CHRISTIAN COMPUTER RESOURCES 1997
David W. Baker*

In the last issue of this Journal (XXVIII, 1996:112-125) we reviewed three Bible software programs. Here we will review several other Bible resource packages, as well as products to help with church management. The machine on which the programs were tested was an IBM-compatible Gateway 2000 P5-75 with an 800MB hard drive, 4MB of RAM, and a 4X IDE CD-ROM drive. Since a number of works are shared by numerous software packages, those which are unique among those reviewed here or in the last issue are marked with *.

Bible Study Resources

WORD*search* 4 is from the publishing arm of the Navigators.[1] It is in STEP (Standard Template for Electronic Publishing) format, as is BibleWorks for Windows which was reviewed last year. Running on Windows 3.1 or 95, DOS 3.3 or higher, and Macintosh System 6.07 or later, it requires at least 8MB RAM and 10MB free hard drive space. This review is based on using a sampler copy which allows access only to material relating to the Gospel of John.

The single CD contains all of the available resources which can be unlocked individually for a fee, or are available in 6 package combinations.[2] As is clear from the list, few of the works are among the newer material available elsewhere, most being public-domain works for which no royalty must be paid. If this were not the case, many of the works would probably have sunk into oblivion by this time.

The demo was easy to install, and the program takes about 35 seconds to begin a session. The user interface is relatively straightforward, with each of the available works presented as a row of clickable library books across the top of the screen. The tool bar will be familiar to Windows users, with additional buttons for various kinds of searches (by reference, word, or topic) and for making and saving workspaces, where different combinations of text can be viewed together. The cursor placed on a button opens a little window identifying the button's function. Most of the functions are also available through pull-down menus, and some by key-stroke combinations as well.

Searches are quick and the results allow a helpful choice of options. One may chose to display only the references of verses, the text of each, or the verses in context, with the target word in bold. Topic searches bring up an alphabetized word list from which to choose, or one may enter the word and search. Original language texts are not available, but double-clicking on a word in the KJV will bring up the Strong's definition of it.

Help is available in several formats. There is a basic printed manual and a handy 2-sided 'Getting Started' card provided. The 'Help' pull-down menu will be familiar, and there is an additional, very useful button for help (marked with an arrow+?). Clicking on it and then the button being queried will provide a full explanation of the second button's function.

PC Study Bible 2.1D is from BIBLESOFT.[3] It runs on Windows 3.1, 3.11, NT or 95 , requires a 386 or better with at least 4MB RAM and 7MB hard drive space, and can be loaded from 3.5" disks or from a CD-ROM drive. It takes just a minute to install, and about 20 seconds for startup. The edition reviewed is the top <u>Complete Reference Library Edition</u>, released May, 1997.

A feature rare among programs I have seen is the "*Bible Reading Plan" which allows users to tailor-make a reading plan for all or parts of the Bible, either reading every day or only selected days, starting at any date and going for a selected number of days. The reading plan can then be printed out for certain days or for the entire course of the plan. The idea is well conceived and presented, and deserves a wide audience.

The CD-ROM product line comes in 5 versions.[4] Most of the material is available in other packages reviewed, apart from <u>ISBE</u>, but note that this is the original, 1915 edition of this reference work rather than the second edition which came out more than half a century later.

The user interface is quite friendly, in that there are buttons across the top toolbar directly accessing the resources. Each is identified by a 1-2 letter abbreviation, but placing the cursor over a button expands the abbreviation. There are also buttons for "help", Bibles (bringing up a dialog box from which the various translations can be selected), maps, photos and Bible outlines (taken from <u>Nelson's Bible Dictionary</u>).

The maps, of which there are nine equally distributed between the two Testaments, are not terribly detailed, but are well conceived in that they have a larger scale map beside another which zooms in on smaller sections. Moving the cursor over the former moves the view on the latter. There is also a descriptive legend for each map. Maps and legends can be copied to a clipboard by buttons along the bottom of the screen.

There are over one hundred fifty photos, from Asia Minor, Egypt, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, and Mesopotamia. They are very pleasing, and have links to related maps, other photos, and concordance searches for the places pictured.

When reading from a Bible version, there are also buttons linking directly to the relevant resources for commentary or word searches, and context-sensitive help is also available easily. The Interlinear Bible presents

three lines, the English version, the Strong's numbers, and the original language in transliteration. There is also an add-on, which I did not receive, which adds a fourth line with the original language in native script. Notes can be taken and appended to Bible verses, a useful feature for sermon and lesson preparation.

For those whom the resources of this product are adequate, it looks very user-friendly, with one of the easiest interfaces I have seen. The added features of photos and daily Bible reading guide make it a good option for those who might not need the higher end material of Logos or Hermeneutika.

Bible Explorer 2.0.3 is from Epiphany Software,[5] and is available in six editions.[6] It runs on Windows 3.1 and 95. Installation from the CD-ROM is automatic, with prompts where information must be supplied. Any add-on books may be previewed before purchase, a useful option, and there is a 30-day trial period for the product in case it is not what was expected. The inclusion list indicates that those desiring the original language texts will need to look elsewhere.

The product comes with a printed User's Guide, which is also available under the pull-down 'Help' menu. There is no on-line tutorial. The 'Toolbar' buttons, when under the cusror, are identified by a drop-down tag. They provide access to the entire library, a find function through which one can search by word or phrase throughout the library, as well as by Strong's numbers, and links to Bibles, word study tools, dictionaries, commentaries, topical resources, and atlases. The later includes a dozen maps, which for some reason are duplicated on the pull-down menu.

Like the PC Study Bible, Bible Explorer has a Bible reading Planner to facilitate daily devotions. It provides a monthly calendar where each day can be clicked for the assigned passage for the day, and clicked again to bring up that passage for reading. I don't know how far ahead one is able to plan one's readings, but I looked ahead as far as 2051, which will probably do for most purchasers of the program. Printing from texts or atlas is simple process, and text may be transferred to other applications through the clipboard or, for Microsoft Word, through a Macro available on the disk.

The product seems user friendly, and will be a good resource for preacher or teacher who likes working with English translations.

Nelson's Electronic Bible Reference Library is a product of Nelson Electronic Publishing.[7] It runs on Windows 3.1 and 95 through the Logos Library System, and so is compatible with all of the Logos products mentioned in the last issue and below. It comes in three editions.[8] Installation is easy and quick (about 30 seconds), and as an entré into the product a self-running demo is provided.

The interface is exactly the same as that of Logos Research System's products reviewed here last year, so the learning curve for Logos users will be nil. Others should not find it difficult, especially if they take 10 minutes to run through the demo. The demo uses multi-media, with an audio and video introduction to some of the basic features of the system.

There is a seamless transfer of data between NEBRL and Word for Windows through the Dynamic Verse Insertion feature. This only works for the unlocked Bible versions, not for other resources. The latter can be cut and pasted into Word and other word processors. Searches within a book or across the entire library are quick and not difficult, though higher levels of sophisticated search will probably require guidance from the User's guide or from the 'Help' menu. Since the operating engine is Logos', the user guides are for all practical purposes thos of Logos.

Many pastors and teachers will find the resources of the program useful and sufficient. More sophisticated users can chose to unlock additional resources. The scholar will find less of use in the package, since original language material is not included. Since all Logos material is available for any product using the system, I was able to consult the Hebrew and Greek texts, but only because I had them from Logos, not from Nelson.

This is n advantage of publishers who share a common platform, since each can concentrate on certain works of specific interest to them, but a user can access them all through the shared platform. We hope that this cooperation might continue in publishing, both electronically and in print.

The Expositor's Bible Commentary, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, is available as a stand-alone product from Zondervan Interactive[9] for $199.95, a substantial savings over individual books. The product reviewed is now designated as '97', since a '98' version is due out in April at the same price. It will be S.T.E.P. compatible, while the package reviewed here uses BIBLESOURCE for Windows. It comes with the NIV Bible.

The program needs a 386 or higher machine with Windows 3.1 or higher, a CD-ROM, and it calls for at least 4MB of hard disk space, though my installation took 23.2MB, since apparently everything was loaded onto the hard drive. Installation was automatic for me, though the directions are quite clear if it does not automatically install.

The accompanying NIV Bible Library User's Guide is over 200 pages long, since it details the use of additional products. Help is also available within the program in ways familiar to Windows users.

The product is relatively easy to use. Its main feature is the commentary which is linked to the NIV text. When mine opened for the first

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time, it had the NIV for Genesis 1:1 linked with the commentary to that verse, and also, for some reason, to the outline of Matthew. Manipulation of texts and windows is straightforward, so configuration to your needs should not be difficult. Cross-references within the commentary are hyperlinked to the NIV, so a single click with the left-hand mouse button takes you there in both Bible and commentary. A toolbar button returns you to the previous position. Searches can be done from a toolbar button, a pull-down menu, or from the right-hand mouse key, from which one may also print the current verse or chapter, copy or copy to a word processor. Search results are displayed in a split screen, and clicking on any generated reference automatically links to the verse and accompanying commentary.

Personal notes can be generated, and these can be tied to a specific reference, allowing the user to develop her own commentary. They also can be linked to text and commentary so all can be scrolled together.

This product is a good example of one way technology can be used. What is provided is a fast and easy means of accessing and manipulating material which is available in regular, printed format elsewhere. Since the original product is excellent, this will make it even more useful for preacher and teacher. The next step, which is being done with other products, will be to add value through the use of computer technology. This is the library system such as used by Logos and other products reviewed here. Here searches may be made through the entire library. Next up in sophistication will be hyperlinks and even courses developed throughout the library system, so reading one resource will link to relevant material in numerous other works. Yet a further step will be to make available through multimedia material that is unavailable through printed format. This could include video clips, audio, automated programs progressing through a set or variable sequence of material, and graded levels of courses using CD, World Wide Web, printed and e-mail resources. The times for teachers and learners are exciting, an the potential is no more limited than the human imagination.

Church Management Software

Church Windows comes from Computer Helper Publishing.[10] The recommended computer system includes Windows 3.1X or 95, a 486 or higher IBM compatible with at least 8MB RAM, 20 MB hard disk, a mouse and a printer. It has separate modules for membership (member and visitor records, attendance, visitation and reporting; $395), a contributions add-on (requiring the membership module; account set-up, pledge tracking, contribution entry, giving statements and reporting; add $200), and financial transactions (general

ledger, accounts payable, check writing ($395), and payroll ($129). An integrated package of all modules may also be purchased,[11] as can an annual update and support program.[12] There is a trial program available,[13] and the product has a 30 day money back guarantee in case it does not live up to expectations. Versions are also available for different denominations.[14]

Although the program is extremely powerful and feature-laden, it is relatively easy to use, with help available in a number of places. Each module has a full user's guide, over 450 pages total for all three. There is a useful on-screen tutorial on two disks leading through the various features of all of the modules. In each module, on-screen help is a click away.

Due to the confidential nature of some of the material present in the program, different levels of access are assignable through a password, including no access, read-only access, and full access. The different modules (membership, attendance, visits, reports, contributions and finance) are available from icon buttons.

For membership information, household and individual information is extensive and flexible, allowing easy customization regarding information included and the order of it. Standard information has places for membership of groups/committees/classes, interests or skills, comments, date sensitive alternative contact addresses, and photos. Visitors are easily noted, and their information can be transferred smoothly to the member category. Reports of many kinds in multiple forms are easily produced, including, for example, attendees at a function either in list or graph form.

Contribution information is also flexible to fit each church's needs. The various accounts to which people contribute can be added, including pledge information for the current, next and multi-years. While entering contributions, one can easily enter information on visitors and members without leaving the contribution module. Within the module, one is able to realphabetize giving envelopes, and alter information in case someone has taken the wrong envelopes. Reports again are available in text and graphical form.

The financial module seems to be very complete, promising to provide all information necessary for a detailed audit. Apparently for security purposes, entered transactions cannot be altered, necessitating a reversing entry. A chart of accounts holds flexible information on the various accounts, with tab keys available to call up information concerning general, vendors, budgets and balances. Based on past year actual numbers or budgeted amounts, it is possible to provide projections for present or future years. Check authorization is done by providing a list of vendors with outstanding balances, which can be selected

by clicking, payments authorized, and checks printed with a payment stub including invoice information.

Membership Tools for Windows 2.70 comes from Colonnade Technologies, a division of Logos Research Systems.[15] It requires Microsoft Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, a 33 Mhz 486 or better, 4 MB hard drive space, 4 MB of memory (8 MB recommended), VGA, mouse and a sound card. It comes on 3 disks, one of which is the registration disk, and took about 1.5 minutes to install.

The program comes with a 58-page user's guide which is repeated on screen in a help file. There is also on-screen help from a pull-down menu, which is slowed down to some extent by not having the help index on the menu, but under a heading 'using help', thus necessitating an extra mouse click. There do not appear to be any automatic labels indicating key functions like in other programs when the cursor is placed over a key. There does not seem to be any security provision through passwords or other means.

When the program opens for the first time, a sample membership page is shown with much of the information filled in, in order to assist the user in making her own entries. Each member entry is recorded on an individual 'card'. The toolbar allows one click access to numerous functions found also under the pull-down menus (open, reports, add [a new card], edit [current card], delete [card], copy [current card], tag [current card], find [a card], house, attend, visit, money, photos, directory). Each card has place for name, title, family head and relationship to that person, address, gender, membership status, marital status, phone numbers (with 6 options), important dates, user entries which can be user-defined and cover information regarding class or committee memberships, etc. There are also boxes to provide information on abilities/gifts, needs and personal comments. Finally, there is a button accessing a previously stored photo of the individual or family group.

The house toolbar button lists family members, while the attend button permits entry of members who are present at functions. Under the visit function, members can be called up and a map printed to assist in visitation. One is able to indicate the nature of the visit, with half-a dozen presets as well as user defined options. Reports can be printed from here in the form of visitation cards which can include maps or lists of pending or completed visits. The money module shows who has given what to which fund and by which means (cash, check, credit card, etc.), and whether the sum was actually given or just pledged. The photo lab aids in acquiring and manipulating pictures, which must be scanned in or imported by other means, including 'Snappy', a device designed to grab pictures from a camcorder, VCR, tv, and most probably

a digital camera.[16] Pictures such as this can be made into a church directory, and would also be invaluable in visitation.

The product seems to be well suited to a small church, or one which does not require the much greater depth and sophistication of Church Windows. It is especially weaker than CW in its financial aspects, but will find a home in churches which themselves have a more limited budget for management packages.

Servant Keeper for Windows comes from Servant PC Resources, Inc.[17] It requires a 386 or better PC with at least 4 MB of RAM (8 are recommended), at least 10 MB hard drive space, VGA or better, Microsoft Widows 3.1 or Windows 95, and a mouse. There are several components which can be purchased together or separately.[18] It comes with 30 day guarantee. The version I used came on 3 disks which took about 5 minutes to install. It did not have a printed user's guide, which would be provided with the full program, and is available within the program itself. The alphabetical help indexes are found two levels down under the help pull-down menu. There are help flags for the toolbar keys. There is no program tutorial available.

When opening the program, three icons are available depending on whether you want to access Membership Pro, Administration Pro or Contribution Pro. Each is only accessible with a user id and password, with several levels of access possible. Security arrangements are handled in the Administration module.

Opening Membership shows a family unit as an example. Individual members of the unit are on the right side of the screen, while family units are on the left. Toolbar buttons allow the user to add, update, delete or print profiles (as each unit is called), copy addresses to a clip board, autodial a chosen phone number, view a family list, search for an individual, open a user group, schedule a visit, or track attendance. Buttons also make it easy to add an additional family member and look at photos of them.

Membership information includes regular identification material as well as that useful for letters, including mailing as opposed to residential address and salutation form. 7 types of status are available (e.g. active, inactive, etc.), as are regular and emergency phone numbers, which can be designated either listed or unlisted. Comments can also be added, and family relationships can be easily modified upon death, marriage or divorce, etc. Individuals can be identified by Sunday School class, whether they are baptized or confirmed and when. Each individual profile has 6 clickable tabs for attributes (skills and talents, leadership positions, church activities, spiritual gifts, places willing to serve, and mailing codes in addition to Sunday school helper or teacher

interest), personal notes (either general or password protected), important events, pledge summary, attendance history and other information such as college attended, home group membership, etc.

The contribution module has no example files, so is more difficult to figure out. It has toolbar buttons for: entering contribution data by name or by offering envelope number, indicating into which fund or funds the money is to be placed, cash verification to see if the total of denominations of coins and bills in accounts is accurate, a currency calculator, a regular mathematical calculator , changing the calculation date, posting contribution data, tracking pledges, setting up different types of accounts, and exporting information to an ASCII file. These also are available from the pull-down menus. The module has capabilities to import and export information from Quicken and Quickbook, two other accounting packages. In entering weekly contributions, there is an option to enter loose monies from the offering where the donor is unknown. It is also possible to enter visitors data directly from the contribution module so as not to need switching back and forth between modules if a visitor gives an offering.

Of the three packages reviewed here, the fullest as regards financial matters is Church Windows, which is also the easiest to learn from the material provided, since it includes a tutorial. It is also good for membership information, although Servant Keeper has a wider range of built-in features here. These can be added to Church Windows as needed, however, since, from what I was able to ascertain, it is tops as regards flexibility and adaptability. Price could well be a deciding factor here, since the full Church Windows program is decidedly more expensive than the other two. Membership tools will provide useful basics for the smaller church, and is easier to use than the others, but that is due in part to its more limited features.

ENDNOTES

[1]NavPress Software, 1934 Rutland Dr., Suite 500, Austin, TX 78758. Sales: 1-800-888-9898; support: 1-512-834-1888; http://www.gospelcom.net/navsoft; e-mail: NavPress@aol.com.

[2]Each level contains the material of the previous one, unless otherwise noted. CD Expandable Library ($9.95)-concordance, KJV, Bible outlines; Classics Library ($49.95): maps from Life Application Bible (Tyndale House Publishers), Nave's, Strong's, Torrey's Treasury of Scripture Knowledge and Topical Textbook, Matthew Henry's commentary (concise); Easton's Bible

Dictionary; *Hitchcock's Bible names dictionary; *Fox's Book of Martyrs; Life Application Library ($149.95): NIV, Living Bible plus one additional Bible or book, *Life Application notes and outlines; *Holman Bible Dictionary; Youthworker's Library ($179.95- lacks Living Bible and Holman dictionary): *The Message; *Lessonmaker youth meeting kits; *Youthworker's Encyclopedia; Discipleship Library ($249.95): (NIV, KJV plus 2 Bibles or books; Holman Bible Dictionary; *Lessonmaker adult lesson kits; Robertson's word pictures; *Teachers' Commentary; Comprehensive Library ($479.95): NIV, KJV, NASB, NKJV, NAB, NRSV, NJB, Living, Message; Lessonmaker ($50.00 add-on); *preacher's outline and sermon Bible; *Hannah's Bible outlines; complete Matthew Henry commentary; NASB Gk/Heb dictionary.

³22014 7ᵗʰ Avenue S., Seattle, WA 98198; customer service: 216-824-8360; support: 216-870-1463; fax: 216-824-1828; http://www.biblesoft.com.

⁴Each level contains the material of the previous one, unless otherwise noted." Discovery Edition" ($79.95): One of NIV, KJV, NKJV, NASB; ASV; annotations, concordances, maps, *color photographs; Nave's topical Bible; *Nelson's Bible outlines and *Bible Dictionary; "Discovery Plus" ($99.95): KJV; NIV; Treasury of Scripture Knowledge; "New Reference Library" ($149.95): NKJV; Strong's; Englishman's Greek and Hebrew concordances; Vine's; BDB definitions; Thayer's definitions; unabridged Matthew Henry's commentary; "Reference Library Plus" ($249.95): NASB; *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (1915 edition); *New Unger's Bible Dictionary; an interlinear, transliterated Bible; "Complete Reference Library" ($349.95): Nestle-Aland 3ʳᵈ edition; BHS; *Adam Clarke's commentary; *Jamieson, Fausset & Brown commentary.

⁵15897 Alta Vista Way, San Jose, CA 95127; (408)251-9788; fax- (408)251-9949; support@epiphanysoftware.com; http://www.epiphanysoftware.com.

⁶Each edition contains the material found in those below it. Most individual volumes can be unlocked separately for each level. Discovery Edition ($14.95): King James, Living Bible; Thompson's chain references; Treasury of Scripture Knowledge; maps, illustrations, maps; Bible reading planner; *E.M. Bounds, The Necessity of Prayer; Standard Edition ($39.95): American Standard Version; *Scofield's notes; Strong's, Tense, voice and mood; Easton's Illustrated Dictionary; Spurgeon's Morning and Evening; Thomas á Kempis' Imitation of Christ; Reference Edition ($69.95): RSV and apocrypha; Young's;

Darby's; Matthew Henry's concise commentary; Vine's; Nave's, *Torrey's New Topical Textbook; F. Wight, Manners and Customs of Bible Lands; *Edersheim's Life and Times of Jesus; * Confessions of St Augustine; *Milton's Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained; *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress; Student Edition ($149.95): NIV; Matthew Henry's unabridged commentary; * Life Application Bible; Teacher Edition ($249.95): NKJV; *McGee's Thru the Bible: OT/NT; Robertson's Word Pictures;; Scholar Edition ($349.95): NASV, NRSV + apocrypha, New Century Version; *Barclay's New Testament Daily Study Bible commentaries; *Harris, Archer and Waltke's Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament

[7]501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214; (800)308-9673x2830; fax- (800)308-6793; http://www.NelsonWordDirect.com; e-mail- NelsonWordDirect@ThomasNelson.com.

[8]The Starter Edition ($9.99) is a demo, and includes KJV, Smith's Bible Dictionary, the system User's Guide and a self-running demo; the Basic Edition ($129.99) includes CEV, NKJV, New Living; Nave's Topical, Treasury of Scripture Knowledge; KJV Bible word book, Strong's hebrew and Greek with numbers ties to BDB and Thayer, Vine's Expository Dictionar (OT/NT); Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary; Believers' Study Bible, KJV Bible Commentary, Matthew Henry's commentary; maps, charts and Bible outlines; the Deluxe Edition, reviewed here ($299.99) includes Living Bible, NAB, New Century, NRSV and Apocrypha' Nelson's Topical Bible Index, Where to Find it in the Bible, new Strong's Guide to Bible Words, Vine's topic finder, Vine's You Can Learn New Testament Greek; Nelson's Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible, Talk Through the Bible; J. Vernon McGee's Thru the Bible Commentary, KJV study Bible, Word in Life study Bible; Josh McDowall's Answers to Tough Questions; and Heritage of Great Evangelical Teaching. All of this material, plus more than thirty additional works which are unlockable are provided on 2 CD's.

[9]5300 Patterson S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49530; 800-925-0316; fax- 616-698-3454; http://www.zondervan.com; E-mail Zondervan Direct Source (zdsonline@zph.com).

[10]P.O. Box 30191, Columbus, OH 43230; (800)533-5227; (614)478-0625 (fax); http://www.churchwindows.com; Mel_Wygant.parti@ecunet.org.

[11]$890.00 with payroll, $790.00 without.

[12]$95.00 per year, per module owned.

[13]A full working program with a limited number of entries is available for $50.00 which is credited toward a purchase. $25.00 is refunded if the trial program is returned. It comes on 6 disks and took me seven minutes to load. A CD-ROM version seems like a good option to have. By the time this review is published, a CD-ROM of the Web site will be available, including the demonstration version, si installation will be quicker. The program itself will still be only on disk.

[14]Lutheran (ELCA and Missouri Synod), Presbyterian (USA), United Methodist, United Church of Christ, Catholic, and Episcopal. Baptists are next in planning.

[15]2117 200th Street, Oak Harbor, WA 98277; (800)875-6467; (360)679-4496 (fax); http://www.logos.com/products/mt; sales@logos.com. The product retails for $99.95.

[16]Available from Colonnade, but produced by PLAY Inc., 2890 Kilgore Rd., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670; http://www.play.com, going for approximately $199.95.

[17]RR 5, Box 255, Jersey Shore, PA 17740; (800)773-7570; (717)398-2501 (fax); http://www/servantpc.com; servantpc@servantpc.com.

[18]Membership Pro and Contribution Pro with an unlimited size database are $399.00, and with a 250 member restriction are $199.00. Membership Pro by itself is $225.00 and Picture Pro is $49.00. Network licenses and annual maintenance and upgrades are also available. A Test Drive model is available for $10.00, creditable toward a purchase. It is limited to 25 entries, and is what is reviewed here.