

A COLLECTION OF
STORIES
FROM
WEST AFRICA

Compiled and Illustrated by
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THE DEVIL GOES TO CHURCH



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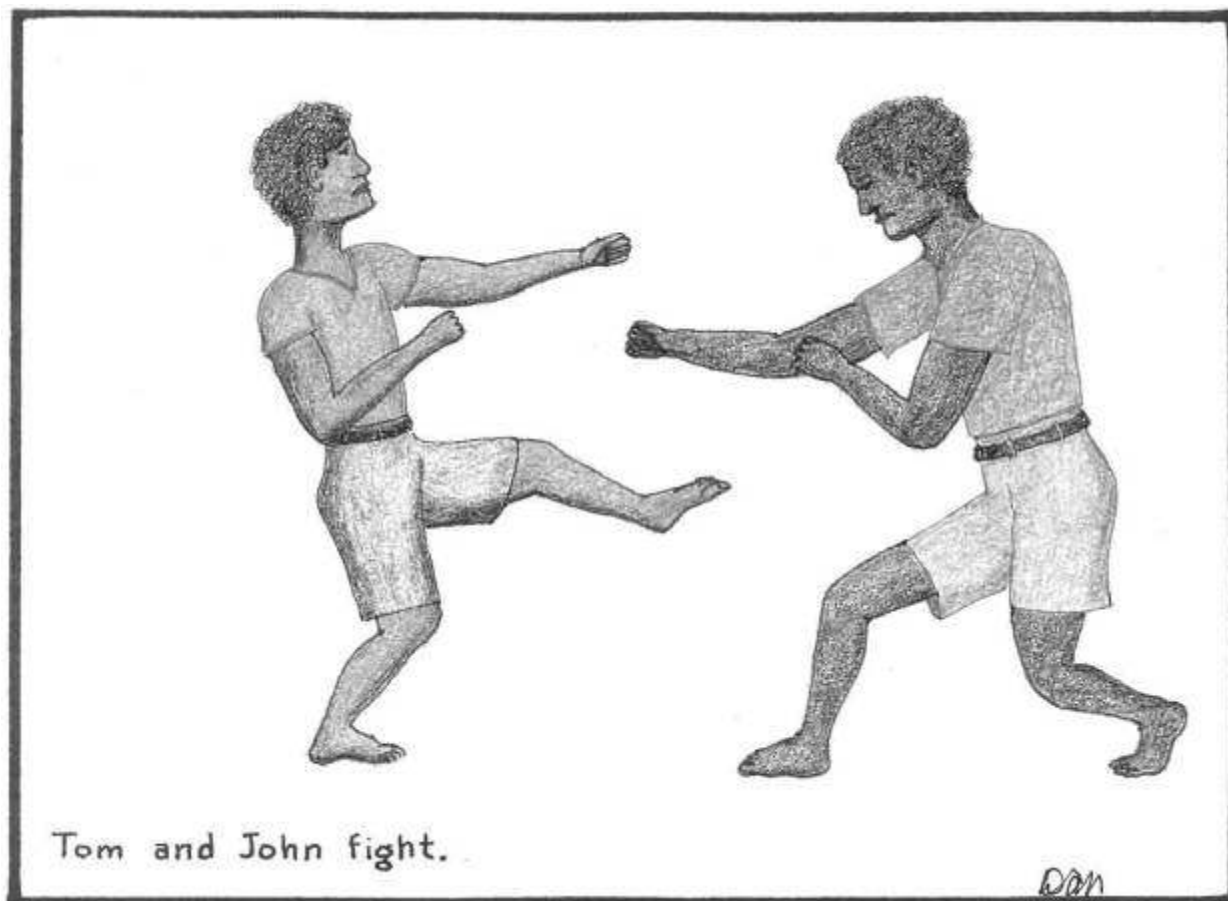
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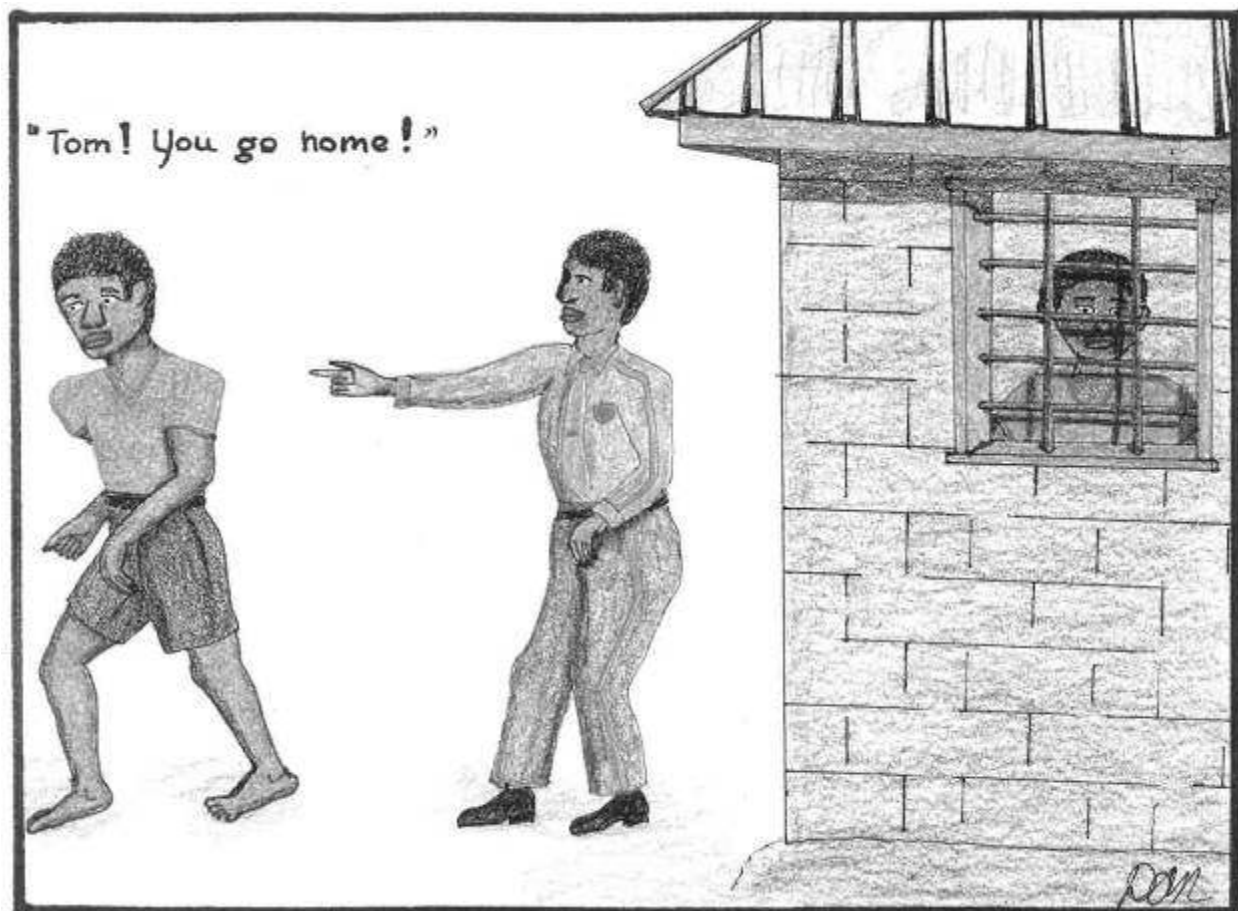


THE DEVIL GOES TO CHURCH*

Note to reader: Words and phrases typical of West Africa are retained and indicated by italics.

Tom and John were usually good friends, but when they got drunk they could fight *plenty-o*. They could fight with each other or with anyone who might try to interfere. They would usually go to drink together on pay day. Then one or the other or both would be put in jail because of *fighting business*.

One pay day, after drinking plenty, they had one very big fight. Anyone who tried to stop them was knocked

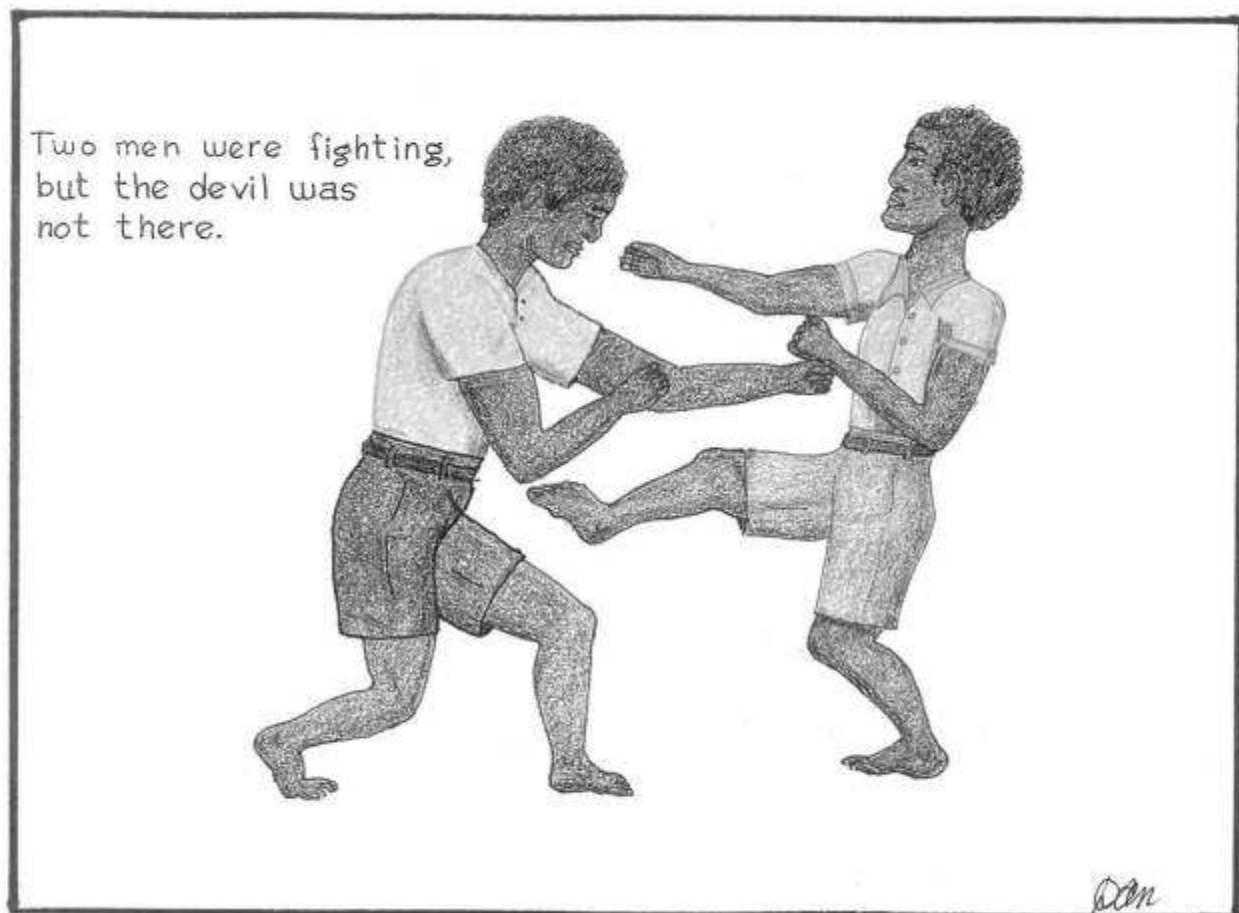


down. Many policemen came. They put John in jail and made Tom go home.

While he was in jail, John thought and thought about his life. He decided that there was no profit in living this way. John decided that when he got out of jail he would go to church and look for God.

It was on a Sunday morning when John was let out of the jail. He soon met Tom who said, "Come, let us go and look for some fun."

John answered, "No, Tom, there is no profit in going that way. I am going to the church to look for God."

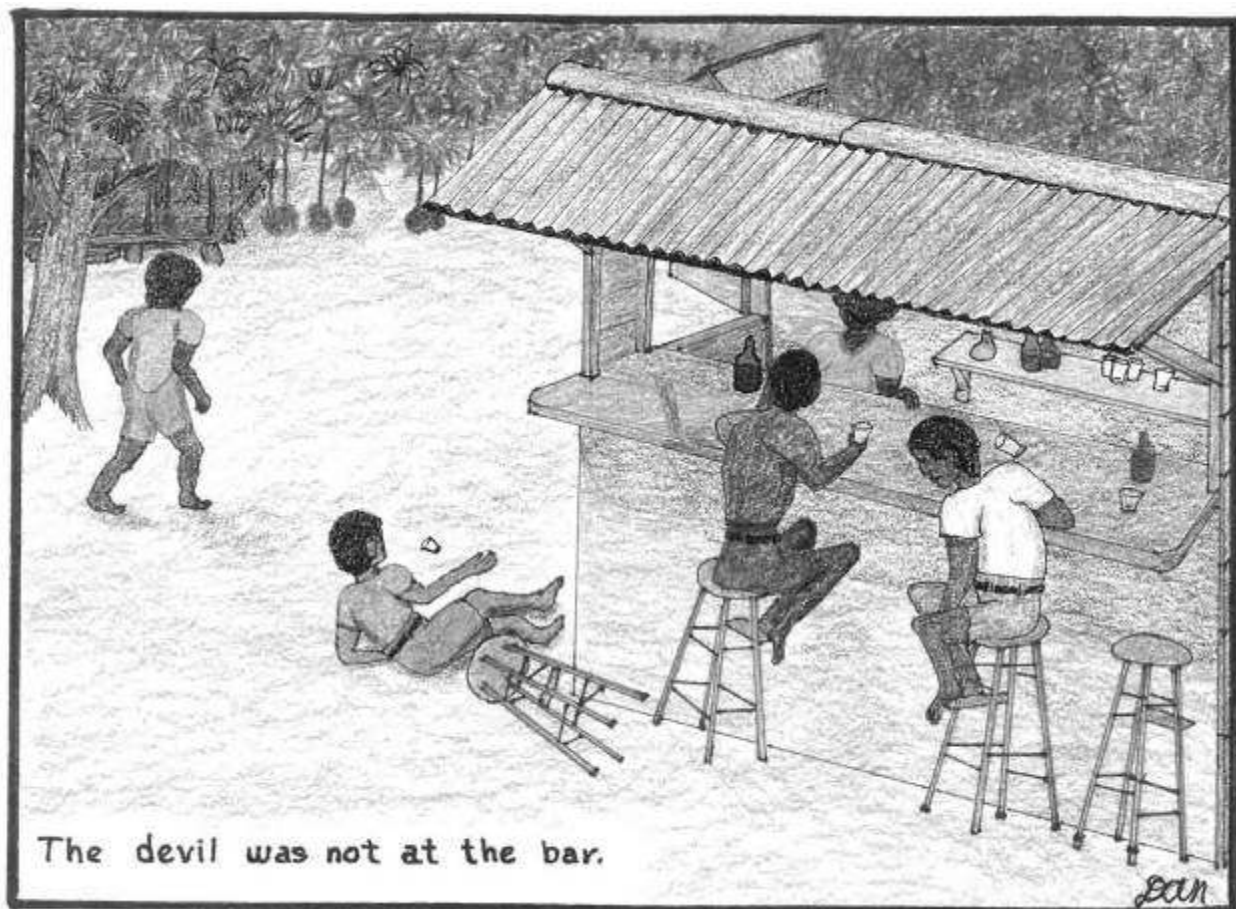


Now Tom was angry when he heard John say that he was going to look for God, so he said, "If you are going to church to look for God, I am going to go about and try to find the devil."

So, while John went to church to look for God, Tom went around the rest of the town looking for the devil.

Tom saw two men fighting. "Aha, here is where I'll find the devil. Surely he will be here where these two men are fighting."

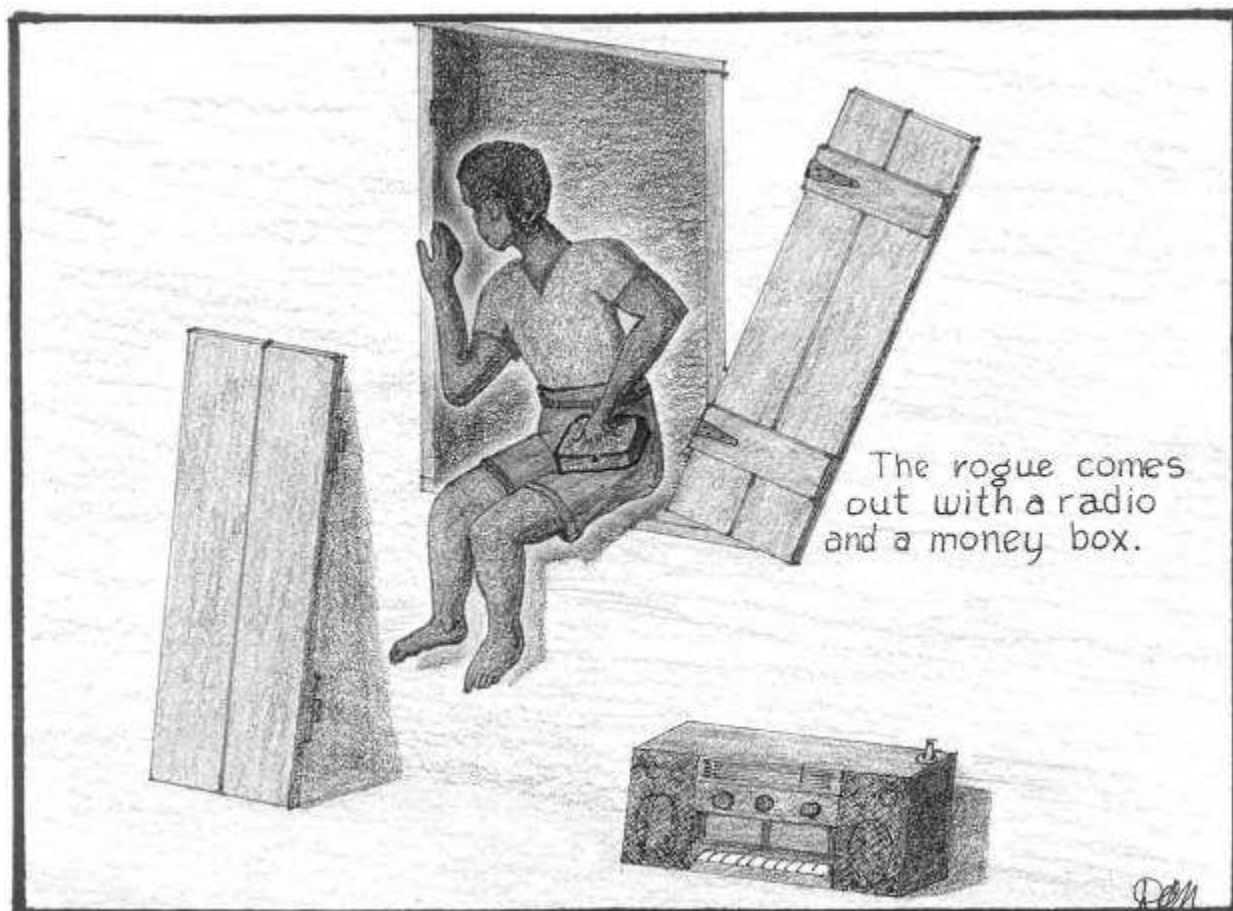
Tom went close to them to watch. They beat on each other. They kicked and cursed. They hit each other with stones. Tom did not find the devil there.



Tom walked on. Soon he heard *plenty noise*. Some people were making a big *palaver*. "Surely the devil will be here" he said to himself.

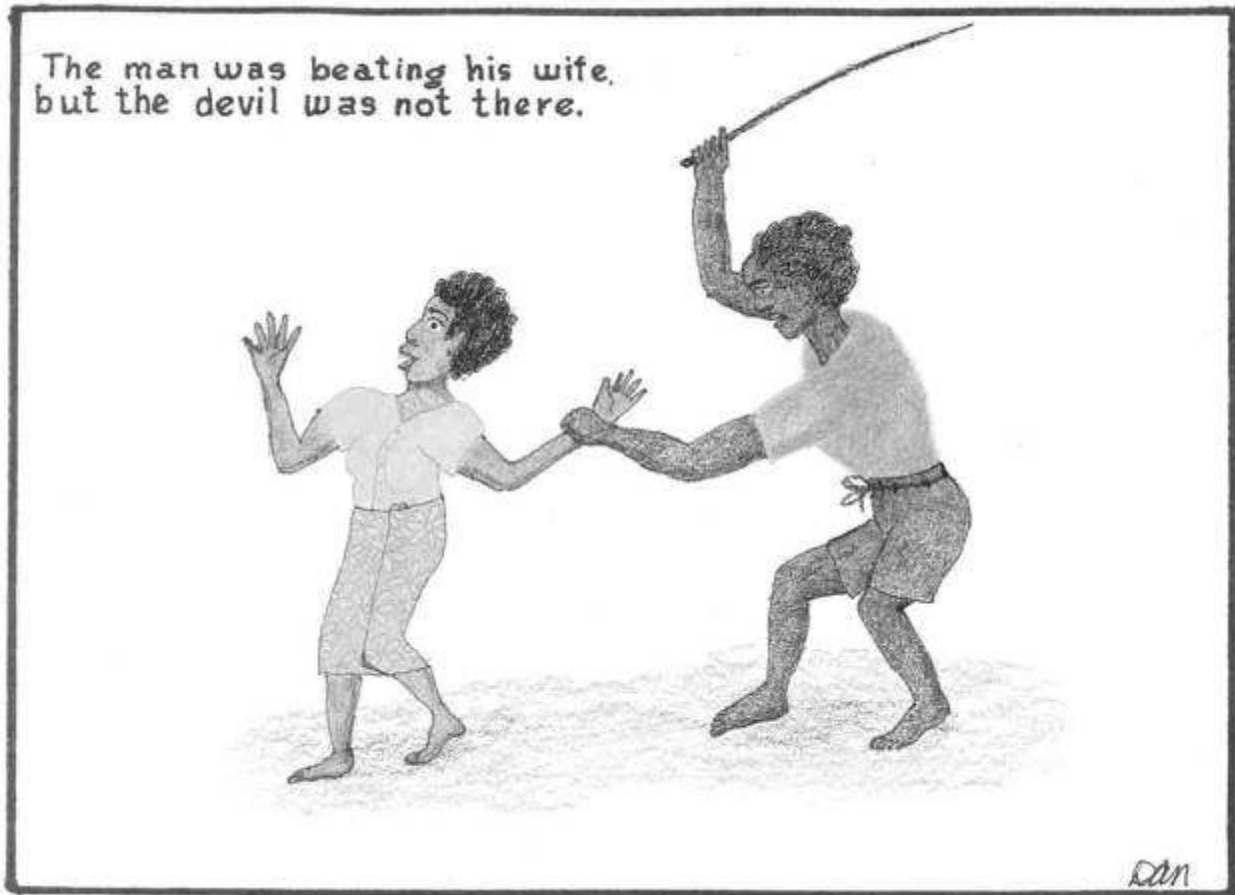
Tom hurried toward the noise. *Plenty* people were there. Some were yelling. Some were shaking their fists at each other. Some were hitting each other. Others just stood and watched. The *palaver* went on and on for a long time. But Tom did not see the devil there.

Again Tom walked on looking for the devil. He heard loud rock music. There was a bar. Some people were there drinking. Some were drunk. One man was *fini drunk* and was lying on the ground. Others were just



drunk enough to talk all kinds of foolish things. Some were cursing. There was lots of noise, but no devil.

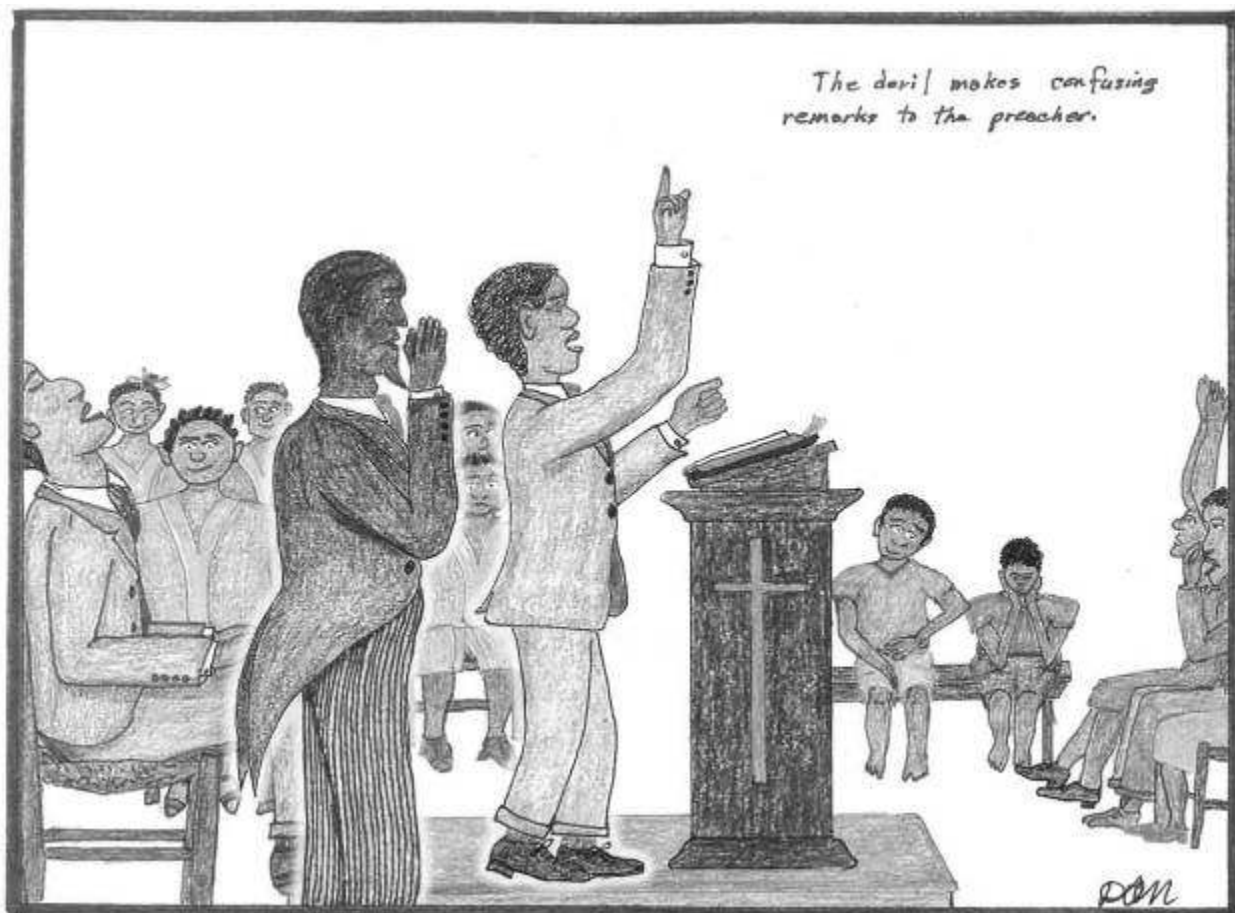
Tom went around behind some houses that were near the bush. A *rogue* (thief) was breaking a window to get into a house. Tom stayed very still where he could watch the *rogue* but the *rogue* could not easily see him. Tom was sure that the devil was not far away, but he could not see him. The *rogue* went in through the window. After a few minutes, the *rogue* came back to the window and looked around. No one was near that he could see. He came out of the window. He was carrying a fine radio and a box for keeping money. Still no devil. The *rogue*



looked carefully all around and then ran into the bush. Tom also looked all around but he did not see the devil.

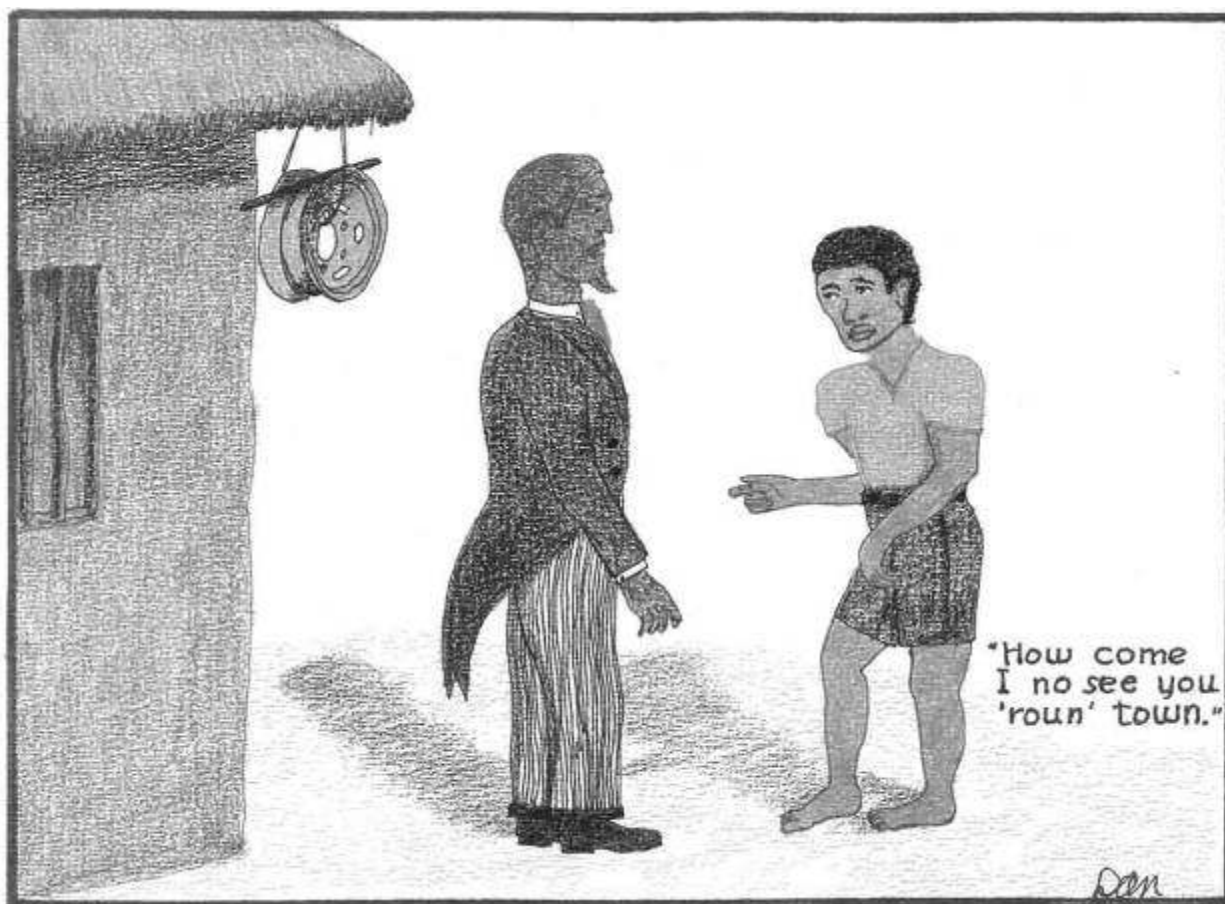
Then Tom said, "Well, I did not find the devil anywhere around town where people were fighting or palavering or drinking or stealing or doing many bad things. I think I will go on over to the church and see what John is doing. I will go and see what is going on in the church."

When Tom got to the church it was late. He went in and stood at the back. The preacher had started to preach. He saw John up front.



Tom looked all around. What do you know? There he saw the devil close beside the preacher. Sometimes the devil would whisper something in the preacher's ear. The devil pinched a baby so it would cry loudly and disturb the people who were listening. He sang softly to a man who was asleep so that he would stay asleep. The devil said something to some girls so they would giggle. He whispered to some boys so they would poke each other and talk. But mostly he listened very carefully to all that the preacher said. He would whisper to the preacher to distract him.

When the meeting was finished, Tom went to speak to the devil. "How come *you be here*? I have passed all



around the town. I *no see* you. People fight - I *no see* you. People palaver - I *no see* you. People drink - I *no see* you. People do *plenty bad thing* and I *no see* you. How come I *catch you to the church house*?"

The devil looked at Tom a long time and then said, "Those people out there are already doing what I want them to do. I do not need to *waste plenty time* there. But these people inside the church - they *no 'gree* for my way. So, I come here to try to disturb. An' I must know what the preacher can say so I can *catch it from the people's heart*. I must hear what the preacher can say about me, about God, about salvation. Then I can try to spoil it all."

Beware when you are tempted to talk, make noise or disturb a church meeting. You may be doing exactly what the devil wants you to do.

In the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23), Jesus speaks of the hard ground where the seed is quickly eaten up by the birds. He likens it to one who hears the Word of God but does not understand. In verse 19 He says, "...the devil comes and takes away that which was put in his heart ..."

Wherever the true Word of God is preached the devil will work to spoil it. The devil has some very good helpers. They are "The cares of this world" and the "lusts of the flesh". These also can take the Word of God from our hearts and minds. Beware when you hear God's true Word for the devil is right there to *catch it* from your heart.

*An illustrative story told by David Ricks of Kollimentown, Liberia in about 1987.

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