

RELIGION

God's perfect love casts out fear

As far back as I can recall, I have been afraid of the unknown. When I was a boy we used to take long trips from Florida to visit aunts and uncles in Kentucky and Indiana. Motels were nonexistent in those days, so we spent our nights on the road in tourist homes — bit houses in small towns where a widow or a retired couple would rent out rooms for the night.

It was always a terrifying experience, carrying the suitcases up the front steps, peering into the strange bathroom at the end of the dark hall, and lying in bed at night, listening for the footsteps of whatever it was destined to “get me” in the darkness.

The fears stayed with me as I grew older. When Jackie and I married and drove from Florida to Texas, it was the first time either of us had been away from home on our own. The first night our car broke down in Pensacola. It was dark and raining. I forced myself to do what was necessary — but what I really wanted to do was run all the way home.

In Fort Worth I found a job driving a city bus. I would get up before dawn and drive into the city to work — scared to death. Except for working for my dad in the orange groves and washing dishes in the college dining hall, it was my first job. I stayed scared all the time.

All the other people in the city seemed busy and secure. What I didn't know was they were mostly like me —

Perspective

by Jamie Buckingham

afraid, insecure, and always on the brink of panic.

The only place I knew where I felt secure was back home with parents and friends who had known and loved me from birth.

Then the old home place changed hands. Friends and loved ones died. Gradually I began to realize that if I was to find security I would have to look in a dimension other than family, friends, salary and house — the dimension of the eternal.

In the kingdom of God I have found all I was looking for in the dimension of the world — plus more. It started with a relationship with the Heavenly Father which is more real than I had with my own daddy. It continued with the joy of being filled with the Holy Spirit. It is being completed as the church, the visible expression of the body of Christ on earth, gathers around me in a community of loving, caring brothers and sisters.

It is this kind of perfect love which has, at last, cast out my fear.