

This System Works Well

When I find a book that I think looks interesting, I tear out the review and put it in a file folder. I add to it all during the year. Then, in September, I give the folder to my mother. She is always wondering



what to give me at Christmas; we have decided on books. She looks through the file and orders from the books noted there. By the time Christmas comes, I can't remember what books I have included and am surprised by her gifts. At the same time, she knows that the books she gives me are those I am interested in.

Reading is enjoyable and, I believe, so very important for a pastor's continued growth in excellence. So what have you read lately? Summer is a great opportunity for "Sabbath time." I understand such time to be not only for rest, but also for renewal and refreshment. That is where books enter in.

But summer is soon gone. I hope you have taken the opportunity for reading. Just in case you are looking for something more, here are a few suggestions...from my mother.

Quick reads:

My God and I: A spiritual memoir - By Lewis Smedes (Eerdmans, 2003). This writer and preacher recounts his lifelong walk with God, "It was because He did not trust me to travel alone."

Credo - By William Sloane Coffin (Westminster John Knox, 2004). This chaplain at Yale and preacher at Riverside Church in New York shares comments and quotes on issues from charity and justice to politics and the meaning of faith. Some great sermon quotes.

On Being Lutheran - By Tim Lull (Augsburg, 2006). A collection of writings by a leader who died too soon. Short chapters followed by questions would serve well teaching new Christians.

A little thicker:

What's Theology Got To Do With It? - By Anthony Robinson (Alban Institute, 2006). "I believe that congregations matter...I believe that congregations are vital when they are clear about the core convictions of Christian faith."

Help: The Original Human Dilemma - by Garret Keizer (Harper San Francisco, 2004). The author is a storyteller, humorist, and theologian who offers challenging questions for the Good Samaritan and beyond.

Heavy:

The Holy Reich - By Richard Steigmann-Gall (Cambridge, 2003). A disturbing look at the rise of Nazism in pre-war Germany, and the use of the Christian faith in supporting its early popularity. Even the Confessing Church does not escape indictment.

Shalom,

Harold Usgaard
Bishop



Share Your News

Do you have something to share? Congregations can submit the following for publication on the synod website:

- **Events** - anything happening that you'd like to invite others to attend
- **Job openings** - any non-pastoral position can be posted free of charge
- **News** - share information about exciting things that may have happened (or will be happening) in your congregation. News about programs/ministries that are working especially well are particularly welcomed.

Send information to Katie Butler at butler@semnsynod.org or call her at the synod office at 507-280-9457 or 800-426-6376 (MN only).