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Circle 126 on card or www.oners.ims.ca/2086-126

## president's message (cont'd)

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7) "We have some things for you," said my friend as he went to the car and started bringing in the brown grocer's bags and packages. I helped him.

The man and his wife were absolutely speechless. They stood motionless and still a little cautious as they strained to understand what was happening here in this quiet little shack in the far corner of a field.

And then my friend said, "Where are the girls?"

With that, the woman went to the far side of the room and pushed open a make-shift door that was already ajar. "Girls," she said softly, "wake up, girls. Wake up. Santa Claus has been here!"

When the woman moved the lamp, now we could see two tiny figures huddled beneath another quilt in a little crib made of two-by-fours and scrap plywood.

Slowly, two curly heads popped out. There were twin girls about three or four years old. They had kept warm by sleeping in their dresses and long stockings. Now they smiled as they climbed out of the crib and stood up.

My friend had filled the small table with groceries, fruit and bread. He had a dress for the woman, a shirt and work slacks for the man. He

handed candy and toys to the twins, a doll for each of them. And they squealed with delight.

The man and his wife had now recovered from the shock. They were so pleased and happy. And they had questions. Who sent these? And why?

My friend explained they were gifts from the people in town. They were Christmas gifts. The man had explained they had gone to bed totally defeated because they could provide nothing for Christmas.

The curly-headed girls had filled their mouths with candy, and they were tearing into the cardboard boxes that contained their toys. Affectionately they fondled the dolls.

The woman searched for some way to reciprocate. She looked around the room and it was bare. There was nothing to offer. And she said, "Girls, sing 'Silent Night.'"

And those tiny girls stood there in that shack, and with the moonlight shedding beams across their faces, they sang the sweetest rendition of that Christmas hymn I have ever heard.

They all waved from the door as we drove away, heading back to town, and our homes and Christmas. They had given me the most memorable Christmas of my lifetime.

Merry Christmas!

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