

1906 ^{t h e} 2006
SOUL WINNING
CENTURY...

1906 ^{t h e} 2006
SOUL WINNING
CENTURY...

The Humbard Family Legacy...One Hundred Years of Ministry

REX HUMBARD

CLARION CALL MARKETING



DALLAS, TEXAS

THE SOUL-WINNING CENTURY

© 2006 Clarion Call Marketing

Published by Clarion Call Marketing
P.O. Box 610010
Dallas, TX 75261

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without prior permission of the publisher.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked (KJV) are taken from the *King James Version*.

ISBN 1-59574-055-4

Printed in the United States of America

2006—First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i> by Benny Hinn	vii
<i>Preface</i> by Doug Brendel	ix
<i>Introduction: Committed for Life</i>	1
1 Odd to Be Called	5
2 Training Up	31
3 Bait in the Water	43
4 Love on the Road	69
5 A Vision of the Future	95
6 The Thirteenth Visit	107
7 A Dome for a Home	131
8 Desperation and Deliverance	159
9 Main Entrance!	187
10 “Into All the World”	201
11 The Next Wave	231
12 The Great Ones	243
<i>Epilogue: Today and Tomorrow</i>	251

FOREWORD

I have heard, seen, and read about Rex Humbard for as long as I have been a Christian. And I have been privileged to be a friend to Rex and Maude Aimee for a number of years. Every time I sit with this precious couple in their living room or spend time with them on the *This Is Your Day!* studio set or stand with them on a crusade stage, I am reminded of the tremendous history and soul-winning legacy they embody.

I am often asked by people, “How can I get into full-time ministry?” This book helps provide the answer. Rex Humbard’s life is a great example of how a young lad pursued God’s will, added to the legacy his father founded, walked through open doors, kept on keeping on, and even now, as this book attests, remains steadfast in his desire to reach souls for Jesus Christ.

As you read the chapters of this remarkable book, you will realize, more than ever, what a blessing Rex and Maude Aimee are to the body of Christ. You will also get to witness the history of evangelism during the twentieth century and take the journey of a lifetime with these pioneers of the faith!

Thank you, Rex and Maude Aimee, for blazing the trail. May the flames of faith that you started continue to spread all over the world until the glorious return of our wonderful Lord Jesus. Only then will we know how vast are the multitudes of men, women, boys, and girls whose lives were brought to the foot of Calvary’s cross through the ministry of the Humbard family!

—BENNY HINN
World Healing Center Church

PREFACE

In a cluttered house trailer sat an aging, bewhiskered old man, smoking a corn cob pipe, drinking hard liquor, and muttering curses. He had spent his life as a classic scoundrel—a wanton womanizer, a debt-jumper—abusing his longsuffering wife and alienating his numerous children.

His only link to redemption was a flickering image on an ancient black-and-white television set. Every Sunday morning, the old man went to church by tuning in to a certain television show.

“That Rex,” the old man rasped, “he’s my pastor.”

Year after year, through that weekly program, the truth of the Word seeped into the old man’s heart. Finally one day, after more than a decade under the ministry of “that Rex,” the old man finally accepted Christ as his Savior.

Within a few weeks, he died and was received into the arms of Jesus.

That crusty old “sinner saved by grace” was my grandfather.

So there was a certain pleasing irony for me to go to work for Rex Humbard.

I was a skinny twenty-year-old nail-biter, desperately ambitious but also terribly insecure, when Rex took me in and made something of me.

One of my former pastors asked Rex to hire me as a writer-editor in the Humbard ministry’s publications area. Rex said yes, but not on the basis of my schooling (minimal), my experience (even less), or my spiritual depth (questionable). He was interested in creativity, passion, and hard work: Would this kid come up with new ways to do the old job of reaching lost souls with the Gospel? Would this kid sell out to the cause

of reaching lost souls with the Gospel? Would this kid stay up all night for the sake of reaching lost souls with the Gospel?

Rex didn't care about anything else.

To go to work at the Rex Humbard Ministry was like stepping into an enormous jet engine. This phenomenal force was sucking in every possible resource—every high-potential worker, every available dollar, every workable strategy, every new idea—and focusing all this energy in one direction, driving directly forward with the greatest possible power. One day Rex and his leadership team came up with an idea for a book. I went to my little apartment and started banging on an old typewriter (those were the days before PCs), writing almost literally around the clock. And just nine days after the idea was hatched, tens of thousands of books came off the press! In moments like these, which were many, I could only sit with my mouth hanging open, shaking my head in awe. Rex and Company routinely worked miracles, because no idea was too far-fetched if it meant reaching more souls for Christ.

Yet on a personal level, Rex was quite unlike the incredible ministry machine that had grown up around him. He was quiet and unassuming, modest and humble. I was foolish in many ways and must have often been enormously annoying, but Rex was unfailingly polite.

His heart was great and true. One afternoon before yet another massive evangelistic crusade in some far-flung city, I was outdoors and happened to look across a wide plaza to notice Rex walking alone. He had no entourage, no bodyguards. Presently, a woman emerged from the crowd, and I saw Rex stop to respond to her. She clearly knew him from television. I began making my way through the crowd, figuring I might rescue Rex from a bothersome fan. But before I could get to them, I saw Rex take both her hands and bow his head. The woman lowered her face and began to weep as Rex prayed fervently for her, unashamedly, in the middle of a public square, with crowds milling

Preface

around. I remember my shock, realizing for the first time that Rex was not only about multitudes of souls, he was about *each* soul.

It was my privilege to write many, many column inches of *The Answer* magazine and to work over the years on numerous books for the ministry, from *Billy Wasn't There* to *The Rex Humbard Prophecy Bible*. It's probably safe to say that I touched more lives through Rex's ministry than in all my subsequent years as a pastor, author, and dramatist.

When I married, Rex did me the great kindness of traveling to my home in Phoenix, Arizona, and officiating at the ceremony. In the years that followed, after I became a teaching pastor, I occasionally preached Rex's own sermons (with his blessing). And it perhaps closes the circle—from my grandfather's salvation, to my "initiation" as Rex's writer and editor, to my wedding—to have worked with Rex on this, his autobiography. To be invited to serve on this project was one of the greatest honors of my life.

Sitting next to Rex in his study, poring over old texts and photographs, rolling tape on his recollections, I couldn't help but look him over. His hair is white; he has the rice-paper skin of an old man. When he gets up to find a certain book on the shelf, his steps are cautious. But no matter the topic of conversation, before many moments have passed, he comes back around to the subject of souls. And that's when his eyes flash like the eyes of a young fighter. He lights up. His back straightens. His fingers move fluidly. He is what God clearly created him to be, and that calling knows no limitations.

Rex has certainly broken through all the boundaries for the cause of Christ, and it has been a joy to journey with him.

—DOUG BRENDAL
Scottsdale, Arizona

INTRODUCTION

Committed for Life

*I*f I live to be a hundred—and that day is fast approaching—I will still be about one thing: winning lost souls to Jesus Christ.

I have been about evangelism from my childhood. My father, Alpha Humbard, was about evangelism from his youth. My own wife and children and grandchildren have worked with me in evangelism for decades. My father, born in 1890, came to faith in Christ at sixteen, when Theodore Roosevelt was president. My father did not wait to finish high school; he did not go to seminary. He was instantly and unstopably passionate about winning souls to Christ, so he began in evangelistic ministry immediately, and he never stopped. I came to Christ as a small boy, caught a vision of the difference between heaven and hell, and began serving alongside my father when I was still very young. I have never stopped either, and 2006 will be the one hundredth anniversary of continuous Humbard evangelism ministry.

I share all this, not to glorify myself or the Humbard name, but to point again, as always, to Jesus Christ. Our family's dogged commitment

INTRODUCTION

to evangelism grows out of the fact that nothing is more important in this life than knowing and accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We have given our lives, and continue to give our lives, to the mission of sharing the Good News: that God loves you, that He has a plan for your life, that you're trapped in sin and unable to connect with God, but He sent His Son Jesus to make the connection for you. You were doomed, but you can be saved. You can spend eternity in heaven with your loving heavenly Father. Accept Christ and live. Our family's message has never changed because God's offer has never changed, and no message has ever been more important to human beings.

For the sake of lost souls, over the course of my eighty-five years, I have traveled millions of miles. I have played and sung thousands of Gospel songs; I have lugged tons of equipment; I have pounded thousands of crusade tent stakes. I have preached thousands of sermons and given thousands more altar calls (for years I gave the altar calls at the end of my father's sermons).

For the sake of souls, I have raised and borrowed and spent about a billion dollars. I have built a church and left a church, both for the sake of souls.

For the sake of souls, I have gone hungry and I have eaten in the White House. I have challenged network television executives to their face. I have cried, and I have prayed.

For the sake of souls, I have dreamed up inventions to make evangelism more efficient. I have cooked up schemes to get around people who opposed evangelism. I have been reviled in the media and congratulated by world leaders.

For the sake of souls, I left my wife's bedside as she hovered near death.

For the sake of souls, I took money from Jimmy Hoffa.

Committed for Life

For the sake of souls, I have prayed with Imelda Marcos and Elvis Presley and more than one dictator accused of war crimes.

For the sake of souls, I put my eldest son in seven different schools in a single year.

For the sake of souls, I left my father, my mother, and my brother.

For the sake of souls, I fought my way onto the radio, wheedled my way onto television, and finagled my way into building permits and on-air time slots and broadcast licenses.

For the sake of souls, I have built and operated a restaurant, yet over the course of my lifetime, I have fasted hundreds, maybe thousands of days.

For the sake of souls, I skipped college, and I bought a college.

For the sake of souls, I have sold girdles.

For the sake of souls, I have followed mysterious hunches and looked like a fool and kept trusting God.

For the sake of souls, I have preached to more than two hundred thousand people in a single gathering, and I have stopped to pray with a single troubled woman by the side of a road. I have been helped by kings and congressmen; I've been hassled by courts and cops. Other preachers have blessed me, betrayed me, berated me.

For the sake of souls, I've started building projects, stopped building projects, and torn up blueprints to start over in the middle of building projects. I've passed up lucrative business deals for the sake of souls. I've taken on questionable business partners for the sake of souls. I've dealt with mobsters, monks, Muslims, Methodists, and my wife, Maude Aimee—all for souls. I have been stolen from; I have been laughed at; I have been threatened; I have been cussed out—all for souls. I have hired people, fired people, refused handouts, taken handouts, pushed and pulled and zigzagged—all for souls. I have made brilliant decisions,

INTRODUCTION

and I have been a fool, but it was all for souls. Countless multitudes of people have received Christ as Savior as a result, and that's all I care about.

Here's the whole story of how it happened. My prayer is that, as you travel this road with me, you'll be drawn to trust Christ yourself and be inspired to give your own life to the cause of winning souls. If Jesus delays His return, the next century of soul winning is yours.

—REX HUMBARD

ONE

Odd to Be Called

*M*y father thought he was going to be murdered.

He was born Alpha Emmanuel Humbard in 1890 and was reared in a poor family on a farm in rural White County, Arkansas, some sixty miles north of Little Rock. His own father was a hard-scrabble farmer consumed by nothing but work. He had no education and didn't go to church. His parenting strategy was simple: keep the children busy.

My father's mother was a devoted Christian, but she died when he was two, after praying on her deathbed that her child would be called by God to preach the Gospel. My father didn't know this until years after he began preaching, when he heard the story from the woman who attended my grandmother at her death.

Something kept my father, in his youth, from joining the other boys in their Huck Finn mischief making: drinking, breaking glass out of vacant houses, stealing watermelons or chickens or eggs. His conscience repeatedly drove him away.

But it was odd that he would be called to preach. He had virtually no

education—three months a year in school more than two miles away, the rest doing chores on the farm—and often missed school because labor was too short in the fields to spare a child for a day in the classroom. He was also terribly bashful. And he had a speech impediment.

There were no family prayers. No Bible reading. No churchgoing. It was a stereotypical turn-of-the-century rural upbringing. The social scene outside Searcy, Arkansas, usually consisted of neighbors gathering in the evening to tell scary or off-color stories, play cards, drink liquor, hold the occasional dance, wind up in a fight, and knock out the lights. On top of it all, my grandfather had lost not only my grandmother but also a previous wife. He then married a third time, bringing additional children into the family, so he had four sets of children to deal with. My father's parents fought often, and loudly, with the children usually fleeing to safety under the house or into the barn.

Poverty was real. The children tasted candy only once a year, at Christmastime. Over the course of my father's entire childhood, there was only one exception: one year, his stepmother took the extraordinary measure of selling eggs to a chicken peddler for two cents per dozen and using the money to buy candy for her stepson's birthday.

A family of farmhands attended a church in town, and the children bragged about their Sunday school. Eventually my father sneaked away from Sunday chores and attended. Lured by an attendance promotion campaign—whoever attended the most Sundays would receive a small New Testament—my father continued slipping away on Sundays and heading to the church in town.

That little Testament changed my father's life. He carried it in his pocket everywhere he went, and with every available moment he read another portion of it. Plowing the fields, he had time at the end of each row as he let the mule rest to sit on the plow handles and read his Testament. He would meditate on the passage as he plowed the row, and

Odd to Be Called

then he'd begin the process again at the end of the line. He found himself believing the Word and asking God to help him live it. He also noticed that a lot of people in his world weren't living by the Bible!

ANGEL IN THE BEDROOM

Even in these early days of his life, my father experienced the power of practical faith. He wanted to give something in the Sunday school offering each week, but he never had anything of his own to give. So he asked God to help him find a penny sometime each week. Every week, without fail, he found a penny somewhere that he could place in the offering on Sunday.

His father kept liquor "as a medicine" and gave a small portion of it, a "toddy," to each child each morning before breakfast. When my father finally refused, he was whipped with a peach tree limb; but he continued refusing, and never touched alcohol again.

My father's family and friends couldn't understand his change. His friends started calling him "sissy." One day his father caught him praying behind a tree and told him he was losing his mind. Once a gang of boys caught him in the woods, held him down, and poured wine on his face and clothes. Another time, dressed up and on his way to church, they wallowed him in mud. But he was steadfast. He had connected with God, and God was real. He would not back down, look back, or change course.

My father's family and friends couldn't understand his change. His friends started calling him "sissy."

My father claimed that an angel appeared in his bedroom one night and called his name three times. Sometime later, as he was plowing in the field, he heard God call his name "three times audibly, like He did

Samuel of old.” It was my father’s call to preach the Gospel, and it was like a “holy fire burning in his very bones.” He argued with God about his lack of education, his speech impediment, and his bashfulness. But as he was reminded of Moses overcoming very similar difficulties in Exodus 4, he didn’t have much leverage to resist God’s call.

He decided that too many people were dying and going to hell each day for him to spend time wading through seminary. He did not sense a call to seminary; he sensed a call to evangelism. My father, according to what would become a lifelong pattern, took the simplest and straightest route to the goal.

He had what he regarded as a good job with a banker who liked him, with the promise of ready promotions. Continuing to work at the bank by day, he attached himself to a preacher who was holding evening revival services in a nearby country schoolhouse. The preacher had asked my father to sit next to him on the platform, which mortified the young man. Eventually he got over his stage fright, although the first time he was called upon to give his testimony, his knees knocked together so badly that he fell back in his chair.

Soon he knew the time had come when he would have to leave his banking job and pursue his ministry full time. His only puzzle was the question of which church he should represent. There were three Christian churches in town, each claiming to be the “one true church”; and a man from Kansas passing through town had said that there were 650 denominations total. My father was so perplexed by the question that early one Sunday morning he climbed to the top of a mountain with his Bible, prayed and fasted all day, asking God for an answer. As night began to fall, he still had no direction. But as he prepared to head home, he sensed God speaking to his spirit, telling him to let his Bible fall open; the answer would appear. My father did so, and his Bible opened to John 14:6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life.”

Odd to Be Called

“The Baptist was not crucified for you,” the Spirit of God said to my father in that moment. “The Methodist was not buried or resurrected the third day for your justification. I am *the* Way (not *a* way), the Truth, the Life. I am the Door. I am the Bread. I am the Living Water. There is no other Name under heaven whereby man can be saved, only by Me.”

From that moment, Alpha Humbard worked with any church or group that claimed Christ and followed the Bible. “There are only two families in the world,” he said: “God’s family and the devil’s family. By one Spirit we are all baptized into the one body of which the Lord Jesus is the Head.” Beyond that, Dad didn’t do doctrine.

“I FEEL YOU’RE CALLED”

Knowing almost nothing about the kind of life and work to which he felt called, my father began asking God to send a preacher to help him get started in his ministry. Inside of a week, a preacher arrived from 400 miles away with no invitation, just a sense that God had led him to this out-of-the-way community. The preacher, Alonzo Horn, began holding revival meetings in a schoolhouse five miles below my father’s town. My father walked from the bank to the schoolhouse every night to see Horn preach a “hellfire and brimstone” Gospel. For three weeks, not a single person responded to the altar calls or even raised a hand for prayer, but Horn was undaunted. He preached the Word night after night. Suddenly one evening, for no apparent reason, the people began to weep as the man closed his sermon. More than a third of the people ran for the altar. Some knelt in the aisles. Three men fell to the floor like dead men, only to revive with noisy praises to God. My father had never seen anything like it.

That evening, Horn came to my father. “I feel like you’re called to preach,” he said. It was a stunning confirmation; my father had never mentioned his calling.

The two agreed to travel together in ministry. When the local revival ended, my father rolled up a spare shirt in a piece of paper, and put on his one good suit of clothes, which he had long ago outgrown. The trousers only reached the middle of his calves; the sleeves were halfway to his elbows. But he was on his way to a lifetime in evangelistic ministry.

The day he left home, he had never before ridden on a train. He had never seen an automobile. He had never owned a necktie. Their first stop was Little Rock, a gargantuan metropolis, from his view. A streetcar looked to him like a wagon shed being dragged by horses, but without horses.

For months he simply served as the older preacher's assistant, shining his shoes and sweeping out the meeting places and carrying water and praying for him as the old man preached. After about six months, in Huntington, Arkansas, Horn sent him out to conduct street meetings each evening before the services. The strategy worked; crowds overflowed the one-thousand-seat meeting place, forcing them to move to a sprawling open area and add services. At a special Sunday afternoon service with nearly four thousand attending, Horn turned to my father during the musical worship and informed him that he would be delivering the sermon. My father sputtered his objections, but Horn had decided. "You might just as well start now as some other time," he said.

My father stood terrified before the huge crowd. He opened his Bible, read a text, and suddenly felt the Spirit of God burning within him. Then, as he opened his mouth, he found that he was speaking French. He had never studied or even heard the language. Eventually he switched to English, and found that the Scriptures were coming to his mind faster than he could quote them. His years of studying God's Word at the plow handle were now bearing fruit.

As he finished his sermon, more than three thousand people were weeping. It turned out that there was a large French-speaking commu-