



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Corporate Life

Many in Vero Beach, because of their contacts in Washington, D.C., remember the late Abraham Vereide, best known as the founder of the Presidential Prayer Breakfasts. Although Vereide has died, his ideas remain. In fact, most states now have a Governor's Prayer Breakfast and many communities have a Mayor's Prayer Breakfast.

I had an interesting letter this last week from Abraham's son, Milton Vereide. Milton served for a number of years with the United Presbyterian Church and then, following a personal experience with the Holy Spirit, became involved in establishing farms in British Columbia. Unlike his father, who felt this nation might be salvaged through a return to spiritual principles by government leaders, Milton feels that day of salvation is past. His concept of the "end of the age" sounds radical to many people. Yet his father's concept of restoring Godliness in government was also viewed as radical.

The Vereides are involved with eight "corporate life" farms near Ft. St. John, British Columbia. These farms are composed of

Christians who have dedicated themselves to the "discipline of a separated walk in order to be redemptive in this time." Roman Catholics, of course, have long appreciated the discipline of the monastic order. But for Protestants, who glory in their individualism and independence (which many feel is born out of a rebellious nature), to pull aside and form corporate farms with communal living is an animal of a different breed. Especially is it interesting when a man of the stature of Abraham Vereide's son is involved.

I usually don't share things like this with my secular readership. However, as John Denver discovered in "Oh, God" — a lot of folks are interested in what God is doing today. Whether they go to church or not. And since I do not subscribe to the popular feeling that God has reached retirement age and isn't doing anything these days, I am interested when Milton Vereide comes along and talks about "three things God is doing."

These three things (and I imagine even Vereide would not limit God to only three) are:

A re-emphasis on corporate

living. This threatens many established churches, but Vereide predicts that in this fragmented world the only hope for survival will be in corporate communities.

A return to the soil. Like Dostoevsky who used to take off his shoes and walk barefooted on the Russian earth, so in a return to the soil do we receive healing in our inner parts. As I read this I remembered an incident last fall, when I sat cross-legged in the sand of the Sinai, letting it run through my fingers, and suddenly felt strangely "joined" to a spiritual root which ran all the way back to Moses — and beyond. Interesting! Although not unusual. A number of psychiatrists, starting with Carl Jung, have suggested that our spirits are indeed joined to those who have gone before.

Vereide says the final "move of God" is the call to "submission to an order" — a strong antidote to counteract the poison of rebellion and independence built into us by the age in which we live.

Vereide may be merely "whistling Dixie" when the Yanks have already won the war. But his theories demand investigation.