

# IT DIDN'T HAPPEN IN AN ADVENTIST CHURCH ... BUT IT COULD HAVE

Jack Harris, Contributing Editor

He came to church for the first time last Wednesday. He was in his mid-70's with thinning gray hair and he was wearing a brown suit.

Many times before we had invited him to church. Christian friends had talked to him about the Lord and invited him to church. He had always been a well respected and honest man with many fine characteristics. But he had never to anyone's knowledge, accepted Christ as his Savior.

Someone had asked him once if he had ever been to a church. He hesitated and then with a bitter sweet smile playing around the corner of his lips, he told of a childhood experience . It went like this:

"I was one of many children in an impoverished family. My parents struggled constantly for enough food to keep us alive. There wasn't much money left after food demands to spend on clothes. So we wore only "hand me down" necessities. But one day some kind neighbors invited us to church. I found the Sunday School class to be exciting. I had never heard such songs and stories about the Bible before and I was thrilled. I had never even heard anyone read from the Bible until that day and I couldn't get enough of it. I actually was sorry when the program was over and it was time to go home.

As I walked out the door the Sunday

School teacher came over to me and put her hand on my shoulder and leaning down said, " Son, please don't come again dressed as you are. We want to look our best when we come to church don't we?" "Instantly I was ashamed and embarrassed. I couldn't bring myself to tell her it was all I had to wear. I just stood in my multi-patched overalls and bare feet and when she asked me not to come again, I just looked down and quietly said, No ma'am, I won't ever come again, ever. And I never did."

There must have been other factors to have hardened him so, but his experience formed a significant part of his life. Doubtless the teacher meant well and we all agree that when we come to church we ought to look our best, but we don't always know the facts do we? So what if that Sunday School teacher had put her hand on his shoulder and said, " We are so happy to have you with us today. Please come as often as you can and come to my class again next week, can you do that?" But unfortunately it didn't happen that way.

So he came to the church last Wednesday. He looked so nice in his new brown suit, just lying there so peacefully in his casket. He was that little boy of long ago, and one could almost hear him say, "No Ma'am, I won't ever come again, ever!" .... And we weep just thinking about it don't we? "How long will ye break me in pieces with words?" Job 19:2

*Reflections*  
A devotional for members of the SDA Church.



## NEWS NOTES

### FROM MORT

Contributing Reporter: Mort Juberg

**Silver Spring, Md** ~ With some 2.600 people joining the Adventist Church each day, this means rapid growth and much change, according to Lowell Cooper, a vice president of the General Conference. He said the church has an established presence in 203 of 228 countries. One-third of the entire church membership is in Africa, another one-third in Central and South America, and 19 percent in Asia. He said one of the major problems facing the church is resource distribution.

**Cap-Haitien, Haiti** ~ About 5,000 church members marched through the streets of this large city on a recent Sabbath. They waved flags and banners and passed out literature. The occasion was the highlight of an annual five-day convention attended by more than 600 pastors and lay preachers.

**Silver Spring, Md** ~ The church in Africa is working to solve the problem of financing the construction of church buildings to keep up with rapid membership growth. Explaining a program called "Roofs for Africa," John Wilkins, project coordinator, says the costliest part of construction is the roof. Under the program members buy the land, make brick or stone to build the walls and gather wood for the roof trusses. Then African church members pay for the roof. Wilkins says a small congregation can erect a building to

house four to five thousand but in two years it will be full. There are more than 4.2 million Adventists worshipping in some 16,000 congregations throughout the African continent.

**Luanda, Angola** ~ More than 20,000 Adventists from central Angola gathered in the city of Huambo to meet with GC President Jan Paulsen and Matthew Bediako, executive secretary. Members marked the end of 25 years of civil war in the country. Many of the churches, schools and other buildings were destroyed in the years of conflict. This was the first visit of a GC president to the country in more than three decades.

**Belgrade Serbia** ~ The physical condition of Pastor Josip Tikvicki, who was beaten by three assailants, has worsened. The beating occurred in front of his church in Zrenjanin, 45 miles from Belgrade. In the last few weeks 10 Adventist churches have been targeted by what is viewed as an "orchestrated campaign against a religious minority" in a predominantly Orthodox country, church officials say.

**Suva, Fiji** ~ Using a mixture of Christian music styles, a new Adventist radio station in Suva is attracting listeners and interest. The station airs more than 22 news bulletins from midnight to midday each weekday, more than any other station in the city. A staff of 20, including volunteers, man the station

*Source: Adventist News Network*

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June 2003

# Bulletin Board

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June 27, 2003

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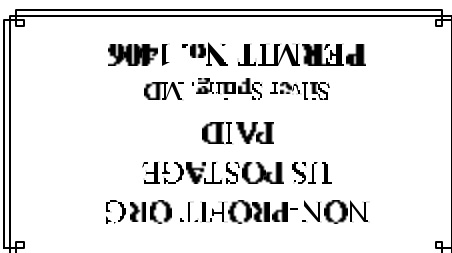
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