



"Change"

Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

In a church I used to belong to certain people had certain places they liked to sit. The Professor's family, I recall, had a certain five-person pew which they always occupied. One Sunday morning I came in and saw seven persons scrooched into that five-person pew. It seems a visiting couple had come in early, and never suspecting it was the Professor's pew, had sat down. When the Professor and his wife and three old maid sisters arrived, rather than sit somewhere else, they all squeezed in with the visitors. The entire service was spent casting hateful glances down the pew at the innocent ones.

I was thinking about that recently and priding myself that while others may be upset by a change in routine, I could always adjust to any kind of change.

Then Christmas Day I found out just how stiff and structured I really was — especially in my shaving habits.

For months I had been seeing those little warm-up-your-shaving-lather-devices in drug stores. "Only a fool would buy something like that," I thought.

Then Christmas morning I found one under the tree — with my name on it. Accompanying it was a double-edged razor (the kind I detest). It was a gift from my children.

Now shaving is just about the most intimate thing a man does. It's a little private world that most men slip into and no one dares invade. For years I had grown accustomed to a single-edged injector blade and a certain kind of shaving cream. Now my children, in love, were trying to better my way of life — and I resented it.

"Come on, Daddy," my 13-year-old Bonnie said, sensing my reluctance, "Get groovy. Try it out."

So, trying to hide my vexation against my children who dared step into the inner sanctum of my shaving habits, I plugged in the lather-warmer and waited for the light to start blinking.

That was something else. I hate to wait when shaving. I always keep my razor and lather where I can grab them and begin shaving the moment I hit the bathroom in the morning. But this morning I had to wait, and wait, and wait some more.

Finally it was ready, but it was a different kind of lather. My old lather was thick and rich. This was thin and full of bubbles. I smeared it on and then had to go back for more because it evaporated as soon as it hit my face. I could see where the shaving cream people had a good thing going.

Then the ordeal of shaving with that bulky, unfamiliar two-edged razor. I felt like I was shaving with a cement trowel. But I got through it without cutting myself, smiled at the children and waited while they all returned to the tree — satisfied.

I then closed the bathroom door, took out my old razor and lather, and shaved all over again. Suddenly I knew how the Professor felt when someone sat in his pew.

But, unlike the Professor, I'm going to change pews. I'm determined that a little thing like my shaving habit is not going to control my life. And I'm going to keep on using that silly contraption until I am satisfied I have broken the habit of my old way. I never thought a can of shaving lather could have spiritual implications, but Jesus said His followers were to be free, and I suddenly realized just how bound I really was.

So, as long as I don't get in a rut, I'm going to try to be just as "groovy" as I can.