



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Extremism

If all this activity in the renewal movement of the church hasn't done anything else, it has at least re-instituted the office of the extremist in the Kingdom.

There is a difference between an extremist and a fanatic. A fanatic is someone who has lost his way and re-doubled his effort. He makes up for his spiritual emptiness with noise and activity. He is as dangerous as he is rude and insensitive. Get close to one and, like the drowning man in the lake, he's liable to pull you under with him.

Extremists, though, are a different breed. The extremist is full of life and knows where he is going. The problem comes when he gets so far out in front of everyone else that we lose sight of him. Even so, he is alive and kicking (even though his foot may be in your ribs when it's not in his mouth), and that's a whole lot better than being stone cold dead

in the market like most church Christians.

I'm not afraid of extremists. Like Vance Havner, I'd much rather try to restrain one than resurrect a corpse.

A friend and his wife recently returned from a harrowing vacation in Canada. On a lonely road high in the mountains they parked their car and started to climb down a steep hill toward a small stream, far below, where they intended to eat their picnic lunch. Half way down the steep, rocky hill the wife slipped. Screaming in terror, she fell headlong over a cliff and landed at the bottom of the ravine. When the frantic husband reached her she was lying face down in the stream, seemingly lifeless. The water around her was slowing turning pink from a nasty cut on her head.

The husband was panic-stricken. Pulling her from the icy water he laid her body on the bank and began

applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. There was no response. He blew into her mouth time and time again.

He pumped her chest. Then he blew some more. More pumping. More blowing. No response.

Finally, in desperation, he lifted his head and cried out to God. Loudly. Then he bent over, put his mouth against hers, and blew again.

She came alive. Her jaws snapped shut. And she bit off the end of his tongue.

Last week, when I heard him testify of the miracle, he was the happiest man I'd ever heard. Even if he did talk with a decided lisp.

Life, even if it kicks and bites, is better than no life at all. And sometimes a good hard shove is what it takes to get us in motion.

Thank God for extremists. Every movement needs one.

But that's all, thank you. Just one.