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Meet Mr. Harold Jackson

by Fred Mancewicz

A life story of a minister boring??? Not in the case of Mr. Jackson! His life prior to his conversion was as eventful as it was after his calling into God's Church; but the latter events were indeed more fruitful and satisfying.

It all began in 1911 in Des Moines, Iowa. At the state capitol his father was a part time clerk who boasted he would never wear overalls to make a living. Mr. Herbert Armstrong was born in the same city. However, he was not acquainted with the Jacksons at that time. Mr. Jackson's mother died when he was just 7 years old and for a time he lived in an orphanage until an aunt took him in.

This young man had musical talent — at the age of 3 he began playing the drums, piano at 8 years and at 14 years he added the saxophone and clarinet. In high school he added to his ability the tuba and the string bass violin. His ability earned him the privilege to play for two summers in the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra.

His maternal grandparents worked as domestics providing the inherent cultural refinement carried through his family. This was a great asset for at the youthful age of 14 years he formed his own 16 piece band that he led on tour through the South.

Upon returning to Des Moines in 1928, he joined a semi-pro basketball team and toured a five state area. This team used many tricky crowd pleasing antics and were known as the "Harlem Clowns."

In 1927 Mr. Jackson married, and in subsequent years, had two children. Rather than be a musician on the road, he earned his livelihood as a painting contractor and supplemented his income in the earlier years by playing nights and weekends with a small band "combo."

In 1932 he became an apprentice mortician. When the owner of the funeral home died he became a licensed mortician and worked nights embalming bodies. He got \$5.00 for each one and sometimes did several a night. Whatever the method he used to make a living, he always did it well.

Upon being encouraged by a Seventh Day Adventist friend, it was in 1933 that Mr. Jackson made an intensive study into the Bible about the Sabbath and the true name of God's Church. After being baptized and keeping the Sabbath for 5 years, Mr. Jackson later moved to San Diego, California. Though he looked intensively he could not find a Sabbath-keeping Church of God in California. Years later Mrs. Jackson happened to catch the World Tomorrow Broadcast. After only hearing three broadcasts, they drove to Pasadena where they met Mr. Herbert Armstrong and received his personal tour of the college.

They were among the original church members when the San Diego Church was formed in August of 1952. He later became the first [black] Deacon, being ordained in 1957. It was November 21, 1959 that Mr. Jackson was summoned to Pasadena to be ordained as a local elder by the hands of Mr. Herbert Armstrong. It was by the fruits he bore that in April of 1963 Mr. Jackson was ordained to the rank of full preaching elder.

Mr. Jackson lives in Chicago but is expanding his itinerary to spend at least one week of each month in other Church areas. He emphasized that his job is to assist in the work among the [black] brethren serving under Mr. Dean Blackwell, Evangelist, and as racial tension mounts he concluded the urgent need is for more of the [black] brethren to serve in the ministry.