

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



While other churches across the nation have services during the week, we have steered away from this at the Tabernacle. Our emphasis has been on the home groups which meet throughout the week. The Sunday morning service became a time when those in the home groups--and many others as well--joined in corporate worship.

This last year, after Curry took over the ministry on Sunday morning, I established a Sunday night service. It was the first time we had held regular Sunday night services in years. The purpose was more than providing a platform for me to preach. I was eager to use the Sunday night services as a time to expose this body to what God was saying around the world. It was also to be a time for Christians from all over the community who do not have Sunday night services at their own churches to gather with us in a time of free fellowship.

We have been successful in this. Randall Bane's ministry is on the cutting edge of what God is saying through

the arts and interpretive dance. The message by Bernie May of Wycliffe Bible Translators was one of the finest messages this body has ever heard. Likewise, the outstanding ministry of Harold Ivan Smith on the move of God among singles--accompanied by his challenge to this community to begin moving with God in ministering to the singles--was superb.

We've been having excellent crowds, but the majority are not from the Tab. They come from area churches. That's fine. But I wish the Tab folks--whom I love so much--were present, not just to hear what I'm saying, but to hear what God is saying through these special messengers He is sending our way.

Sunday mornings are Curry's time to shepherd the entire flock. I speak one out of every five Sundays. That means Sunday morning is a good, steady diet of solid food. On Sunday night, however, we're having a banquet--with different dishes being offered weekly. I hope you'll start the new year with a resolve to balance your spiritual diet by attending both services.

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Monday, Feb. 4, I am scheduled to make my last trip up to the Florida State Prison at Starke. For some weeks I have been driving up to spend the day with Carl Songer, a 34-year-old inmate who has been on death row for 11 years. Back in 1973 Carl was sleeping in the back seat of his car in Citrus County when a state trooper woke him from a drug-induced sleep. When the trooper appeared at the window of the car, Carl, terrified over being sent back to a Texas chain gang, shot him three times.

Now for 11 years he has been on Death Row. Twice before the governor has signed death warrants. Each time the courts have granted reprieve. This time it seems the sentence will be carried out. Carl is scheduled to die in the Florida electric chair at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 5.

One of the women who served on the jury that convicted him is part of our Body. When she heard Carl had become a Christian, she began corresponding with him. Later she sent him a copy of Risky Living. Carl then contacted

me, asking if I would be willing to walk with him as he went to be with the Lord.

I felt I had no choice. My visits with him have had a profound effect on my life. (I've shared some of this with the Body and will share the rest Sunday night, Feb. 10 following his execution.) Carl is no longer fighting the system. Realizing he took a man's life--which included taking a woman's husband--he is submitted to punishment. But . . . ah, the glory of redemption. Never have I met a man so full of the Holy Spirit, so repentant, so cleansed of bitterness, so ready to meet God.

Monday I will spend the night in his cell. Like Paul in the Philippian jail, we'll be singing praises. "I want to enter His gates with thanksgiving," Carl told me. Tuesday morning I'll walk with him to the place of execution and sit--watching--as he meets Jesus. I believe the same God who came into his lonely cell four years ago and filled it with His glory will do even more in the death chamber on Tuesday morning.

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The saga of Carl Songer has stirred the entire Christian community deeply. The fact he is still alive--granted an indefinite stay of execution by the U.S. Supreme Court less than 13 hours before he was to be electrocuted--is a miracle of the first magnitude. No man in modern history, who has had three death warrants signed against him, has ever escaped execution. Yet God, when He exhibits His mighty arm, is not intimidated by the powers of state or the systems of this world.

The entire three-day ordeal was a miracle. Never have I found myself in the middle of such a volcano of power. The fact we were able to get a TV crew in to interview Carl and capture his testimony on video tape just hours before his scheduled execution, the fact two of his family who had driven over from Oklahoma to keep the death watch received the Lord and are now moving deeply in the Spirit, the fact the U.S. Supreme Court acted so out of character to grant a stay when they were not even seated on the bench, the fact new evidence

is now being introduced which could influence the outcome of future hearings, the fact the prison guards were touched themselves as they witnessed God's intervention to save the life of this man--once a murderer, now a new creature--all added up to what must be classified as a miracle.

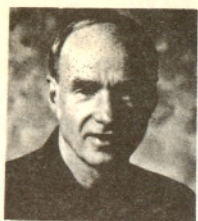
I was on the way out to the prison at 6:00 p.m. to spend that last night with him when the word came of the stay. Carl's response, when I got to him, was a simple smile and "Now I have to come down off the mountaintop and see what God has for me to do in the valley."

I ask your continued prayers for him. So many have written saying they were touched. But the battle continues--not to save his life for that is in God's hands, but that nothing will interrupt the purpose of God in this entire matter. Carl's life is still in danger, not only from the state but from others. One cynical guard told me, "If we don't kill him (the state), one of them (an inmate) will." I believe God has bigger things in store. Thank you for your love, interest and prayers.

Write: Carl Songer 041036,
Box 747, Starke, FL 32091.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

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Following Julie Vaughan's accident, a timid soul approached Curry. "If walk-

ing by faith means getting attacked like you, I'm not sure I want to enter into combat."

It's a valid observation, for Curry no sooner began to preach faith than his daughter was almost killed. But remember these things: (1) We are already in warfare simply because we're Christians. Our choice: move forward or be driven back into the wilderness. (2) Those in leadership draw the heaviest fire. As a result, many in the army never even have to fire their rifles since the enemy was demolished by those who hit the beaches first. (3) What seems real--i.e., sickness, persecution, accidents, financial difficulties--has no substance. The only reality in this world is what we cannot see--the reality of the King and His Kingdom. Truly, greater is He in us than he who is in the world. (4) The enemy has already been defeated at Calvary. What we're engaged in now is a mop-up action, dealing with shadows, echos, and unfounded fears. (5) The real warfare

is carried on in the heavenly places. Our job is simply to continue faithful in prayer and faith while the angels wage war for us.

The devil always overplays his hand. Trying to kill our pastor's daughter only fired up the army of God. That was a big mistake on Satan's part. In fact, it revealed him for who he really is: an ineffectual, bumbling would-be murderer unable to conquer those who stand among the "blood-washed saints."

A friend told me of a deliverance session during which he asked, in the name of Jesus, if there were any demons left in the young woman. There was a long pause, then a guttural voice spoke out of the girl sitting there. "We're all gone. There's none of us left."

This latest encounter with the enemy again emphasizes that Satan is a liar and a harrasser of the Body. God will not allow anything to come our way that we do not have power to overcome. What seems to be persecution from the world's perspective is viewed as glorious victory by those of us in the Kingdom. March on!

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



Having three tiny grandchildren in the house for an unscheduled visit has proved to be, well, ah... exciting.

Our daughter Bonnie's second baby was not due until mid-June. When she started contractions last week, her doctor, fearing premature birth, rushed her by ambulance to Orlando to a neonatal unit. That meant we inherited David--aged 21 months--because Marion needed to be in Orlando with Bonnie.

Then, five days later, Robin entered the hospital here and gave birth five weeks premature--to little Heather Dawn. Since the baby came by C-section, Robin remained in the hospital for a week. The baby is in an incubator and will have to remain in the hospital for some time. That meant we inherited April (5) and Kristin (3) for the majority of the time.

Of course Jackie's much at home with babies, having raised five herself. I've not been much help, since I've been traveling a great deal and the writing deadlines never seem to cease when I'm home. But an amazing thing has happened.

Marion's Aunt Grace, a real saint of a woman who retired several years ago, flew over from Baton Rouge. One night, standing in the kitchen, God told me to pay her special respect for she might well be an "angel unaware." She has been a real servant--not only in doing but in sensing needs and rushing to meet them before they become a crisis.

Then there's the Masters Road community. Most of them were part of Jon and Robin's home group. They have stepped in to care for April and Kristin while Jon is at work. And since the little girls were so close to these precious families anyway, it was natural for them to simply shift across the street to the yards on Masters Road. Others have called, too, offering help.

Many have been praying, not only for Bonnie and Robin and their born and unborn children but for those of us who are back in the ranks guarding the stuff. It has been a perfect example of the Body of Christ at work. How good it is to have "family."

P.S. Julie Vaughan is totally recovered from her accident--and has even caught up on all her school work. To God goes all the glory.

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I am convinced the Tabernacle Church is entering a new era of Pentecost. We are not unique.

There is an exciting new emphasis all over the nation in "signs and wonders." John Wimber told me last week that more than 3,000 Southern Baptist pastors have recently received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. What began with the Pentecostals, moved to the liturgical churches and finally called forth a number of independent charismatic bodies--has now flamed up among evangelicals. It seems there is indeed a new wave cresting--we need to be up on our boards prepared to hang ten as it rolls in under us.

In studying through Acts 2 in preparation for a recent Sunday night message, I was struck by the fact God sent people from all over the world to be in Jerusalem when the Holy Spirit fell on the day of Pentecost. As I look at what is happening in South Brevard County, I see the same thing taking place. Our little town has suddenly become a thriving city. Multi-story hotels are going up all over the place. Hundreds of

families are moving in every month to fill those miles and miles of subdivisions in GDC and to occupy the scores of condos and townhouses springing up along the beach and in Palm Bay. There are several thousand foreign students studying at FIT--most of whom will return to their homelands as leaders in the high tech industries and in the military. Patrick Air Force Base is bustling with activity. The shuttle program at the Cape is bringing in the world's top scientists--many of whom are locating in our area. All the groundwork has been laid for a mighty explosion of the Holy Spirit which will touch these people flocking into our community.

I believe God has raised up Tabernacle Church for such a time as this. Our emphasis on worship and praise, our willingness to be agents through whom the signs and wonders flow, our understanding of relationships through home groups, our love of the Word of God--all seem to qualify us to be one of the agents God has chosen to light the fuse on the new Pentecost which is to sweep the world.

This is the most exciting time in history to be alive. Don't miss out on what God is doing.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



As I look back on my ministry at the Tab, I am aware that it is not my preaching which people remember--it is my spirit. Words are fleeting but a spirit which reflects God, which makes it easy for people to love God and to love one another...that alone is profound.

Now, as I look forward to the year ahead, I am asking what role I am to play with the body. I am comfortable with my leadership role with the elders and staff, but my role in public ministry has been confusing. Of course I have been gone a great deal, but I believe God has ordained that so the body could have time to accept the public ministry of our pastor, Curry Vaughan. At the same time, I know I have a call to minister to this body publicly as well. The question I have asked is: when and what?

Over and over I keep hearing God say, "Teach my people how to worship. Not just with your words, but with your spirit." That is exciting, and as I look forward to the fall, I intend to obey Him.

The plan is slowly materializing. Curry will continue to

be the primary preacher on Sunday morning. (I will rotate, as now, once every five Sundays.) I am clearing my calendar to be present every Sunday night (except the first Sunday of each month when I will be in Vero Beach as I have been for three years). I will also be teaching the adults on Sunday morning--teaching them how to worship. Then, on Sunday night, we will use the service as a great worship time--utilizing all the forms available: music, dance, drama, prayer, testimonies and preaching.

I am trusting God to send us a master musician who will coordinate much of this worship. My role will be to impart a spirit--the spirit of worship. While the Sunday morning services will be great church meetings, the Sunday night services will be times of great worship.

To kick this off, we have invited two of the nation's finest musicians, Dan White and Barry Griffing, to be with us for a "worship workshop," beginning August 29. I hope every serious worshipper--especially those of you who play and sing--will be there. We are about to enter His gates. I want to be there when we do.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



This week Jackie and I are in Amsterdam where I am speaking to the European leadership for Youth With A Mission (YWAM). We will stop by London on our way home so Jackie can see England for the first time (she's been to Holland on several occasions) and I will meet with a group of pastors for dialogue and ministry. This will be my last extended trip away from home for some time. Beginning October 13, I will be present for nearly all the 7 P.M. services until June 1986. Also, I will be teaching each Sunday morning at the 9:30 A.M. adult session. I look forward to these intimate times together as we worship and study and receive ministry.

You'll be interested in knowing that Power for Living is going to be published in England and Canada. We've given away more than 11 million copies in the USA, and more than a million people have responded, accepting Jesus. This last week Coach Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys announced he is sending a special hardbound copy, in a beautiful package, to

the top four corporate officers of all the Fortune 500 corporations. The results have already started coming back in, and they are outstanding. Please pray for this next phase of ministry through Power for Living--and for the Arthur DeMoss Foundation who is sponsoring the work.

A final word: Many of you have been faithful in praying for my friend Carl Songer, who is on death row at the Florida State Prison. Carl's lawyer called me this week and said the judicial review council had granted Carl a new sentencing hearing, which will take place in the near future. That means the judge who originally sentenced him to death will reopen his case. He is still guilty of murder, but the judge will allow testimony to determine whether, after 11 years on death row and three aborted trips to the death chamber, he should receive another sentence. Please pray for Carl, for his family, for the judge, and for those of us who will speak in his behalf.

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MEET JAMIE AND JACKIE...



At the first meeting of the new elders four years ago, the men unanimously said their primary function was to support Jamie Buckingham--not only as the spiritual overseer of the Tabernacle Church but in his ministry to the world.

Jamie hasn't always had a worldwide ministry. When he along with a handful of people founded the Tabernacle Church in 1967, his only ministry was to this small, struggling flock. Across the years the flock has grown. As it did, God expanded Jamie's place of influence and ministry. It started with his writing ministry and a book called Run Baby Run. In fact, the first piece of equipment the new church purchased was an IBM typewriter for Jamie. Since then he has written 37 major books.

While giving leadership to the Tab, Jamie began to write for various magazines as well. He served on staff for

Guideposts as a roving editor. Later he was executive editor for Logos Journal. For the last several years he has been editor-at-large and one of the moving influences for both Charisma and Ministries. His newsletter, The Buckingham Report, is read by the nation's senior pastors and Christian leaders. He travels extensively, speaking and ministering. In short, Jamie is one of the world's best known Christian writers and ministers.

At the same time, Jamie feels his primary ministry is that of providing spiritual oversight to the Tabernacle Church. Two years ago he relinquished his role as pastor, turning that over to Curry Vaughan. However, he retains the position God gave him 18 years ago as the final spiritual authority for the church. This special relationship with the Tab enables him to minister effectively around the world as he draws on the lessons learned here and on the spiritual covering provided by the elders and his home group--which he considers his most vital link with reality.

Jackie, too, has become a part of Jamie's worldwide ministry. (This week, for example, Jamie and Jackie are

in Amsterdam and London for meetings with Christian leaders.) Although Jackie's presence in the Tabernacle has been quiet and unassuming, she has been a vital part of what God has been doing here. Thousands of people have watched her relationship with her husband, and imitated the way they have raised their children.

All the children are grown now. All were raised in the Tabernacle, all were married here, and all but one have moved back to Melbourne to be part of this church.

Bruce, a graduate of ORU, spent six years working for Congressman Bill Nelson. Now he and Michele have moved to Melbourne, and Bruce is the new Public Information Officer at NASA.

Robin, also an ORU graduate, married Jon Moore, and they live next door to Jamie and Jackie where they are raising their three children. Jon is a health and rehab specialist at Pro Health and Fitness Center, which is run by Holmes Hospital.

Bonnie finished ORU and married Marion Ranzino. Marion works for Sun Bank and they--with their two children--live in a cottage on the

Buckingham property.

Tim has just graduated from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and has accepted a job as a ranch manager in Forsythe, Georgia, where he lives with Kathy and their two boys.

Sandy, the youngest Buckingham, works at Harris part-time and is a full time senior at the University of Central Florida. Her husband, Jerry Smith, is an electrician with Hobbs Electric. They live in another cottage on the Buckingham property.

So when Jackie repeats her often-stated desire: "All I ever wanted to do was be Jamie's wife," you know she is being abundantly fulfilled--especially when you see their grandchildren running in and out of the house.

Jamie says his deepest point of gratitude is toward the people of the Tab who, across the years, have understood and supported his leadership--and his ministry in writing and speaking. Many years ago Jamie and Jackie announced that God had put them in Melbourne to stay. They've obeyed that command, and we look forward to many years of deepening relationship in the future.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



A number of you are new in the Tab and are wondering how we function as a church. This month I want to explain the roles of apostles and elders. In the future I'll share more about pastors, home groups, ministries, and corporate worship.

Our government is apostolic. Some churches have a congregational rule and others depend upon an outside hierarchy which makes decisions. We are attempting to follow the New Testament pattern of apostles and elders. We have seven elders. (The number is not sacred, it just so happens that for the present that's how many we have.) They were appointed by me. These elders recognize my apostolic role in the church and look to me as the overseer. (We use the term "senior minister" in our printed material to lessen confusion.) I, in turn, have submitted myself and the governmental authority to the corporate eldership. Final authority, then, rests in the eldership.

However, the elders and I believe God speaks through the corporate body. We believe in the priesthood of

all believers. Therefore, our ears are constantly tuned to the voice of God as He speaks through the body--either formally through prophecy, or informally through attitudes and casual conversation.

No elder is authorized to make individual decisions when it comes to church government. The elders have authority only when they meet corporately--as a plurality. The elders are not pastors (although some serve as pastors and two of them--Curry Vaughan and Jim Bauman--are on the church staff). The elders are the "fathers" of the church. Their task is to make decisions. It is the task of the pastor, staff, home groups and various ministries to put those decisions into practice. They meet several times a month for early morning meetings and on regular occasions spend most of a day together. Some meetings are given to long hours of prayer as they seek the Lord's direction for the body. If there are particularly weighty matters, the elders will address them. In short, it is the place of the elders to make certain the Tabernacle stays under the cloud of God's anointing. This is especially sticky when the cloud keeps moving--but each step draws us toward God's final goal. We've not arrived, but, hallelujah, we're on the way!

A NEW PERSPECTIVE...

jamie buckingham



Where are we going to get the \$2 million needed for the new building? Though we may go to the bank for a short range construction loan, we aren't going into long term debt to the world--even to build a much needed auditorium and educational space. Nor are we going to sell church bonds. Nor are we going to hire a high-powered fund raiser to come in and twist arms in the name of Jesus.

Where are we going to get the \$2 million then? Quite simply, we're going to get it from God.

How is God going to get it to us? By angels with money bags? Frankly, I don't know. I do know this, however, and I can testify to it out of my own life and from our past experiences at the Tabernacle in other "building programs." When we raise money God's way --He always supplies.

Well, then, what is God's way to raise money? Simple. You start by giving money away. In fact, you give away the first fruits--or the very first offering.

In an elders' retreat this

afternoon we agreed to do just that. It came on the heels of a recommendation from the Missions Committee. A request has recently come in from the Jungle Aviation and Radio Service--the flying arm of Wycliffe Bible Translators. They desperately need a twin-engine airplane in Indonesia to fly to the out-islands to carry translators, medical supplies, and support workers. A wealthy friend of Wycliffe has promised to match every dollar they raise for this project. If they can raise \$50,000, Wycliffe's anonymous friend will give another \$50,000. The Missions Committee, knowing that Gene Berrey and I have a special love for Indonesia following our trip there two years ago to minister to the Wycliffe folks, asked the elders to consider this.

The elders agree we should not only receive a special offering for this project, but it should be the very first offering of the upcoming building campaign. So, early in November at a Sunday morning service we will take our first building fund offering--and will give it all away to missions. I want you to pray about your part in this "seed faith" offering. If we give, the Bible promises, God will supply our needs. It's a grand way to start the program.