Nancy walked into the young people's classroom and stood looking at and counting the boxes which were stacked off to one side of the big room. A broad smile parted her lips. "Thirty-five boxes!" she exclaimed aloud to herself. Pleased and thankful, she smiled again.

"Whew! What a lot of sorting!" Cindy exclaimed, breezing into the room in a flurry of excitement. "How and when will we ever find time to go through all this stuff?" she asked solemnly.

Nancy laughed. "We won't, Cin. We'll never find time; we'll just have to make time. I'm so excited with the response over my plea for boxes of good used clothing to mail to our missionaries that I could almost jump for joy. This is overwhelming! And wait until Mrs. Frances learns what we have been able to do. I heard her tell the adult missionary group she hoped they'd be able to have ten or twelve boxes to go out this next month. Oh, I'm so excited and... and so thankful!"

"But when will we ever get all this sorted?" Cindy inquired again, opening one of the big brown boxes and looking inside. "I know what you could do," she said brightly. "You could give each of us girls a certain amount of boxes to take home and sort through, setting a date for us to have the boxes back here."

"I could, yes. But I'd rather do something that would be far more fun for all of us, Cindy..."
"Like what?"

"Like having several sorting and wrapping nights at my house."

Cindy's face brightened. "That's great, Nancy. Great! But wouldn't your parents mind? I mean..."

"Mind?" Nancy interrupted pleasantly. "Not my parents! They're great. Really great! Morn and Dad love having young people over to our house."

Cindy's eyes lowered. She bit her lip. "I sure wish I could say that about my folks, Dad especially. He's almost a bear when I even mention having some of my Christian friends over for pizza or popcorn. O Nancy," she said suddenly, "you're so lucky! And if your folks don't mind having our whole class-tribe over, well, let's do that. I'd love it! We girls could sort through the clothes and let the fellows do the final wrapping and getting-ready for mailing and shipping."

"That was my thought exactly, Cindy. Plus the added fun of having pizzas, a taffy pull and homemade ice cream and freshly baked--from scratch--chocolate and oatmeal cake. How does that sound, my dear friend?"

"Gr-reat! Especially the oatmeal cake and ice cream. Your mom's a super-super cake maker."

"You get an A for that answer."

The girls laughed heartily. Then Nancy said, "As president of our missionary group, I appoint you to get on the phone and call every class member, Cindy, and tell them of our plans, Lord willing. Do you mind?"

"'Course I don't mind. Fact of the matter is, I like being helpful. Like Mrs. Chipman tells us in our Sunday School class, 'Look for ways to be of service to others.' This will be another one of my good deeds for the day. The one I'll be of service to will be you, Nancy." And Cindy laughed softly.

"It's great to have a friend like you," Nancy said. "And I really do mean this. I don't know how I'd have managed things without your help. But it's worth every minute of our time and every dollar spent and invested, too. I feel we're privileged to be a part of things."

"And I'm thankful that our young people want to help in our missions projects. In some churches, they don't do a single thing; they expect the older people to carry the entire load. Me, I believe in getting even the little children involved. This way they'll grow up with missions on their mind and in their heart."
Nancy smiled. "You'd make a good 'Ambassador for Missions,' if we ever needed one, Cindy. You're enthusiastic, cooperative, helpful; and you have a vision."

"I'll make you my campaign manager," Cindy teased. "Your eulogies of me sound so familiar. Politically familiar, I mean." She laughed as she finished speaking.

Chewing thoughtfully on the end of a pencil, Nancy said, "I guess we'll just leave these boxes right here until Thursday night, the Lord willing, when we'll begin sorting and checking through the clothes for missing buttons, rips, tears, zippers that need replaced, and what-have-you."

"Have mercy and pity on Kathleen when it comes to the sewing part," Cindy pleaded. "She detests a sewing machine. Hates it almost. Says it's certainly not her 'special' love."

"I know," Nancy said pleasantly. "She told me she despises it. But what she lacks in sewing skill, she makes up a hundred times over in other ways and other areas. She's super as a homemaker, cook, baker, woman of mercy and help to the needy and the underprivileged."

"You can say that again!" Cindy exclaimed. "Honestly, it wouldn't surprise me one bit that some day, providing Jesus hasn't returned for His Bridehood saints, we'll be packing and shipping boxes out to Kathleen on some foreign field. She's a born missionary. A rare somebody, in my estimation."

"She really is. God has blessed our church with unusually-talented young people. And now, I guess we'd better be getting home."

"I'll take care of all the telephone calls, Nancy, while you get the right kind of boxes for packing."

"I really appreciate your help, Cindy. See you Thursday evening, the Lord willing."

The basement in the Hart's home was the ideal place for sorting and packing the many boxes. Folding tables and chairs were in abundance and Nancy, who was a perfect organizer, had everything moving with almost assembly-line precision. In one part of the room, four sewing machines--three borrowed, one the Hart's--stitched up rips, strengthened seams, and replaced zippers that needed replacing; nearby, a group of girls sewed on missing buttons while others sorted and inspected the clothes.

"Oh, look Nancy!" Bonnie called. "Ruth Ann gave her good dress. Her only good one, to be truthful." And Bonnie held it out before her, a tear sliding from the corner of her eye. "She . . . she needs this dress!" she added in a soft but emphatic kind of way.
Nancy felt like she was going to cry. "O Bonnie," she said, "that's love in action. True sacrifice; the 'widow's mite.' It . . . it's like you said; it's Ruth Ann's only good dress."

"What are we going to do?" Bonnie asked quickly. "I can't put it in one of those boxes and ship it out when it's all she has that's good. Honestly, Nancy, I doubt that any of the heathen need it any more than Ruth Ann does. What'll I do? I'm going to cry and I can't help it. She needs her dress. She does!"

Nancy threw her arms around Bonnie and the dress. "I'm going to cry, too," she confessed, "and... and neither can I help it. But we'll have to send it, Bonnie. Ruth Ann gave it so we could send it."

"Hey, what's wrong with you two?" Dale Carr asked, wadding the leftover ends of chord and tossing it at Nancy and Bonnie.

"This," Bonnie said, holding up the garment.

"Ruth Ann's dress!" a chorus of voices exclaimed, gasping in shocked silence.

"It . . . it's all she has!" Lonnie added quickly. "We can't send that, Nancy. She needs it."

"But we must send it, Lonnie. Don't you see? It's Ruth Ann's gift of love--her sacrifice gift," Nancy replied frankly. "It's pulling terribly at my heart; I don't want to send it out. But we must. Knowing her, she's minding God, I'm sure; and we dare not--must not!--do anything that would deprive her of the joy of giving. It's her 'widow's mite.' " A sob shook Nancy's frame.

Betty Lou got up from where she was sewing up seams. "I've never seen anything so sacrificial in all my life," she said. "I... I'm astounded. Being a new Christian, this is the most beautiful thing I've witnessed. But I believe the Lord would be greatly pleased if each of us would help Ruth Ann in some way. I have an abundance of nice clothing, and since she's the same size as I am, well, I'm going to give her some of my nicer, better things."

With trembling lips, Gretchen said, "I agree with Betty Lou; we must help Ruth Ann. It will be a sort of mission project. A bit different perhaps from what we've been used to, but a mission project, nonetheless. Jesus said, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me.' So I'll give five dollars of my baby-sitting money."

Giving was spontaneous, and by the time each had contributed, Nancy had a sizable amount of cash to give to Ruth Ann, whose part-time job prohibited her from assisting with the night's activities.
"I believe this is the most exciting time I've ever had." Melissa exclaimed. "Just think of it; we're a part of something so great! And now this home mission thing for Ruth Ann. Oh, I feel wonderful. Wonderful!"

"So do I," Rodney agreed. "And when I think of our missionaries and the tremendous culture shock they experience in their various fields, well, I feel all warm and good inside to be able to help in a small way and let them know that we love them and do care--the proof of our love and concern coming through in the boxes we send and the gifts we give."

Ted chuckled, then he said, "If you'd have told me three years ago that I'd be helping with something like this, I'd have said you were crazy. I thought all religious people were devoid of good sense. I really did. The holiness people especially. But I've changed my mind... a thing obvious and evident to all. And I can truthfully say that I've never enjoyed anything like I'm enjoying the things pertaining to God and to His business. Since giving every part of me to Jesus Christ, I have been totally and completely satisfied. Working for Him and His cause makes me feel fulfilled and richly repaid, a thing I never experienced while living in sin. Frankly, I feel I'm highly honored to be a part of a caring, sharing, living-Christ group of young people who have a vision that reaches beyond 'home base' and extends to the remotest areas of the world."

"That's what salvation and holiness of heart and life does," Nancy answered. "It takes selfishness away and gives you a vision of others' needs. And now, my folks informed me, it's time for a break; the ice cream's set to perfection and the still-warm cakes are tempting us to taste of their rich, moist goodness. Anybody hungry?" she asked, smiling. "We can finish another night, God willing, if we don't get it all done tonight."

"The more nights the better!" Dale remarked, starting up the stairs, singing lustily, "Forward With God."

The others, joining in the singing, followed Dale to the kitchen. Nancy, with bowed head, thanked God for the privilege of serving others.

"Who says packing boxes is boring?" Kathleen whispered in her ear. "I love it!"

"So do I," came Nancy's emphatic reply, "especially when I think of all the joy those clothes will bring to others."

"Gifts of love," Kathleen said softly, her gray-green eyes dreamy looking. Nancy nodded sweetly in understanding.

* * * * * * *
THE END