

Pattern of Love

by Jack Smith

I didn't question Timmy, age nine, or his seven-year old brother Billy about the brown wrapping paper they passed back and forth between them as we visited each store.

Every year at Christmas time, our Service Club takes the children from poor families in our town on a personally conducted shopping tour. I was assigned Timmy and Billy, whose father was out of work. After giving them the allotted \$4.00 each, we began our trip. At different stores I made suggestions, but always their answer was a solemn shake of the head, no. Finally, I asked, "Where would you suggest we look?"

"Could we go to a shoe store, Sir?" answered Timmy. "We'd like a pair of shoes for our daddy so he can go to work."

In the shoe store the clerk asked what the boys wanted. Out came the brown paper. "We want a pair of work shoes to fit this foot," they said.

Billy explained that it was a pattern of their daddy's foot. They had drawn it while he was asleep in a chair.

The clerk held the paper against a measuring stick, then walked away. Soon he came with an open box. "Will these do?" he asked.

Timmy and Billy handled the shoes with great eagerness. "How much do they cost?" asked Billy.

Then Timmy saw the price on the box. "They're \$16.95," he said in dismay. "We only have \$8.00."

I looked at the clerk and he cleared his throat. "That's the regular price," he said, "but they're on sale for \$3.98 today only."

Then with shoes happily in hand the boys bought gifts for their mother and two little sisters. Not once did they think of themselves.

The day after Christmas the boy's father stopped me on the street. The new shoes were on his feet, gratitude was in his eyes. "I just thank Jesus for people who care," he said.

"And I thank Jesus for your two sons." I replied. "They taught me more about Christmas in one evening than I had learned in a lifetime."