

The Church was too crowded for a little girl on Christmas Sunday

*A true story as told by
Jim Groen, President, Global Connection International*

For our friends of the ministry

On Christmas morning a little girl stood near a small church from which she had been turned away because it was 'too crowded.'

***Can't go to Sunday School on Christmas Day,
she sobbed to the pastor as he walked by.***

Seeing her shabby, unkempt appearance, the pastor guessed the reason and, taking her by the hand, took her inside and found a place for her in the Sunday School class. The little girl was so happy that they found room for her, and she went to bed Christmas night but couldn't sleep. She was thinking of the children who have no place to worship Jesus.

Within a year, this child lay dead in one of the poor tenement buildings. Her parents called for the kindhearted pastor who had befriended their daughter to handle the final arrangements.

*As her poor little body was being moved, a worn and crumpled red purse was found which seemed to have been rummaged from some trash dump. Inside was found 57 cents and a note, scribbled in childish handwriting which read: **'This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday School.'***

Before her death she had saved for this offering of love.

When the pastor tearfully read that note, he knew instantly what he would do. Carrying the note and the cracked, red pocketbook to the pulpit, he told the story of her unselfish love and devotion. He challenged his deacons to get busy and raise enough money for the larger building.

But...the story does not end there...

A newspaper learned of the story and published it. It was read by a wealthy realtor who offered them a parcel of land worth many thousands of dollars.

When told that the church could not pay so much, he offered to sell it to the little church for 57 cents.

Church members made large donations. Checks came from far and wide. Within a short time the little girl's gift had increased to \$250,000.00 -- a huge sum for that time (near the turn of the 1900's). Her unselfish love had paid large dividends.

When you are in the city of Philadelphia, look up Temple Baptist Church, with a seating capacity of 3,300. And be sure to visit Temple University, where thousands of students are educated.

Have a look, too, at a **Sunday School building** which houses hundreds of beautiful children, built so that no child in the area will ever need to be left outside during Sunday School time.

In one of the rooms of this building may be seen the picture of the sweet face of the little girl whose 57 cents, so sacrificially saved, made such remarkable history. Alongside of it is a portrait of her kind pastor, Dr. Russell H. Conwell, author of the book, 'Acres of Diamonds.'

This is a true story, which goes to show **WHAT GOD CAN DO WITH 57 CENTS.**

I share this story because the donations of the GCI family -- small or large -- are helping us experience miracles in the lives of poor and needy people in each of the nations where our staff is at work. So, as we approach the 'Christmas Season', we want to express our gratitude for all you are helping us to accomplish.

This letter is also a reminder that we need a Miracle to close out 2009 with all of our obligations met. Funds for our work in Tanzania, Rwanda, Cuba, North Korea, Cambodia, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Honduras are needed.

As we prepare to step into a new year we do so with a measure of concern about just how our ministry will be impacted by the economic conditions. But the **Miracle of Christmas** is a powerful reminder that Christ was sent to the world as God's rescue plan for mankind. And, we have been commissioned by Christ to be His Light to people lost in the darkness.

So, please help us by **lighting a candle of help and hope** for many who are trapped in the dark.

Anything you can do to help us by year's end will be very encouraging.

Dotti joins with me to send you our warmest best wishes during the **Advent Season and for the New Year ahead.**

Yours for the cause that counts,



Jim and Dotti Groen

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