

\$1, and a Visit with Reagan

Peggy Noonan, speech writer for President Ronald Reagan, related a story about Frances Green, an 83-year-old woman who lived by herself on Social Security in a town just outside of San Francisco.

Green was very poor, but for eight years she had been sending \$1 a year to the Republican National Convention. One day, she got a fundraising letter from the RNC, inviting the recipient to come to the White House to meet President Reagan. She never noticed the little RSVP card that suggested a positive reply that needed to be accompanied by a generous donation. She thought she had been invited because they appreciated her dollar-a-year support.

Green scraped up every extra cent she had and took a four-day train ride across America. Unable to afford a sleeper, she slept sitting up in the coach.

Finally, this little elderly woman with white hair, white stockings, an old hat with white netting, and an all-white dress arrived at the White House. When she walked up to the entrance where the grand event was to be held, she gave her name to the guard. He informed Green that her name was not on the list, and she could not go in.

A Ford Motor company executive who was standing in line behind Green watched and listened to the scenario. Realizing something was wrong, he pulled Green aside and got her story. He asked her to return the next day at 9 a.m., and she agreed. The Ford executive then made contact with Anne Higgins, a presidential aide, and got clearance to give Green a tour of the White House and, if possible, be introduced to the president.

The next day was anything but calm and easy at the White House. Ed Meese had just resigned as U.S. attorney general, and there had been a military uprising abroad. President Reagan was in and out of high-level secret sessions. Nevertheless, Frances Green showed up right on time with full expectation and enthusiasm. An executive met her and gave her a personal tour of the White House, then quietly led her to the Oval Office. Members of the National Security Council came in and out while high-ranking generals were coming and going.

President Reagan glanced out of the office and saw Green, patiently waiting. With a smile, he motioned for her to come into the office. As she entered, the president rose from his desk, and invited her to sit down. They talked about her town and family and California. The president of the United States – the most powerful man in the world – and the White House staff took time out of a very busy day to properly greet Frances Green.

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The point of the story: Every person is important. Frances Green's gift – small as it was – was more sacrificial than the donations of thousands of dollars by many others. In the biblical story of the widow's mite, Jesus explained that the small sacrifices of the poor mean more to God than the extravagant, but proportionately lesser, donations of the rich.

Investments in God's kingdom come in a variety of ways, including time, energy, stewardship of talents, and compassion expended on others.

Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood (Mark 12:43-44 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter

