



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

---FEATURES

produced by Baptist Press

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October 1, 1974

Booze Had the Upper Hand 'Till Jesus Saved the Day'

74-54

By Steve Wall

LEON, Iowa (BP)--Baptist layman Loren Rumley drives an oil truck for the county near this small town of about 2,000 population.

He likes his work, says it isn't too hard and it feeds the family.

Rumley almost threw his life away with excessive drinking. But about two years ago, "some Baptist men started witnessin' to me, and I rededicated my life. My wife got saved and we started livin' for Jesus.

"Jesus sure knows what He's doin', 'cause we was on the verge of gettin' a divorce, and we told the Lord that if He'd put our marriage back together again, then we'd serve Jesus.

Before he "turned it all over to Jesus," Rumley recalled, "my drinkin' really caused a lot of problems. Well, it got so bad that some mornin's I would get up and just be afraid and ashamed to go back into town because I wouldn't even know what I had done the night before. But before night, I'd be back at the tavern doin' the same thing again.

"Sometimes I would drink with my buddies all night long and not even have any time to sleep. I would just go home and change clothes and head for work.

"My drinkin' really got bad just before I rededicated my life to Jesus," he recalled. "I even started carryin' a bottle on the job. Sometimes I almost couldn't get into the cab, and then I had trouble drivin' it. I never understood just why the boss didn't fire me. He sure had good reason. I guess it was the Lord and him knowin' that my family needed food.

"But there was weeks that my drinkin' bill got to be \$50 or more. That was before the Lord got ahold of me and my life changed. My whole family changed.

Because of his knowledge of just what goes on in the taverns he used to frequent and his acceptance there, Rumley now takes the message of Christ into those same establishments. But he never touches liquor anymore.

"I don't care about nothin', I guess. I just take my Bible with me and go right on in, and I just start tellin' people about Jesus.

On one occasion, Rumley went into a tavern where he did much of his drinking, "and the Lord just intervened," he recalled. "The man that owned the tavern just shut off the juke box and told us we could give our testimonies. And we just started preachin'."

Confident in his new-found faith in Jesus, Rumley started going on weekend witnessing trips to nearby towns.

"I remember on one trip we went to this little town. The preacher there was a nice guy, but he told us there wasn't no use in going to the tavern to witness. He said he had tried to reach those folks but they just did not want to listen.

"Well, we had almost finished on the street when we realized there was just one house between us and the tavern. So we witnessed at that house and we were right in front of the tavern trying to decide if we should go in.

"The Lord was workin' that day, 'cause a man was walkin' down the street on the other side. So we just went over and witnessed to him, and he got saved. That really made us happy and gave us enough strength to walk right into the tavern.

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Because of Rumley's interest in things of the Lord and church involvement, he is now the Sunday School superintendent at the First Baptist Church of Leon. He also drives one of the church's two buses.

Driving the oiler for the county gives Rumley a good bit of free time during the day.

Before his dramatic change, Rumley used to drink or sleep while waiting for the spreader to catch up. Now he studies his Sunday School lesson for the class he teaches or studies for a sermon on one of his witnessing trips. Once he spent the time preparing a testimony to give at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Recently, Glendon McCullough, executive director of the Brotherhood Commission, heard Rumley give his testimony at a Baptist Men's retreat.

McCullough asked Rumley to speak, along with Georgia Governor Jimmy Carter, during the Brotherhood Commission's annual report to the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas last June.

"I don't understand why I was asked, but I had to accept," Rumley recalled humbly. "It was a chance for me to share how the Lord changed my life."

The SBC messengers gave a standing ovation to Rumley's testimony, and many came away saying it was the highlight of the entire convention.

Rumley recalled: "There were 22,000 people there, and I believe I counted every one of them in the two minutes I was talkin'."

"And there was really some top ole boys there," Rumley added. "Why, those ole boys were better educated than me and held high positions. I still don't know why I should have been there."

After Rumley spoke that night, Evangelist Billy Graham, one of Rumley's heroes, made it a point to walk over and shake Rumley's hand and tell him how much his testimony had meant.

Rumley's speaking before the SBC has meant a lot to the people of Leon, Iowa, and his church too. One of Rumley's bosses asked him to speak to the Kiwanis Club, saying "If you can speak to all those Baptists, you can speak to the Kiwanis Club too."

One member of the church said Rumley's participation on the convention program has given the entire church a feeling of worth and importance.

Yet Rumley is still amazed that he was ever asked. "I didn't know what to say, except that I loved Jesus," he recalled. "I didn't care what they thought about me, I just wanted them to know what I thought about the Lord."

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

Adapted from the November, 1974, issue of World Mission Journal.

Southern Baptists Play
Major Role in ABS

10/1/74

By Jack U. Harwell

NEW YORK (BP)--When Southern Baptists and representatives of the American Bible Society (ABS) sit down to tally the points of contact between the two, the results are impressive.

Southern Baptists not only rank as the largest single denominational contributor to the ABS' widespread scripture distribution enterprise but use its services more than any other denomination.

Out of two billion scriptures of all types distributed by the ABS since its beginning in 1816, more than 18 million have been produced with some sort of Southern Baptist identification imprint for special use.

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That doesn't include uncounted others that Southern Baptist individuals, churches, conventions, associations and agencies have used in worldwide evangelistic and missions endeavors.

For the past 10 years, Southern Baptists have been the largest single denominational contributor to the ABS operational budget, which now totals \$12 million annually. Last year, Southern Baptists gave over \$253,000 through individuals, churches and agency budgets.

According to Edward Cunningham of Atlanta, ABS executive secretary for the Southern region of the USA, "Southern Baptists received many times over what they gave to the ABS."

Cunningham, one of three Southern Baptists on the Atlanta ABS administrative staff, was a pastor in Kentucky and director of mountain mission work for Kentucky Baptists before joining the ABS.

Through his contacts alone, the ABS has produced more than 75 scripture items specifically for Southern Baptist agencies, associations or state conventions.

The largest single order in ABS history came during the Crusade of the Americas when the Baptist General Convention of Texas ordered 1.2 million copies of Today's English Version (TEV), commonly known as Good News for Modern Man, New Testaments printed in English and Spanish.

"At least two million other TEV copies were provided by the ABS for other Baptist state conventions during the Crusade of the Americas," reports James Nettinga of the ABS headquarters at Bible House in New York.

"For many years, Southern Baptists have been almost totally dependent upon the ABS for scriptures used by the SBC Foreign Mission Board overseas," Cunningham said. "ABS is deeply grateful for this relationship. The Foreign Mission Board makes the largest financial allocation to ABS of any SBC agency."

In fact, in a sense, the Foreign Mission Board and the SBC Home Mission Board both played a key role in the production by the ABS of Good News for Modern Man, which, in 1971, became the largest seller in book publishing history with more than 45 million copies sold.

ABS officials relate that a letter in 1961 from Wendell Belew, director of the missions division of the Home Mission Board, sparked the idea for the Good News version when he asked if a New Testament translation could be prepared that would be understood by people with a fourth grade education.

As a result of Belew's letter, Robert G. Bratcher, a former Southern Baptist foreign missionary, headed a team of ABS translators which produced the Good News version in 1966. Another team headed by Bratcher is completing translation of the Old Testament in Today's English Version. The complete TEV Bible will be released by the ABS in 1976 as a "gift to America on its 200th birthday."

The ABS, Cunningham points out, has had a good working relationship with Southern Baptists in producing many special scripture pieces for special ministries.

Examples with the Home Mission Board include Bible packets for state park ministries, prison ministries, migrant workers, good will centers and "Campers on Mission," the board's work with family campsites.

For many years, ABS has produced special Bible portions to coincide with January Bible Study Week in the Southern Baptist Convention. Now it is giving major promotion to "Justice Now," a special edition of Hosea-Amos-Micah, which will be January Bible Study books in 1976.

"One of the most popular items in the ABS catalogue is 'Jesus,' the special book on the life and sayings of our Saviour produced at the request of National Student Ministries at the Baptist Sunday School Board and the Home Mission Board for use on college campuses," Cunningham says.

He points out that ABS has also produced a special edition of the Gospel of Mark for the

Woman's Missionary Union SBC auxiliary to be used with "coffee dialogues" which WMU sponsors.

In 1974, ABS is working with National Student Ministries in a major effort to get scriptures in the hands of every international student on every college campus in the nation.

Many ABS scripture projects have been completed in conjunction with state Baptist conventions and local associations and churches.

One of the biggest was the printing of one million copies of a tabloid edition of the Gospel of John for the Georgia Baptist Convention in 1972, when the convention was 150 years old.

The same edition was reprinted for Indiana Baptists, with a special cover designed for the Indianapolis 500 auto race. Over 100,000 copies were distributed to race fans.

Many Southern Baptist groups are now working with Cunningham and other ABS officials on special scripture items to be used in 1976, as part of the national bicentennial. The ABS, using a "Good News America" slogan, plans massive Bible distribution projects for the bicentennial.

In Mississippi, the ABS is working with Southern Baptists to place a Bible in every black home in 1975.

Cunningham helped Baptists in New Orleans to produce special Mardi Gras editions of Bible portions.

Miami Baptists produced an Orange Bowl edition, including lineups of football teams, and when the Super Bowl football game was played in Houston, Baptists and ABS distributed more than 200,000 evangelistic portions of scripture.

ABS also makes scriptures available to chaplains at military bases, hospitals, prisons and other places, usually without cost.

"By producing Bibles and scripture portions in such heavy volume, we can keep unit costs way down. We pass these savings on to Southern Baptists and to all other groups who purchase and distribute ABS scriptures," Cunningham explained.

"ABS hopes this happy relationship with Southern Baptists continues on into the future. Our common task of getting God's word into the hands of every man, in a language he can understand at a price he can afford to pay, calls for cooperation and creativity on the part of all concerned.

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to state Baptist editors.

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