

# RELIGION

## Christians enrich our lives and community

There is, in that inner closet of our lives we call "the soul," a deep longing to touch God. And to be touched by Him.

We don't like to talk about it. In fact, "religious conversations" never seem to be appropriate at cocktail parties or board meetings. Yet in our deeply private times we know we are more than just animals raised to a higher level. There is, in each of us — despite our moral weakness — a yearning to be restored to full fellowship with Him who first breathed life into our bodies.

Perhaps our reluctance to come to grips with this stems from the fact that those around us who are supposed to represent God seldom present a very clear picture. They are either negative, warring among themselves, self-righteous, holier-than-thou, building their own kingdom, or so compromising that even those standing on the outside looking in know that men of God don't act like that. It's a little sad, but often the very ones in our community who are supposed to convey the eternal truths our inner persons yearn to hear, somehow have a way of letting us down in their demonstrations of those truths.

The old Hindu, Mahatma Ghandi, once remarked, "I

### Perspective

by Jamie Buckingham

would have no trouble believing in Christ were it not for Christians."

There are very few "men of God" around anymore. Even those who are professionally religious — the men of the cloth — don't always do a good job representing Him. How well I remember the confession of a bishop: "I know that God is moving in a remarkable way in these days, but frankly I haven't had time to look into it. The work of the church keeps me so busy, you know."

Others, constantly afraid they'll be crucified — or worse, ignored — even dare to bless (through invocation

or benediction) that which God has cursed in an effort to win the favor of men. Poor creatures. They don't know that what the world is hungry for is a man who will stand up — even at the risk of crucifixion — and represent God to those of us who have a hard time hearing because of our moral impurities — rather than a "good Joe" who will join us in the cesspool for a friendly dip.

Fortunately, there are some in our community who are true representatives. I'd like to call their names, but to do so would destroy that which they seek to do. They are not necessarily wealthy, famous, educated or even religious. But they are spiritual men and women whose primary task in life is to point the rest of us toward Christ, and to help us fill that inner vacuum which St. Augustine reminded us was so shaped that only God could bring satisfaction.

In a world either gone mad with sin or coated with sentimental religion, they are what the Bible calls "the remnant." Our community is richer because of them.