

him, but instead to his workers. He the good work.



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Finding A Goal

As a teenager I used to have a recurring dream. I would find myself in a large factory. Everyone was busy, working at machines, spindles or drills. I knew I was supposed to be there and knew I was supposed to be busy at some job, but I didn't know what it was.

Every once in a while the boss would appear and shout at me: "Get to work!" Then he would disappear back into wherever bosses go in dreams, and leave me with a horrible, frustrated, confused feeling. I would begin to run — as I often do in my dreams. Up and down the aisles of the factory where all the machines were humming, looking for what I was supposed to be doing — and never finding it.

It was a typical dream for a teenage boy who is looking for his life's work. I thought I was supposed to be everything from a medical doctor to a football coach to a forest ranger to the world's greatest lover. In reality I was none of those things. I was just a confused teenager

longing to be something other than a confused teenager.

The problem is, I have a friend who told me he was still dreaming a similar dream — at the age of 42.

Recently I have been sitting with a group of ministers who are asking themselves the question: "Who am I?" They have brushed aside such questions as "Who do others want me to be?" and focused in on "What do I really want to do with my life?"

This is a hard exercise for any of us, but especially for preachers, who have a tendency to be a bit pompous sometimes. They often wear masks and refuse to let people see who they really are. One man described himself, in a moment of painful revelation, as being "cocky without being confident."

But the sessions have been good as each man has talked about what he would do with his life if he were free from all restraints. What would he do if he didn't have to support a family, plan for retirement, fit into a mold designed by some church council, answer to his bishop. In-

terestingly, nearly all the men said they would remain in the ministry — but none of them would conduct their ministry as they are now doing it.

Several of the men expressed their frustrations because they were being forced to assume responsibilities greater than their capabilities. Others expressed disgust over being stereotyped as the man who always leads the invocation at Kiwanis. At least one liturgical minister expressed a loathing for having to wear a clerical collar — but he did it because his church order (and his bishop) demanded it of him.

It is hard to differentiate between what I CAN do and what I WANT to do. And the problem is not limited to ministers. Nearly all of us go through life frustrated, hoping the day will one day arrive when we can take off our masks and be real. Until we do, until we determine who we are and begin to express it, we will never find our work bench in the factory.