

Pies 'n Puddles

by Gramps Curtis

The monstrous map covered most of a wall in Lisa's bedroom. A nearby bulletin board held several colorful brochures and flyers of every description and many continents. The shelf on the opposite wall held ribbons of merit in food preparation and other school events. A picture frame displayed a newspaper clipping showing Lisa accepting a letter of commendation from a city official. It was for humanitarian efforts in a nearby storm-damaged rural area.

Lisa couldn't count the number of times she'd stood in front of that map and with her finger traced the shoreline of each continent visualizing herself in that area building schools or teaching in them. She asked herself if there was some very special talent inside just busting to make itself known in really important ways. Would her work be so crucial that her every waking hour was spent in some quest that no one else dare to attempt?

During those dark bedroom moments when only God could see, the blanket became a handkerchief for blotting away an ocean of tears. Those are the fearful tears that may tell us God has already shelved us right next to long-ago ribbons and trophies. Is this what is to become of the bright-eyed baby girl that took her first breath 21 years and a month ago? In Lisa's heart of hearts she felt her destiny was to stake her claim on the future in one of those far away lands doing any of a number of things.

She realized she'd made a mistake going to the library that day. The library maps and pictures showed people that needed to be taught how to prepare and safely store food. Others begged for someone to come and dig a water well for their village. Every time Lisa would search out where she could do the most good for the planet, her blanket had to blot another ocean of tears.

Only 3 blocks away from the library on her way home she spied a little girl with matted hair and a soiled dress that looked like it had tangled with a cranky cat. Miss Matted Hair sat on the curb by herself with no shoes or socks anywhere to be seen. The

little ragamuffin propped her chin on her knees and stared at the puddle just a few steps in front of her.

Lisa wasn't sure why she did it, but she took a seat on the curb by the little girl and began staring at the puddle too. A few short moments later, Lisa said, "My name's Lisa. Have you ever danced in a water puddle before?" She waited for a little girl answer but got none. The little ragamuffin took her hand and touched some frilly trim on Lisa's dress with such tenderness she must have thought it was a glass cloud. Her hands returned to her soiled lap as her stare returned to the puddle.

Without warning Lisa stood to her feet. She pulled the powder blue ribbon from her own hair and tied it in the little ragamuffin's hair. Not waiting for any comment or such, she took both of the little girl's hands and lifted her to her feet. "Come on. I'll show you how to puddle dance. It's loads more fun when you dance with a friend." With her right hand the little one felt the new ribbon in her hair and then sprouted a cautious smile. The two girls waded in the puddle, then splashed in the puddle, and even danced.

The little one asked Lisa, "Do you know how to cook? I mean, do you know how to make a pie?" Lisa thought about all the different fruit pies she'd made and the one that got her a second place ribbon. "Miss Lisa, I'd sure love it if you'd make a mud pie with me. Would ya? Huh?"

As the two cooks each made their own chocolate looking mud pies there were smiles shared and even a hug or two. Lisa looked close at the little one's pie and saw the letters LISA written on the pie. Lisa asked, "Why have you written my name on your pie?" In a little girl's sweet tone was heard, "Oh. My name is Lisa too. This pie with my name on it is for Jesus. He gets my pie 'cuz he sent you to me and taught me how to puddle dance and cook pies."

That night Lisa turned out the light and pulled up that blanket full of tears, blotting some more. In God's infinite wisdom and the leading of a little child, Lisa learned that puddles come before oceans. But more important is that before puddles come tears.