

ESSENTIALS FOR OUR MILLENNIUM - Part 2 By Carl McMurray

In part one of this series we began examining the culture we live in today so that we might better understand how to reach into it and touch the “seekers” near to us as we go into the new millennium faced with education, technology, and attitudes in society that our nation has never had to face in its history. Part one dealt with the fact that we live in a “niche” world that demands focus and targeting to get people’s attention. In this installment, please consider that we also live in a “computerized” world.

We live in an age where almost every part of our life is being related to computers somehow. The days of complaining about them are really past. One might as well complain about those “noisy, horseless carriages” that spook the horses, or that “scratchy phonograph” that really serves no purpose anyway. Even the folks that try to complain are wearing computerized watches, driving computerized cars, complaining to each other over digital phone lines, and listening to each other with computer manufactured hearing aids.

As a spiritual army with a mission of the utmost importance, it behooves us to master this medium and turn it over to our Lord for service. A few years ago churches of Christ (members and congregations) had the largest representation on the world-wide web of any religious group. I’ve no idea what those numbers might be presently, as different faiths and beliefs have flooded the internet, but that was a great lesson in what CAN be done if we’re willing to go to work. The amount and quality of material that continues to be available on the web is staggering, but is this dissemination of material where we must stop?

60% of homes have computers and 35% have email. Those were the figures being quoted in 1999! To understand that over one-third of American homes are using email is to receive definite encouragement to become versed and practiced in reaching out this way. Some of the things that are being done with computers and the Internet to assist in the work of outreach would be...

Email Bible studies and online correspondence courses, web-sites (note: surveys show that a web-site will only be visited 3 times maximum if it is not updated and changed), asking for visitor’s email addresses on visitor’s cards (to send thank-you notes and distribute announcements), daily messages, and listing folks who “hit” our web page and sending notes of thanks. Of course these are in addition to the specific things that can be done within a web page with giving directions, providing information, advertising upcoming meetings, and storing material for reading and study.

Here at Anderson we are experimenting with a number of things from the list above, but I suspect that more uses for this communication tool are going to become available. It’s past time to get used to it and begin thinking how best to use it. For those especially experienced in this area, that responsibility is falling your way. It’s where we live. What will we do with the “talents” our Lord has put into our hands?