

# I'm me — no one else

It seems I am to spend my life paddling upstream. While nearly the whole of mankind, it seems, drifts with the currents, here I am doggedly battling in the other direction, determined to regain my individuality. Very few things are really precious, but one that is, is my uniqueness. Thus I cling to the control of my thoughts, take my stand on the rock of absolutes, and buck the raging tide toward sameness which this world is bent on achieving.

I am determined, for instance, not to be pushed around by fashion and advertising moguls who seek not only to tell me I should dress like a woman, but want to turn me into a walking billboard for their products.

Therefore I refuse to wear T-shirts that have ADIDAS blazoned on the chest, and the first thing I do when I buy jeans is clip the label. Last week my wife gave me a dress shirt that said Pierre Cardin on the pocket. Since my name is Jamie, not Pierre, I gave it back. Neither is my name Levi or Hang Ten.

I'm me!

The tough scene came at the auto dealers when our new car arrived. I balked at being a driving billboard for the dealer. I asked him to take his little sign off the tailgate. He said he never heard such a complaint before. I said that was because I'd never bought a car from him before. I offered several alternatives. I'd leave the little sign on the car if he'd give me a royalty of one

## Perspective

by Jamie Buckingham

cent for every mile. That's the way the song writers do it, you know. Or, perhaps he'd like to buy my books from me at a good discount and put one of them in the glove compartment of each new car he sold. He took the little sign off and we parted friends.

I'm not, as some accuse me, a cynical iconoclast. It's just I don't like being swept along with the flotsam.

All my experiences are unique—even those I share with others. I am not a sheep to be herded, I'm a saint. I choose to submit to authority as an act of my will. But I refuse to put my brain in neutral and buzz with the swarm.

I detest crowds. I stay home on July 4 and go to the beach when it is devoid of people. I value my indi-

viduality—and the individuality of others. It is the essence of being, the mark of creation, the reason for redemption.

God did not call me to unscrew my head and store my intellect in a jar. When His Spirit entered me he sanctified my intellect as well as my emotion. He wants me to be a free thinker, but one who realizes that only the Truth can really make me free.

There are lines I choose not to cross. But I refuse to be put in a box or labeled as a "them." I'm not a them. I'm a me.

I have, in the front of my Bible, several notes to myself. One of them says, "Jamie, don't let the world—or the church—mold you into its image."

That causes some misunderstanding sometimes. But it's kept me free.

Why not, as your drift by, turn and paddle with me. It would be nice to have company.