

Skipizane Gave What She Had

A lot of people probably would have called me poor while I was growing up as a barefoot missionary kid (MK) in Swaziland. My missionary parents didn't make a lot of money, and most of my clothes were LINKS donations.

My friend Skipizane, though, was really poor. She had one ragged dress and one pair of shoes. No toys. Not even a real family; because her father, in desperation to keep her from starving, gave Skipizane to the local Nazarene pastor's family. She helped with their household chores, and they fed her and sent her to school. Skipizane became a Christian while living with the pastor's family.

One day Skipizane was in town and saw her real dad. In a burst of fatherly love, he gave her a coin worth about 10 cents in American money. She was so excited; it was more money than she had ever had in her whole life! We dreamed all week about what she could buy with her money on her next trip to town. Skipizane was a good friend, and I knew she would share her bounty with me.

That Sunday the church had an Easter Offering for world evangelism. The pastor implored the people to compassionately reach others with the gospel of Christ. I watched in disbelief as my friend Skipizane took her coin out of her torn pocket and gave all she had.

That act of genuine unselfishness changed my life. Skipizane's compassion for the lost stirred in me a yearning for my life to look like Jesus in such an evident way. There have been times in my life when I have felt God was asking too much of me—whether in time, or finances, or commitment. And then I have remembered Skipizane, who gave her all.

The story doesn't end there. Part of that small offering that Sunday was used to purchase some Christian pamphlets. Ladies of the church took the materials and went into the surrounding villages and homes to share the Gospel. One morning they spoke to a woman about Christ. She began weeping uncontrollably. She ran back into her hut and pulled a long knife from the rafters. She said, "Tonight I was going to murder the man who killed my husband. God sent you to me to save me from committing this act." She was saved that day—from committing murder, an act of brutal revenge, a lifetime of regret and bitterness, an eternity in hell. She later became an active leader in the Nazarene church in Swaziland.

All because my friend Skipizane gave what she had.

WEF Offering idea to Accompany This Story: For each offering holder, cut two pieces of construction paper in the shape of the back pocket of a pair of jeans or pants. Put Faith Promise commitment slips or pieces of paper with your church's offering goal inside the pockets. Challenge the congregation with the following question: What's in *your* pocket? Place your Faith Promise commitment or your offering in the pocket and bring the pocket to church on *(date)*.

Theme Ideas for the Day of the Offering or for Faith Promise:

World evangelism. Because one person's gift can give another person life.

World evangelism. Individuals transformed in the name of Jesus.

World evangelism. A pocketful of hope.

Ellen Gailey Decker
Dover, Pennsylvania

