



# Book Review



## Jamie's Book

By Mary Beth Herzog

It must be fun living in the Jamie Buckingham household. I've often thought that after reading his column, "Perspective," Sundays in the Press-Journal. Even ordinary things that happen around any house — unexpected guests, leaky faucets, cleaning out the attic — seem more amusing at the Buckinghams' than they do at my house.

But, of course, it's not the situation that is so humorous as the way the author puts the whole thing together, taking digs at himself and his family, finding the brighter side to disasters, pointing up his own imperfections while at the same time gently prodding us to do the same.

Earlier this year Buckingham came out with his latest book, "The Last Word," which we are sure is not the last word from his prolific writer. It's a collection of his columns from the Press-Journal and other publications, as well as some unpublished essays.

It's a good book, full of Jamie Buckinghamisms and stories about things that have gone right and wrong in his home, his church, with his life and his family and friends, stories that take pot shots at religion, but never at God, stories that are funny, stories that are somber, stories that are thought-provoking and stories that are hopeful.

And Buckingham introduces his

readers to quite a few characters — characters that are good and genuine and characters from the seedier side of life, and also just some ordinary characters like you and me. There is Harry Gasque, a wanderer, a free spirit, yet a man with no goal. And Aley Gonzalez, a Filipino preacher who drove a battered Kawasaki around his island helping the poor, feeding the hungry and preaching the Gospel, but who found little hope for preachers and churchgoers in the United States. And then there is Miss Henrietta Seymour of Greenwood, S.C., a special friend of the Buckinghams, and Dr. Paul Mansfield, who received the calling to minister and to heal the sick, which he did for 40 years among the poor of Appalachia. Eunice Wood, a woman who lost her buck-toothed appearance when her husband suffered a severe heart attack, is also in the book, and many, many more.

And while a number of Jamie Buckingham's light columns are found in this book — more in the beginning and toward the end — the general tone of the book is serious and meaty.

The chapters are very short, most 2½ pages or less, so it's an easy book to pick up at any time. But many chapters might slow a reader down because it will take about four times as long to think about them than it did to read them in the first place. It's that kind of book.