

## **From the Archives continued...**

But Pike couldn't shut up, and continued to voice his unorthodox views. He opened himself to further criticism (and ridicule) by dabbling in the occult and participating in a televised séance seeking contact with his son, who had committed suicide (as one of Pike's mistresses had done and as his daughter had attempted to do). His claim that he was in communication with the spirit of Paul Tillich drew a rebuke from the theologian's widow. Pike escaped trial for heresy but was censured by the House of Bishops. He resigned his episcopate and left the Episcopal Church, declaring in an article for *Look* magazine that his former church was "a sick—even dying—institution."

In August 1969, Pike and his third wife, 26 years his junior, traveled to Israel as part of a project to produce a book on the historical Jesus. They rented a car and, on September 2, equipped only with a faulty map and two Coca-Colas, drove into the Judean desert, where Jesus is believed to have fasted and meditated for 40 days. The car got stuck in a deep rut. His wife went for help while he remained behind. She survived. His body was found four days later. He had wandered off and had fallen into a *wadi*. On viewing his decomposing remains, his wife expressed satisfaction that her husband was returning to nature. Others may have shared her sentiment.

-Jim Weingartner