



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

My childhood Sundays were always the most pleasant day of the week. Sunday mornings were spent attending Sunday school and "church" at the little white stucco Community Church. I was too little to be concerned about the mechanics or organization of the institution. I knew my Daddy was the Sunday school superintendent and led the singing in the opening assembly. Old Dr. Wishart was the scholarly and distinguished pastor and Mrs. Mills, who also taught music in the public schools, played the organ. All our friends attended: The Thatchers, the Pooles, the Guys, the Schumanns, the Hardees . . . all our friends that we saw every day of the week we also saw on Sunday. It was good and pleasant that the brethren could dwell together in unity.

There were occasions when the unity was broken. I remember a pet cockroach named Archie who almost split the church. Archie lived in a matchbox (the kind the big wooden matches came in) and ate the "sticky" from gummed paper. One day I brought Archie to Sunday school and passed the box around for the other kids to admire. Archie was the only cockroach I had ever seen — or have seen since — who could stand up on his hind legs and make faces. He caused quite a stir in the class, and the teacher (whose name I shall withhold for sake of propriety) demanded to see what was in the box. It was a mistake. She screamed loud enough to wake the dead, threw Archie in the general direction of the piano, and resigned her teaching job on the spot.

I never did recover Archie (I imagine he lived a long and delirious life eating the glue off the offering en-

velopes) and remember distinctly my father's stern lecture that afternoon about how hard it was to find Sunday school teachers.

Most Sunday afternoons were quiet, though. Often our family would eat dinner at the Rose Garden Tea Room or at Moon's Boarding House and the children would take turns carrying the money to the cashier to pay the bill. The rest of the afternoon would be spent at the movie, the beach, or just riding our bikes around town.

I remember one Sunday afternoon was spent prying open a huge wooden keg my brother Clay and I found near the railroad crossing on 14th Avenue. It was extremely heavy and we imagined it was filled with gold ore or perhaps silver dollars. It turned out to be railroad spikes for the new tracks that were going down. When we sheepishly returned the keg we discovered similar kegs all up and down the right-of-way.

Sunday evenings were pleasant, too. There was Christian Endeavor at the church. We sat on the front row on wooden folding chairs that were covered with starched white cloth and sang "Follow the Gleam" and then ate little sandwiches with the crust sliced off.

After that we returned home and listened to the radio. There were Jack Benny and Edgar Bergen with Charlie McCarthy. My oldest brother, Walter, figured out how to hook the antenna from the radio to the copper screen in an upstairs window for better reception. Then the entire family would sit around the radio, eat popcorn and celery (I never have figured out that weird combination) and laugh at Rochester and Mortimer Snerd.