch, and saying she needed to get to work on the sanctuary. Clementine (the vacuum cleaner) was taken to the sanctuary and the day's work continued.

It wasn't until about two days later that Rae asked Mum the question asked by every generation down through the ages. "Mum. If God doesn't like sin, why'd He make it, or keep it around?" "Well, Rae, it has a little bit to do with lightning in the sky. When I break for lunch, we'll talk a bit about why I think God made sin." Rae turned to face her newly begun sketch that Tanner also wanted next.

"I'm the wrong person for God to use to explain such an important question," thought Matti. She looked at the wall clock and saw that she'd be giving the Green-haired Rae some of the answer to her question, in two hours. "Dear Lord. You'll have to give me the clear words to plant in this troubled teen that would show why that Cross shadow reached out to her arm against the poster.

One reason why God made sin -

"Rae. one reason I believe why God made sin and let's it endure, in my mind, starts with lightning – you know, what we often see in stormy skies. Well, lightning is one of the things that shows us God's power. Preachers have a fancy word that describes God's power. The weird word is OMNIPOTENCE. There's two other words that tell more about God. One is OMNISCIENT. That means God is all-knowing; He knows everything. And no one else does. The third weird word is OMNIPRESENT. And that means He can be everywhere, all at once; He's got the power to. Our human minds just don't have the ability to really grasp these "omni-attributes" of God. We can only trust the Bible as it tells us these facts."

"Now honey, remember that Cross shadow in your sketch? Well, something happened on that Cross, that God's "omni-attributes" fail to describe. The three attributes of God, were demonstrated on that Cross, that you drew the shadow of. There were many, but the three I think of, are TABERNACLE, LOVE,

and MERCY.”

“Rae, I'll give you a taste of God's TABERNACLE attribute and then we'll talk about love and mercy and even full joy, another time.” The teenager's heart must have skipped about three beats and she couldn't get her breath for a couple seconds, when she heard the words 'full joy' in the same sentence with 'tabernacle'. Rachel, decided in an instant, she wanted to go visit this tabernacle place and get at least one handful of this 'full joy'. It would certainly be the brightest ray of comfort her heart would ever know.

“I'm not real great at describing things, Rae, but I'll try my best.” An instant hug from the teen said, “Go for it!” “Well, some fancy churches name themselves a tabernacle. And in the real old part of the Bible, God had Mr. Moses build a portable tent church that was called a tabernacle. But God wants us to know something very special about Him, not just the different ways to build a church – portable or otherwise. He wants us to know about His heart – God's heart.”

Matti held up one hand and then both hands. “He wants us to see Him as all powerful. He's showing us in nature, He has greater muscles than anyone. And then on the other hand, He wants us to see His heart for the needs of mankind. And one of those heart-attributes I call tabernacle. Tabernacle is a God-word that talks about unity, about family, about dwelling together, about fellowship. Tabernacle is a bit like folks working together in harmony toward goals, that I might add, goals that please God.”

That Saturday, there was a sketch taped to the vacuum. It was a picture of Matti and Rachel, and arm around each other, with a big title overhead, that shouted, “WE”RE TABERNACLIN!” It was another way of describing that little string that goes from heart to heart. It can't be described, only demonstrated – daily. But even more than that – it needs to be experienced – from the inside – it surrounds you.

Ultimately God wants us to tabernacle with Him in Heaven – eternally – and that's the REAL BOTTOM LINE!

[~]

#8 – A Hole In Her Heart

The lines of the sketch in process, appeared harsh and cold. They could never share the page with a warm sun or cotton candy clouds hosting carefree birds enjoying the God-given nature. The sketch appearing on Rachel's pad was of a girl looking at a computer tablet. The image on the sketched tablet looked like a deep sinkhole; so black it likely had no bottom.

In the same harsh cold style, Rae added the sketch title at the top: THE EMPTY PROMISES OF COMPUTERS. The sketch was something of a window into the teen's troubled heart. Matti wanted it to be a door, not a window; a door she could reach in with love – God's love and light of truth, purpose, and peace.

Matti asked, “Rae, describe to me the black hole. Is this the black hole in your heart, honey?” The teenage artist felt she was being asked to describe a terrible tornado that left total destruction and death in its path. “Mum. Almost every teen today, me included, has this Black Hole of emptiness in their deepest self. Even many church kids have theirs too.”

It's like going to a carnival with all the laughter and flashing lights. You hear someone on a loudspeaker describing the greatest most-thrilling ride there. “You can ride for half the price of a sandwich – come ride with your friends! It's a blast like you've never experienced!” As you get close to the ticket booth, you realize the ride is the tallest roller-coaster you've ever imagined. The painted sign shows the coaster reaches into the clouds above.

You buy the ticket and realize there's no turning back – you're committed. There are hints of the true dangers involved as you are strapped into the seat with strong wide straps. But you see others being strapped in, so you wait for the promised thrills to come. Never imagining the final moments – where and what they would be.

The string of thrills certainly had your heart pumping even if only for 3 and a half minutes. The tallest peak was the finish. As

you crept over the peak you started gaining unbelievable speed. But half way down that tallest peak, the track disappeared. It was as though the coaster builders never finished building the track. That track just disappeared into a black hole.

“Mum. Kids like me think that texting and stuff will take them into the clouds above the pain and hopelessness of each and every day. But they never dreamed how it all would actually end. The real sad part of that coaster ride is the kids never were offered an alternative; a far more thrilling life experience offered as God's tabernacle.”

“I truly enjoy putting my feelings and questions in sketches, because the lines on the page seem to say more than my words can. Mum. You won't understand this, but somehow my questions in sketches try to fit in order like pieces in a jigsaw puzzle. Maybe I'm like most teens that want to get our stress and hurt onto the table in case someone would come along and help me put the pieces of my life in the right order to show me the purpose of why I'm here.”

Rachel tapped her finger on the black hole in her sketch and said, “Matti, I mean Mum. I wish there was some way I could make good use of that black hole. I'd like to sketch me standing in front of that hole, not at all thinking of jumping in and ending it all. But I'd like to stand at the edge of that ugly black hole that has no bottom. I'd like to take each and every hurt, disappointment, each empty promise I've heard, every piece of ugliness in my heart, and throw them into that hole, never to be remembered by anybody.”

“I'd love to hear a tender voice behind me saying, 'I'm proud of you Rachel Ann Fandy. For a long long time that's what I've wanted to see you do. You see, I want to fill you with Heaven's love and real joy. But like you, everyone needs to empty themselves of all their false beliefs and hopes, so I have all your space for my blessings that extend far deeper than your words can describe. You just watch and see.’”

[~]

#9 – Your Love Meter

Rachel, I have a request for a sketch – actually from me,” Matti said with a grin. I would even give you a couple dollars spending money, on one condition.” “Mum, you don't have to give me any money, 'cuz your love, hugs, and friendship are far more valuable to me than dollars – honest injun. But first, what's the condition?”

“Rae, I want you to begin signing your sketches. Even if it's not your full name... maybe something like RachelF. Your signature is a small way of identifying you with what God has created with you hands. Honey, God has given you a valuable talent He wants you to use for Him – especially as you have Tanner put them on the Church's website. It's just that you want always to give God the Glory.”

“Now do you remember we're learning the true meaning of words that describe the attributes of God? We started with learning about His fellowship and the heart-touching unity word: TABERNACLE. Well, maybe the most precious of all those other words is the word LOVE. The world has misused the word so badly, God knew we'd need some Bible instruction to get back on track. Though the whole Bible talks about God's Love, a special chapter is 1st Corinthians 13. It's called the LOVE chapter. In that special chapter, LOVE is given a special word – CHARITY.”

“Well, anyway, the sketch I want you to make, that I'll pay for, is a sketch of you – actually the back of your head,” Matti said with a grin. “I better explain. The sketch will show you drawing a wall poster. OK?” “The poster in your sketch will be titled, YOUR LOVE METER. Rae, I want the meter, in the poster – in your sketch to look like a simple thermometer that measures 1 to 10. The 1 will be at the bottom and the 10 will be at the top. Understand?” “Gotcha. Mum this will be fun. But I'm real anxious what the numbers on this LOVE METER poster will represent.”

Matti and the 14 yr-old green-haired artist clasp hands as silver-haired Matti led in prayer for God to bless the efforts of talents He has given to souls, no matter what their hair color.

“Rae, this idea of mine isn't great, but maybe we can put our heads together and refine it a bit. Honey, let's put “YOU'RE COOL” at the bottom, next to the 1. Now to me, even the word cool tells me there is no warmth, no feeling to the statement. I'd guess it has a value like the reply “OK”. See, Honey? 'Your Cool' just lays there. It doesn't stir me in any way... so that's a number 1 on our so-called LOVE METER. Now above that, I'd put the word LIKE. If you changed the two middle letters, you could spell love. But I wouldn't give LIKE any more than a 2 on our LOVE METER. In one of the on-line social networks, they've substituted a “+1” for the word LIKE. Rae, do you see any warmth or feeling in “+1?” I sure don't. It used to be that people would use the word LOVE and LIKE interchangeably. It just took the warmth, the feeling out of both words.”

Matti asked, “How we doin' so far, Rae?” “Well, Mum. When my mind says, 'love' I don't think of cool or like. So there must be a bunch more on our Love Meter.” “You're right as rain, Rachel Ann. We've got three more words for our meter poster before it's done. Now these last three words for love are used in the Bible. And actually, we can begin thinking of love as being sacrificial. Let me say that again. The level that we love someone is determined by how much we'll sacrifice for them. So in a way, love equals sacrifice (plus other things too.)”

“Above the LIKE that we placed at number 3, we'll add the word, EROS. I'm guessing that's where we get the sexual word, 'erotic'. Most often 'eros' has a negative level of sacrifice. I mean, if one person has an eros love for another, it's strongly selfish, without regard for any of the possible consequences.”

“Honey, this is the love that quickly turns ugly by disrespect for the natural feelings of our body as it enters adulthood. Terrible long-lasting consequences result when young people don't continually ask God to help them respect each other and reserve God's greatest gifts for after marriage.”

“Now the second greatest level of love in the Bible, and the heart of man and woman, is called, PHILEO. It means, 'brotherly love.' It contains a small amount of sacrifice for the other person. This kind of love is like waves on the shore. They are not constant,

and most often are undependably unequal. It's probably a 7.”

“So the top and final level of love is a solid 10 with no close seconds. It's AGAPE Love. It's pronounced 'uh-GAH-pay'. This is LOVE IN SPITE OF. This is God's love. This Love from God is in a class by itself, for many reasons. This love exists no matter if the loved one deserves it or not. This love is expressed because of WHO THE GIVER IS.”

“Rachel Ann, God agape-loves us not because we deserve it, but because of Who He is. This just thrills this old heart. I don't have anything, or can do anything to deserve God's Love. There's absolutely nothing I can brag about me. I'm loved because of the one that spoke the worlds into existence, chose to love me. And even when I do what the world wants me to do, I sin, He keeps right on loving me. I don't really understand that kind of love, honey. But it's a fact. It was demonstrated for all the world to see and accept.”

“Rae. There's a verse that you may want to add to the bottom of your sketch that says, “*Greater love hath no man, than this: that he lay down his life for his friends.*” (John 15:13).

“Do you see, Rachel? Love is measured by our willing sacrifice for others. Jesus demonstrated is when He willingly shed His innocent blood on the Cross of Calvary as the sacrifice for your sins and mine.”

“Honey, I want your sketches to plainly show others God's power and love, so much, it hurts.”

[~]

#10 – It's The Law!

Well, Rachel. Are we ready to take on another word that describes our wonderful God?” With a nod from her teenage friend, Matti continued with, “When we first start learning about God, we see Him as laying down the law – initially in nature. We know about the law of Gravity, and if something is in motion, it's going to try to stay in motion. Scientists are discovering new laws in God's creation, every day.”

“But there's laws for humans to obey too. The first one was not to eat of a certain tree in the Garden of Eden. Much of the first five books of the Bible describe God's laws He wants us to obey. The most famous ones we call the Ten Commandments. Rae, someplace in the Old Testament there is a law that if a child won't obey his parents at all, they are supposed to take that child to the edge of town and he (or she) would be stoned (to death). That certainly makes us pay attention to the 5th commandment to honor thy father and thy mother, doesn't it, Rachel?” (Deuteronomy 21:18+)

“So honey, we first see our God in Heaven is righteous, He's just. The priests in the tent tabernacle had a rope tied around Aaron's foot, so if they quit hearing the bells jingle around his skirt, it would mean he had done something wrong, and they could drag him out from the most holy place of the Tabernacle.” But God knew He'd never see one of His humans be totally sinless. Somewhere along the way they (that's you and me) would do or think something that God doesn't like, and boom! Right then and there we'd never be able to spend eternity tabernacling in the pure and perfect Heaven.”

“Rae. I'd like you to make a sketch of a teen standing before a judge with a sign in big letters on the wall behind the judge saying, IT'S THE LAW! Now I'd like for you to draw the judge holding a piece of paper and ripping a large portion of it off and throwing it away. The piece of paper listed all the laws broken by the teenager and the punishment for each. Your sketch would show the judge showing mercy toward the teen. Rachel Ann, the sketch would be showing MERCY toward the teen by not giving him (or her) all the punishment he deserved.”

“This mercy that God (the righteous Judge) is based on His love for we imperfect humans. His mercy is the connecting link between His JUSTICE and His LOVE, for you and I. Honey, there's a little phrase in the Old Testament that truly warms my heart. It says, He 'delighteth in Mercy.' The goodness, in my mind, is that the verse doesn't say whether it's Him giving mercy to us, or we extending loving mercy to someone who has wronged us. Isn't that wonderful? God's word gives us little openings to act toward

others like God acts toward us. Yes, I LOVE God and His Word!”
[~]

#11 – QUIET!

Tanner Maston spoke to the green-haired teenage artist about using her sketches on the church's website, he was designing. “Rachel, I'm thrilled to see your talent in making sketches to explain some of the attributes of our Lord Jesus. And in allowing us to post them on the web for others to see and learn from. There are certainly tons more sketch definitions we could include, but I have just one more that should top them off. It's the PEACE gift that Jesus has promised to every one that becomes saved and makes Him the Lord and Master of their life.” “I've done that very thing, Mr. Tanner. Sure I feel different about things, but more than that, is that I KNOW that Jesus Christ is my Savior and He watches over me, and guides me in how I can please Him each day.”

“Rachel Ann. I'd really prefer that you just call me Tanner. I want to be your friend... maybe a little like a grandfather. I suppose. Now let's work on this special PEACE gift that only Jesus has to power to give. Are you ready?” “I'm ready and excited to help.”

“Rachel. Let's start by talking just a bit about QUIET. You and I both know there are a number of places we go that we must be quiet; not speak out or make disruptive noises. I think about a library where people are reading and studying – we'd better be respectful of the needs of others and be quiet. Another place to be quiet is in the church service when the Pastor has his Bible open and teaching all his listeners what God has placed on his heart. For sure, we want to be quiet when he's speaking or during music specials, AND when we pray or others do. This kind of quiet (or peace) is sort of an OUTSIDE quiet. It's outside of us, but certainly so important – let's call it EARS PEACE.”

“But, Rachel Ann, I want to tell you about a different kind of quiet or peace that every teen wants to have – and grownups too.

Let me show you a little phrase here in 1st Thessalonians 4:11, in my old Bible that never gets out of date. See the phrase here, '*study to be quiet*'. I want you to especially notice it doesn't say, 'be quiet to study – like in a library. It's the other way around. It clearly say, 'study to be quiet'. Now, Rae. it's that kind of quiet, that kind of peace I'd like you to somehow draw a sketch of. And then we'll put it in the website.”

“I'd like to take just a minute and describe how you STUDY to be quiet. Studying and learning is an INSIDE thing. I mean, we read and think and compare statements. I like to say that I FEED on my Bible truths, not just read them. I put those truths INSIDE me, not just through my ears. These truths I place in my heart and mind, and constantly remind me of the Peace of God's promises that comes to me. WOW! That really gives me INSIDE PEACE, by studying (my Bible) and trusting in the promises that quiet my heart and questions I don't have the answers for, yet. Do you see, Rachel?”

“I sure do, Tanner. I can already see in my mind; in my heart, what my sketch about God's PEACE, His 'INSIDE QUIET', His HEART PEACE sketch is going to look like.”

Three days later, Rachel Ann Fandly, the green-haired artist gave Tanner her sketch of HEART PEACE. It showed a teenager seated against a Weeping Willow tree with a few ducks and their fuzzy newborns feeding on grass nearby. Beyond the ducks is a quiet portion of a lake with the sun's reflections off lazy waves like dancing diamonds. The teen is holding an open Bible with eyes raised toward the clouds as though listening to a sweet chorus of angels. Their words include: '*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters.*' (Psalm 23:2)

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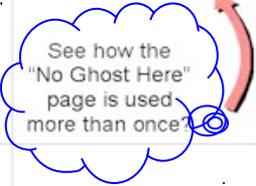
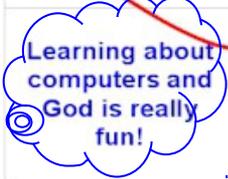
#12 – Preschool Websites

The phone rang. Laying aside his evening newspaper the silver haired church website designer answered, “Hello, Tanner here.” Nancy Alders said, “Mr. Maston. Can Barbara and I come over tomorrow and show you a couple photos? It'd only take a couple minutes. We've been teaching our church preschoolers how to program computers – um... I should say, how to design websites. I'm sure you'll be blessed by what they've done. A time was agreed upon and the brief phone call was ended.

The next day Nancy and Barbara were invited to Tanner's kitchen table and began the explanation of how you teach preschoolers how to design websites.

“Tanner, Barb and I began by having the children help create a fun website called Grandpa's Ghost. Now before you say anything, this has nothing to do with anything that would be dishonoring to God or His unmeasurable love for us. This whole thing we call WOW. It stands for Website Ona Wall. We are teaching the children how a website fits together by pasting pictures on the wall and then having pieces of bright red yarn link the home page picture to all the other pictures. The Grandpa's Ghost leads the children in discovering where to find Ghost – that's the name of Grandpa's gray colored cat.

Where is Grandpa's Ghost ?

(Home Page)  <input type="checkbox"/> Bird House <input type="checkbox"/> Horse Stable <input type="checkbox"/> Cow Barn	<input type="checkbox"/>  Is it in the Bird House?	No Ghost Here. Return to Home Page
Is it in the cow barn?  <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Is it in the horse stable? 	
	<input type="checkbox"/>  Look in the milking parlor	Silver haired kitty's name is GHOST  —>>

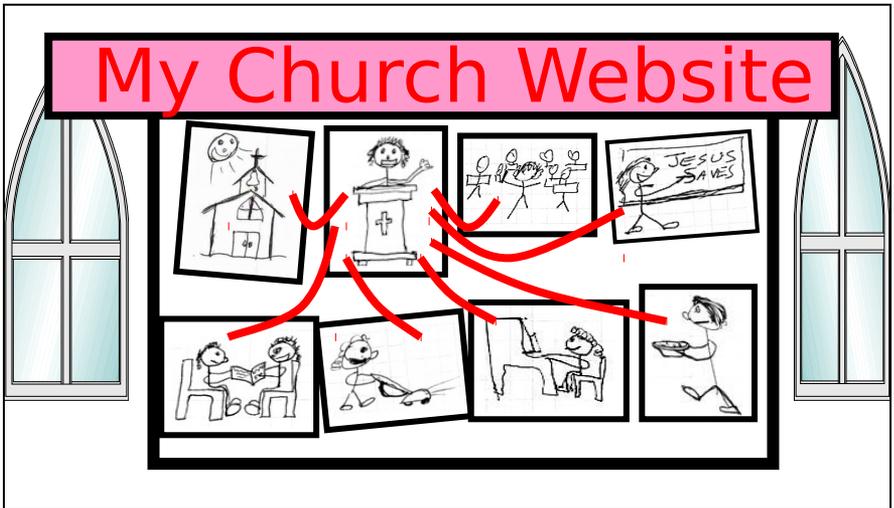
Barbara continued the explanations with, “Well, as you can probably guess, that didn't completely satisfy the children. They wanted to do more than tape the ends of yarn for a website. So Nancy and I had the children draw their own sketches of different people and their jobs in the church. We pasted them on the wall – actually a very large piece of cardboard and the children linked all the jobs to the homepage 'buttons' just like the Ghost website.”

Nancy then spoke, “Well, Bernie is one of our students and built a little larger than his classmates. He proved he was actually paying attention, when so many times we thought he wasn't. Bernie asked, 'How about taking a picture of each of the workers and past the picture next to their job.’”

The next Sunday, Pastor was just about to start his message of God's promises to produce Heart Peace, when without a word, he walked away from the pulpit. He returned just a moment later with a large piece of cardboard that had once been a new refrigerator cardboard shipping container. He held it upright at his

side. He began, “I have evidence that the youth God has blessed our church with are loaded with talent that we must encourage them to use, in spreading the Gospel. I’m sure you’ve been noticing the online website produced with lots of teenage talent. But I want to show you a very special website you’ll want to include in your personal prayers each day.” He turned the cardboard box around for all to see the church website designed by preschoolers.

Pastor looked at most all the faces in the pews before him. He said, “Because of their energy, so often we put our children aside from our focus. We send them to their own room at home, or we assign them to a classroom downstairs where they won’t disturb our adult worship. These websites remind me of God’s precious gifts of children He has given us; of the energy and talents He’s put inside them. Folks, I ask that you remind me often these children will be sitting in your seats making church decisions, not too long from now. Let’s especially remember the child that Heaven brought to us, in Bethlehem – without which we and this church would have an ugly future. We’ll focus more often on our youth and our HEART PEACE that only comes through the Cross of Christ. [~]



[~] [~] [~]

The Most Important Question of Your Life...

**If you died tonight, do you KNOW
if you'd go to heaven?**

The Easy Steps to KNOW for Sure:

== A == Acknowledge you are a sinner

ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

**== B == Believe the shed Blood of Jesus Christ is the only
way to be saved.**

The wages of sin is death* but the GIFT of God is eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23

**== C == Confess to God you know you are a sinner and call
upon Him to come into your heart.**

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be
saved. Romans 10:13