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Letters

New Right concerns

As a Catholic priest and a professor of dogmatics I share Clifford Goldstein's concern about those who would impose by law Judeo-Christian ethics ("Who's Afraid of a Judeo-Christian America?"—July 1986). Quite correctly he questions the New Right agenda for the country. Actually the problem he raises was addressed by Governor Mario Cuomo's speech at Notre Dame University in 1984: "Religious belief and Public Morality: A Catholic Governor's Perspective."

The governor emphasized the need for consensus in order to produce a workable civil law. It is most important to recognize that civil law must be workable and practical, a regulation that the overwhelming majority sees as desirable. To imagine that civil law is simply a spelling out in detail of the divine law is to misunderstand its nature. Its purpose is not to lead us to salvation, as in the case of divine law, but to produce a peaceful and orderly society and thus pave the way for people of diverse persuasions to live with dignity and to follow their consciences. I do not think I am being very radical in saying this; rather, I believe I am very much within the Christian tradition (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox).

In the religiously pluralistic society in which we live it behooves believing Christians and Jews to be most careful to respect freedom of conscience, even when it is quite plain to us that some, even many, consciences are in ignorance. By now we should all be well aware that some very wicked events happened in the past 2,000 years, or at least since the time of Constantine, when Christians attempted to force values on those who did not share their faith. Jesus' approach was to win the mind and heart of men and women, not force them into conformity. Governor Cuomo suggested that this is best done by example.—Father John P. Mahoney, O.P., Providence College, Providence, Rhode Island.

Many thanks for Clifford Goldstein's "Who's Afraid of a Judeo-Christian America?" Seventh-day Adventists are generally to be commended on their insistence over the decades that church and state be kept separate. Only with such separation can we ensure that the multicultural and multiethnic ethos that is American can survive.

Thank you, too, for MINISTRY. I am a priest in the Syro-Malabar Orthodox (Indian Christian) tradition, and for several years I have enjoyed being one of your "guests" with your much-appreciated gift subscription. Your valuable articles have covered everything from pastoral burnout to the Temple of the Old Law and its furnishings as iconic of Christ Himself . . . and I've enjoyed your magazine. A day on which MINISTRY appears in my mailbox is always a little special!—Reverend Father Edward F. James, Ph.D., St. Elijah's Eastern Christian Mission, Washington, D.C.

I too have fears even as does the author, but my greatest is over the divisiveness of the followers of Jesus at the time of their greatest light, the greatest global danger, and their most glorious opportunity to make an impact for Christ.

Perhaps the words printed in bold type on page 12 of the same issue put it in perspective best—"A movement should not be judged by the excesses of some. Rather, it should be evaluated by the teachings and practices of its supporters."

I have no fears for America under the direction of the so-called New Right, for I have seen their biblically based mandates lift our nation upward in the past despite unscholular abuses. Likewise, I have seen the downward plunge of our country under the uncontested emphasis of godless pluralism.

Since Christians must make a stand somewhere, it appears to me that history is on the side of the New Right. Certainly Scripture says that God will exalt a nation that walks righteously, following His commandments, but will give those who reject Him over to a dark mind, with catastrophic results.

My prayer in this day is for a compassionate, tolerant body of believers who will have a vision of what God wants and will uniformly move toward doing His will, unswayed by any other considerations.—Richard B. Ail, Annville, Pennsylvania.

True reform, which changes attitudes, does not come from civil legislation. It comes from hearts softened by a relationship dependent on Jesus Christ. That is where our time, talents, and money should be directed.—Eds.

Cult—yes, no?

Several years ago I concluded that Seventh-day Adventism is a non-Christian cult. I still believe that. Please remove our church from your mailing list.—Thomas C. Hagerty, Mount Arbor Baptist Church, Marietta, Georgia.

It's a tragedy that your broadness of reasoning can't be widely circulated. It has certainly changed my view of Christianity, for I was reared in one of the most fundamental and exclusive sects on earth.

About two issues back you printed an article concerning the disparity between salvation by works and salvation by grace through faith. The article was wonderfully put together, and to my sorrow, that (Continued on page 28)
Demand for MINISTRY has grown to the extent that University Microfilms International of Ann Arbor, Michigan, has asked us for a contract to make available current and back issues.

Starting with January 1986, MINISTRY will be available on 16-millimeter microfilm, 35-millimeter microfilm, 105 microfiche, and printed article copies. Beginning March 1987, readers will be able to purchase the whole of 1986 for approximately $10. At the moment nothing before 1986 is available. However, University Microfilms has told us that when demand for back issues is great enough, they will film all the volumes, beginning with 1928.

Owning a microfiche reader is not expensive. It is true that you can spend several thousand dollars for a more sophisticated model, but you can also buy a unit for $215. Portable readers range from $89 to $350.

University Microfilms offers more than 13,000 titles besides our own. For more information, call them at 800-521-3044. If you are in Michigan, Alaska, or Hawaii, call collect at 313-761-4700. Or write University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Two series continue in this issue. Robert and Marie Spangler conclude their account of how they revitalized their physical and mental being. Richard Müller continues discussing the beliefs of the Anabaptists, focusing this month on baptism.

A recent survey of our readers indicates that Computer Corner ranks as one of the items of least interest. This is possibly because many readers feel intimidated by computers and do not use them. Ignorance is no longer justified once you have read our article “Computers: What You Need to Know.” One day computer illiteracy may be considered as great a social evil as being unable to read.

Technology, whether microfiche or computers, is here to stay. Let us learn how to benefit from it rather than ignore it lest we ourselves become obsolete.
J. R. and Marie C. Spangler

Get a NEWSTART!

Weimar’s program has brought about near-miraculous results healthwise for those who follow it. What are its secrets?

NEWSTART is an acronym that the Weimar Institute’s medical staff uses for “God’s eight true remedies”:

- Nutrition
- Sunlight
- Exercise
- Temperance
- Water
- Air
- Rest
- Trust in God

Nutrition

The N in NEWSTART comes from nutrition. NEWSTART’s success is not a result of any single factor. The genius of this plan is found in the marvelous blending together of every element that touches life. But the part of the NEWSTART program that made the greatest impact on us, and we believe on everyone who takes the course, was the change in dietary habits. The guests spent more time discussing the food than any other single element of the program. This indicated to us how deeply the taste factor is ingrained in our daily lives.

Our first meal was a shocker! We felt like King Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel’s day, who, after losing his reason, began eating grass. But we believed that the cook who was providing us with such tasteless food had lost his reason! The food was all—and we mean all—unrefined, as it came from the Creator’s hand. Because even orange and apple juices are refined, those of us on the therapeutic diet were taught to get our juice in its natural form by eating the whole apple or the whole orange. The bread and rolls we ate were whole grain and contained no oil or shortening whatever. Weimar’s cooks use no animal products, such as milk, cheese, or eggs. Neither do they use any salt, condiments, oil, grease, or sugar in preparing the food.

After a week or so, however, we became convinced that Weimar had fired the old cook and hired a new one. And by the end of the 25 days, we actually relished eating plain, unrefined food!

The scientific explanations the knowledgeable physicians gave did much to motivate us to eat this type of food. We learned that in the human race, fats and sugars are probably the two greatest contributors to the degenerative process. Ethnic Japanese living in Japan, Hawaii, and Los Angeles get 10 percent, 25 percent, and 40 percent, respectively, of their calories from fat. These differences in diet result in serum cholesterol figures of 150, 220, and 250 milligrams/deciliters, respectively. And more important, those Japanese living in Hawaii have a relative death rate from coronary heart disease four times that of those living in Japan, while the coronary heart disease death rate of those living in Los Angeles was nine times that of those living in Japan! Statistics such as these
soon took away our taste for fats and oils and made us appreciate the wholesome food God originally gave man to eat.

Em Baxter's excellent book *Almost Died!* points out that "this style of eating cannot be approached with the typical diet mentality, or it will never work. We must embrace it as a new way of living or we will gradually find ourselves slipping into old habits and patterns and losing all the benefits we had gained."

The program at Weimar included at least eight one-and-one-half-hour cooking labs conducted by professional nutritionists. In most of these we gained hands-on experience and then enjoyed the work of our hands at supper. When we left Weimar, we took with us a valued, newly acquired treasure—a notebook of recipes.

The institute uses two types of diet, a therapeutic and a preventative or maintenance diet. Both diets help those who follow them avoid all refined foods; select the proper foods for adequate intake of balanced amino acids, vitamins, minerals, and trace elements; and choose the types of foods that allow weight loss as needed and that clear the body of excess cholesterol and other unwanted materials that cause the tissues to degenerate.

Both diets contain the following rules:
1. Use no refined foods—no oil, margarine, shortening, sugar, syrup, or free starch. No white bread, white rice, or degenerated corn meal. No commercial meat substitutes of either the gluten or soy types.
2. Use no animal products—no flesh foods, eggs, or milk products.
3. Use recommended foods—all unsweetened fruits, preferably fresh, but also frozen or canned in fruit juice or water pack; all greens, especially turnip greens, mustard greens, radish greens, and comfrey; all herbs that are mild; all legumes (beans, peas, lentils, and garbanzos); all whole grains—use three kinds daily plus a legume to get the optimal balance of amino acids. The preventive diet also includes nuts used in moderation. The better ones are the nontropical nuts: almonds, filberts, pecans, and walnuts.
4. On a preventive diet, secure all nutritional needs from a daily serving of the following foods: a citrus food; a yellow vegetable, such as carrots; a green vegetable, such as greens or herbs; a legume; and three types of whole grains. Servings of tubers and nuts may be added if desired.
5. Avoid all liquids for 30 minutes before mealtime and for at least one hour after the meal.

In addition, those on the strict therapeutic diet should restrict their use of soybeans, tofu, and such high-fat foods as olives, avocados, nuts, and high-fat seeds. The Weimar staff told us that there were three unique birds on their campus. One of those birds could be identified by its warble of "chew, chew, chew." We learned that chewing unrefined food thoroughly not only helped the digestive process but allowed us to enjoy the rich taste of natural foods that heretofore we had not experienced fully.

But more important than the taste and quality of the food is one's attitude. Gratitude to God for His marvelous love in creating delicious, simple foods just for our enjoyment enhances the healing process.

**Exercise**

Exercise is a most important part of the NEWSTART plan. We gradually increased our walking until we were doing well over five miles daily. One guest averaged 10 miles a day. The second Weimar bird sings, "walk, walk, walk, walk, walk."

Exercise makes the heart more efficient, normalizes the blood pressure, increases the oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood, and allows a greater volume of blood to reach all parts of the body.

Early in the morning we "stretched-cised"—that is, for approximately 10 minutes we did limbering-up exercises. Then we began walking around the campus circle. As time permitted, we were able to get on the beautiful trails that are mapped out through 450 acres of woods.

God gave man the capacity to exercise. He is a God of activity! Genesis 1 and 2 describe Him as moving, forming, breathing, and making.

The Weimar staff urged us to notice the beautiful wildflowers, the majestic pine and redwood trees, the mountains, the deer, the running streams, and the meadows as we walked the trails. With our eyes and hearts focused heavenward, our exercise brought true healing to both body and soul.

Unless a person enjoys the exercise he is involved in, it really does little good. The Loma Linda University School of Health placed a group of student volunteers on an identical diet, each receiving the same amount of cholesterol, fats, proteins, and carbohydrates. All were free to select the exercise programs they enjoyed most, such as volleyball, tennis, swimming, and running. Medical personnel then measured the volunteers' blood cholesterol levels each day. In all of them the level dropped within three days. By the end of the week the drop was substantial. Then the activities were stopped. Soon their blood cholesterol had returned to preexperiment levels.

**Fat soup**

In order to determine what percentage of your diet fat makes up, you need to know how many calories' worth of fat each of the foods you eat contains.

To figure this on prepared foods, first check the label to find the number of grams of fat per serving. Then multiply that by 9, the number of calories in each gram of fat. If you divide that figure by the number of calories per serving and multiply by 100, you will have the percentage of calories in that food that comes from fat.

For example, the label on canned cream of mushroom soup says it contains seven grams of fat per serving. Multiply that by 9, the number of calories per gram of fat, and you find that 63 of the calories in a serving of cream of mushroom soup come from fat. The label says a serving contains a total of 100 calories. Divide the calories from fat by the total calories (63 divided by 100 equals .63) and multiply by 100 to convert to a percentage. Doing so reveals that 63 percent of the calories in a serving of cream of mushroom soup comes from the fat it contains.

When you analyze processed foods and realize how much fat the world is using, it is staggering. Then when you understand that we would be best off on a diet consisting of approximately 80 percent carbohydrates, 10 percent protein, and 10 percent fat, you can begin to see why degenerative diseases stemming from wrong dietary habits are on the increase.
Next the students were placed on treadmills. They exercised just as strenuously as before, but not as enjoyable. Surprisingly, when they did the blood tests, the researchers found that for the most part the volunteers' cholesterol failed to drop. In fact, in a few it actually went up. When they returned the students to activities they enjoyed, in every case their blood-cholesterol levels dropped again.

This experiment shows that a person's attitude toward any health habit either increases or decreases its effectiveness. The message is clear: Learn to like what's good for you!

Water

By weight, people are 70 percent water. We did a little calculating and found that all the water in our two bodies weighs 239 pounds!

Every body function requires water. If our bodies did not continually recycle the water they use, we would have to drink approximately 40,000 glasses of it every day.

Our instructors suggested that we drink eight or more glasses of water daily. The more water we drink, the less work our kidneys have to do in eliminating body waste. We began every morning by drinking four or five glasses each; and all through the day, except at meals, we continued drinking water. It is one of the cheapest, easiest health habits to acquire.

At Weimar we enjoyed water on our outsides as well as in our insides! We received numerous hydrotherapy treatments, such as contrast showers, steam and whirlpool baths, and hot packs—each followed by a massage. Well-trained college students performed the massages, ending the treatment by taking our hands and offering a beautiful prayer of thanks and petition to God for healing. This proved to be the finest part of the treatment!

Sunshine

Ninety-eight percent of the energy on the earth comes from sunlight. It creates the environment necessary for our existence, keeping the temperature and humidity at life-supporting levels. And sunshine is essential to growing the food the earth comes from sunlight. It creates oxygen, as does the breakup of water droplets by waterfalls and ocean surf.

We were taught that the first step in achieving self-control is awareness; the second, the right use of the will; the third, establishing realistic goals; and the final step, learning to accept insult and injury as part of the discipline of life. Not that we should become masochistic. But we must recognize that we live in an imperfect, even cruel, world in which the innocent as well as the guilty suffer.

The strength of the system is, in a great degree, dependent upon the amount of pure air breathed. Take advantage of this true remedy God has ordained for us to use. Praise Him for His free gift of air—pure, fresh, negatively charged outdoor air.

Air

Air that has a relatively high proportion of negatively charged ions is apparently healthier and more mood elevating, thus the exhilaration experienced by those who are near a waterfall or by the ocean. In the mountains, where an abundance of negatively ionized air exists, resorts and vacation spots flourish.

Air pollution and smog decrease the amount of negative ions present in the air we breathe. And indoors the negative ions adhere rapidly to the walls, air-conditioning ducts, and fabric. So exercise and work performed in clean open air are much more beneficial to health than indoor labor. Physicians urge us to open our windows at night, using plenty of warm bedding, in order to breathe deeply the fresh air.

Rest

Rest is as important to health as is activity. Our most vital organs need rest.

Perhaps the heart best exemplifies the necessary balance between rest and activity. Every 24 hours the heart, the strongest muscle in the body, beats more than 100,000 times and pumps almost 2,000 gallons of blood. With such a heavy work load it certainly needs rest—and it finds it. A normal heart beats about once every second. It takes for five minutes allows your body to produce sufficient vitamin D for the day.

To ensure the other benefits of sunlight, you should be out in it for 30 to 60 minutes a day. Use it and thank God for it!

Temperance

In the lecture on temperance our instructor shared such interesting concepts with us as: "Temperance alone is the foundation of all the graces that come from God, the foundation of all victories to be gained." 

Self-control, one of the highest functions of the human mind, is a skill that can be learned. As with any skill, the basic requirements for learning it are concentration and repetition.

We were taught that the first step in achieving self-control is awareness; the second, the right use of the will; the third, establishing realistic goals; and the final step, learning to accept insult and injury as part of the discipline of life. Not that we should become masochistic. But we must recognize that we live in an imperfect, even cruel, world in which the innocent as well as the guilty suffer.

It took Abraham a hundred years to learn self-control. Job mastered the skill through adversity and personal catastrophe. In modern times we have the examples of Mahatma Gandhi and Helen Keller. But the greatest example of all time is Jesus Christ. While His death set us free from the penalty of sin, His life exemplified the harmony with His laws of life and health that enable us to enjoy life at its best!

Air

Pure air, free from pollutants, especially tobacco smoke of any type, is important. Among all causes of cancer deaths, lung cancer, mainly attributable to smoking, is number one. (See the March 1986 issue of MINISTRY to learn about the new Breathe-Free Plan to Stop Smoking.)

Air is approximately 21 percent oxygen, 78 percent nitrogen, and the final 1 percent comprises various other gases. To function properly every cell in the body must have an adequate supply of oxygen. Lack of oxygen is thought to be a factor in causing degenerative diseases.

In experiments conducted on animals, increasing the percentage of oxygen in the air even slightly results in a corresponding decrease in blood cholesterol and triglycerides. The researchers even found a reversal in the hardening of the arteries. Connect with this the fact that cholesterol causes the red blood cells to become sticky and clump together, thereby blocking the very tiny blood vessels. As the blood's fat content increases, the amount of oxygen in the tissues decreases. So a person who wishes to have optimum health should increase the oxygen his tissues receive both by getting as much fresh air as possible and by seeing that fat remains a relatively low proportion of his diet.

Consider also that air is ionized. It contains negatively charged ions and positively charged ions. Outdoor air is naturally ionized by radioactive particles in the atmosphere and in the earth's crust. Sunshine also brings about ionization, as does the breakup of water droplets by waterfalls and ocean surf.

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Anabaptists and believer's baptism

Though both the major Reformers and the Anabaptists believed in “Scripture alone,” they differed regarding infant baptism. What did they each find in Scripture to support their positions?

As my second article pointed out, the foundation of Anabaptism is its concept of the church. Believer’s baptism, administered only to those who have experienced conversion, became important to Anabaptists because it was the outward sign of this new church concept. They opposed infant baptism because it meant in effect that everybody was baptized and everybody belonged to the visible church regardless of their beliefs. The Anabaptists were convinced that infant baptism is baptism administered to unbelievers.

All of the major Reformers wrote on the subject of baptism, mostly in order to oppose believer’s baptism. Many Anabaptists also wrote on this topic, Balthasar Hubmaier probably doing the best job of it. His writings influenced many. Even Menno Simons, after whom the Mennonites are named, reveals hardly any new thoughts, although he wrote sometime after the baptism controversy had started.

In the Schleitheim Confession (1527) the Anabaptists unitedly formulated their understanding of baptism. The first of the Confession’s seven articles states: “Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him, and to all those who with this significance request it [baptism] of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes, all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apos-
The appeal of the Reformers to the circumcision of male Jewish infants made a stronger argument for infant baptism.

The Reformers contend for infant baptism

In arguing for infant baptism the Reformers consistently appealed to the household baptisms mentioned in Scripture. They felt that children must have been included in the large households of ancient times.

But the Anabaptists found little support for the Reformers' contentions in the four biblical references to household baptism. In regard to the baptism of Cornelius' household (Acts 10:48), the Anabaptists said that verses 1 and 2 of chapter 10 make it clear that the whole household were believers: “a devout man who feared God with all his household” (verse 2, RSV). Those who fear God must be believers.

Concerning the second household the Reformers referred to, that of Stephanas, the Anabaptists pointed out that they served the saints and worked with the apostles (1 Cor. 16:15f.). “To serve the saints is a work of faith. Since the house of Stephanas served the saints, as Paul writes, therefore they showed by their fruits that they had faith.”

The Anabaptists pointed out that the members of the Philippian jailer's household believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and were baptized because of their faith (Acts 16:31-34).

And finally, the fact that the household of Lydia was named after a woman (Acts 16:15) probably indicates that she did not have a husband at that time. So she most likely did not have any infants.

The Anabaptists felt that because the texts do not really say that infants and small children were present, the whole argument from household baptism was based on presumption. While many households would include small children, many would not. Texts that do not specifically say that children were baptized cannot be used to support infant baptism. “For wherever mere presumption is followed, there evidently no proof is available.”

The appeal of the Reformers (including Luther, Zwingli, Bullinger, Calvin, and others) to the circumcision of male Jewish infants made a stronger argument for infant baptism. In nearly all their discussions of this topic, they pointed to the Old Testament indications that through circumcision infants became part of God's covenant with His people. They argued that if the infants of Israel could become members of the old church, should not infants now be allowed to become members of the new church?

The Anabaptists believed that Scripture itself refuted the Reformers' case. As Menno Simons expressed it: “For this reason I will hold before your readers the quoted Colossians 2:12 with which they try to prove their point, and humbly beseech them to judge impartially whether we find in this or any other divine Scripture that the circumcision of the Israelites was the prototype of infant baptism. It is incontrovertible that Paul, in this passage and also in Romans 2:29, teaches that the literal circumcision was a figure of the spiritual circumcision, but not of infant baptism. This circumcision cannot be applied to any but the believing, as may be plainly inferred from the figure of the literal practice. For the literal circumcision was to be performed with stone knives on the foreskin (Joshua 5:2, 3; Gen. 17:23). This spiritual Rock is Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 10:4). The knife with which thebelievers are circumcised is the holy Word.”

Faith must precede baptism

The genuine Anabaptists considered it of fundamental importance that their understanding of baptism was founded on Jesus' teachings and example. Frequently they quoted the text in which the resurrected Lord commissioned the disciples to proclaim the gospel throughout the world: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” (Matt. 28:19).

This text makes it clear that one should teach before one baptizes. The Anabaptists felt that the sequence Jesus established should not be reversed. It was obvious to them that infants could not be taught the Christian truth, so quite naturally they believed that they should not be baptized.

They also appealed repeatedly to Mark 16:16, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved’(RSV). Here again the Anabaptists pointed to the order established: first faith, then baptism.

When Martin Luther argued with the Anabaptists, he would ask how they could be so sure that infants do not have faith. Could they prove it from Scripture? Easily, they would answer. Faith is a gift of God that comes through hearing the Word of God. Paul states it quite clearly in his letter to the Romans: “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ” (Rom. 10:17, RSV). Even Luther himself translated this text as saying “faith comes through the sermon.”

The Anabaptists asked, If an infant cannot understand the preached Word of God, how can he have this faith? They concluded that infants could not have the kind of faith that should precede baptism, that which is the condition for our salvation.

Martin Luther felt rather strongly about this. He believed that he could prove from Scripture that infants have faith. In his own words: “There are Scripture passages that tell us that children... can believe, though they do not speak or understand. So Psalm 72 [106:37f.] describes how the Jews offered their sons and daughters to idols, shedding innocent blood. If, as the text says, it was innocent blood, then the children have to be considered pure and holy—this they could not be without spirit and faith. Likewise the innocent children whom Herod had murdered were not over 2 years of age [Matt. 2:16]. Admittedly they could not speak or understand. Yet they were holy and blessed. Christ Himself says in Matthew 18 [19:14], 'The kingdom of heaven belongs to children.' And Saint John was a child in his mother's womb [Luke 1:41] but, as I believe, could have faith. . . .

“I am giving proof that your foundation for rebaptism is uncertain and false inasmuch as you cannot prove that there may not be faith in children. Inasmuch as John had faith, though he could not speak or understand, your argument fails, that children are not able to believe. To hold that a child believes, as
Saint John is an example, is not contrary to Scripture. If it is not contrary to Scripture to hold that children believe, but rather in accord with Scripture, then your argument, that children cannot believe, must be unscriptural.”

This kind of argumentation and use of Scripture could not convince the Anabaptists. And they found Luther’s reference to Matthew 19:14, “Let the children come to me” (RSV), no more persuasive. While Jesus blessed the children because of their trustful attitude toward Him and pointed out their trust as an example for those who belong to the kingdom, He did not baptize the children.

The Anabaptists viewed Jesus’ teaching as being crystal clear. Only believers who, having heard the good news of salvation, have come to trust in Jesus for their salvation should be baptized.

The Anabaptists believed that Christ’s apostles had the same understanding as their Master. The first part of Acts contains an important statement on baptism. When Peter preached his fiery sermon on that famous first Pentecost, the listeners wanted to know what to do. His answer was, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38, RSV). Here, the Anabaptists pointed out, we find the same sequence Jesus gave: first repentance and then baptism. An infant cannot change his mind (which is the true meaning of repentance) and so should not be baptized.

**Original sin and infant baptism**

But, some Reformers replied, do we not receive forgiveness through baptism? Do we not find original sin, inherited from Adam, in the infant? And do we not have to baptize infants so that they may be saved should they die in infancy?

Menno Simons gave the following answer: “To teach and believe thus, my brethren, is first of all a dangerous idolatry and an abominable blasphemy against the blood of Christ. There is no remedy in heaven nor on earth for our sins, whether original or actual, other than the blood of Christ, as we have shown in our first writings (1 Peter 1:19; 1 John 1:7; Eph. 1:7). . . . If we could be washed or cleansed by baptism, then the blood of Christ and His merits would have to abdicate, unless we are prepared to admit that there are two means for the remission of sins: first, baptism; and second, the blood of Christ. This cannot be. For the most holy and most precious blood of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ must and shall have the praise, as has been so clearly declared and testified by all the true prophets and apostles throughout the Scriptures.

“Those who believe receive remission of sins, not through baptism but in baptism, and in this manner . . . .

“Then they receive the holy baptism as a token of obedience which proceeds from faith, as proof before God and His church that they firmly believe in the remission of their sins through Jesus Christ as it was preached and taught them from the Word of God.”

According to the Anabaptists, children who die before they are baptized are under the grace of God. Before they reach the age of discretion, although they partake of Adam’s transgression and sinful nature, God reckons them as being without sin. Forgiveness does not come through water but through Christ’s blood. Baptism is a symbolic act by which the believer expresses his faith that Christ died for his sins. In addition, it symbolizes the believer’s own dying to sin and his being resurrected to newness of life. Paul wrote to the Romans: “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3, 4, RSV). Because of these and many other texts, the Anabaptists believed that the apostles also clearly taught that baptism should be administered only to believers.

For a number of reasons, then, the Anabaptists were convinced that their practice of baptism was the correct one. First, because Scripture, the Reformers’ only rule of faith and teaching, supports believer’s baptism. Second, the theology of baptism, the very nature of baptism and what it symbolizes, points only to believer’s baptism. And third, the New Testament teaching that the church does not consist of every member of society, but only of those who are called out, those who respond to God’s call in faith and obedience and are willing to follow Christ in active discipleship, calls for believer’s baptism. According to the Anabaptists, it is the very sign of submission and discipleship. For these reasons the Anabaptists had to reject infant baptism as belonging to the tradition that ought to be reformed.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church is one of the many Protestant denominations that follow the practice of believer’s baptism. This part of our heritage traces back through the Baptist movement in England to the Anabaptists on the Continent. But the line of tradition in which we stand is not the main reason we practice believer’s baptism. Underlying our practice is our belief that we should follow the example and teaching of the apostolic church as clearly expressed in the New Testament.

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1 Balthasar Hubmaier’s main tracts on baptism are: Von dem christlichen Tauf der Gläubigen (1526); Ein Gespräch auf Zwingli’s Taufbuchlein (1525/1526); Von dem Kindertauf (1525/1526); and Eine Form zu Taufen (1526/1527). But he also speaks about baptism in other writings, especially in his last one, Eine Rechenschaft des Glaubens (1528), which is a kind of confession of faith. All these tracts are published in Quinn Westin and Torsten Bergsten, Balthasar Hubmaier: Schriften, in Quellen der Täuferei, Vol. IX (Gütersloh, 1962).

2 Menno Simons’ works on Christian Baptism (1539) and Reply to Gellius Fabor, Chapter III, “Baptism,” are also important. They can be found in The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, translated from the Dutch by L. Verduin and edited by John C. Wenger, with a biography by H. Bender (Scottdale, Pa., 1956), pp. 227-287; 681-717. A more extended discussion on the Anabaptists’ understanding of baptism can be found in William R. Estep, The Anabaptist Story (Grand Rapids, 1963), pp. 150-178. This is, of course, only one chapter of the extensive literature that is available on this question.


4 See The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, p. 281.

5 Ibid., p. 281.

6 Ibid., p. 282.

7 Ibid., p. 281.

8 Ibid., p. 260f.


10 The Complete Writings of Menno Simons, p. 244.
In the fourth decade of my life I finally became aware that God really wants to hear from me. This realization did not come easily. It took a crisis to open my life, to teach me the communication that reaches far beyond even the closest human relationship. When, through opening the doors of my life to the Father, I moved from considering Him as being “somewhere out there” to an intimate, personal relationship with Him, all things truly became new.

Fortunately, throughout my life I have known that my parents had a very deep commitment to me. During my time in college and the service they delighted to hear from me by phone or pen. They wanted to share the joys, the victories, the defeats, the trials, the needs, the concerns of my life. Since I knew in the core of my being that they really looked forward to their son's words, I wrote and called often. I could not help communicating!

But it was not until that fourth decade that I really saw that God loves this same communication. When Billy, the second of our four sons, was 2, we discovered that he had a tumor on his lower spine. By the time we had discovered the cancer, it had metastasized to his bone marrow. Deep pain struck through to the core of my being, and I became angry with God. Even after seven years in the ministry I had only an intellectual faith, not a personal, experiential one. I became bitter toward the God who was somewhere out there and not concerned with my need. Not understanding the battle between Christ and Satan over the soul of every individual, I cried out to God, “If Billy dies, I'm not your minister anymore!”

Before my eyes our Father lovingly carried Billy through 110 days in the hospital that included marrow taps, cobalt treatments, and chemotherapy. And He gave our child the victory of victories: eternal love in eternal life. The Lord led a young Baptist intern at Children's Hospital in St. Louis to love Billy with the irresistible communion of God's love. So close was their friendship that our son fell in love with Jesus Christ, asking the Saviour into his trusting heart. Now that I've been born again, I can understand Billy's response from this perspective, yet even back then I could see in Billy a power bringing love, joy, and peace, and providing an unbroken union of his soul with God. His living testimony deeply touched my wife and me and all who came into contact with him. I felt the great contrast in our attitudes, the bitterness in my heart toward Jesus and Billy's love for Jesus through it all. As I walked my dark road, something just had to give.

Billy's death-bed sermon
The cancer took Billy's life one year after it was discovered, but not before he spoke the few words that became to me a life-turning sermon. He seemed in deep pain one day while sitting at his play table. “How are you feeling?” I asked him. With the deepest trust and peace I had ever seen in his face, he looked at me and said, “Jesus is making me better!” That was all he said, but I knew that Billy possessed that relationship with God that every soul hungers for. How could I hate the Lord whom Billy loved so much? Eventually I was to find for myself...
that same personal, liberating relationship, and the bitterness within me completely disappeared!

One morning soon afterward I was to enter Billy's room, call his name, and get no response. As I touched his lifeless body, an amazing sense of victory flooded my soul. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? . . . Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" seemed to be spoken right into my mind. The words and triumphal music of the "Hallelujah Chorus" ran through my mind in lifting power.

For the first time in my life I reached for my Bible for the help it could bring me and not as a tool kit for producing sermons. Providentially, I was led to Paul's great symphony to the victory of Christ's love, Romans 8 and particularly verse 32: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" For the first time I knew that God was not way out there. He also was involved in the thick of human struggle: He lost His Son too! He knew my hurt! My love for Him was kindled and began to grow even months before I came to know Him.

Christ's Spirit was calling me to prayer and conversion. But as the crisis of Billy's loss started to recede into the past and we had gotten through it, I did not seek a consistent devotional life.

A little more than a year later I was called to a new ministry. There the lack of spiritual power occasioned by my continuing separation from Jesus Christ nearly caused me to leave the ministry. The Lord allowed me to come to the point where I desperately needed to know Him! I heard clearly the call to consistent time in prayer with God. Early in the morning, in the bone-chilling cold of a Northeastern winter, I struggled down to an easy chair with Bible in hand and said in effect, "God, I need You. I am going to meet with You here every morning in prayer, the study of Your Word, and the reading of hymns. Please make Yourself known to me."

For 200 mornings, while I carried out this contract, God was preparing my heart. Then a loving Christian sister explained to me the beautiful plan of salvation, and I received Jesus Christ into my life as Lord and Saviour. Truly, His Word is unshakably faithful. "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13).

Prayer as a calling of God is only actualized in a life that senses its utter helplessness apart from that unbroken communion. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in thy sanctuary" (Ps. 63:1, 2).

Prayer is absolutely essential to our spiritual life, just as being able to share with others around us is crucial to our lives as social beings. God's word to us is clearly presented in the Scriptures, personally incarnate in Jesus Christ, gloriously displayed with joy and beauty in nature. But if we could not respond in supplication, intercession, and appreciation, all would be empty, like an eternity in front of a television, a thing that does not hear or empathize. The knowledge that we are always in His thought and loving care gives us total security and peace.

Truly, prayer is a calling of God for all Christians and not an option. We receive from prayer and Bible study, those powerful poles of human-divine communication, the content and direction for our ministries. In this way the Holy Spirit leads, guides our impressions, and gives wisdom.

Praying for yourself first

In intercession I must begin with myself. As we all do, daily I need to receive Christ's protection spiritually, mentally, and physically.

By beginning with myself I admit that unless my heart is aligned with the life of Christ, unless my needs are met by Christ, little can happen in and through me in ministry to others. The Holy Spirit would not be allowed free access to others through my going forth to serve. As Oswald Chambers wrote so long ago, I must be converted every day. So I say to the Lord, "Take me as wholly Thine." I claim promises pertinent to the day that I face. I seek from His gracious hands qualities of mind and character I sorely need each day: meekness, honesty, humility, patience, wisdom. As a husband and father, I seek guidance in leading our family. I seek Christ's keeping and controlling of my life, and knowledge of His Word, His will, His plan for my life, His gifts of healing and discernment (1 John 4:1), and the capacity to serve as pastor, teacher, and counselor. I seek for the courage to obey. I pray that I might keep Christ central and uplifted in all my conversation. I need the perspective Christ upheld: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Then, in a similar way, I pray for others: my wife, our sons and related families, church leadership, community leadership and beyond, and the individuals to whom I minister. Speaking earnestly through the apostle Paul, our Lord says, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1). A major part of our without-ceasing communion with the Father is to be intercession on behalf of others.

I visualize the individuals for whom I am praying as if they stood before me. I picture Christ's Spirit touching them and their needs, and leave the fulfillment up to the Lord. I picture wholeness of spirit, mind, and body for each person, the full realization of their created potential for the Lord's use. I firmly believe that laying our petitions before the Lord enables things to happen that would not happen if we did not pray.

For the most part, we know whom we will see each day. I believe that meeting
with the Lord and visualizing these individuals—their lives, their families, their part in my life—prepares me to encounter them with an interest that is deep and vital, adding an amazing depth to our relationship.

Systematizing intercessory prayer

I use a system of 3 x 5 cards upon which I write specific items as I encounter those persons for whom I am interceding. The cards are more easily updated than lists in a notebook: I can add to them or file them, keeping my prayer time current as needs are met. I may write the needs of one person or those of a whole group on each card, depending on the extent of my involvement in their lives. It brings me joy, day by day, to record on the cards the answers to the specific needs.

Prayer covenants add another dimension to my intercessory prayer. Often we share deeply with other people and say in parting, “I will pray for you.” We usually remember their needs for only a few days. A prayer covenant involves a mutual commitment to pray daily for each other’s needs over a 30-day period. On a card each prayer partner writes his name, address, phone number, the dates of the covenant, and the specific needs for which the other is to pray. Then the partners exchange cards. At the end of the covenant period, the partners contact each other by phone or letter to ascertain what has taken place as a result of consistent, trusting intercession.

Like you, I find a consistent devotional life a challenge. It is the commitment to others to pray for them daily that always gets me moving and positioned for that unbroken communion. Prayer on behalf of others in a systematic, committed pattern produces great joy that is too good to miss! In any endeavor, only consistent effort bears fruit.

Each day as I meet with Jesus in the sanctuary by faith, He fills me with renewing power. As I live the ministry He has shared with me and meet the persons for whom I am praying, how deep the encounters become when I am able to say: “Your life is important to me. Today I prayed that every blessing of God would come into your life and fill your every need.” Each person, no matter how “turned off,” needs Christ. Intercession, the Lord guarantees, opens and grows ministry!

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all . . .”

Computers: what you need to know

Shopping for a computer can be complicated, especially if you don’t even know what questions to ask. Here’s what you should know before you go shopping.

Do you like to make last-minute changes in your sermon notes? Do you preach a sermon more than once? Have you ever lost your notes the day before you were going to preach? How about the Bible studies you share with others—would you like to be able to revise them and tailor them to individual needs without having to retype them each time?

Does it take hours of arduous labor to update your membership list and put it in alphabetical order for distribution to members? And what about your interest file—has it started looking more like a pile?

Could the church treasurer use some help to get reports out faster? Would you like to be able to analyze quickly the giving patterns of your members? Wouldn’t it be nice to be able quickly and easily to create charts that show how the budget is going?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, chances are good that you could benefit from a computer. It would make revising your notes a snap. And the lost copy would be no problem—just print out another! With a computer you could make address changes and print new member and interest lists every month if you wanted to. And a good financial program will save your treasurer hours each week.

Maybe you already knew all that but have been putting off looking into computers because it seems like there are too many choices to make. Admittedly, shopping for a computer can be a bit like
brands continue to proliferate, selecting a computer for the church has actually gotten a little bit simpler in recent years.

Choose your operating system first

The first and most important choice you must make in selecting a computer is deciding what operating system you want to work with.

So what is an operating system? Basically it is the engine that runs the computer—it is the basic operating information built right into the machine that tells it how to respond to various commands. (The operating system is what makes it simple for people who know nothing about computers to use them. You do not have to learn a programming language in order to communicate with the machine.)

For the first several years that microcomputers were on the market almost every brand of computer had its own operating system. What that meant was that programs (software) written for one computer would not run on a computer manufactured by any other company. Trying to interchange programs was kind of like trying to put a Ford engine into a Chevrolet. It could be done, but it was hardly worth the effort.

The first big step toward standardization came when Digital Research Corporation’s CP/M (Control Program for Microcomputers) was adopted as the operating system for several brands of computers. CP/M would probably still be the most popular operating system if IBM had chosen to use it for its personal computers. But IBM chose instead to use a variation of a system created by the Microsoft Corporation called MS-DOS (Microsoft Disk Operating System), and many manufacturers jumped on the bandwagon with IBM. IBM-compatible machines all use MS-DOS, or its variant PC-DOS, as their operating system.

The majority of personal computer manufacturers now make their machines as closely compatible with IBM as possible. This move toward standardization has been a real boon to computer users. Now programs and data are much more easily interchangeable between machines. A “best of both worlds” development has recently come on the market too. For about $100 worth of hardware (a NEC V-20 chip) and software an MS-DOS machine can now be modified to run many CP/M as well as MS-DOS programs. The “fix” won’t work the other way, though. CP/M machines cannot be easily modified to run MS-DOS.

Whether MS-DOS will continue to be the standard for most computers remains to be seen. But for now a machine that uses MS-DOS or PC-DOS (hereafter referred to as IBM compatible, or simply compatible) is a wise choice for several reasons, chief of which is pure numbers. So many IBM-compatible machines are on the market that programs to run on them are abundant and prices for both hardware and software are competitive.

Having said that, we must hasten to add that many pastors are very happy using computers with other operating systems. The Macintosh is especially popular with some because it is easy to use, and because of its graphics capability. So in choosing the operating system that is best for you, don’t just follow the crowd. You also need to consider the programs you will want to run. If your heart is set on using software you’ve seen demonstrated on a Macintosh, don’t buy an IBM-PC and hope it will run that program.

The second consideration you should make in selecting a computer is warranty and service. You will be best served by purchasing a well-established brand from a dealer who can offer good and timely advice and service.

Deciding what you need

Once you’ve decided on the operating system you plan to use and narrowed down the number of brands you want to consider, you can start serious hardware shopping. For simplicity’s sake we will assume that you have chosen to buy an IBM compatible. Many of the comments we make about these computers are applicable to other types as well.

The basic internal workings of all the brands are very similar, and you shouldn’t have to worry about terminology like mother board, real-time-clock, and command processing unit. The only internal equipment issue you need to be concerned with is the amount of Random Access Memory (RAM) you should have.

RAM is a measure of how much information can be stored in the computer’s internal memory. It is measured in kilobytes. (A byte represents one piece of information such as a letter or number in the memory. A kilobyte is 1,024 bytes.) Most IBM compatibles are capable of having up to 640 kilobytes (640k) of RAM, but many come standard with only 128k. For most applications 256k is adequate, but some programs may require more. Additional RAM chips can be installed easily and inexpensively.

Once you’ve determined the amount of RAM you need, it’s time to choose the peripherals you will use with the computer. Peripherals include the keyboard, disk drives, monitor (TV screen), and printer.

Since most brands offer only one keyboard, study the one you are considering carefully. Is it comfortable to the touch? Are frequently used keys such as the carriage return (enter), shift, control, and alternate easy to reach? How long is the cord that attaches the keyboard to the computer—will it allow you to vary your keyboard position for different desks?

You will notice several special keys on a computer keyboard that you will not find on a typewriter. The keys numbered F1 through F10 are called function keys. Most programs use these to perform specific functions or allow you to choose specific functions for them. The control and alternate keys are used in conjunction with other keys to modify their function in much the same way that a shift key is used to modify a key’s function to create capital letters. The escape key is used in different ways by different programs, but commonly allows you to “escape” from a certain level of the program back to the previous level.

Most of the compatible computers will
Disk drives and hard disk drives. The various types of drives are capable of storing and reading different amounts of information at different speeds. The information stored on the disk is measured in bytes, kilobytes, and megabytes. (A megabyte is 1,000 kilobytes.) Floppy-disk drives do not flop. They got their name because the disks we put into them are flexible, or floppy. The most common type of floppy disk in use today is 5¼ inches in diameter. The amount of data that can be stored on such a disk depends on the disk drive. The earliest drives were single-sided, single density, meaning they wrote on only one side of a disk and that the information was packed together at “single density.”

IBM-compatible computers come standard with one or two floppy-disk drives configured to read double-sided double-density disks. That means that they write data on both sides of the disk and at twice the density of earlier drives. With this arrangement each disk is able to hold 360 kilobytes of data.

Another type of floppy-disk drive that is becoming very popular is the 3½-inch miniature drive. Despite their small size, the 3½-inch disks can store nearly twice as much data as the 5¼-inch ones.

Hard-disk drives can store much more data and retrieve it much faster than a floppy. These drives have a disk made of metal permanently mounted inside, so you never see the disk. Typical hard-disk drives designed for use with personal computers can store 10 to 30 megabytes of data—that’s up to 85 times as much as a 5¼-inch floppy disk. And the drive itself takes up no more space than a floppy-disk drive. Hard drives are, of course, more expensive than floppies.

A computer with two floppy-disk drives may be adequate for most small and medium-sized churches’ general applications. But the software you plan to use may require a hard disk, so, before you buy, know all you can about the programs you plan to run on the computer.

Several types of hard-disk drives are available. One choice you will need to make is whether to have the drive internally mounted in your computer. This is very convenient if you move the computer from place to place frequently.

A relatively new option in hard drives is called a “hard card.” Essentially it is a hard-disk drive that attaches to one of the expansion slots provided on most IBM-compatible computers. Be sure before purchasing a hard card that it is compatible with your computer.

If you do purchase a hard disk, be aware that unless you have a convenient system for making backup copies, keeping your data on it is a little like putting all your eggs in one basket and setting it on a windowsill. If a floppy-disk drive malfunctions, you can always take your disk and read it in another drive. Not so with hard drives. If the drive fails, your data is permanently lost unless you have made copies of it either on floppy disks, another hard drive, or on tape. For many applications, floppy-disk backup is easy, but if you produce a lot of data in a short time you may want to consider streamer-tape backup. Your dealer should be able to point you to the best backup method for your application.

It is essential to make backup copies, whatever type of disk drive you have. But it is especially important to keep current backups of data on a hard-disk drive.

Printer

A printer may as well be considered an integral part of your computer even though you can run the computer without one. You need a printer to be able to put your sermon notes on paper. It might be rather distracting for your congregation to watch you reading your notes off a pulpit monitor.

You will most likely be interested in one of the two most common types of printers: dot matrix and letter quality. There are more advanced types such as laser printers and xerographic printers, but few churches need such elaborate equipment.

Dot-matrix printers have several advantages over letter-quality ones. They are faster, can do graphics, and generally are less expensive. But for doing correspondence and printing the church bulletin you may decide you need a letter-quality printer.

Dot-matrix printers produce letters composed of numerous little dots and typically can print 100 to 200 characters per second. Many of the recently produced models also have a feature called Near Letter Quality (NLQ). Invoking this mode of printing slows the printer down but allows it to make letters that look less like a group of dots and more like a letter produced by a typewriter. Be sure to examine samples of the work produced by the printer you are interested in, and decide for yourself...
whether the NLQ feature is good enough or whether you really need a letter-quality printer.

Letter-quality printers typically increase in price as they increase in speed. A relatively inexpensive one should print about 16 to 20 characters per second, while the more expensive models produce 45 to 55 characters per second. Faster ones are available but at a very high price. The ideal choice would be to have a dot-matrix printer for doing quick jobs and a letter-quality printer for doing finished products.

Choosing software

Perhaps we should have dealt with software first, since the type of software you plan to run will help you decide what hardware you need. But then again you need to understand the hardware options before you can understand the requirements of various types of software.

Without good software a computer is worse than useless and may become a hazard rather than a help.

Integrated church office systems are software packages designed especially to meet the needs of churches. They integrate all the functions of the church office into one package. A good system should be useful to the church treasurer as well as the church secretary. It should be able to produce a list of choir members or a list of those who are giving to the new steeple fund.

Some integrated packages include all of the following types of programs right in their system, but with others you will need to purchase separate programs for these applications.

A word processor is a program that allows you to write sermons, letters, and reports, store them on a disk, and print them out. A good one should allow you easily to move blocks of material around within a document and to search for and find a word. And it should not have a complicated command structure requiring several-keystroke commands. If you plan to produce church bulletins on the computer, be sure your word processor can work with and move columns of material.

A helpful optional program for use with the word processor is a dictionary program to find any misspelled words in the documents you create.

A filing system program allows you to create the equivalent of a card file within your computer and allows you to sort the cards into any order you want. If you are filing names and addresses, you should be able to produce an alphabetical list, or a list based on zip code numbers or on any other piece of data in the file.

A spread-sheet program is for mathematical and financial calculations. It will allow you to enter mathematical data and rapidly analyze it, using various formulas.

A telecommunications program allows you to hook your computer to a telephone line via a modem (an optional accessory) and thus communicate with other computers or receive data from commercial databanks.

We could list many other types of programs under the et cetera category (see, for example, a description of outline processing in Computer Corner, p. 25), but the ones listed above will give you a good start in using your computer. You will discover many additional uses as you become more familiar with computing.

A final word about computer shopping: there will always be new, improved products coming on the market. You could wait years to buy the best machine. But during all those years you would be working with no machine. It is far better to take the plunge now and to enjoy the benefits of your best selection today than to continue shopping, waiting for something better. If you make a wise selection now, it will serve you for many years. You may not have a few of the ‘bells and whistles’ that will become available later, but you will have a good, dependable machine to help you do the Lord’s work more efficiently.
Books that have enriched my devotional life

"Happiness is a choice,"
"Life is difficult," and
"Lives that are effective are not always those that attract attention" are some of the themes reviewed in these books.

"God says: I like youngsters. I want people to be like them.
I don't like old people unless they are still children.
I want only children in My kingdom; this has been decreed from the beginning of time.
Youngsters—twisted, humped, wrinkled, white-bearded—all kinds of youngsters, but youngsters.
There is no changing it; it has been decided. There is room for no one else.

"I like little children because My image has not yet been dulled in them.
They have not botched My likeness; they are new, pure, without a blot, without a smear.
So, when I gently lean over them, I recognize Myself in them.
I like them because they are still growing, they are still improving.
They are on the road, they are on their way.
But with grown-ups there is nothing to expect any more.
They will no longer grow, no longer improve.
They have come to a full stop." *

Many of us have been raised on the classic Prayers of Peter Marshall. But many are not nearly so familiar with Prayers by Michel Quoist. The above extract is part of the first prayer in this book.

In this article I will share four books that have had a significant impact on my devotional life. While the Bible is the main focus of my study, these books also supplement and stimulate my thinking.

Abbe Michel Quoist served for four years as pastor in a busy city parish in Le Havre, France. As a political and social scientist, he has been widely recognized for his studies of urban working-class people.

These prayers reflect the lives of real people. Some may shock, but they all inform. We must beware of a too-insular approach to life.

"I have just hung up; why did he telephone?
I don't know. . . Oh! I get it. . .
I talked a lot and listened very little.
Forgive me, Lord; it was a monologue and not a dialogue.
I explained my idea and did not get his;
Since I didn't listen, I learned nothing.
Since I didn't listen, I didn't help.
Since I didn't listen, we didn't commune.
Forgive me, Lord, for we were connected,
And now we are cut off" ("The Telephone," p. 19).

This next quotation could be made the subject of many sermons as well as

* All quotations from "Prayers" by Michel Quoist are used with permission of Sheed & Ward, 115 East Armour Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64111.

J. David Newman, is the executive editor of Ministry.
prayers: "Lives that are effective are not always those that attract attention" (p. 44).

I quote only a portion of this next prayer, but it portrays in graphic language life as it really is:

"Here, Lord, before You, tonight, are
the bodies of sleeping men:
The pure body of the tiny child,
The soiled body of the prostitute,
The vigorous body of the athlete,
The exhausted body of the factory worker,
The soft body of the playboy,
The surfeited body of the rich man,
The battered body of the poor man,
The beaten body of the slum child,
The feverish body of the sick man,
The painful body of the injured man,
The paralyzed body of the cripple,
all bodies, Lord, of all ages.

"Here is the body of the fragile newborn baby, plucked like ripe fruit from its mother.
Here is the body of the lighthearted child who falls and gets up, unmindful of his cuts.
Here is the body of the worried adolescent who doesn't know that it's a fine thing to grow up.
Here is the body of the grown man, powerful and proud of his strength.
Here is the body of the old man, gradually failing.
I offer them all to You, Lord, and I ask You to bless them, while they lie in silence, wrapped in Your night" (pp. 36, 37).

These prayers have helped to shape my own prayers both private and public. It is far too easy to get into a rut in one's prayer life. When it comes to public prayer, most people develop a certain style and seldom deviate. You can predict how they will begin and close, and most of what is in between.

**Happiness Is a Choice**

_Happiness Is a Choice_ is the startling title of the next book. This book is written by two Christian psychiatrists, Frank B. Minirth and Paul D. Meier. While the subtitle states that it is a "manual of the symptoms, causes, and cures of depression," it is one of the finest books dealing with personal attitudes. The subject of the book is summarized in this terse statement: "Most human beings, however, hate to face up to their own human responsibility, especially when it comes to their own emotional state. It is so much easier to blame all our woes on bad parents, a poor mate, unfair treatment by the world, hypoglycemia, or—in today's modern world—'bad genes'" (p. 44).

It is a human trait to blame others for one's problems. It began with Adam and Eve. I have done my share of blaming also. Then I came across this next statement:

"The root problem in nearly all depressions is pent-up anger, either toward ourselves (true or false guilt) or toward others (holding grudges). These grudges are usually unconscious (that is, we are unaware of them), because we are ashamed or afraid to admit them to ourselves" (p. 50).

I seldom get depressed, but when I ended up in the hospital with a stress-related illness I began to do some serious thinking about my whole emotional makeup. A regular devotional time is very important for physical, mental, and spiritual health!

The authors spend a whole chapter dealing with the obsessive-compulsive personality. They say that "over 90 percent of the physicians and 75 percent of the ministers to whom we have given tests leaned primarily toward obsessive-compulsive personality traits" (p. 55). This chapter should be read by all who have trouble sorting out their priorities when it comes to work and family. Notice where they place the priority.

"The Bible says a man should not be a pastor unless he rules his family well and has children who are well-behaved. The pastor who can't say no to parishioners placing demands on him should not be a pastor. The pastor who devotes excessive hours to 'the Lord's work' and neglects his family is really a selfish man who is building a bigger and better church for his own pride and selfish motives (though he is not usually aware of this)" (p. 57).

They give seven basic guidelines for happiness and make this astounding claim: "Christians who get over their depression and continue to follow our 'seven basic guidelines' never get depressed again" (p. 133—see box).

Item number 3 in the list is so important the authors devote an entire chapter to it. In "How Do You Handle Anger?" they outline how to tell the difference between appropriate and inappropriate anger and how to deal with both kinds.

Another book, _The Road Less Travelled_, written by a psychiatrist, Scott Peck, although not in the same fundamentalist stance as the previous book, has given me many insights into my own life and behavior. _The Road Less Travelled_ begins with this phrase: "Life is difficult" (p. 15). He goes on to describe how people seem surprised by this fact. Many times they are unwilling to discipline themselves. "Good discipline requires time" (p. 21). This book has many similarities with _Happiness Is a Choice_. Peck gives four principles for self-discipline. These are listed on page 18 and developed in succeeding pages. They are:

1. Delaying of gratification.
2. Acceptance of responsibility.
3. Dedication to reality (truth).

A number of sentences just jumped out at me as I began reading:

"Discipline is meaningless if it is undisciplined" (p. 21).

"The time and the quality of the time that their parents devote to them indicate to children the degree to which they are valued by their parents" (p. 23).

"When children know that they are valued, when they truly feel valued in the deepest parts of themselves, then they feel valuable.

"The feeling of being valuable—I am a valuable person—is essential to mental health and is a cornerstone of self-discipline" (p. 24).

"Problems do not go away. They must be worked through or else they remain, forever a barrier to the growth and development of the spirit" (p. 30).

Like Doctors Minirth and Meier, Peck
“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves.”

deals with the different personalities. Much of the value of this book lies in how it emphasizes that responsibility for solving problems rests with the individual, not someone else: “When neurotics are in conflict with the world they automatically assume that they are at fault. When those with character disorders are in conflict with the world they automatically assume that the world is at fault” (p. 35).

“If you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem” (p. 39).

He has much to say about the need to grow and to be constantly revising the images and concepts we have of the world. He says, “Our view of reality is like a map with which to negotiate the terrain of life” (p. 44).

“A life of total dedication to the truth also means a life of willingness to be personally challenged. The only way that we can be certain that our map of reality is valid is to expose it to the criticism and challenge of other map-makers. Otherwise we live in a closed system—within a bell jar, to use Sylvia Plath’s analogy, rebreathing only our own fetid air, more and more subject to delusion” (p. 52).

“For individuals and organizations to be open to challenge, it is necessary that their maps of reality be truly open for inspection by the public” (p. 55).

This next statement has many implications for those of us serving individual churches and our relationship with the larger organization:

“If one is to be at all effective within an organization, he or she must partially become an ‘organization person,’ circumspect in the expression of individual opinions, merging at times personal identity with that of the organization. On the other hand, if one regards one’s effectiveness in an organization as the only goal of organizational behavior, permitting only the expression of those opinions that would not make waves, then one has allowed the end to justify the means and will have lost personal integrity and identity by becoming the total organization person” (p. 62).

Space does not allow me to quote from the rest of the book. Peck has four sections, dealing with discipline, love, growth and religion, and grace. It is enlivened and enriched by numerous case studies. It is the kind of book that is hard to put down once you pick it up.

**The Desire of Ages**

The last book I want to refer to is one of the classics of all time and yet is hardly known outside of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. This is the book *Desire of Ages*, by Ellen G. White.

“Christ was treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life which was His. “With His stripes we are healed”’ (p. 25).

If you are like me, you tend to be an overachiever. I have always found it easier to emphasize the “doing” over the “being” aspect of life. This next statement, pointed out by my wife many years ago, has often made me stop and reassess my priorities:

“In the estimation of the rabbis it was the sum of religion to be always in a bustle of activity. They depended upon some outward performance to show their superior piety. Thus they separated their souls from God, and built themselves up in self-sufficiency. The same dangers still exist. As activity increases and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God, and seeking to make a savior of our activity. We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work. While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good” (p. 362).

This volume is a discourse on the life and ministry of Christ. It is a large volume of more than 800 pages whose reading will pay rich dividends for the spiritual life. Consider this picture of Jesus hanging on the cross:

“The spotless Son of God hung upon the cross, His flesh lacerated with stripes; those hands so often reached out in blessing, nailed to the wooden bars; those feet so tireless on ministries of love, spiked to the tree; that royal head pierced by the crown of thorns; those quivering lips shaped to the cry of woe. And all that He endured—the blood drops that flowed from His head, His hands, His feet, the agony that racked His frame, and the unutterable anguish that filled His soul at the hiding of His Father’s face—speaks to each child of humanity, declaring, It is for thee that the Son of God consents to bear this burden of guilt; for thee He spoils the domain of death, and opens the gates of Paradise. He who stilled the angry waves and walked the foam-capped billows, who made devils tremble and disease flee, who opened blind eyes and called forth the dead to life—offers Himself upon the cross as a sacrifice, and this from love to thee. He, the Sin Bearer, endures the wrath of divine justice, and for thy sake becomes sin itself ” (pp. 755, 756).

These are but four books out of countless numbers. You may have already read one or more or none. Consider getting at least one. May the Holy Spirit speak through it to you as He did to me.

**BOOKS REVIEWED**

When guilt is not from God

Are you trapped in a dark attic by ghosts of guilt? Do its sticky cobwebs clutter your mind and stifle your creativity? God’s light can chase the ghosts away.

It began with a simple trip to western Tennessee—a five-hour jaunt from our home in southern Georgia. But nothing about this trip was normal.

For one thing, I’d had surgery just two days before. My stomach stitches still throbbed. But our big mistake occurred when we decided to take our 70-pound Labrador retriever and our 6-month-old kitten on the trip. For five hours I stretched and squirmed and scrambled, trying to keep the kitten off my husband’s head so he could drive. (This continued even after giving the kitten three times the recommended dosage of sleeping pills!) Add to that 70 pounds of affectionate black fur determined to sit in my lap, and you have an unforgettable journey. At every rest stop I was amazed to find my stitches and my sanity still intact.

When we finally made it back home a few days later, my only desire was to slither slowly into a soft, steamy bubble bath. But just when my toes touched the tickling foam, it hit me: Tonight is Julie’s baby shower.

For more than an hour I played Ping-Pong with the question of whether I should go to the event. I desperately needed the rest, but as the pastor’s wife, I felt obligated to attend a church member’s shower. Finally, already feeling the stingers of guilt, I called the hostess and begged out. Then for several days guilt clung to me like a sticky spider’s web.

Perhaps you’ve had a similar experience. Even though you think you’ve done the reasonable thing, guilt haunts you. Such guilt is real and powerful—there’s no doubt about it. And since most of us have been taught that guilt is always God-breathed, we hesitate to challenge the feeling. But maybe we should.

Over the years guilt’s sticky strands have entangled me in its dark attic many times. I remember one incident with a lady I’ll call Miss Baker. One week she entered the sanctuary before the church service and feverishly began dusting the windowsills and pews. “This church should be kept cleaner,” she declared. Automatically I thought to myself, I should have noticed the dust. It’s my fault that the church is not as clean as she would like. I assumed the guilt was from God and didn’t question it.

Then once as we were about to leave for a two-week vacation in Colorado, Mr. Simmons commented, “I don’t think pastors should take vacations.” Unfortunately I discovered guilt’s haunted attic in Colorado too.

In an effort to pacify my guilt feelings, I endeavored to become a parish pleaser. Maybe, I reasoned, if I do what everyone wants, then there will be no confrontations, no complaints—and no guilt. But somehow I didn’t feel comfortable with this attitude. I knew I was being dishonest with myself and with others. More and more, I began to feel guilt for no reason at all. It was just a vague, sickening feeling. I had to take action.

Grabbing the ghosts

For me, grabbing the ghosts of guilt firmly by their heads was the first step toward freedom. Reading books such as Emotions: Can You Trust Them? by James Dobson, and Freedom From Guilt, by Bruce Narramore and Bill Counts, was tremendously helpful.

As I wrestled with the causes of this
False guilt can become a greedy vampire who would suck away our peace and stifle our effectiveness and creativity as Christians.

haunting emotion, I unveiled the ghosts. Surprisingly, I found that many of them were empty sheets, waving in the attic. They had no substance. For instance, I needed rest after that surgery more than I needed to attend a baby shower. God understood this, and the guilt was not from Him.

The woman who criticized the dusty church was transferring the frustrations of difficult home life to the church. The sanctuary was not that dirty, and besides, a custodian cleaned weekly. This guilt also was undeserved.

Gradually I began to spot a ray of light seeping through a crack under guilt’s dark door. Through my study I learned that the type of guilt I was experiencing was what Christian psychologists call false guilt. Some counselors consider this type of guilt even more dangerous than true guilt. It is, in fact, a dangerous, sly tool of Satan to discourage sensitive Christians. In the book Emotions: Can You Trust Them? Dr. Dobson says that undeserved guilt is one of the devil’s most powerful weapons. I believe women are especially susceptible to this type of guilt.

False guilt is a dead-end street. If it is not confronted, it will inhibit growth, and it often leads to complete discouragement and eventually even rebellion.

In the same book, Dr. Dobson tells of a young teenager who experienced an extreme case of false guilt. He was “blessed” with such a sensitive conscience that he felt guilty if he didn’t pick up every piece of glass on the street. “If some child steps on the glass,” the young man reasoned, “it would be my fault.” Eventually he became a confirmed atheist. His false guilt slammed the door on any concept of a loving, accepting heavenly Father.

Many adults experience false guilt because of unrealistic demands their parents placed upon them as children. But a home does not have to be strict to encourage false guilt. A person may be guilt-sensitive simply because, as a child, she received no affirmation or praise from her parents or other significant individuals. Since no one has ever told her she is valuable or worthwhile, she therefore reasons she must not be. Even though she may not even realize it, she spends her life trying to please others in order to win their acceptance. Sadly, despite the fact that such people may be highly successful, they feel they offer nothing to the world. They may even feel shame and guilt because of the person they have become.

But even a person who had a positive childhood may experience false guilt. Because of their conscientiousness, Christians, especially women, may feel they are letting friends or family down if they can’t live up to the demands of others.

A person’s false guilt is further inflamed if she believes all criticism or instruction originates from the Holy Spirit. Morton Irving Seiden says that a sensitive human being may be compelled only too easily to feel guilty about anything.

False guilt can become a greedy vampire, who, if not confronted, would suck away our peace and stifle our effectiveness and creativity as Christians.

But what if we find ourselves trapped in guilt’s haunted attic? Is there a key to escape?

Conquering false guilt

Since guilt is a feeling, we must challenge it objectively and promptly. At the first twinge of guilt, hang those feelings out on the clothesline and ask yourself, “What’s causing those guilt feelings? Are they from God? Have I disobeyed His moral law or ignored His will for my life? Is this really the Holy Spirit speaking to me or is this false guilt—a product of my overly sensitive conscience?” You may find that many times the guilt is not deserved, that you’ve allowed yourself or others to produce the guilt within you. As someone has said, “Conscience is the still small voice that makes us feel still smaller.” But false guilt should not be given this power.

When you unveil the ghosts of guilt and find false guilt, constructive self-talk is the next step toward escape. This self-talk involves talking with yourself the way a loving parent would counsel a child. And since our thoughts and emotions often behave like mischievous 2-year-olds, there is a little irony in this practice. You might tell yourself something like this: “You’re getting locked up in the attic again, Karen. You don’t want that. True, you’re not a saint. But you don’t have to be. Stop trying to please the world and just be what God wants you to be. You’re pretty good at that.”

Humor also helps fight away the ghosts. I try to look at my own demands and those of others with a smile. And that’s not as hard as it sounds, since many times the demands placed upon us are quite a joke. Oscar Wilde spoke wisely when he said, “Life is too important to be taken seriously.” A good laugh can provide an emotional lift.

Since false guilt often evolves from feelings of insecurity, try to find avenues to excel in. Increasing your feelings of competence can protect you from many of guilt’s ghost bites. You may enhance this security through your work in the church, community, or place of employment.

But the thing that is most crucial in our battle with the ghosts of guilt is the gospel.

The gospel is a sweet, soothing ointment for our painful guilt bites. The cross snaps us awake and reminds us that Christ is there even when the ghosts of guilt engulf us. Thus the vampires are chased away, and we are greeted with Christ’s healing hands and helping heart. He refreshes our emotions as the drama The Blue Bird portrays Him refreshing Mary Magdalene’s. “He brings a happiness that was not known before,” she reflects, “and all those who come near Him are happy, it seems, like children at their waking.”

The ghosts of guilt are relentless. They stifle our service to God and our growth as Christians. At times they leave us as battered as a paper kite harassed by bitter March winds. But there is hope. As we confront these gloomy goblins, the door to the haunted attic is flung open. And we are free at last.
Planning a sermonic year always sounded like a good idea to me. But I didn’t realize how much it would benefit my preaching ministry until I actually sat down and tried it.

I find having prepared a sermonic year helps me maintain a better sense of direction throughout the year. With it I can direct my reading schedule to complement my preaching schedule. And rather than limping along from week to week searching for appropriate subjects, I have more subjects for a given year than Sabbaths available for preaching.

My members also find my use of the sermonic year rewarding. Now they receive a balanced spiritual diet. And they sense that I’m taking time each week to prepare for them.

Planning a year of sermons is not difficult, nor does it have to involve long hours. I am now able to prepare a sermonic year in one morning. You can too if you follow a few simple steps.

Begin by labeling one sheet of paper Subject Work Sheet. On this, list all of the subjects that you will use during the year.

Consider first the church-related subjects that you want to include among the year’s worship services. Examples of these are religious liberty, gift of prophecy, Christian education, youth day (Pathfinder Day), Week of Prayer, stewardship, and Communion.

Next, you will probably want to incorporate some of the secular holidays. Since many guests worship in our churches during the holidays, they offer excellent opportunities to present spiritual lessons that can minister to these people. So list on your worksheet such subjects as New Year’s Day, Easter, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Now list other subjects that you want to include: church doctrines, prophecy, miracles, biography, Christology, evangelism, sanctuary, angels, parables, righteousness, eschatology, and missions.

On a second sheet of paper, your Calendar Work Sheet, list all of the Sabbath dates for the next year. If your schedule allows you to preach in the same church only twice a month, then your Calendar Work Sheet should include only two Sabbaths a month.

Now move the subjects from the Subject Work Sheet to the appropriate dates on the Calendar Work Sheet. The Sabbaths you will schedule the sermons fitting the various holidays will be obvious. Place the church-related topics, including Communion, with the dates appropriate to them. On some Sabbaths, such as those that come during your vacation and camp meeting or when you have guest speakers, you will not be preaching. Either mark these out, or indicate that you need to arrange for guest speakers for these dates.

After you have done all of this, several Sabbaths will still be open. Determine the time of year when you will have the best attendance. Although geographical area and local customs dictate this, generally there are two seasons that are best for preaching. The first is February through April. The winter holidays are over then, and people are not yet going on vacations. The second major preach-
ing season is September to November. The children are back in school, vacations are over, and the holiday season has not yet begun. During these prime times you will want to preach on your top priority subjects, so note these on the Calendar Work Sheet.

During the hot summer months congregations appreciate sermons that are easier to listen to, such as biographies and parables. List these on appropriate dates.

If you find that you have several consecutive Sabbaths open, plan a series of sermons on some theme.

As with all good plans, changes will be inevitable. Events that merit immediate attention from the pulpit may surface in your culture or church. You can easily modify your preaching calendar to meet such needs.

With a little effort now you can show your members that you care enough for them to provide them with a well-balanced spiritual diet. At the same time you’ll be taking off yourself the weekly pressure of finding an appropriate and important sermon topic. Why not schedule a planning session now and make 1987 the year you begin following a sermonic year?

Get a NEWSTART
From page 6

only one tenth of a second for the heart to contract; in the remaining nine tenths of the second the heart muscle relaxes and rests.

Because, as is true with the heart, resting involves more than sleep, eating between meals is not good. The salivary glands, stomach, and other digestive organs need rest also.

Experiments have shown that rest is one of the habits that contribute in a major way to living longer. It has been found that averaging less than six hours of sleep per night shortens life, while too much sleep also shortens life.

Trust in God

God is good. He wants only the best for us: new birth, eternal life, title to heaven, forgiveness and cleansing, grace and power, and the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. Every human being upon earth can know that our heavenly Father loves him and wants to grant his requests. How can we help but trust Him? There are many good health programs, but none can produce proper results unless the principle of trust in God lies at their foundation. Weimar’s third bird evokes this trust by singing, “Cheer-up, cheer-up, cheer-up.” As we look up, we automatically cheer up!

The NEWSTART program consists of many different colored threads tightly woven into a pattern of beauty. The entire staff, including students, contribute to this fabric. Threads of prayer, encouragement, scientific evidence, practice, fellowship, and study are all woven into the healing process. From the moment of arrival when the student driver meeting us at the Sacramento airport asked God to give us a happy, safe trip to Weimar, to the delightful trio who led us in singing at the morning worships, to the nutritionist who began the cooking classes by praising God for His goodness with her guitar and voice—all impacted on not just our minds but our hearts.

The queen of Sheba, after seeing for herself how God had blessed Israel under Solomon, said, “I believed not the words, until I came, . . . and, behold, the half was not told me” (1 Kings 10:7). Our articles, like the reports that came to her, have not told half of the story. To learn more, get Ernest Baxter’s book I Almost Died! (see the ad in this issue for a special price). Better yet, try the principles summarized in this article and his book for yourselves, and experience what blessings they bring your way.

For more information on Weimar’s program, you may write NEWSTART directly at NEWSTART, Weimar Institute, Box 486, Weimar, California 95736, or call (916) 637-4111.

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3 _____, Instruction Relating to the Principles of Healthful Living (Battle Creek, Mich.: Medical Missionary Board, 1898), p. 177.
From the Editors

A priceless commodity

You don't inherit it. You can't buy it. It is impossible to weigh or touch it. You can build it, but not suddenly. It defies chemical analysis, yet it has a powerful influence on others. Although it is a rare commodity, most people think they have an abundance of it. I speak of character.

Frequently my counsel is sought in connection with problems that arise as a result of the unfortunate and indirect actions of some who serve as spiritual and administrative leaders. Many, perhaps most, of these regrettable situations could have been avoided if true character had governed the words, actions, and lives of those in question.

About 10 years ago a study sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada asked church members what qualities were most important in young ministers or priests. The three qualities that people desired most in their clergy related to Christian example and character. To see ministers serve without regard to position, skills, information, and friendships are easier to secure than personal integrity, and the minister’s role as a community leader took fifth place.

Qualities least desired centered on what was described as “self-serving” ministers. One of the harshest criticisms centered on ministers involved in illicit sexual relationships and other self-indulgent actions that bring reproach on the ministry and the cause of Christ.

A February 21, 1983, Time article titled “Above All, the Man Had Character” indicates that the secular world makes similar demands of its leaders. The central figure in the article was America’s first president, George Washington. The author pointed out that Washington knew no foreign languages, never traveled to Europe, was not an accomplished public speaker, and that his military achievements were judged for their perseverance rather than their brilliance, yet he is considered a great leader who made a powerful impact on society mainly because of his character.

The article concluded that “our task is to rekindle the tradition, to search in our systems for people of great character and then bring them to power and rally behind them.”

“If the secular world needs people of great character for positions of leadership, how about the church?”

Character is not conferred. It is not the product of wealth or education. It is of much greater value than intellect. I agree with Thomas Carlyle’s observation, “Clever men are good, but they are not the best.” Various leadership documents describing power bases seem to promote powers such as coercive power, connection power, expert power, information power, and reward power. I find very little said about character power.

Why? Is it because power bases derived from position, skills, information, and friendships are easier to secure than character power?

How is character power developed? It is the result of walking with God. These are easy words. But putting them into practice is difficult. Only as we spend at least one hour a day communicating with our Lord and Savior will we develop a character like His. Jesus requested His disciples to “watch” with Him for just an hour. They failed! He responded, “Couldn’t you three keep awake with me for a single hour?” (Matt. 26:40, Phillips). Is it unreasonable to expect a minister to spend at least one hour a day in prayer and meditation? What an impact we would make on our community if each of us would spend 60 minutes or more each day communicating with our Lord and Savior.

A passage from a favorite book of mine, The Desire of Ages, vividly describes our needs. “As activity increases and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. . . . While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God. Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good” (p. 362).

- Full-time salaried ministers, regardless of their position, are actually paid to spend time with God. We are paid to gain that strength that is acquired in earnest, secret prayer. We are paid to take the time necessary to become effective ministers of the gospel with an influence that cannot be bought or sold—what a responsibility and what a privilege!

The apostle Paul summarizes and confirms this priceless commodity in these words: “As God’s steward a bishop must be a man of unimpeachable character” (Titus 1:7, NEB).—Neal C. Wilson.
On being appreciated

Commitment versus career

A creative and somewhat free-spirited pastor I know ministers in a conservative church. Until recently he had been hearing mostly from the complainers in his church: he's been doing things that have never been done that way before, at least not in that church.

But not too long ago he told his church that he had accepted a call to another full-time position in the conference in which he works. Suddenly he has found out how much he has been appreciated. People who had not spoken up before are telling him what his ministry has meant to them. Many have said that they wish he weren't leaving.

Like most other people, ministers desire appreciation. But too often parishioners with positive feelings remain a part of the silent majority. (Ministers, who conduct funerals, know something about people waiting to express their appreciation until it is too late.)

We can learn to live with this fact of life. We may take some comfort in realizing that, like my friend, while we may have critics, more than likely many of our members do appreciate what we are trying to do for them.

In addition, while fishing for compliments is not a good idea, if we will genuinely express our appreciation we will likely be paid back in kind. At least our doing so creates the atmosphere that allows this response.

But we also need to realize that while we may crave appreciation, it is dangerous for us to become dependent on the approval of others for our job satisfaction or personal happiness. When we do, we lose control of our lives. Our emotional states then fluctuate with our external circumstances. Such an approach may also tempt us to do our work based not on principle or what is best under the circumstances but on what will bring the response we want.

For the most part let's find our satisfaction in having a clear conscience before God and in knowing that we have done our best with the work we have been called to do. Then later we may have the additional satisfaction of hearing our Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful servant! . . . Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matt. 25:21, NIV).—David C. Jernes.

Commitment is a difficult word to define. I rather suspect that it is indefinable, much like a companion word—love. It took me a long time to understand that love is never defined—not in the dictionary, not in the Bible. The Bible does say that "God is love," but that is hardly a definition. To define one abstract term by another is unsatisfactory. Communication, then, hinges on concurrent opinions and commonly held views of one abstraction or the other. Love—and by implication, commitment—is always described.

We could begin a description of commitment by saying that it implies an attitude of giving. More than that, it is giving that is responsive to the desires and needs of the one to whom giving is aimed. This aspect of commitment involves the voluntary placing of oneself at the disposal of others. It also involves freely setting aside a part of one's life for someone or something. Until there is this almost blind giving, all relationships—at every level of the potential commitment spectrum—are very tender and very tentative.

A person can never experience peace in his vocation as a parish pastor until this commitment has taken place. Without commitment to the pastoral office, the person must constantly wrestle with a vocational decision that has to be reconsidered with every shift in theological, institutional, family, or personal circumstances. Every ruffling of personal, congregational, district, or conference waters chases the person back to the question "Why should I have to go through this kind of folderol?" The folderol level of life is enormous. A person may study with a jaundiced eye every salary scale published, whether it be for teachers or custodians or salespeople or doctors, and wonder why his salary should not be the same or proportionately higher. He or she may begin talking about "career" with "career" objectives and decisions based on "career" priorities, so that his or her professional future becomes paramount in all decisions. Until there is a commitment to the concept of parish ministry, there will be little peace in the life of the parish pastor.

Being ordained is not the same as starting life as a second lieutenant while harboring secret aspirations of someday becoming a general. On the day of ordination the pastor's brethren place on his shoulders, as it were, the highest rank of the Christian army. All the real "advancement" possible takes place in that moment. There is no ecclesiastical pecking order other than that of servanthood. Seminary professors stand in the same line and on a peer level with the pastor of the smallest parish. I've never known any professors who had a problem understanding that. Conference presi-
If you aren't doing outline processing (some people call it idea processing), you are missing one of the chief joys of computer ownership! Yet as I talk to computer users I find that very few of them are even aware that outline processing programs exist.

An outline processor (OP) is similar to a word processor in some ways, but it does some important things that a word processor won't. Essentially, it allows you to process individual thoughts and put them where they belong in an outline, not just where your cursor happens to be when the light dawns. And it allows you to view only the areas and levels of the outline that are important to you at the moment.

An OP is good for doing many jobs that would be cumbersome with a word processor or database system. Its advantage over the database is that you can see your data and its relation to other data at any time without having to do a print-out. Of course, OPs don't make the other programs obsolete. There are other jobs the other programs will do better.

An OP's chief strength is in doing jobs where organization is important. It can help you organize from the bottom up (brainstorm) or from the top down. In brainstorming, you can jot down ideas to be organized later. In top-down organizing, you can take a large task and divide it up into numerous smaller tasks so you can easily see the relationship between each of the parts. My favorite use for an OP is in note-taking. When I take notes from multiple sources, I can organize the data I collect into an outline format so that all the information about a given topic is in one place. I can also use the copy command to file a piece of information in more than one place.

Possible future tasks for my OP include computerizing my list of library books, organizing my address file, and laying out a comprehensive planning calendar. I also want to begin copying the tables of contents from some of my favorite magazines into an outline so I can quickly find an article I remember having read.

An OP can also be very handy as you're preparing a sermon. Looking at what you plan to say in outline form can help you organize for the best flow of thought. And it can help you discover the parts that don't really fit where you put them, and instantly move them to where they belong.

I laid out the basic organization for this article on an MS-DOS-based OP called PC-Outline. At home on my CP/M-based Kaypro I use OutThink. Both are excellent OPs. Other programs are available, but on a price and value basis I would recommend these two.

PC-Outline is available for $54.95 from Softworks Development, 750 Steirlin Road, Suite 142, Mountain View, California 94043. You may also be able to get it from a friend because it is distributed as shareware. In other words, the copyright holders allow purchasers to give away copies of it to others. If you decide to use the program you should send in $54.95 to register your copy and receive the printed manual. OutThink, produced by Kamasoft, Inc., P.O. Box 5549, Aloha, Oregon 97007, retails for $69.95.

For me, discovering outline processing was almost like finally finding the program that would help me tap the full potential of my computer. I think you'll feel the same way if you'll give it a try.
Caring for the spiritual needs of cancer patients

Swanson: What is a sick person's role in our society?

Vastyan: In his book The Social System, Talcott Parsons described for the first time the role of the sick. You're suddenly allowed not to work, to be passive rather than aggressive, to complain and say "I hurt" rather than try to tough things out. You're freed from work, from expectancies. You're even excused for bad behavior, or at least surliness, impatience, or anger. These are even expected.

The hospital recognizes this role, because when you check in, your clothes are taken away and you put on hospital clothing. You're expected not to go wandering off without some kind of permission.

Humphrey Osmond, a young Georgia physician, adds to this that the expectation is that you'll get well and return to your ordinary role as quickly as possible. He talks also about the role of the permanently handicapped—for example, someone with a spinal-cord injury whose legs are paralyzed. The expectation is not that you're going to recover the use of those legs but that you'll adapt to that handicap and do the best you can.

There is also a dying role, in which the expectation of death finally comes. This brings up a tough question that physicians, nurses, and pastors work around: When does a dying role take over from a sick or a handicapped role? There may be no expectation of either getting well or adapting to these circumstances. Death is imminent. Sometimes physicians don't recognize that a dying role is beginning, and they treat in a way that is lying both to themselves and to the patient.

Swanson: Does the dying role go into effect with cancer patients sooner or more often than with those with other serious illnesses?

Vastyan: Many forms of cancer are treatable. It's a misunderstanding on the part of the general population to see a diagnosis of cancer as a sentence of death. Great strides have been made in achieving what physicians call cures on some cancers. We must attempt to overcome the idea that nothing can be done. In many instances much can be done.

Swanson: Describe the feelings that patients experience when they're first told that they have cancer.

Vastyan: There's an intense shock that comes when someone finds out that they have what has been called a dread disease. Good physicians tell me they share very little with a patient in that first encounter and that they arrange a time to come back. It seems to the patient like a dread diagnosis, no matter what kind of cancer it is, despite the ability of physicians now to control some cancers. It's a kind of roller coaster in which the patient goes up and down, screaming in a kind of agony, "Why me? Why now? Why is this happening to me?"

Swanson: How is so-called cancer phobia different from these feelings?

Vastyan: Cancer phobia is an irrational fear of cancer. A physician friend tells an interesting story of an elderly woman. When he gave her a thorough physical examination, he discovered one organ system after another with real problems. He recounted as briefly as possible the various life-threatening problems he had discovered.

The woman listened through all of this quite brightly and finally said, "Is that all?" and he said, "Yes, that's all." "Are you sure that's all?" And he said, "Yes, I'm sure that's all." And she replied, "Thank God, it's not cancer."

Many physicians have experienced this, so they try to avoid mentioning the word cancer. They'll talk about tumors and neoplasms in an effort to avoid stimulating the kind of irrational fearfulness that most of us seem to have of the simple term cancer.

Swanson: How can a diagnosis of cancer be related to shame?

Vastyan: Cancer seems to be different from conditions like coronary artery disease or infarcts, which are either muscular or arterial. Cancer is new growth. The very use of the word neoplasm suggests a new growth, something that has gone awry. There's a feeling that cancer, the crab, is something that eats away. There's a sense of rottenness. Perhaps the shame comes from a feeling of irresponsibility. What did I do wrong to begin this kind of process? There's something in me that's uncontrollable. It's growing, and I can't stop it.

Swanson: Is this similar to the biblical feelings toward leprosy?

Vastyan: In the Bible, leprosy was a term
used for almost any skin disorder. It suggested a kind of untouchability, a shying away from. In many ways this whole cancer phobia goes back to that. People are often fearful of being around patients with cancer. Patients tell me about this with some frequency.

I observed the sad case of a young woman whom I saw quite a few times in the course of her hospitalization. She had contracted cancer, Ewing's sarcoma, in her early 20s. From that time on, unfortunately, her husband treated her as an untouchable. He not only didn't have any intimate sexual relations with her but he avoided touching her. She told me at one point he wouldn't even kiss her.

Swanson: You've said that in some cases the diagnosis of cancer can actually have a positive impact on a person's spirituality. Could you tell us what you mean?

Vastyan: For some patients the diagnosis of cancer marks the time when they begin to take life seriously for the first time. It means coming to terms with their own humanity and their own mortality. W. H. Auden wrote, "Life is the destiny you are bound to refuse until you have consented to die." Thus we must accept human life as limited and finite and realize that it is going to end. We live with all kinds of illusory optimism and hope.

Some cancer patients have described their experience with cancer as the happiest time of their lives. They say, "Now I'm really able to live. Now I cherish life because I know in a personal sense that there's an end to it. I know I will have an end; therefore I can pour myself into the present."

Swanson: Do you think one's newly appreciated spirituality at a time like this derives from fear?

Vastyan: When I've observed this attitude, there has been a marked absence of fearfulness. It's been a sense of owning, cherishing, and affirming, marked by courage. People are opening their hearts to new experiences. Patients I've seen do this have not done so out of fearlessness but rather out of a sudden discovery. They discover life as being worthwhile in a way they'd never known it to be worthwhile before.

Swanson: How does the belief in a judgment relate to this issue of finding courage and assurance during a terminal illness?

Vastyan: The idea of getting your house in order is important. It provides an opportunity for making wills and assessing relationships. Patients bring together people whom they love and begin the process of saying farewells. There is not only the distribution of a financial estate but the caring disposal of things that have meant something to them.

This can be in the form of extending and receiving forgiveness and healing relationships that have been broken, as well as disbursing money. All of these imply wanting an assurance of forgiveness, of absolution. Most of the Christians I've worked with have achieved affirmation or at least a trusting resignation.

Swanson: What sort of counsel would you give to the pastor who is attempting to help a patient cope with a cancer diagnosis?

Vastyan: Pastors need to realize their rich faith resources. We are not only inheritors of but vessels for the good news. Although we're vulnerable creatures, we've been redeemed. This is cause for rejoicing. It's in the very midst of human suffering that we see most brightly the redemptive joy of Christ crucified and risen.

The ministry of hand and ear and heart is hearing the agony and the suffering, listening with real empathy, being willing to share a common vulnerability. Christ didn't come to deliver us from trouble; Christ came in the midst of trouble. When we share our vulnerability we share something that is most precious to God.

Swanson: What can a pastor do to help a patient overcome denial?

Vastyan: Denial is part of a complex psychological reaction to bad news. There's always an oscillation between denial and acceptance. It is just like a pendulum. A patient may be planning specific funeral details and in the next minute say, "The doctor told me there is a new drug that we can try, and that's a possibility."

It's important for us as pastors to realize that this oscillation takes place and that we shouldn't try to break through it but accept it. We should be empathetic to whatever the patient is manifesting at any moment. He will be open to real communication if we don't try to shatter this denial but recognize that it can be a temporary phase.

Swanson: Do you agree that no cancer patient should ever be kept from the truth about his or her own condition?

Vastyan: The courts hold that we have a right to any diagnostic knowledge about our own condition. On the other hand, denial can be fierce enough that some patients don't want to know. Physicians tell me that they have patients who come and tell them, "Doc, if it's cancer, don't tell me."

This is a spiritual malaise, because part of the life we have under God is a life that ends in this world. One of the real adventures spiritually is to recognize that this life is a preparation for the life to come. There should be tremendous joy and expectancy in looking forward to that.

Most of us in the ministry have been awakened to some of the needs of dying patients. Many of the seminary and clinical pastoral training programs try to help pastors minister to the dying. We within the Christian tradition have to recover the sense of the spiritual journey that takes place at that time near death.

There's a place for the pastor to minister, to help the dying not simply in working their way through such things as denial and anger, but in accepting a limited life as God-given, in relating to the holy, and in learning how to be prayerful, submissive, expectant, trusting, and open to the Lord. All of these are ways for us to help cancer patients come to an understanding of death as part of this creatureliness that God has given us.
issue of MINISTRY was inadvertently destroyed. If at all possible, could you furnish me a copy of that issue?—C. P. Ephland, Nevada, Missouri.

Old Testament codes valid

Although I cannot accept the entire viewpoint of Dr. Jerry Gladson, I found his article ( "Discovering the Gospel in the Old Testament Codes," July 1986) stimulating and fair. We should add to his quotations the following: The Lord is surely a "compassionate" and "gracious" God; He is "slow to anger"; He keeps "kindness to the thousandth generation"; He forgives "iniquity, transgression, and sin" (Ex. 34:6, 7, Tanakh). [When Scripture speaks of God as being] angry and jealous, [it] means that He is rigorously just, and wrongdoing has inevitable consequences. This thought was expressed by Lincoln when he said that the war was punishment for the practice and tolerance of slavery.

Love your neighbor, leave crops for the poor and alien, etc., are part of the holiness code (Lev. 19). In Exodus 23:5 a person is bidden to help an enemy when his beast has fallen under its burden. This is like helping an enemy when his car breaks down!—Nathan A. Barack (retired rabbi and author of God Speaks Naturally), Newton, Massachusetts.

Jesus taught practically nothing except the Old Testament moral law! For example, the Sermon on the Mount was a lengthy discussion of Old Testament commandments. At least half of the Beatitudes are either direct quotations or paraphrases of Old Testament commandments. How about the two great commandments? You will find these in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19. Proverbs 31:6 goes beyond wine—it says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." Verse 7 even concerns those in poverty—"Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." Surely these passages show the Word of God approving of drinking in propriety and Christian moderation.—Rev. C. Hubbell, Chicago, Illinois.

Regarding Galen Bosley's article in the May issue entitled "The Effects of Small Quantities of Alcohol," (May 1986) an interesting thought occurred to me. He asks "Can a minister who drinks socially truly direct his flock if his moral discernment and decision-making are as impaired as the evidence indicates?"

We can only wonder, How much better would the Sermon on the Mount have been if Jesus hadn't been a "wine-bibber." I also can't help dreaming of the improvement there would have been in the apostolic church if the disciples had refused to drink the wine Jesus offered at the Last Supper.—G. V. Wachter, Worland, Wyoming.

I must question the intellectual integrity (not the moral integrity) of Galen Bosley for his selective quotation from Paul about drinking wine. He sought to show that Paul opposed use of alcohol in any form. And so he quoted Ephesians 5:18 in support of his article, which went on to oppose small quantities of alcohol.

First, what the verse condemns is being "drunk with wine"; it does not condemn moderate drinking. So citation of it in the article is misuse of Scripture.

Second, an authority on science/religion like Bosley may be presumed to know commonplaces of the Scripture, so Bosley knew Paul's injunction to Timothy: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Tim. 5:23).

The qualifier little should be noted carefully. Also, in 1 Timothy 3:8 Paul tells us that deacons must be "not given to much wine." The qualifier much implies permission for a moderate amount.

Proverbs 31:6 goes beyond wine—it says, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." Verse 7 even concerns those in poverty—"Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

Astonishingly, the passage he cites in favor of this thesis is Exodus 21:22, 23.

Abortion concerns

Although I received my journal late, I want to congratulate John and Millie Youngberg for the article "The Reborn and the Unborn." It is time something be said to lead our thoughts back to the truth of God's Word.

It is time to call sin by its right name. Why did God slay Onan, son of Judah, when he spilled his seed upon the ground? Isn't there something there for us to ponder?—R. M. Cargill, Belize, Central America.

Robert E. Hays (Letters, May 1986) wisely admits that the Bible nowhere explicitly condemns abortion, but then goes on to assert that the Bible contains passages that "refer to unborn persons as though they were something of considerably more worth than protoplasm or egg white."

FOR PASTORS' WIVES

- Can you be Christian while being assertive?
- Can you serve others without being a doormat?

CARE-FRONTING

by Betty Lou Hartlein

Roy Oswald (1984) reported a study concerning the needs of ministers' wives. He said, "I would encourage all clergy wives to get assertiveness training."

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"The clear teaching," he writes, "except to the obtuse, is that if a fetus is prematurely born because of two men's negligence, and subsequently dies, then the men are to be executed."

The New English Bible renders Exodus 21:22 as follows: "When, in the course of a brawl, a man knocks against a pregnant woman so that she has a miscarriage but suffers no further hurt, then the offender must pay whatever fine the woman's husband demands after assessment." The NEB also shows that verse 23 (the so-called lex talionis) is unrelated to verse 22 (it is not possible to induce miscarriages in men, after all!).

Considering the fact that capital offenses listed in the Old Testament include such trivial crimes as stubbornness, rebelliousness, drunkenness, and gluttony (Deut. 21:20, 21), the fact that a simple fine is imposed for induced miscarriage shows this "sin" to have been the biblical equivalent of a parking ticket.

Does Mr. Hays believe the translators of the NEB to have been "obtuse"?—Rev. Frank R. Zindler, Columbus, Ohio.

95 theses stir challenge

I find the term righteousness by faith in only two texts in the New Testament—Philippians 3:9 and Galatians 5:5. The phrase righteousness of faith abounds in Scripture, and I see a definite difference between the two. Righteousness by faith implies an objective "righteousness"—a righteousness that is separate from the individual and imputed to him as a gift. It could be looked upon as a "passive experience" denoting the subject as receiving the action, whereas righteousness of faith, spoken of in Romans 4 in the experience of Abraham, implies a subjective (declared) righteousness in that his faith is counted as righteousness. It is an "active faith" in that it was an expression of his belief in God, describing the subject as producing the action. The faith of Abraham is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4:3, 5, 9). His faith, the Scriptures declare, was counted as righteousness. It was a subjective, spontaneous experience of Abraham, springing forth from within out of a deep love and trust he had for his God. Is it the same with us today? Is this a valid concept worthy of further study?

Second, I am disturbed by the implied worthlessness and helplessness of man. I see and read "Calvinism spoken here." Surely I am subtly being told that the more depraved man is made to appear, the more necessary is the existence of God. This cannot be! It also bothers me to read of the level on which we place man, coequal with worms, while at the same time I read of man being created in the image of God. Is this some kind of paralogical thinking—a dual message to add to the denigration of the image of man and his relationship with God?

My third objection to the "95 theses" lies in the area of man's total depravity and inability even to turn to God for help on his own. Am I incapable, and too insensitive, as a child of God to recognize and appreciate the "goodness of God" toward me, a lost and rebellious individual? Can there not be a recognition of an act of kindness exercised toward me with a corresponding response of appreciation out of the depth of my heart? "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness . . . not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). With its own primitive brain even an animal in need can recognize and appreciate an act of kindness exercised toward it. Is man less capable of doing so? Where do man's intellect and freedom of choice enter the picture? Reconsider numbers 15, 16, 17, 19, 85, and 87, to mention a few. Here the total helplessness of man is alluded to. Granted, man is unable to save himself, but what of his own cognitive realization of his need of help? What of man's ability to turn toward that Source of power out of his sense of need? What of man's own moral responsibility?

Finally, I am disturbed by numbers 8, 9, and 10, which subliminally imply predestination, or a "spiritual determinism." As Christians we do not agree with the deterministic views of psychology that deny man his freedom of will and choice. If man is born sinful and it is determined that he sins by virtue of his birth, over which he has no control, then this concept is as deterministic as the teachings of Freud or Skinner. I was under the impression that Adventists did not believe in the doctrine of "original sin." (Review and Herald, September 23, 1965: "Seventh-day Adventists do not accept the 'original sin' theory.")—Robert L. Larsen, El Sobrante, California.
Biblio File
From page 32

Everything about a news show tells us this—the good books and amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials—all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping."

The medium shapes the message, Postman says. Indeed, some forms of communication and/or content are impossible in some media. Public discourse, ways of thinking, and content of thought are fundamentally different in a print-based culture than in a television-based one. Postman fears that American culture and thought as we know it today is threatened not so much by totalitarian mind control imposed by an external authority, but that rather the danger is that we shall willingly, eagerly, amuse ourselves to death.

"When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility."

Postman has written a frightening book. Frightening because so much of it is chillingly true. It is a significant book, a book that everyone who is concerned about effective communication in today's televised world needs to read.

Lord of Song

Ronald Allen has written a songbook. There are no notes to the songs, only lyrics and lots of rhythm.

There is nothing particularly revolutionary about this book, which is simply an exposition of the psalms as they relate to the life of Jesus. Probably a hundred books or papers have been written on the subject, though many have had titles like A Soteriological Explication of the Messianic Implications of the Psalms.

Allen has given us nothing like this. "This book," he writes, "is not a theological treatise." Instead, "it is to be enjoyed." And it is enjoyable.

But it is not just milk either. Allen is a scholar, and his book shows that he is. He has a command of Hebrew that adds a great deal of insight and authority to what he writes. (He translated many of the psalms himself.)

Allen has managed to give us things we've heard before—instantly into the psalms and their relationship to the New Testament, and especially to Jesus—in a way that makes his message really sing. The book itself is written almost like a psalm. It flows, it has rhythm. Allen's theme, "Y'shua is Lord of Song!" comes across in a style that brings it to life.

Allen makes no bones about the fact that he loves the Jews, which is why this book is especially good for Jews. If you know a Jew who seems interested in Christianity, here's a book made in heaven. Too often Jews are put off by well-meaning Christians who give them literature that reads like something hot off the Tomas de Torquemada Press.

I can't help but think that Allen had Jews in mind when he wrote this book. But Gentiles will enjoy his songs too.

The Bible and Christian Life

The author of these 18 essays has also produced the superb two-volume ICC Commentary on Romans. His credentials are impeccable.

While he covers a wide variety of topics in the essays, Cranfield always writes with clarity, liveliness, and good sense. His essay on New Testament eschatology is a hard-hitting rebuttal of the view that the apostolic church expected a quick return by Christ and a speedy destruction of the world.


This is an informative, relevant, and interesting book with appeal to all concerned about Christian life and thought in the twentieth century.

The Missing Link

"Raising a teen today is a complicated task." The first sentence in the preface gives the impression that the book will pull no punches. And the impression is right.

The authors deal first with the concept of quality time, and move from there to compare and contrast teens' developmental crises with the life crises their parents commonly endure at about the time their children become teenagers.

Chapter 3 deals with four types of family behavior broken down into 16 categories, such as cooperative adult, cooperative teen; cooperative adult, adversarial teen; etc. Other topics addressed include peers and friends, music, teen idols, dating, sexual behaviors, and self-concerns of the teens. Also included are helpful forms for both parents and teens to fill out, and a list of resources for parents.

Recently Published

Bullock has chronologically integrated his study of the major and minor prophets. He deals with three periods: Neo-Assyrian (after the fall of the northern kingdom), Neo-Babylonian (after the fall of the southern kingdom), and Persian (after the Exile). The book will primarily interest scholars dealing with the prophets.


This book would be of more interest to scholars and seminary students than to pastors; nevertheless it may have value for ministers with well-educated congregations. It deals with the role that Greek thought played in the development of Christian theology.

How do you say thank you?
Letting those who make large contributions of time or money to your church or organization know that you appreciate their support may be particularly important in assuring their continued help. But how do you say thank you? How do you communicate your appreciation adequately?

Philanthropic Service for Institutions, a service organization of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, has produced a 67-page booklet with many good ideas on how to say thanks to those who donate their time or money to charitable organizations. Besides giving an overall picture of how to express your appreciation in a meaningful way, Accent on Recognition: Saying Thank You to Donors and Volunteers reproduces various certificates and sample letters to those who have made donations and lists supply houses for recognition awards. Anyone needing the ongoing support of volunteers and/or donors will find this booklet helpful.

Single copies of the booklet are free, but we do need US$1 to cover postage and handling. You may obtain your copy by writing to MINISTRY Services, Box 217, Burtonsville, MD 20866.

A gift for your givers
Speaking of ways to say thanks to those who donate time or money to you, the same organization that prepared the booklet we mentioned above also has a page-a-day calendar for 1987 that you can give those you wish to thank. Each page contains an inspirational quotation on giving, providing an everyday reminder to those to whom you give this calendar of your appreciation for their gift.

You can obtain a single copy of the calendar for US$6.50 plus $1.50 for shipping. Quantity orders receive discounts: 2-24 calendars are $5.95 each plus 10 percent for shipping; 25, 50, or 75 are $5.45 each plus $5.00 per 25 for shipping; 100-475 (in lots of 25) are $4.45 plus $5.00 per 25; and 500+ (in lots of 25) are $4.25 plus $5.00 per 25. All orders include individual mailers for your distribution. A check payable to "Giving Calendar—SDA" must accompany your order.

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Amusing Ourselves to Death


Postman has written a frightening book. Frightening because he maintains that television has fundamentally changed our notions of truth and our ideas of intelligence—and that eventually and almost inevitably it will determine not only how we think and communicate but what it is possible to think and to communicate.

"My argument," he says, "is limited to saying that a major new medium changes the structure of discourse; it does so by encouraging certain uses of the intellect, by favoring certain definitions of intelligence and wisdom, and by demanding a certain kind of content."

If you are expecting the standard diatribe against television as a source of trivia, sex, and violence, you won't find it here. In fact, Postman, a professor of communication arts and sciences at New York University, argues that the best things on television are its "junk" and that we have most to fear from television when its aspirations are high and it sets itself up to be a carrier of important cultural conversations.

Nor will you find Postman indicting the network executives or program producers of conspiring to use television for their own sinister agenda. Television is the way it is because the technology demands it, he argues. Every technology has a built-in bias that determines how it will be used and the kinds of content or thought that it can carry. For example, "the printing press . . . had a clear bias toward being used as a linguistic medium. It is conceivable to use it exclusively for the reproduction of pictures . . . But in fact there never was much chance that the press would be used solely, or even very much, for the duplication of icons. From its beginning in the fifteenth century, the press was perceived as an extraordinary opportunity for the display and mass distribution of written language. Everything about its technical possibilities led in that direction. The technology of television has a bias as well."

And that bias, according to Postman, is visual entertainment.

"The average length of a shot on network television is only 3.5 seconds, so that the eye never rests, always has something new to see. Moreover, television offers viewers a variety of subject matter, requires minimal skills to comprehend it, and is largely aimed at emotional gratification. . . . American television, in other words, is devoted entirely to supplying its audience with entertainment." But of course the printing press has produced its share of trivial entertainment as well. The difference, says Postman, is not that television is entertaining, but that it has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience. Television does more than present entertaining subject matter; it presents all subject matter as entertainment. And that is a significant difference.

Postman makes a convincing case for his thesis in the areas of news, politics, education, and religion. He devotes a chapter to each of these and demonstrates that television, by the very nature of the medium, demands that whatever it touches becomes entertainment. As a result, the distinctions between show business and other aspects of society—politics, education, religion, and the news—have been blurred.

We have an actor in the White House and a number of other entertainment figures either holding public office or running for it. We recognize the increasing impact of television on the election process, political discourse, and the packaging of candidates. In religion the most influential religious figures in America today are the popular electronic preachers who command large numbers of devoted followers—Falwell, Robertson (who is making a run for the presidency), Schuller, Swaggart, and the rest of the cast. These preachers package their electronic church as entertainment every bit as consciously and as effectively as does Hollywood.

News itself is entertainment and trivia on television. "We know that the 'news' is not to be taken seriously," Postman writes, "that it is all in fun, so to say. (Continued on page 30)