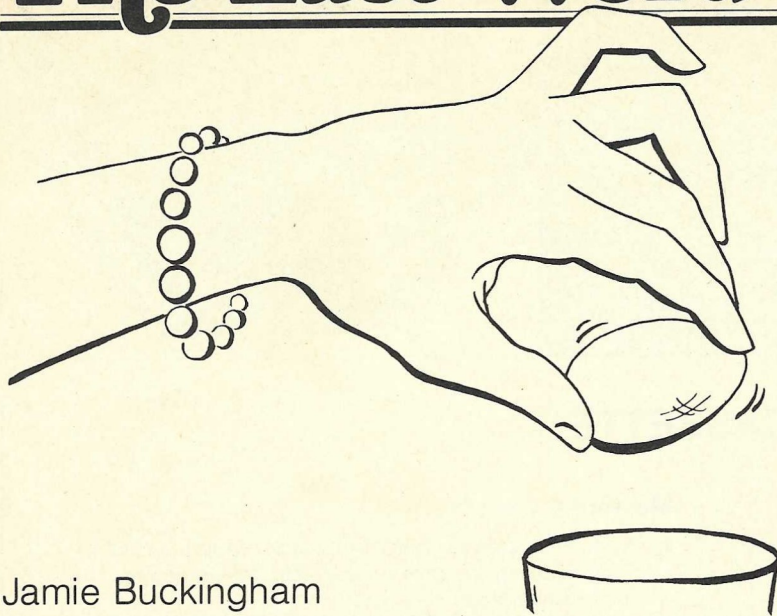


The Last Word



Jamie Buckingham

Pete the barber used to say: "There are three things I never discuss with my customers: women, politics and religion."

Pete never could keep quiet when anyone brought up women or politics, but he did a great job with religion. Now I would suggest to Pete—and other barbers—a fourth taboo subject.

Health foods.

In fact, I hesitate to bring it up myself since nobody, I mean nobody, is neutral on the subject. It's like the ERA. Everyone has an opinion even if they don't know what they are talking about.

The problem with health foods is not only do people have opinions; they have formulas. And cures! And briefcases loaded with Shaklee vitamins.

People who eat health foods are like those who join the volunteer fire department, lift weights or sell Amway. That's their life. It's all they think about. It's all they let you think about.

Show me a man who drinks carrot juice and I'll show you a man who, when he hits his thumb with a hammer, hollers "BRAN!" And when you run across a man who drinks the infamous "green drink" you have stumbled into that very holy of holies.

Now the problem does not lie in health foods. It lies in the extremists.

Recently over lunch I talked with a charming woman nutritionist. I am eager to learn all I can so I was taking copious notes. Then, in the middle of

our conversation, she pulled from her purse what appeared to be a golden chicken egg. Without breaking her conversation she began moving the egg back and forth over her water glass. Then she started to return it to her purse.

"Ah . . . what is that?" I asked, pointing to the egg.

"Oh," she exclaimed, "that is a molecular energizer. It changes the molecules of the minerals in the water so they won't poison me."

"It looks like a golden egg to me."

"That's just the case," she said, handing the egg to me for examination. "It is filled with special dirt dug from under the San Diego Freeway Bridge and mixed with chicken manure."

"How much did it cost?"

"Eighty-five dollars," she said. "The sad part is it loses its power after three months and I have to order a new one."

We continued our conversation about health foods, but for some reason I didn't feel like making any more notes.

I believe God is, for several reasons, restoring to the church an emphasis on nutrition. If it was important to God what the Israelites ate, so it should be important to us. But God is a god of balance. Just because we are now eating nuts does not mean we have to act like one.

At a covered-dish luncheon last month the hostess asked a visiting

minister to "say the blessing."

"I cannot bless what God has cursed," he said solemnly. "Your table has pig meat."

I spoke up. "That's all right, ma'am, I'll do it for you. God, bless the pig meat and other bothersome things in the room."

I didn't make a friend, but I sure did enjoy the ham biscuits.

We don't eat much ham any more. But if it is lowered down on a sheet (or a tablecloth) from heaven, I'm going to partake—and trust the promise of Mark 16:18 is still operative.

There are no easy answers. But I want to discover all I can about the connection between what you eat and what you are.

A hand-waving, eye-rolling, tongue-speaking enthusiast almost convinced me, a number of years ago, that the baptism of the Holy Spirit was psychological gimmickry. I don't want to let some extremists with golden eggs and a pocket full of pregnant ants to be eaten before meals to increase the enzymes keep me away from God's truth of nutritional health.

We haven't found our answer yet. I don't know why one biochemist says vinegar removes vitamins while another one says drink a glass full every day. I believe that radical diseases probably call for radical diets.

In the meantime (much to the displeasure of the children), we've removed the white sugar, bleached flour, all those things with unpronounceable preservatives, and most of the soft drinks from our cupboard. We're making the shift to grains, nuts, seeds, honey and raw bran (to keep the plumbing unstopped). We feel better and think better.

In fact, I'm even having some new insights on women, politics and religion.

Jamie Buckingham is pastor of The Tabernacle Church (Melbourne, Fla.) and author of numerous books, including *Daughter of Destiny*, *Kathryn Kuhlman . . . her story*; *Run Baby Run* and *Into the Glory*, published by Logos International.