



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

Kenneth Sawyer Goodman wrote a play entitled, "The Dust of the Road." A tramp, who is the reincarnation of Judas Iscariot, walks the roads on Christmas Eve. Every year he appears, seeking to undo the wrong he did to Jesus long ago.

On Christmas Eve the tramp comes to Peter Steele, a church official, who is on the verge of perjury and theft which will ruin his life. The tramp knows that even though Peter Steele will never be found out, that nevertheless, he will have to live with his conscience. And God will know too. So the tramp warns Peter Steele against what will happen to him if he commits this wrong. Says the tramp:

"You'll miss the joy of small things crying in the grass, and the pleasant sadness that comes of watching the fall of yellow leaves. You'll take no comfort in the sound of a woman's singing, or the laughing of a child, or the crackling of a fire in the grate. You'll walk the sunshiny roads and have only the dust of them in your throat. You'll see little lakes lying in the bosom of the hills, like purple wine in cups of green Jade, and have only the pain of daylight in your eyes. You'll lie down to sleep with the crystal stars blinking at you, and have only the empty blackness of night in your heart. I know it will be with you, Peter Steele."

And who should know better than Judas? Who should know better the emptiness and sham of a life that has betrayed all things honest, decent and good?

I have a friend who tells me he missed last year. Somehow he got off on the wrong track and even though he made more money in 1970 than any year of his life — he missed the year. I know some young people who missed it. They were wiped out on dope. In fact, if they don't come to themselves pretty quick they're going to miss the rest of their life.

It's bad enough to miss a year — but to miss a life time is tragic. I know a mother who can't enjoy her children because all they do is interrupt her way of life. A pregnant mother at the post office the other day was shouting at her two small children who were running up and down the sidewalk laughing, "If it weren't for children I'd be happy."

I have a feeling she'd be unhappy no matter where she was.

A friend of mine tells the story of a man riding on a train who took the only vacant seat in the diner. It was across from a husband and wife. The woman was berating her husband for everything from his choice of ties to the dirty silver on the table. Trying to calm the situation the other man asked the husband, "What do you do for a living?"

The man answered, "I'm a school teacher but my wife is a manufacturer."

"Oh, that's interesting. What does she manufacture?"

"Misery," the school teacher said shaking his head. "She makes me unhappy and makes everyone around her unhappy."

Maybe you missed last year. That's too bad. But don't miss a life time. It's the only one you'll ever have.