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Clarion Review

Anecdotes & Personal Reflections
Michael Alan Paull
LLL Communications
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Four Stars (out of Five)

A considerable amount of care and attention has gone into the production of Reverend Michael Alan Paull's anthology, *A Collection of Anecdotes and Personal Reflections on Life.* The book includes fifty-six one-page textual entries diligently chosen from the weekly newsletters Paull distributed to his congregation between 1980 and 1985. Each entry is accompanied by a striking full-color photograph that depicts the theme. The resulting book is a masterful blend of text, illustrations, and design in a hardbound volume of wit and wisdom that can be showcased as a coffee table edition or used as a handy source for daily inspiration.

Paull's reflections form a list as broad as it is long. While most are written in prose form, a handful are poems, and a couple are modern-day parables. Each accompanying photograph is ideally suited to the thoughts shared by the author.

Paull admits to finding his subject matter in "clichés, thoughts, memories, and observations." But he gives each one the indelible stamp of his personal insight. In "Hide and Seek," the children's game becomes an opportunity to show how "everyone is waiting to be discovered." He cautions that it's never too late to accept the challenges of life as a race, and suggests that "you are what you eat" applies as much to one's mental as physical well-being. In "Have You Ever Noticed?" he explores the wonders of the world.

Two of Paull's most powerful and moving pieces are "The Painful Now" and "A Rare Day in June," both written just weeks before the death of his son, Bryan, in an automobile accident on his way to write a college pre-testing examination. Close behind is his reflection on the impact of his father-in-law's death upon his wife.

Paull invites his readers to "enjoy the book in the hope that the thoughts and reflections that it brings to you, offer the same joy and peace that was mine when I wrote them." It is a worthy sentiment and admirably achieved.

M. Wayne Cunningham