

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

A generous man

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

"We really need money," Joanna reported. "We cannot meet the community's expenses this month."

The other Christians looked at one another sadly. "What will we do?" Samuel asked. "We already are sharing almost everything we earn."

The meeting went on late into the night. The Christians in the city of Jerusalem were poor. Many were unemployed. Others earned very low wages.

They did all they could to help each other. Those who worked gave their wages to the community. They shared their food. Those with houses shared them with those who had none. But they still had a hard time.

Barnabas listened to Joanna's report. He thought to himself, "I'm already sharing my house and my money. What more can I give? All my wife and I own now is our little farm."

The next morning Barnabas went out and sold his farm. Then he brought money to the leaders of the community. "Here is money from the sale of my farm," he said. "Share it with the community."

"You are a generous man," they said. "God will bless you in return."

Barnabas soon became a leader of the community of Christians in Jerusalem. About that time a famous enemy of the Christians, a man named Paul, became a follower of Jesus.

Paul came to Jerusalem. But the Christians were afraid of him. They knew how he once arrested

Christians and put them in jail.

These Christians were not sure they could trust Paul. They could not believe he had become a Christian.

Barnabas showed his generosity again. He opened his heart to Paul. He trusted Paul and believed Paul was a friend of Jesus.

"Paul is my friend," Barnabas told the Christians of Jerusalem. "I believe he has changed his life. He is now one of us. We should treat him like a friend."

So the Christian community welcomed Paul because of Barnabas. "You have a large heart, Barnabas," Joanna said. "You are a generous man."

Paul and Barnabas became very good friends. They were sad that the Christians were still poor. They had nothing more to give them.

So they went to other towns and cities to beg for money.

"Your Christian brothers and sisters in Jerusalem are poor," they told Christians in the city of Antioch. "They share all they have but they still need help."

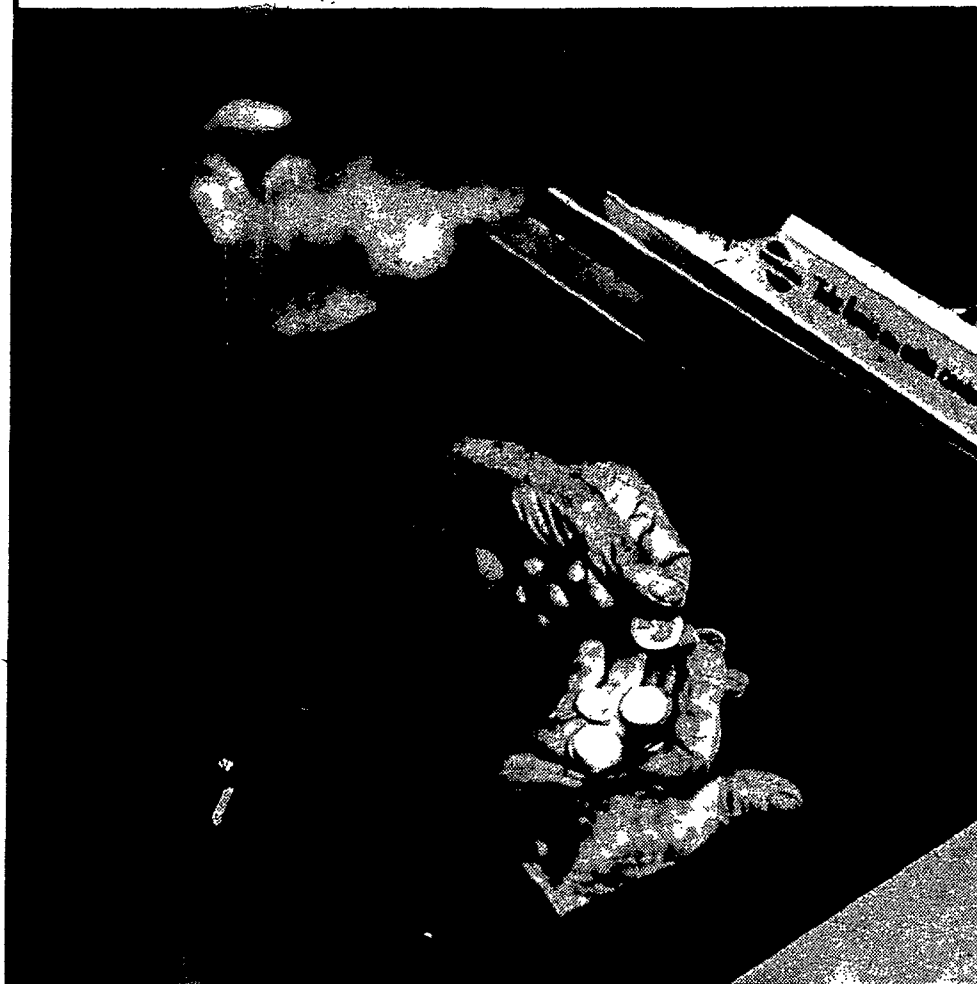
Barnabas and Paul took up a collection. They took the money back to the Christians in Jerusalem and gave them all of it.

"Thank you," the leaders of the community said to Barnabas and Paul. "Our brother and sister Christians have been very generous. And so have you in collecting money for us."

Story hour biblical quotes — this week from Acts 4:36-37; 9:23-30 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)

Barnabas sold everything he had and gave the money to his friends. He even went to other towns to beg for money. Barnabas knew he had to share everything.



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HOW ABOUT YOU?

- Think of a time when you didn't have enough money to buy something. How would you feel if your friends pooled their money to help you out?
- Why did Barnabas sell his farm? How did his friends respond to his generous action?
- Barnabas went out of his way to show that Paul was his friend. What did he do?

The Reading Corner:

The story of "Tico and the Golden Wings," by Leo Lionni tells of Tico, a little bird who doesn't have wings like other birds. Then, through wishing very hard, he receives wonderful, shimmering gold wings. Just as wonderfully he gives his golden wings away to others who are poor.

All of us want to have the things we really need. Yet many children and adults do not have enough food or clothing, or a decent place to live. This could change if everyone were very generous.

There is a second miracle in the story about Tico. For what happens to Tico because he is generous and loving is a miracle in itself. (Pinwheel Books, Knopf-Pantheon, 201 E. 50th St., New York, N.Y. 1964. Paperback. \$1.25.)



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