

Jim Found New Spirit—Holy Spirit

By JAMES BUCKINGHAM

Jim is 69 years old. He had been drinking "hard" liquor at an alarming rate for 49 years. For several years he's been consuming at least a "fifth" a day — and that's a lot of drinking.

Physically it was killing him. Spiritually he was nearly dead.

JIM OWNS and runs a grocery store. Last year he re-hired an old drinking buddy, Jack. Jack was just coming off a drunk when he came back to work and accepted Joe's usual offer for a drink to "calm his nerves." But that was the last drink Jack took.

Something was happening in Jack's life. Day after day he reported for work sober. He consistently turned down Jim's offer for a drink from the bottle kept in the meat cooler. Jim found out Jack was going to church — regular. He sneered at him, ridiculed him, derided him but could not deny the change that had taken place in Jack's life.

Then word came that Jack had been ordained a deacon in his little church and was working with a group of young boys teaching them about Jesus. "Jack, you're a damn fool to spend your time messing around that church," Jim

said. But Jack just smiled and told Jim he was praying for him.

OTHERS WERE praying too. A lot of folks. A little Negro woman who lives behind Jim's store and has a little prayer chapel, was praying. The people at Jack's church were praying. A lot of Jim's customers were praying. Jim just drank harder until it seemed he would die.

Then, with Jack making the arrangements, Jim finally agreed to be admitted to Hebron Center, an alcoholic rehabilitation center in North Carolina. For eight weeks Jim was submitted to the Apostle

Paul's philosophy, "Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." (Ephesians 5:18). And Jim returned to Florida filled not with distilled spirits, but filled with a new spirit — the Holy Spirit.

The little Negro woman

(only it's Jim's church, too, now). "Not only did I find sobriety, but I found salvation. Jesus Christ is alive in my heart."

One of his old drinking cronies came in the store one day to make fun and instead had to listen to a half-hour sermon. He shook his head and said, "I'll say this, Jim, whatever it is you've found, it's real." Jim answered with a grin, "I'll tell you Buddy, it's not what I've found that's real, it's Who found me that makes the difference."

There may be a lot of people stumbling around who say God is dead, but I doubt if they'll cite Jim as an example.

Perspective

came in the store one day and said, "Praise the Lord, Jim, we've been praying for you." And old tough, hard-as-nails Jim cried and said, "I know it."

JIM TESTIFIED at Jack's church last week