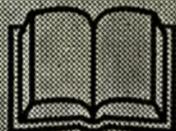


"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The *Word and Work*



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

MAY, 1994

**BREAKING LOOSE FROM
THE TYRANNY OF**

TV

- **WHAT ARE OUR CHURCH YOUNG PEOPLE THINKING?**
Don McGee asks them, and finds out.
- **STRONG & HAPPY MARRIAGES DO NOT JUST HAPPEN!**
25 questions that might help you prepare.

SPEAK UP FOR GOOD TV

In the past we have urged boycotts of sponsors who advertise on objectionable television programs. We have also suggested that our readers complain to their local station and the network about programs which feature sex, violence, and profanity.

But there is another side to it. We also need to encourage the producers, sponsors, stations and networks that provide programs compatible with Christian values. One such program is currently being shown on CBS television—"Christy."

Based on Catherine Marshall's best-selling book, the story is promoted as one with positive values, sincere faith, and good role models for our youth. Following its premiere on Easter Sunday, the program was scheduled to continue on Thursday nights over the CBS affiliates.

***TV Guide* said of the program, "'Christy' is as much like 'Little House on the Prairie' as anything we've seen . . . with strong characters to care about."**

If you enjoy "Christy," write a letter of thanks to Mr. Jeff Sagan-sky, President CBS Entertainment, c/o CBS TV City, 7800 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

--Editorial in Christian Standard; 5/15/94

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

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THEME:

TAMING TV

Alex V. Wilson

It's been called the world's largest university. It's been called mankind's most widely used drug. And a former commissioner of the F.C.C. made the understatement of the decade when he said, "It's not wise to ignore the most powerful influence in our society."

Doubtless you've heard that today's high school graduates have spent 50% more time watching TV than they have spent in the classroom. During that time, each may well have seen 18,000 murders and 350,000 commercials. By contrast it is estimated that the average American spends ten hours a year reading books. And how much time does he spend in personal Bible study, Sunday school and church meetings?

TV has its values, of course: 1) News coverage, especially of outstanding events. Remember seeing Neil Armstrong's giant step for mankind, onto the moon? And watching the Berlin Wall come down? 2) Great drama, musical events and other cultural feasts. 3) Believe it or not, TV *can* promote thinking, evaluation and discussion. 4) It can teach children basic reading, arithmetic, etc. 5) It can promote character development. "Exposure to just twelve episodes of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood has been associated with increased helping, sharing and cooperative behavior by children." 6) "TV comedy tends to decrease the pulse rate and relax people." 7) And of course there are some fine Christian programs on the air.

On the Other Hand . . .

Sometimes the comic strips in the newspaper portray things better than we can. Here are some examples. In "The Family Circus" Billy walks into his home from school and then asks, "Hey! Who left the TV off?" In "Nancy," one day she and Sluggo are staring at TV and she says, "I must be out of my mind to watch this. It's an insult to my intelligence." Sluggo suggests, "Why don't we see what else is on?" But she replies, "Wait till the commercial." Another time she is reading a magazine while he is engrossed in the tube. Nancy: "Interesting-- it says here that the average person watches over 7 hours of TV a day!" Sluggo "No kidding? That's great! It's nice to know I'm above average in *something*."

On another day Nancy tells him, "The worst thing happened last night. Our TV broke. So the whole night I had to sit around and read a book. It was like living before TV was invented! Now I know why they called it the Dark Ages!"

And in "For Better or For Worse," the wife next door charges into Elly's kitchen. "Aagh! I can't stand it! I've got to talk to somebody!! It's a beautiful Sunday afternoon--and what is Steve doing? . . . Watching baseball! He's flat on his back watching baseball! Every weekend it's the same! If it's not baseball it's football--I'm not married to a person, I'm married to a television set !!! What am I going to do, Elly? We hardly talk to each other any more." Elly: "Well, why don't you make plans to have lunch together during the week. Just the two of you!" Neighbor: "During the week? Are you kidding? That's when I watch my soaps!!!"

Now to some specifics: **Addiction:** Don't miss Chuck Swindoll's article in this issue. It's incredible. **Sex without principles:** Children are robbed of their innocence and projected into instant adulthood. "In its quest for new and sensational ventures to hold its audience, TV taps every existing taboo in the culture: homosexuality, incest, divorce, promiscuity, corruption, adultery and terrible displays of violence and sadism." Biblical standards are either omitted or pooh-poohed.

Violence: In half of TV's dramatic conflicts, violence is shown as a successful way of dealing with the problem. What does that teach? *USA Today* counted, in one week of prime-time network fare, 276 violent incidents, 57 people killed, and 99 people assaulted. The most violent program averaged 117 violent acts per hour!

Some people deny any cause-and-effect between such programming and the rising violence in our country. But *Christianity Today* mentions "more than 1,000 studies that demonstrate a link between violence in the media and violent behavior in society." And even *Movie Guide* admits that 7-11% of viewers are *deeply* affected by what they see, and mimic anti-social practices that are portrayed. That's more than one in twenty viewers!

Video games overflow with aggression too. In 1991 fifty-eight percent of the 95 most popular Nintendo home video games contained warfare scenarios and 83% featured violent themes. Many of them feature a variety of weapons to destroy your enemy. One game was advertised as "the ultimate guerilla warrior." The object of another is to "destroy Count Dracula: You'll have to find and destroy his body parts to end his reign of terror " Nice games, eh?

Other effects on children: Many don't get enough sleep. Some are affected with extreme talkativeness. At home they can't talk when the TV is on, which it always is; they are starved for attention, affection and conversation. There is less creativity in some areas: "You don't see kids making their own toys out of crummy things the way we used to," commented a parent. They have shorter attention span than formerly, so hyper-activity runs rampant. And teachers lament the fact that kids now have less thinking ability apart from visualizing. "Some teachers are encountering children who cannot understand a simple story without visual illustrations. TV has taken away the child's ability to form pictures in his mind."

Desire for Instant Solutions

"Understanding printed words must be learned; watching pictures does not require any learning. Conditioned to see all problems resolved in 30 or 60 minutes, the offspring of TV exhibit a low tolerance for the frustration of learning. Grade-schoolers are quickly turned off by any activity that promises less than instant gratification. 'You introduce a new skill, and right away, if it looks hard, they dissolve into tears,' laments a first-grade teacher. 'They want everything to be easy-like watching the tube.'

"There are some things you must know before you can learn other things. It takes hard work and lengthy periods of study to attain many desirable things that are not immediately visible. [Learning the multiplication-table or memorizing Bible passages, for instance.] Yet because the attention span of children is contracting, teachers are under terrific pressure to make everything relevant immediately--because if it is not, the students turn off.

"There are times when you have to say, 'You must understand such and such before we can get on to this next point.' And if the kid says, 'But this is boring,' sometimes you have to say, 'I know, but that's the way some things are.' TV works against this attitude."

Thus lack of self-discipline and of endurance are promoted--two key elements of mature character.

Effects on Our Homes

It's easy for arguments to break out over which program to watch. Too much TV results in little in-depth conversation and discussions. Many Christian families falter because they have no family altar, no devotions--a tragedy beyond calculation.

Quarrels tend to increase after folks watch tense programs. "Violent, frightening, suspenseful, and sexual content causes increased heart-rate, blood pressure, and other bodily responses in most people. And the intensity of our emotional experiences is related to how fast our hearts beat or how high our blood pressures soar. Family conflicts, having nothing to do with TV, may be more intense and emotional than they normally would be whenever they take place directly after family members have watched arousing TV content." In other words, we are psycho-somatic beings. Thus stimulated emotions tense up our bodies, and such physical/mental excitement makes us more likely to erupt in quarrels. Think that over; to be forewarned is to be forearmed, hopefully.

Then there is advertising. It aims to promote dissatisfaction, so we'll rush out and buy their product. Chronic dissatisfaction, another name for materialism! There is much deception too: Special techniques make toys look bigger and seem faster. And health problems? "Kid-directed ads for sweet foods, candy, etc. hook children on poor eating habits long before they develop the mental defenses to resist." A study found that only 2% of such ads are for fruit, vegetables, dairy products or other nutritious foods. And think how conformity runs wild. Every other kid on your block has this doll or that rocket or the other contraption; will you be the only kid without one?

TV has other dangers too: **passive spectatoritis**. And **distorted news reports**. Also, **missing out on more valuable things**. For all these points, be sure to read Philip Yancey's perceptive article in this issue.

All these matters should be discussed in our homes. Parents should teach children about them, and should set good examples too. Unless we train them to choose the wheat and reject the chaff, our families and churches will become weaker and weaker. "Woe to you who are complacent in Zion," warned Amos long ago. What would he say today? TV addiction and spiritual complacency are bosom buddies. These are urgent matters; let's wake up!

[The preceding article has several direct quotations not credited to any source. They were compiled years ago for an ethics class in Manila, and I was careless about the credits. Though old, the points made are still valid. Most of the quotes referred to were from magazines: **Christian Herald**, **Eternity**, **U.S. News & World Report**, and **Reader's Digest**. --AVW]

PLUG-IN DRUG

Chuck Swindoll

A fascinating experiment on addiction was reported in an issue of *Good Housekeeping* magazine. Not drug addiction. Not alcohol addiction. Not tobacco or candy addiction. It was on television addiction.

A Detroit newspaper made an offer to 120 families in the city. The families were promised \$500 each if they would agree not to watch TV for one month. That's right--500 bucks if they'd keep the tube turned off for just 30 days. Guess how many turned down the offer.

Ninety three.

Of the 27 families that said "Yes," five were studied and reported on in the magazine article. Right away you realize it was quite an adjustment for them. Each family had been watching television from 40 to 70 hours a week . . . that's between 5.7 and 10 hours a day. Think of it! Every day of every week the monotonous sounds and electronic pictures were a continual part of those households--year in, year out.

Serious pains accompanied the sudden, cold-turkey withdrawal from the plug-in drug. Remarkable things occurred, some almost bizarre. Like the lady who started talking to her cat or the couple who stopped talking to each other altogether! But some good things also occurred. Books were pulled off the shelf, dusty from neglect, and read. Families played games, listened to the radio, and enjoyed playing records together. In another family two young kids spent some time practicing how to spell their names and addresses!

Miracle of miracles, several actually reported the younger kids took their baths at night without throwing a fit. And some (better sit down) willingly practiced their piano lessons.

The result? Well, the "no TV month" families finally had to admit four facts:

1. Their family members were brought closer together.
2. More eyeball-to-eyeball time between parents and children took place.
3. There was a marked increase in patience between family members.
4. Creativity was enhanced.

I would love to report otherwise but I must be honest rather than wishful and add that television eventually won out once again. All five families returned to their addiction for nearly the same number of hours as before. Some more.

The Primary Danger

It's not the TV that disturbs me. No, all it is is another gadget that can be used and enjoyed on occasion. It's the abuse that bothers me--the paralyzing addiction that stifles human creativity and cripples personal relationships. I agree with the comment made in the Christian Medical Society Journal a couple of years ago:

"The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces as the behavior it prevents."

Turning on the television set can turn off the process that transforms children into people . . . and non-plus viewers into thinking, caring persons. That's why the little 9-year-old kid in San Francisco was overheard saying:

"I'd lot rather watch TV than play outside 'cause it's boring outside. They always have the same rides, like swings and slides and things."

One reputable authority declares that children raised on television come to adulthood with no evident signs of decline in overall intelligence. There is apparently no huge brain drain, but there are a few peculiarities that concern the pros in this field.

- Increased communication in near non-verbal speech ("like man uh you know uh")
- Much less spontaneity and fewer imaginative concepts coming from young adults.
- An intense, almost irrational, dependence on music with a heavy beat as their only art form.
- The ever-present drug scene.
- Greater interest in passive experiences than in those requiring mental interaction and active involvement.

Since television sets sit in 97% of American homes (more homes have TV than indoor plumbing), these problems aren't decreasing.

Hey, let's do something about this, folks! It's a tough uphill battle, but it isn't insurmountable. Coming off the addiction is always hard. It actually boils down to the correct use of two of the smallest

things in your house, the on-off knob on your set and the simple yet powerful word, "No". Now, don't look around for much support. You'll have to hammer out your own philosophy. One that fits you and your family. But, for sure, do something soon. Let's take seriously these words:

"Fix your thoughts on what is true and good and right. Think about things that are pure and lovely, and dwell on the fine, good things in others."

--Paul, to 20th-century Christians

Believe me, the ultimate benefits you'll enjoy will be worth much more than \$500 and they will certainly last a lot longer. For a change, unplug the plug-in drug.

TV AND ME

Philip Yancey

Have you ever been overseas? Have you watched a whale cavort in the ocean? Ridden in a supersonic jet fighter? Taken an ocean cruise?

Every one of those experiences has taken place in our living rooms. A twelve-year old can describe in detail the sensation of an aerial dog fight at supersonic speeds and can probably sketch a recognizable Eiffel Tower.

Think of what the mass media have done. Alien places and adventures were remote, vague half-descriptions carried from mouth-to-mouth for all of history until this century. What did a Minnesota logger know about slavery in 1848? It depends on whom he'd talked to. Without firsthand experience, he had no universally-accepted notion of it. Today, one TV series like *Roots* can permanently sear a powerful image of slavery into the memories of 130 million people.

I could have asked another line of questions. Have you been to a strip-tease show? Have you gambled in Las Vegas? Have you watched a robbery? Seen a rape? These are not idle questions, even for Christian readers, because those experiences, too, could be portrayed in your living room. Almost any 12-year-old in America could describe the scenes.

Television has to be ranked as one of the major forces shaping our lives. Much of our perception of the world comes through the shape of a picture.

Parents—especially Christians--like to think, "Oh, but I'm in control of my kids' viewing habits. We run the TV; it doesn't run us." If that's true, your family is a rare exception. Statistics show that the typical U.S. high school senior has spent 15,000 hours watching TV, but only 12,000 hours in school classrooms. By the time he reaches 65, even if he attends Sunday School faithfully enough to earn a string of perfect attendance ribbons, he will have spent a total of four months in Sunday School, but nine years watching TV. Who's in control, you or the medium?

Don't get me wrong--I'm not one of those axe-wielding crusaders against TV addicts. I've never even written a letter to the FCC about TV programming. But I do think it's important to flick off the switch every so often and reflect on what the cathode-ray tube may be doing to my life.

Here's what I've come up with:

1. TV affects my values. Horrible statistics tell how TV affects our values in pernicious ways, especially in the areas of sex and violence. The average 15-year old has seen 13,000 deaths, and hundreds of crimes are inspired by TV plots. But as I say, I'm not on a wild-eyed crusade against sex and violence on TV. I can defend myself against those obvious dangers. What bothers me are the more subtle ways TV may be persistently wearing down my own values.

2. TV blurs my perception. I'm grateful to TV for taking me to Alaska without my having to endure the swamps and mosquitos. I'm delighted to know a lot about octopi without having dived to dangerous, murky depths. TV has exploded my experience of reality and broadened my life.

But this god has become a demon. TV seems so real that I sometimes take at face value its images. Francis Schaeffer gave a stark illustration of this subtle danger on one of his "How Should We Then Live?" films. He staged a mock student riot, then showed how two news teams might portray it.

The conservative news station showed "our brave men in blue" being abused and pelted by "obscenity-screaming, long-haired youths." The more liberal station showed different scenes from the same event: Police battering passive demonstrators and tossing tear-gas grenades into crowds of innocent bystanders. The point is, when you and I watch the news each night, we take it as fact. After all, it's on film; the camera doesn't lie. But with selective shooting and editing the camera does lie, or at least distorts reality.

Why pick on TV? Because it presents unique problems. A public raised on books is accustomed to a marketplace of ideas. B.F. Skinner presents his views with documentation. Another author with equal skill refutes them. We read both books, mull them over, and decide on a view that takes some truth from both men. But in all but a few cases, TV is not a symposium of ideas. It makes statements. Reasoning has been eliminated and pre-digested for us. There's not much time for boring, heady dialogue on TV.

I have a hard time remembering that. When I watch a two-minute clip of the President's next news conference and he looks worried and stumbles over words, I may forget that those may have been the weakest two minutes of the entire press conference, edited to heighten the drama.

Advertisements are especially tricky because their whole business is to impress me with new values. They don't purport to be objective; they are bald propaganda. Yet I can't help but feeling a bit unAmerican and inferior if there's a ring around my collar, or my clothes aren't whiter than white (whatever that is), or my teeth lack sex appeal. Values of questionable importance suddenly dominate my life.

Several years ago the *Chicago Tribune* Sunday Magazine published two fascinating collages. One was made up of scores of caricatures clipped from ads in the 1930's and 40's showing how blacks were portrayed in advertisements. The archetypal black then was a carefree, grinning, boyish-faced young thing with a cap jammed on the back of his head--kind of like the Phillip Morris cigarette bellboy.

The second collage showed how blacks were portrayed in ads and movies of the 1960's. The black face was firm, jaw clenched, eyes closed to a slit. The image was of a cool, tough, superfly dude. All blacks looked like hardened ghetto-survivors.

The tragedy is, if you ride a bus into the South Side of Chicago, you see young blacks emulating the stereotype that TV and movies are constantly raining on them. Their perception of reality (and my perception of the black world) is being manipulated. You hardly ever see born-again Christian roles acted out on TV. Just as the media slants our view of blacks, it may also slant others' views of Christians.

Why doesn't TV portray good sex within happy marriages? I don't mean showing physical scenes, but simply indicating that a husband and wife are faithful and happy about it. I come away from TV with the idea that the best, most thrilling kind of sex comes in extra-marital or premarital affairs. Yet the people I know involved in such

affairs are mostly disenchanted and desperate. Lots of happily married people brag about their sexual relationships--why aren't these happy marriages ever represented on TV?

Every problem on TV--homosexuality, incest, suicide, murder, you name it--is resolved by the end of the show. Life is shown as a series of riddles which eventually work out to clever solutions. Sometimes that comforts me. But mostly it makes me feel abnormal because a lot of my struggles have been going on for many months without a station break.

Sometimes I wonder if these formulated life stereotypes haven't instigated the rise in similar easy-answer Christian platitudes. I've attended Bible conferences, heard many sermons, and read Christian books. Many of them have my problems all figured out. Am I depressed? Follow these five steps to happiness, they say. Am I having trouble with my quiet time? Here are twelve easy formulas to choose from. Sometimes I get the idea that the only way to make it as a Christian is to divide all of life into a series of lists with two Bible references for each spiritual answer.

Sorry, my life just doesn't work that way. It works more as a relationship--with God and with others--and not as a step-by-step formula for action.

3. TV makes me passive. T.S. Eliot summarized well that TV is a "medium of entertainment which permits millions of people to listen to the same joke at the same time and yet remain lonely."

TV is powerful. It can keep me glued to a chair for hours. It takes a mighty good conversationalist (or preacher) to hold my attention that long. Through TV I experience war, adventure, intrigue, travel. Yet there is something hollow about them.

I have been to the top of Mt. Kilimanjaro and seen the view. But I saw it from the rattan chair in my living room. I missed the lung pressure caused by shortage of oxygen, the ache of muscles as I neared the top, the sharp smells, the sound of my boots crunching ice, the comradeship of sharing an adventure, the exultation of achieving difficult goals.

I missed the nuances of mountain vista--the way valleys snake from one side of a mountain to another, the delicate shades painted by the setting sun. I got the end result--a view from the top without any of the pre-requisites.

I lost something in the process. One would expect TV to heighten my lust for adventure and excitement. Strangely, it dulls it. Visiting Mt. Kilimanjaro isn't that much different from visiting Walton's Mountain. My experiences become vicarious. That's why it's so easy for me to sit passively through bloody war scenes.

This numbing effect of TV has implications in the Christian world, too. Jesus commanded me to love my neighbor. It applies to the divorced lady down the street with her runny-nosed kid, the poor family that goes to my church, the old folks' home behind the grocery store. But TV shows me a whole new set of neighbors--billions of them. Some are earthquake-riddled, malnourished, begging, and war-devastated.

At first, scenes of all those neighbors stir me. I want to give to World Vision. But after the hundredth news report on this famine or that earthquake (it hurts to confess it), I'm numb. All I care about is balancing my checkbook or fixing a snack. I can't carry the burden of all those neighbors.

Instead of making me active and involved, then, TV makes me passive. I sit sleepily through church services, force myself to read the Bible regularly, and try to figure out what small dent I can make in that big world.

I know I must resist such a deadening influence. Rather than sit in front of the set, I must plan Bible studies that challenge my spirit. I must create quality time with my wife--walking, playing, reading, exploring new ideas. Which will I choose tonight?

Or will I just flick on the tube and relax?

THOUGHT-PROVOKERS FROM HERE AND THERE: TELEVISION

I have never seen a bad television program, because I refuse to. God gave me a mind, and a wrist that turns things off. --Jack Paar

The Bosses Who Control TV Programming

It is valuable to know the enthusiasms and prejudices of the media elite who are responsible for the content pouring into our homes day by day. A study under the auspices of Columbia University reveals that:

*50% of those controlling the media have "no religion." *8% attend church or synagogue weekly. *86% attend seldom or never. *84% believe government should have no laws regulating sex. *55% believe extramarital affairs are not immoral. *95% believe homosexuality is not wrong. *85% believe homosexuals should be permitted to teach in public schools. --The Church Around the World

Guidelines for Parents

1) Look at your other activities. In some homes . . . few sports, games, jobs or other interests are available. 2) Be active with a few of the things you can participate in. 3) Read to your children. If you start early, reading can become captivating. 4) Limit preschool TV time. Many children watch the most hours of TV during the preschool years. Limitless viewing hours can establish poor patterns early. [Don't use] the set as a babysitter. 5) Ask what your child is going to watch. Instead of turning the TV on and trying to find a program, ask your child to first use a program guide. [Don't have] the set on merely to have it on. 6) If possible, remove TV from the living room or other main room [where it will] be the center of life.

--William Coleman, Making TV Work for Your Family

Slanted News-Reporting

Think back to October, 1989, when San Francisco was shaken by a major earthquake and 66 people were killed. This tragic story of death and destruction dominated our national news for weeks. In comparison, 171 babies are killed by legal abortion every hour of every day in America. Where are the special reports, and where is the national outpouring of grief for these silent abortion victims?

Nothing is more frustrating than the shameful and irresponsible manner in which our side of the abortion issue is dealt with by the national news media. Our major networks have shown nothing but contempt for the right-to-life movement. Pro-life supporters are commonly referred to as "extremists" or even "fanatics." In contrast, the views of anti-life people are described as "deep commitments." The media feel perfectly justified in identifying individual pro-lifers as Catholics, Evangelicals, Fundamentalists, or members of the "radical right." But who ever heard a news report identify an anti-lifer as an extremist, a left-winger, or even an atheist, if such were the case? Labeling pro-lifers is one way reporters try to discredit them.

Pro-life rallies, like the annual march in January which always attracts 50,000-100,000 marchers in our nation's capital, are ignored or grossly underestimated in size. But a dozen abortion marchers will get more coverage on the evening news than 10,000 pro-lifers. --Newsletter of the National Right to Life Committee

Throw it Away? #1

Over a year ago [we got rid of our TV], and we've been pleasantly surprised by the results. For example, when Santa came gathering his shopping list last year, posing to each of the children, "What would you like for Christmas?" each of the children responded, "I don't know, Dad. What do you think we need?" As I picked myself up off the floor I realized that over the months without TV, the demon of advertising covetousness had been quietly exorcised from my children . . .

Another interesting benefit has been the removal of certain fears. The Ontario Commission on Violence in the Communication Industry says: "Heavy viewers of TV are more likely to overestimate . . . the danger of their own neighborhood. They're more likely to have a sense of fear about daily life. They're more likely to overestimate the probability of being involved in a violent crime." -- George Mallone
in Interest

Throw it Away? #2 and #3

One family didn't repair their set. As a result, the oldest boy is active in Scouts and works in a gas-station. Another plays a lot of ball, and read *Watership Down* [a long, good book] and all four of the Hobbit books. The father commented, "I don't know any other children with their range of interests."

Another family, with four children under ten, didn't fix their TV either. "The whole family goes to bed earlier. My three-year-old can do a 100-piece puzzle my ten-year old has discovered baking, my six-

year-old memorized the entire musical score from the record *Mary Poppins*; and I no longer beg and nag one child to stop watching TV and do homework. We take hikes after dinner during the week, and on weekends we walk early in the morning. We pray and sing, and we visit the library weekly. None of us wants the TV back.

YOUR FAMILY AND THE VCR

Ruth Herron

Watching television is a daily form of entertainment in most of our homes. For many years, we have sat passively and watched whatever came on the channel. Our power has been limited to complaining to the broadcasters, and turning the set off. With access to cable television, there is a greater selection of programs, but the choice of what to watch is still dependent on what is being aired at a particular time.

Television is such a prominent part of our lives that we sometimes let it control our actions. We have become slaves to TV, buying what is offered to us, and becoming what we watch. It is time that we take control of our television and make it our slave. When we purposefully control what we watch, we will be using television wisely.

Changes

One of the biggest changes in the TV industry is the widespread use of videocassette recorders. They are inexpensive enough that many families own them. VCR tapes are readily available for rent and purchase also. Grocery stores, video movie shops, libraries, and even service stations stock VCR tapes. VCRs are changing what we watch on TV.

For a small amount of money, a family can watch a quality movie together. For some families, this is more economical than going to a theater. Families can break the habit of just leaving the TV on in hopes of finding something worthwhile to watch. They can choose what to watch, and not be totally dependent on what someone wants them to watch.

Choices

My father often planned our television viewing when I was growing up. When something of interest was on, the entire family watched it together. Because of this, I was exposed to documentaries, circuses,

nature and seasonal specials. If my father had not planned for these, I probably would have watched just cartoons and game shows.

At the time, I sometimes resented his control over the television, but now I realize that the parent's role in TV viewing is important. Without parental influence, children would exist on a diet of "junk" shows. In the past, parents allowed this to happen with a resigned sigh and, "Well, there's nothing else on." By using a VCR and tape, a parent exercises a wider choice as he administers his responsibility of guiding his family in TV program selection.

Of course, a family can still watch "junk" but the parent does have control. Parents can choose and even preview what the family will be watching. (This is important sometimes with younger children.) Together, parents and children can learn to choose quality tapes and be discriminating in what is seen.

Planning what to watch and when to watch it can be fun. Families can choose from such broad categories as: Cartoons, concerts, lectures, dramas, classics, Bible stories, fairy tales, how-to tapes, exercises, Christian movies, read-along stories, and just-for-fun movies.

To help encourage reading, a child (or family) can read a book before watching it on the VCR. Our family did this last year with *A Christmas Carol*. When this is done, the family can then discuss how the two differed, what was similar, and how it differed from each person's image of the book. The great advantage of a VCR tape is that it can easily be stopped for breaks and discussion.

Just as television viewing can be either positive or negative, the same is true for VCR viewing. What you see as a family can enhance your family life or it can erode the very values and ideals you are seeking to uphold. Parents and children might choose a tape by its cover or hyped advertisement. This can easily happen when the parent is in a hurry. The parent can unwittingly subject himself or his child to violent or scary scenes which can be many times worse than what he might see on TV.

This is dangerous because a child cannot detach himself from a disturbing scene as an adult is able to do. The child becomes a part of it and absorbs everything presented. Parents also need to be aware of what their teens rent and watch. Some places rent movies to teens with a large amount of sex, profanity and violence. Again, it is the responsibility of the parent to guide the family in what is seen and to restrict viewing of potentially harmful or offensive tapes.

Questions

Below are some questions which parents can ask when choosing a movie for the family:

1. What kind of tape do we want? (entertainment, educational, etc.)
2. Will the tape bring out issues we can discuss as a family? Does it help us to use our imagination or make us think?
3. Will it scare or upset younger children? Does it bring to life any fears or anxieties?
4. Does it stereotype people or make fun of certain groups?
5. Is violence used as a solution to problems? Does it produce negative feelings which the child watching it might act out?
6. Toward what age is the tape geared? Is it suitable for the entire family?
7. Are there sexual scenes, profanity, violence, details of crime? What is the rating?
8. Does the film support or reinforce what you are teaching in the home?
9. Are the characters ones you want your children to imitate?
10. Does the film make you feel good about yourself as a family?

We can learn about ourselves, others, and the world we live in through VCR tapes. We can laugh at ourselves, gain new insights, and cry together. Or we can let ourselves feel overwhelmed and assaulted by what we watch.

To take positive control over what is seen on your VCR, set family guidelines. Decide how much time you want to spend watching TV and tapes during the week. Don't let your family become addicted to any form of viewing. Make sure you have plenty of time to develop relationships with each other in other ways. See a wide variety of tapes.

Don't use the VCR as a baby-sitter. If you can't watch a tape with your child, check on him often, asking and answering questions, and letting him know you're concerned about what he is watching. Set aside special family viewing times complete with popcorn and drinks. If you don't have regular family times, this can be a start. Talk about what you are seeing, and stop the tape when needed for discussion.

Let the child know how you feel about what is happening and encourage him to discuss how he feels about it. Point out positive things as well as negative. Turn the tape off if the program is offensive or inappropriate. Don't feel you have to watch it just because you paid for it. Taking control over what you and your family see takes discipline. Set limits on what you allow to be seen in your home, and stick to them.

To help avoid problems, consult reviews of tapes found in books, magazines and newspapers. Examine what is available at your video rental shop. Develop a rapport with the owners and let them know how they can serve your family better. Be creative and rent a video camera to tape your family's special occasions.

What we are as a family depends on what we let ourselves become. Our actions are easily influenced by what we view, whether this be through television or on VCR tapes. Enhance your family life by choosing purposefully and wisely what is shown in your home.

--From *Christian Standard*

THE DOCTOR'S RX

Dr. James Dobson has some good advice about families and TV. He points out three goals parents should have. First, to oversee the *quality* of the programs their children watch. Second, regulate the *quantity*; are they spending too much time at the tube? Third, include all the family in establishing a policy, and seeing *why* such a policy is needed. Then he describes a system he read about which can help achieve all three goals:

"First, . . . parents sit down with the children and select a list of approved programs that are appropriate for each age level. Then type that list and enclose it in clear plastic so it can be referred to throughout the week. Second, either buy or make a roll of tickets. Issue each child ten tickets per week, and let him use them to 'buy' the privilege of watching the programs on the approved list. When his tickets are gone, his television viewing is over for that week. This teaches him to choose carefully what he most wants to spend his time on. Ten hours a week is perhaps a good target to shoot at . . ."

WHAT ARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE THINKING?

Don McGee

I was a teacher at church camp last summer and I could tell from the Sunday night crowd this was going to be a very good Senior week at CYE. It was what one might call the tenor and intensity of the group that arrested my attention, and I have continued to mull over what they said that week though it has now been several months. Perhaps other church leaders are interested in what these young people are thinking. I certainly hope so.

My class consisted of twenty-one high school and college students. Five were young men, sixteen were young women, and they represented a good cross-section of the churches in Louisiana. We took advantage of the opportunity to discuss a number of current church issues and I will share several of these with you in the hope we all will better understand those matters our young people consider important.

One of the first things talked about was the need for classes on how to study the Bible. They understand Bible study is to be approached differently than reading a newspaper or studying a biology textbook, but they are not sure of some of the mechanics. Judging from the proliferation of generic topical sermons there may be a pressing need for church leaders to seriously consider this subject.

Closely associated with the above is this next item. They also felt strongly about the need for teacher training classes. They see fine Christians being asked to teach Bible classes but who have little or no training in the art of Bible study. They are adept at reading and quoting scripture but are unfamiliar with expounding it. Take away a canned lesson plan so that a teacher must simply teach from the Word and they're at a loss! No theme, no substance, no thrust and no application. Do you suppose there may be something to what these young people are saying about our teaching programs? I believe there is. On a couple of occasions men have actually told me they "can not teach from the Bible," that they must have a "study guide." At least one reason for this is they have never been taught how to mine for the gold. It seems the word *exegesis* is not familiar to some teachers. That might be okay because our churches are not seminaries, but the alarming thing is that the practice of what the word means is also unfamiliar.

Also high on their list was the need for premarital counseling. They felt there was a great need for such classes but hardly any of their preachers had such a practice. As a result many young people are going into marriage without much of a Biblical view of sex. None were able to say their parents or church leaders ever talked to them about human sexuality, except to say "don't do it" before marriage. They have no concept of the family being the foundation for church leadership training. They somehow have the idea elders hire and fire the preacher and speak *ex cathedra*, and that deacons are "elders in training". Most admit to having hardly any idea of stewardship, budgets, credit, etc. The list could go on. [See the following article]

Among other things they would like to see are activities involving others their own age. For examples they listed tubing, canoeing, bowling, skating, ski trips and even an afternoon in the local park playing volleyball. One of them said any excuse to get together is good enough. *One of the ideas they had was for churches with buses to bring their young people to other church camps so they could meet other people.* The thought that crossed my mind when I heard that was, "Yeah, we used to have SCC to help fill that need."

They want to know HOW TO STUDY AND APPLY THE BIBLE, and HOW TO TEACH IT. They also want PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING ... and ACTIVITIES WITH OTHERS THEIR AGE.

After a couple of days with them I felt comfortable in asking what I've been wanting to ask a responsible group of young people for a long time. "Would you consider becoming a minister, and if not, why not?" The answers were not very varied. The reasons included their not being up to the challenge and not wanting to be viewed as being different. However, their two main reasons had to do with the money situation and the undue stress put upon the preacher and his family. These young people believe Christians should practice sacrificial living but they do not believe the preacher should be the only one in the congregation doing the sacrificing. I ask you, does that strike a nerve or what!? Three of the five young men said they would "seriously consider" the ministry but the above matters would be major considerations. One said both his peers and family (Christians, by the way) feel the preaching profession is a "waste of talent." There is more money and prestige doing other things, they said. That, too, is an exposed nerve!

I asked the young women how they felt about marrying a preacher and the answer was basically the same. Fifteen of the sixteen young women said they would "seriously consider" it and several indicated they would actually like to marry a preacher.

Perhaps when our churches realize preachers are "ranchers" and not "shepherds" and that it will take more than \$2100 a month and a parsonage to get a man who knows what he is doing, we will begin to see some good talent being put into practice.

Does this mean these young people are materialistic? Not at all! But it does mean that, as potential preachers and their wives, they would like a style of living similar to that which their congregations practice. They would like to take a vacation, own a boat or camper, have a modest and comfortable home, take their families out to dinner, continue their education, provide opportunities for their children, have a savings account . . . I think you get the idea.

Next time some committee or board of elders gets together to consider a lectureship series or the future of their congregation they may want to listen to what their young people have to say. None of the young people I know would make unreasonable requests, present ultimatums, or spew forth caustic demands. (What could be more reasonable than the above mentioned classes?) Sadly though, they are not even asking for an audience with the "powers that be." Some seem to have simply resigned themselves to the status quo. After being defacto ignored for some length of time they simply leave, and as leaders we are left standing in the dust wondering what happened and why. To deny consideration of our young men and women is to destroy golden opportunities, ignore some brilliant ideas and waste the drive and vigor of youth. May this charge never be leveled against us for we shall give account of our stewardship in this most vital area.

If you feel this evaluation is off by a country mile then give it a test. Take your class of young adults, both singles and those married, and study 1 Timothy with them. Take the role of facilitator from time to time and listen carefully to what they think. Especially when you get to chapter three! If you are like me--that is, if you are quite conservative--you will be impressed. Perhaps one Sunday afternoon you will fall on your knees and praise God for your young adults and their depth, conviction and soundness. Perhaps for the first time you will realize that, if our Lord's return is further delayed, His church will pass into the capable hands of a generation that will fit well into Hebrews chapter eleven! If we will let them!

PREPARING FOR A MARVELOUS MARRIAGE

Alex V. Wilson

Deciding about marriage is the second most important decision you will ever make in your lifetime. (The most important, of course, is whether to follow Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior.) Should YOU marry? Believe it or not, there are some advantages to single life. See what Paul said about it in 1 Cor. 7. Since this side of the question is rarely presented, study it carefully.

If you should marry, WHOM will you marry? Jane or June or Joan or Jean? John or Jim or Jack or Joe? How will you decide? And even if your choice is already made, WHEN will you marry? That is important too.

The pressures of modern life put a great strain on marriage. In some parts of the U.S. as many as one out of every two marriages end in divorce! I remember in Manila it was discovered that 65% of the students at an expensive school were from homes where their father and mother were not living together. There are schools here now with even worse statistics. That is tragic, for broken homes usually produce broken lives.

Prepare Beforehand

Strong and happy marriages do not just happen. They result from careful preparation: praying, thinking, evaluating, planning, and character-building. Churches need to help their members prepare for vibrant, Christ-centered marriages and homes. We should *teach* about God's standards and resources for the family. Perhaps start a lending library of *good books* about the home. Perhaps hold a *seminar* on Christian family-life. Or use some of the valuable *Sunday School Materials* that are available regarding courtship and marriage. *Pre-marital counseling* is also an important ministry. A wise policy is for a pastor to refuse to marry any couple unless they first meet with him for at least two and preferably three or four counseling sessions. Announce this policy to your congregation, so they won't be caught by surprise. I prefer to meet for the first session at least two months before the wedding, and then hold other sessions during the following weeks. I recommend some books for them to read before the wedding too.

Here are helpful questions to ask during pre-marital counseling. Perhaps this list will assist new pastors to formulate their own set of

questions. Or maybe it will enable couples who are engaged (or thinking about it) to consider these important matters before their pastor asks them.

PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING QUESTIONS

1. How long have you known each other? How long have you gone together seriously?
2. Your ages: If there is a wide gap in your ages, what effects might this have on your relationship, now or later?
3. Your educational attainments: If differing, what effects might this have?
4. Your occupations: Are you happy in your occupation, or hoping to change?
5. Your racial/cultural heritage: If they differ, what effects might this have?
6. Your economic status: well-to-do? average? poor? If differing, what effects might such differences have?
7. Do you know and enjoy each other's friends?
8. Are your goals in life basically harmonious? Have you ever discussed them?
9. Are your moral standards basically harmonious?
10. Are your temperaments basically harmonious? Do you understand each other quite well? (A good book to read: *Spirit-Controlled Temperament*, by Tim LaHaye).
11. How would each of you describe your relation to Jesus Christ? How long have you been His disciple? What changes has He made in your lives? Do you pray together? Do you plan to have a "family altar?" What makes you believe it is God's will for you to marry each other? If you discover it is not His will for you two to marry, will you submit to Him?
12. Do you attend the same church? If not, then what church do you intend to attend after you marry? Are you agreed wholeheartedly on this, or is there any reluctance or irritation on the part of the one who is "giving in?" Will you really be active in your church or just "attend?" If you are from different church backgrounds, then what beliefs and practices will you teach your children to follow?
13. How would you classify the married life of your parents through the years that you were growing up?
__extremely happy __fairly happy __satisfactory
__unhappy __very bad.
What do you believe were the reasons why their marriage was the way it was (whether happy or unhappy)?

- 14. How do your parents feel about your forthcoming marriage:**
 Very favorable favorable OK disapprove
 strongly disapprove.
 If they disapprove, what reasons do they give? Have you seriously considered these?
- 15. Do you know each other's parents and other relatives well? Do you feel comfortable with them?**
- 16. Are you aware of each other's faults? How do you react to them? How might they affect your marriage, now and later?**
- 17. Have you ever been quite angry at each other? How did you respond? Did you solve or merely cover up the problem? Did you truly forgive? How will you respond next time? Do you know how to handle such situations constructively?**
- 18. When you disagree over an important decision, what do you do?**
- 19. Do you know each other's physical conditions--health; tendencies toward sickness; strengths; weaknesses? Have you recently had a thorough physical check-up by a doctor? You should, as soon as possible--before the wedding! Inform the doctor of your plans to marry.**
- 20. Do you know the amount of your income? Have you discussed and planned at least a tentative budget? Do you know at least approximately what your expenses will be? What kind of Lifestyle will you follow, economically . . . not only now, but later? Do you agree on this matter--the kind of home you will desire, and furniture and appliances you consider essential, etc.? Will you tithe regularly? Do you know how to set up a budget? Have you while single been able to live within a budget? What debts do you owe to any one, which will affect your budget?**
- 21. Do you both plan to work? Have you carefully thought about if the wife should hold an outside job once she becomes a mother (or even before then)?**
 If you both plan to hold jobs, and your budget will be based on the combined incomes, then what will you do if the wife needs to stop her outside job because of children?
- 22. Are you well informed about matters related to sex? Do you understand the Bible's teaching about mutual sex duties, as in 1 Cor. 7:1-5? (Use a modern translation) This passage clearly implies that sex is God's good provision for husband and wife, even apart from its reproductive purpose. Have you planned your honeymoon? Where, and how long?**

23. Have you discussed and agreed on how many children you want, and when you want them? Are you aware of various family-planning methods, and do you agree on this matter?
24. Where will you live? With the parents of one of you, or separate from them? Have you considered how you can use your home in the service of Christ?
25. Have you planned your wedding? Where? When? How many in the wedding party? Have you considered expenses? What to include in the ceremony? Have you applied yet for a marriage license?

Comments on the Questionnaire

Wow—so many questions! Yes, it's a long list. But each question is important. It only goes to show that marriage calls for a good deal of maturity and experience. It should not be entered into lightly, by any means. Especially risky is early marriage. One well-known authority on marriage, Judson Landis, concluded from statistics some years ago that the "divorce rate was six times higher in the marriages where both spouses were under 21, then in marriages in which both spouses were 31 or over at the time of marriage." And in a recent survey almost one-fourth of the wives said they felt they had married too early. In other words, Slow Down! What's the rush? Those who dash into marriage are usually the first to wish that they could dash out of it somehow.

One lesson is clear: It takes *time* to know someone well enough to discover if he or she is right for you. That fact is the basis of questions #1, 7-11, and 15-19. That is, you will not be able to answer those questions intelligently and sufficiently unless you have known each other for quite a while.

Equally Yoked and Well Matched

Another point is of crucial importance, and it is the reason for questions #2-12. The more *areas of similarity* that exist between a man and woman, the more likely they are to have a happy marriage. When quite large gaps exist, whether educationally, economically, spiritually, socially or morally, there will almost always be dangerous tensions. Of course this does not mean that a couple must be completely similar in background to get along well. A man with a PhD. *might* have a successful marriage with a high-school dropout (if, for example, she is an intelligent, self-educated person), but such would be a very rare exception to the rule. When several disparities exist, or even just one disparity that is really big, then it is almost certain that the marriage will turn sour. This point is verified by countless statistics, by almost every marriage counselor, and—in the case of a believer

marrying a nonbeliever--by 2 Cor. 6:14ff in the Bible. (The matter of temperaments is an exception to what we are saying here. Many happy married couples have different temperaments. But you need to be sure you are compatible temperamentally. Again, time is needed for such a discovery.)

Differences in cultural background (question #5) affect us deeply often without our even realizing it. Marriage counselor Emily Mudd gives an interesting example of this.

Leo and Marie had been married three years when Marie came to us for help. They had met at work and fallen in love. Leo's family was from Italy, Marie's from Ireland.

Marie told us that from the beginning Leo was inconsiderate. For instance, when they became engaged he rented an apartment *without consulting her*, and brought dining-room and bedroom furniture *without consulting her*. Then he said, "Now we're ready for the wedding." Also, he made more fuss over his mother than he made over her. Also, he wanted her to cook all sorts of Italian messes that took forever to fix. With two small children she just couldn't manage to prepare them.

Leo was angry when he came m. He told us he'd done everything to show his wife how much he loved her. Before their wedding, for instance, he got their home all ready for her *without bothering her about it*. All he asked was that she learn to cook the kind of food he liked. His mamma would teach her, but Marie was jealous of mamma. Was a man supposed to stop loving his mother when he got married?

The counselor helped Marie understand that most Italians grew up assuming that the man made the decisions and did the major buying. Also, Italians made a big fuss over their mothers. Leo wasn't criticizing her when he asked her to do things differently; he was merely expecting what he was used to.

As a start, the counselor suggested, why didn't Leo and Marie sit down and plan their menus for the week together? Marie could say how many of the Italian specialties she thought she could cope with--and then ask Leo's mother to teach her. This they did. Talking about food led to talking about other differences and ultimately to a new understanding.

Your Parents and Your Spouse

Our ideas and expectations of the roles of husband and wife are shaped not only by our culture but also by the way our parents carried out those roles as we grew up. Note question #13. A marriage counselor gives us three examples of what I mean.

a. A wife had a father who ran around on weekends with a bag of tools fixing things in the house and yard. She expects her husband to be like her father. That is the husband's role as she saw her father live it. If her husband is all thumbs, and can't drive a nail, she feels betrayed.

b. A husband whose mother spent all of her spare time fixing bountiful meals, cleaning house, and mending clothes may feel let down if his wife is not enthusiastic about housework. His concept of the wife-and-mother's role has been fixed by his mother, and now he feels resentful toward his wife—perhaps without realizing why.

c. Someone whose parents expressed their affection for each other warmly and openly might feel deprived if his spouse was very undemonstrative. On the other hand, if his parents were inhibited and restrained in expressing affection, he might feel embarrassed and smothered if his spouse is demonstrative.

These areas are worth thinking over and discussing.

Health, Sex and Money

Question #19 deals with a practical matter that too often is taken for granted. A thorough medical check-up revealed to a prospective bride that her run-down condition made it wise for her not to conceive a child during her first year of marriage. In another case, a very minor operation (one night in the hospital) was needed by a bride-to-be, so that the first time of sexual union would not be extremely difficult and painful. Although those two cases were unusual, it is still common sense to see your doctor several weeks before your wedding.

Sex (question #22) is a vast subject in itself, but a number of good books from a Christian standpoint are available. For a couple who expect to be married soon, one of following is recommended: *Sexual Happiness in Marriage*, by Herbert Miles, or *The Marriage Act*, by Tim LaHaye.

Here is some advice about the family budget (question #21). If it is likely that the wife will be a wage-earner for a year or so, but then quit her paying job and stay home with the children, wise foresight is needed. Let's say, just for the sake of example, that she earns \$1,000 monthly and her husband earns \$1,000 monthly. So they base their budget on a regular income of \$2,000 a month. Then the baby arrives, the wife quits her job, and suddenly three persons have to live on \$1,000 monthly whereas up till now two persons were living on \$2,000. Disaster!

Here is a solution. Base your budget of major, *regular* expenses on the husband's income only, not on the wife's. In other words, pay

your love-gifts to the Lord, and your food, rent or housing, utilities, transportation and taxes from the amount earned by the husband. Then when the wife stops earning, you can continue paying for these necessities without trouble. Use the wife's income for other things: furniture and appliances, clothes, repaying of debts, medical expenses and savings. When you buy furniture, appliances, and clothes, they should last for quite a while and therefore be occasional expenses rather than monthly ones. (You pay less if you pay all at once instead of by installment.) Medical costs also will be occasional, we hope, but set aside a monthly amount for them because when they come they are big. Repaying debts and putting money into savings should be done regularly, of course. But hopefully by the time the wife stops earning, the debts will already be paid off and the husband will be earning more than before so that the savings can be made from his income by then.

Marriage is no easy matter. It needs much care and prayer. If Christ is truly the head of the marriage, it can be rewarding and enriching. But an unwise, unstable marriage will be devastating. Here's wishing the best to you.

Recommended Reading:

Many Christians around the world have been helped by the writings of marriage counselor Walter Trobisch. *Living With Unfulfilled Desires* is for younger teenagers. *I Loved a Girl* probes the subjects of courtship, sex and marriage. *I Married You* deals with husband-wife relations.

For counselors, a book of pre-marital questionnaires, much more detailed than this article, is published by Bethany Fellowship. It is *A Pre-marital Guide for Couples* by David Thompson. It is designed to be used in four or more one-hour counseling sessions.

VOICES from the FIELDS

Corinne Johnson

Mozambique

April 17, 1994

Thank you for your prayers. Each day has strength to carry us through. Christian friends around this world have remembered us in prayer. What a great joy! We are busy with getting ready for Rachel's wedding in Georgia in June. I still have some travels in the next weeks.

My plans are to return to Maputo the last of June. The students need an anchor and also our apartment can be used for prayer groups.

[For those who may have missed the March issue, Corinne's husband, Robert S. Johnson, died suddenly in Africa on March 7.]

Motoyuki Nomura

Japan

March 11, 1994

This year is a year of dogs according to Oriental zodiac, and quite often dogs come up in mass media such as newspapers, magazines and television programs in Japan.

The ASAHI SHIMBUN, nation's most influential daily paper with 8.3 million daily morning circulation, 4.5 evening circulation, first reported my small dog ministries. Then the article was translated into English and appeared in the ASAHI EVENING NEWS that has 3 million circulation respectively. I actually have not done anything special, but we have been taking care of abused dogs, lost dogs, abandoned dogs, unwanted dogs, etc., for years.

The ASAHI SHIMBUN reporter came to us to interview us, and the article appeared on the last day of last year.

The NHK, a semi-government TV and radio network, perhaps the most respected and powerful system in Asia, similar to BBC, then came to us to shoot some video tapes. It was first televised locally within this Yamanashi Prefecture, but a week later it was televised in Tokyo and central Japan area that has about a half of the population of Japan. Many saw it.

We have met so many people both in this area and in Tokyo saying that they had watched the programs and that they found out that we

are Christian, a good way to show the folks what a Christian couple, a very small minority of minorities in Japan, can do.

For many people in Japan think that professional Christian clergymen are so irrelevant to their daily human needs. But they are surprised that we do care for the needs of people, even dogs! Any religious authoritarianism-filled behavior or person is not welcomed by ordinary people.

We, at least, have been trying to tell them in our daily deeds that we are here to serve Him in serving His people whatever the needs may be, and we've made it a rule to try not to say NO as much as possible for his sake. This is particularly important in an area like here. We need to try to identify ourselves with ordinary people's needs with Christian smile like what our Lord was to His people 2,000 years ago when he was on earth.

**Cindy Brady Operation Mobilization Lit. Depot April
Waynesboro, Ga.**

My mother (Alice Crowder) is 72 now and has been working from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. with very little time for lunch or break just trying to keep up with the orders. We think she should slow down some, but the question she comes back with is, "Who will do it then?" We are trying to recruit more staff, but since each worker must raise support, there aren't so many available to come.

**Maple Manor Christian Children's Home March 1994
635 West Utica Street, Sellersburg, IN 47172**

Our population of children has experienced much movement during this time as we have been able to return three children to family or loved ones, while accepting a family of three and two individuals. One child had to be placed in a different environment due to uncontrollable anger. We would like to have him back with us, when he makes satisfactory progress. Our hearts truly get heavy when considering the background and events that affect our children. Please be in much prayer for our children and the houseparents who try to deal with the children on an everyday basis, while attempting to meet their needs. It is indeed a wonderful opportunity to become part of the lives of so many boys and girls.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Your News Could Appear Here!

Do you ever wonder why the same congregations have their news in this "News & Notes" section? And why YOUR church's news doesn't appear?

Simple. WE PRINT WHAT FOLKS SEND IN TO US. Oh yes, we also include news we learn by word of mouth. But that kind of news travels with less speed and less accuracy.

So please send us your church bulletins. Or, better yet, have a church reporter send us 2-4 paragraphs about the most important events, every 2 months. Six reports a year, that's not much work. But it will encourage other folks to learn what's going on in MORE of the churches.

El Paso, Tex.

Please pray for the church here in our efforts to rebuild the meeting house after the fire. The city is delaying us regarding the permits and the many regulations they have.

--W. L. Wilson

Gallatin, Tenn.

We are pleased to see the increased attendance in our Sunday School. The two Precept Bible classes are showing the way to serious Bible study. Most class members return an hour before church on Sunday night to share a video about the week's lesson. Lives and homes will be changed and blessed as a result of such effort.

Locust St. Church of Christ Johnson City, Tenn.

Have we given up on finding a full-time minister? Not at all. Every suitable lead is being pursued. The problem is that among our group of churches there is a greater need of men than there are those available. To obtain a minister often means to rob another congregation of theirs.

We believe the Lord will supply a suitable man in His own good time. Meanwhile, let us not be impatient or neglect doing what we can to promote the work. Let us also be thankful that we have as functional a situation as we do. We are in a better situation than a number of small congregations.

Be careful not to minimize what is being done. Among other things, last year's contribution to mission works was a significant sum.

Ralph Avenue Church Louisville.

Men's Business Meeting and Ladies Bible Study Monday Night. Ladies we will begin a study for several months on the life of Christ. To begin with, write down all the characteristics you can think of pertaining to Christ. Write down scriptures Jesus used to tell about Himself.

News From Jennings, La.

The Dorcus group had a rummage sale on April 2. In '93 this yearly sale raised funds for 2 tables, 20 folding chairs, 2 used sewing machines, fabric for many items, & material for the puppet stage curtains. Many bibs, wheelchair pockets. lap

robes & small quilts have been made & sent to nursing homes. A fine ministry!

Meetings with a Difference

The Hamburg, Ind. Church of Christ held meetings with the theme, "Values for Now & Eternity." Fri. night a preaching service was held, with Earl Mullins Sr. Sat. afternoon a youth activity was held, & that night another preaching service, with Nick Marsh.

Lord's Day morning during Sun. School time, "Workshops" were held, to follow up & apply the earlier messages in practical ways. Nick led the young people's workshop (ages 9-18), & Earl the adults'. During the usual morning worship meeting Ray Naugle continued the theme, preaching on Transferring Our Values to the Next Generation." This was followed by a catered lunch. From 1:00 - 1:50, Workshop #2 was held, making practical applications of the preceding sermon. The series ended with a 2:00 preaching service, with Bill Smallwood preaching on "Transferring our Values Beyond Ourselves." No evening meeting was held.

We commend the church for its innovative approach, well chosen subjects, & emphasis on practical applications.

Pray for our Fellow-Believers in China

A church leader in China showed a visitor from the West his hand-copied pages of Matthew through 2nd Corinthians. His church's single Bible is passed from family to family. They keep it 2-3 days, copy as much as they can, then pass it to another family. It takes up to 3 months for the cycle to repeat. And a leader in a 65-member house

church in Guangdong Province said his church members had not seen a Bible in 27 years! -- *Open Doors*

Iroquois Church, Louisville

David Johnson, formerly an assistant minister at Iroquois & now the preacher at Jennings, La., held a week of meetings here.

On Sundays Larry Miles leads a study in 1 Thes., & on Wed. nights the church is studying Colossians.

Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville

Our congregation is blessed with ladies who are being used of the Lord through PRAYER! Each Mon. afternoon & Wed. evenings a group of ladies led by Joann Burks & Betty Ann Schreiner meet to bring our petitions before the Lord.

Alan Woodward & other adults took a group of our children on a trip to the wonderful Children's Museum in Indianapolis.

Our chorus, led by Bonnie Blansett, continues to bless & uplift others as it sings here & at other churches' meetings.

Hello From The Corn People!

The High Lysine Corn Project of Bryantsville Church of Christ and of Rosehill Farms, Inc. is continuing to expand. We were able to ship almost 10,000 bags of high lysine corn last year to hungry people in many parts of the world. We have been encouraged that much of the corn went to Africa, to Kenya and South Sudan, and much of it to parts of the former USSR, to Belarus, Armenia, and Ukraine.

We have been greatly encouraged by some things that have happened. Portland Christian High School, Louisville, KY. is bringing

the whole school to bag and load corn. The freshmen class will come one day, the sophomores one day, the juniors another day to bag the corn, and the seniors will come the last day to load it in a truck. They did this last year and had such a good time being "Working Missionaries" that they want to come back. The Church of Christ in Tell City, IN, came last year for two days and bagged a load of corn and they want to come back again. They had a "working church picnic" and everybody, we think, had a great time.

Bryantsville Church of Christ has a special Sunday offering for the Corn Fund. Pleasant Grove Church of Christ, Lyons, IN, decided to sponsor one load of corn and funds came in to cover the cost of a load. Many individuals send regular contributions which are very helpful and are greatly appreciated. The Project is probably limited only by the funds that come in.

To get a full report of this exciting ministry, write to: Bryantsville Church of Christ, Rural Route 1, Box 408, Mitchell, IN 47446.

Pleasant Grove Church of Christ, Lyons, IN

We would like to introduce our new preacher, Andrew (Andy) Paris. He and his wife, Jackie, come to us from Cincinnati, Ohio. He graduated from Cincinnati Bible College in 1970 with a Bachelor of Arts in Greek and New Testament. He earned subsequent Master degrees from Cincinnati Bible Seminary in Theology, 1975, and New Testament, 1990.

Though he has served as minister to churches, his main work has been as a college professor. For ten years he was Professor of New Testament and Christian Doctrine at St.

Louis Christian College. Following this, he served as Associate Professor of Theology in New Testament at Cincinnati Bible Seminary.

In addition, he has taught extensively via seminars on the cults, the occult, the Lord's Supper, the New Age Movement and Biblical archeology. He has written many articles for various publications and the book entitled *What the Bible Says About the Lord's Supper*.

Andy has been involved with the youth of our nation for years by serving at numerous conferences and at the North American Christian Convention. At the latter convention held in Louisville, Kentucky, 1989, he was the main teen session preacher. We are happy that God has sent such a man to us. We invite you to come and find out for yourself. His Phone # (812) 847-9064

Introducing a new preacher, means that a previous one has stepped down, that being of course Orell Overman. He and Frances have not totally left us, in that they still live close to us and visit with us frequently. We mention Orell and Frances again, because we want to honor them with a special day. **Sunday, July 31, 1994** has been chosen for that day. We would like *Word and Work* readers to help us celebrate. all of you know them. Many of you could share with us something unique and special about what Orell and /or Frances have meant to YOU spiritually. We would like for you to do just that. Either write it for one of us to read that day, or better, plan to come and be here in person. It will be fun! Help us give them flowers now as together we celebrate the goodness and greatness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus the Christ.

--Tooger Smith

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Each issue of *Word and Work* centers on some theme that is important for Christian growth. Preachers, elders, teachers--all believers, in fact--benefit from the challenging, instructive articles found month after month in *Word & Work*.

If you missed any of these **BACK ISSUES**, or if you have them but want additional copies to distribute, they are available @ 75 cents plus postage (+ tax in Ky.).

SOME AVAILABLE TOPICS

- God's **LAW** is Good, His Gospel is Glorious
- **MIRACLES** Now? Of Course!
- I am the Lord, who **HEALS** You
- There Shall be **SHOWERS** of Blessing (Revivals in many times/places)
- God **VISITS** Us (More about revivals)
- Improving our **FAMILIES**
- We Need to be **FORGIVEN**, and **FORGIVING**
- God can do **MORE** with your Sin than just Forgive it
- Tell me a **STORY** (modern parables for the unsaved)
- Our **FATHER** in Heaven
- God's **SON** dwelt among us
- How Important is **THE HOLY SPIRIT?**
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