
CONTACT

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Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, Canada, celebrates 30th anniversary

(adapted from an article by Robert Vander Vennen)

At the annual academic convocation and at a book publication party the ICS celebrated its thirty years of existence as a graduate school. The general feeling was awe and thanksgiving.

Those attending the convocation had the feeling that God has upheld the ICS like a small boat on a stormy sea. Senior member Hendrik Hart, one of the speakers reflecting on the Institute's history, said, "Thanks be to God. We've survived against all odds. ICS is a fragile creature sustained by God's hands." The fact of our many flaws makes God's astounding blessings all the more awesome, he said.

A highlight of the convocation was the presence of the first executive directory, Paul Schrottenboer (former IAPCHE Executive Secretary), who has lost a leg through cancer surgery. He recalled being invited in the mid-1950s to help start the Institute. The aim was to engage in *foundational* Christian studies, he emphasized, to "bring every thought captive to Christ." ICS was to be a "free" school, he said, meaning free from government, business interests, church and other outside forces. But that has also meant being free from government, church and big business money. This has always added a unique challenge to the life of ICS, he noted. Schrottenboer went on to become the first paid staff member of ICS.

Many others shared memories of special moments in the history of ICS. Among those were Marinus Koole, an

early supporter and chair of the board in the 1970s; Aukje Masselink Wonnacott, board member for many years; Ed Piers, who's served on the Board of Trustees or the ICS Senate for 20 years; Janet Wesselius, doctoral student at ICS; Carroll Guen Hart, Director of ICS's Worldview Studies Program; and Clifford Pitt, former president of ICS.

Book publishing has been a central outreach service of ICS for all its lifetime, so in October an evening was organized to celebrate book publishing since 1960. Especially impressive at the celebration were the large tables covered with many of the books that have been published, in a real sense offered there as praise and service to God.

At the event Robert VanderVennen presented an overview of the history of ICS book publishing, James Olthuis talked about the new book *Knowing Other-Wise*, and Paul Marshall talked about his new book *Their Blood Cries Out..*

Book publishing was started already in 1960 by the people who were in the process of starting ICS. Glenn Andreas published the papers given at the 1959 Unionville (Ontario) Conference (a conference activity which, though changed in form, has continued to the present). Each year the papers from a growing number of conferences were published throughout the 1960s, with covers boldly designed by graphic artist Willem Hart.

In 1970 the ICS set up a separate academic publisher, Wedge Publishing Foundation. Robert Carvill came to the staff to direct book publishing as well as to oversee the production of *Vanguard* magazine. During the troubled decade of its active existence, Wedge published 36 books. Some of them were very significant, like Bob Goudzwaard's *Aid for the Overdeveloped West* ; Kalsbeek's *Contours of a Christian Philosophy* ; *Labour of Love* ; which was published in collaboration with the Christian Labour Association of Canada; Dooyeweerd's *Roots of Western Culture* ; M.D. Stafleu's *Time and Again* ; and the books on technology by Egbert Schuurman.

In 1983 the ICS was able to set p a co-publishing arrangement with University Press of America. In that arrangement 23 books have been published to date, most of them based on ICS research or academic conferences held at ICS.

Many books have been published from ICS work apart from these publishers. We think of James Olthuis's books on troth, Calvin Seerveld's books *Rainbows for the Fallen World* and *On Being Human*, papers edited by George Vandervelde from the ICS conference on the Holy Spirit, the worldview books written by Al Wolters and by Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton, Paul Marshall's books, especially his recent book on worldwide persecution of Christians, and Hendrick Hart's *Setting Our Sights by the Morning Star*.

Most of the books have not recorded large sales, but they have established a world side reputation for ICS. They continue to be a good outlet for creative ideas form ICS, and are one way in which it is fulfilling its mandate for the "advancement of Christian scholarship."

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Editorial - Building a Christian academic community

From our point of view, one of the most significant books published during this past year was *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (Oxford University Press, 1997), by George Marsden. Marsden, who was formerly a member of the faculty of Calvin College, is now the Francis A. McAnaney Professor of History at

the University of Notre Dame.

Marsden has written many books, including *The Soul of the American University* (Oxford University Press, 1994) in which he asks why American university culture, established largely by Protestants, provides so little encouragement for academic activity shaped by Christian (or other religious) faith. In seeking to answer this question, he suggests that dismantling the Protestant establishment was an understandable way of addressing problems of equity in an increasingly pluralistic society. He concluded his inquiry, however, by observing that the American university has overreacted by viewing expressions of religious faith as inappropriate and even offensive.

Marsden's conclusion drew the attention of a number of critics, who asked what he meant by "Christian scholarship" and who wondered about the appropriateness of introducing such a concept into mainstream academia. It was clear that many found "Christian scholarship" a strange idea unless it refers specifically to theology or study about religious topics. These reactions led Marsden to make the following observation:

Even though many academicians are religious, they would consider it outrageous to speak of the relationship of their faith to their scholarship. That is true not only in religious studies, but also in almost every discipline, no matter how relevant religious beliefs might potentially be to academic interpretation (p. 7).

While the title of *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* comes out of this observation, Marsden makes clear in the preface that his goal is not primarily to respond to the critics, but "to take a step toward clarifying what the ancient enterprise of relating faith and learning might mean in the academy today."

As already indicated, we found Marsden's book to be one of the most significant publications of this past year. Nicholas Wolterstorff, a former colleague at Calvin College and now a professor at Yale University, describes it as "a masterly explanation and defense of Christian learning in the contemporary world." We would agree with Wolterstorff's evaluation. Marsden very effectively argues that, given our religiously diverse culture, American higher education should be more open to expressions of faith and more accepting of what faith means for the academy today.

In light of our commitment to the purpose and program of IAPCHE, we appreciated especially chapter six: "Building Academic Community." Those acquainted with the Association will recall that the revised purpose statement indicates that "The IAPCHE is a world-wide community of scholars and institutions that provides a network which, through academic activity, helps people to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in an integral way." In light of this statement we responded positively, of course, when we came upon the following paragraph in Marsden's concluding chapter:

Scholars, like everyone else, depend on communities. If like-minded academics do not form their own sub-communities, then they will be dependent entirely on the communities that already exist. These, of course, have little place for inquiry concerning faith and learning. If such inquiry is to grow as a recognized part of contemporary academia, it must depend on institutions and networks which can sustain that enterprise. (p.101)

Marsden goes on to observe that, in the United States, "there are no Protestant research universities that approach anything like the first rank" (p. 102). He also makes clear the need "to strengthen the Christian academic dimensions of the hundreds of Christian liberal arts colleges . . ." (p. 104). But the main thrust of the chapter is that, while isolated Christian scholars can make impressive efforts here and there, "but unless their voices are concerted, they will be lost in the general cacophony of the contemporary academy" (p. 101).

We have written earlier about the difficulties and challenges facing an association such as IAPCHE. We have also experienced, as Marsden observes, that we stand in great need of "benefactors with vision" (p. 103), who will support us in dealing with these difficulties and meeting these challenges. In light of all this, our members will understand that we not only enjoyed and were encouraged by our reading, but we would recommend the reading of *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* to them as well. J.B. Hulst

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Hulst spends three weeks in Korea speaking at conferences

From October 21 to November 7, 1997, IAPCHE Executive Secretary, Dr. John B. Hulst, was in South Korea.

The first half of the trip Hulst spent lecturing at two Christian universities in Seoul: Soongsil University and Chongshin University. One of three lectures at Soongsil dealt with "Christian Higher Education in an Era of Religious Pluralism." The lecture of Chongshin was titled "John Calvin and the Genevan Academy."

Toward the end of the Korean trip, Hulst met with the administration of Kosin University in Pusan to discuss a regional conference which has now been tentatively scheduled for the year 2001. It is hoped that this conference will involve and be of benefit to Christian scholars and institutions throughout the entire Oceanic area.

During the three weeks in Korea contacts were made with a number of individual Christian scholars, such as Dr. Bong Ho Son, as well as with a number of Christian institutions such as the Korean Association for Christian Studies, the Asian Center for Theological Studies, the Institute for Calvinistic Studies in Korea, Seoul Women's University, the Asian Federation of Christian School. Joy Mission, Myong Ji University, and the Association of Christian Public School Teachers. These contacts provided the opportunity to lecture on such topics as "Preparing Christian Teachers of the Future," "Christian Worldview and Scholarship," and "Christian Education, Preparation for Kingdom Service."

Much guidance and assistance was provided by Wesley Wentworth, a member of IAPCHE and representative of Intervarsity Christian Press in Korea.

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Introducing Karoli Gaspar University of the Hungarian Reformed Church

Csaba Szabo, Director for International Programs at Karoli Gaspar University and member of IAPCHE, introduces us the the youngest but highest-level Hungarian Reformed educational institution with the following description:

The legal predecessor of the Karoli Gaspar University of the Hungarian Reformed Church was the Budapest Reformed Theological Academy founded in 1855. In 1993 the General Synod of the Reformed Church in Hungary seized the historic opportunity, when the nation changed the political system after forty years under Communism, and decided to establish the very first several-faculty university for the Reformed Church.

The aims and tasks of the Karoli Gaspar University are to carry on the traditions of Sarospatak, Papa, Debrecen and Nagyenyed; to carry out university and college basic education in the Reformed spirit; and to be able to carry out scientific research and Ph.D. training, as well as faculty rehabilitation.

The new university consists of the Faculty of Theology, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, and Teachers' Training College.

Presently the departments of the young university have a library of 60,000 volumes, complemented by the 160,000 items of the famous Raday library, 15,000 of which are antique books, some dating back to the beginnings of the history of printing.

The 1997-98 academic year counted 1650 enrolled students. The number of faculty was 194. Dr. Jozsef Ujfalussy serves as the president of the university, and the provost is Jenő Baratossy.

For further information, please contact:

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TKUC and ICS continue to explore affiliation --Edmonton, Alberta, and Toronto, Ontario, CANADA

The Board of Governors of The King's University College (TKUC) and the Board of Trustees of the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) have both decided to continue a process of exploring the possible affiliation of the two institutions. This process began a year ago, with the appointment of a joint task force.

In November the task force presented an extensive report to the two Boards, outlining the work done to date. Besides a series of exploratory meetings, the task force conducted extensive surveys of the TKUC and ICS support constituencies. The task force also organized a very successful joint meeting of the faculties of TKUC and ICS in Edmonton in August. The surveys as well as the joint meeting revealed a strong interest in the possible affiliation, but also brought a number of issues and concerns to the fore. Respondents in both support constituencies viewed the pooling of academic resources and the possible development of a small Christian university as the key potential benefits of affiliation. Issues of concern related to the challenge of relocating ICS faculty and staff, compatibility of the two institutions in terms of programs and institutional culture, priorities and image, as well as concerns about the financial viability of the initiative.

In its report the task force informed the two Boards that the exploratory discussions were characterized by much goodwill and a positive spirit. The report outlined in some detail the key issues which arose over the

course of the exploratory discussions. It also suggested that in view of the issues raised, more time is needed to study the contours of a possible affiliation, particularly as it relates to a more long-term, integrated relationship between the institutions.

Over the next several months the task force will focus on this task. The stakeholder groups in the two institutions will be consulted, and a possible model will be presented to the two Boards at their respective spring meetings.

For further information please contact:

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▶ Redeemer prof to analyze how various Christian traditions view sports

(adapted from an article by Marian Van Till in the Christian Courier)

Redeemer College physical education professor John Byl has embarked on a project which will give him, and eventually the public, a good idea of how various Christian denominations in Canada view sports, dance recreation and other things related to physical education.

Byl will sift through hundreds of back journals to see how each of them has handled - or not handled - sports, health, physical education, recreation and dance.

That will tell him something about how the Christian Reformed community, the Canadian Reformed, Mennonites, Baptists, Catholics and some others view sports, how that relates to their worldview, and how their attitudes may have changed over the years.

Byl has begun with *Christian Courier* and the *Mennonite Brethren Herald*. He intends to analyze, as well, papers such as *Clarion* (Canadian Reformed), *The Canadian Baptist*, *The Catholic New Times*, and others keeping a computer database for each publication.

"I want to get a handle on the history of Canadian churches, how they have dealt with these things," Byl says. In addition, he asserts, "In the different traditions there may be insights that we can learn from each other."

When Byl completes his research, "in about 10 years," he jokes, he intends to "pull it all together in a book."

The project could actually take him some years, he surmises, because he's involved in his teaching and "a lot of other projects."

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Stapleford Centre: An institute for Christian development in education

The following e-mail message was received from David Smith of the Stapleford Centre, St. John's College, Nottingham, UK:

Dear Dr. Hulst:

I have just been reading the current issue of *Contact* and am writing to ask a few things about the possible relevance of your work in IAPCHE to us here at the Stapleford Centre.

We are not an institution of higher education as such, although we do run a part-time/distance learning master's degree program in religious education and also offer some doctoral supervision. We have in the past mainly been involved in in-service training for Christian teachers and in the writing and publication of Christian curriculum resources for the 5-16 age range.




Recently the Centre's former existence as Stapleford House came to an end, being superseded by the Stapleford Centre, which will continue the work of the Stapleford House but has added a research department, where I have been working since my return last summer from the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto. It is particularly this later development which makes us very keen to network effectively with other Christian researchers in education, both to learn from their work and to inform them of what we are producing. It is with this in mind that I am writing to you after reading *Contact*.

Given this brief outline of our nature and activities, I would be interested to hear from you regarding how the Centre might be able to relate constructively to IAPCHE and how this might help us to benefit from and contribute to wider discussions of Christian education.

Since receiving this letter, we have been in correspondence and have received from the Centre their three-year development plan. Included in the plan is:

1. Mission Statement

The Stapleford Centre exists to promote development in education from a Christian perspective by:

-  providing high quality teacher education and training based on Christian principles;
-  publishing high quality curriculum resources reflecting Christian values; and
-  promoting high quality research into education grounded in the Christian faith.

2. Aims and Objectives

- ▶ to improve the quality of pupils' educational experience by promoting the personal and professional development of teachers from a Christian perspective.
- ▶ to improve practice in the teaching of values across the curriculum, including religious education, by publishing high quality Christian resources.
- ▶ to enhance the influence of Christian beliefs and values in education by developing a programme of high quality Christian research which seeks to change the climate in which teachers are trained and work.

We are pleased to be in contact and correspondence with The Stapleford Centre; and we do indeed hope that IAPCHE can assist the Centre "to network effectively with other Christian researchers in education."

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Vandervelde invited to a Vatican Synod

George Vandervelde, IAPCHE Board Member and Professor of Systematic Theology at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto, Canada, was honored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops with an invitation to participate as a fraternal delegate in the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops held in Rome from November 16 to December 12, 1997. The delegation from Canada consisted of 15 people, including ten bishops.

The preliminary discussion paper for the synod invited reactions to a series of question. Vandervelde responded with a article published in the Canadian journal *Ecumenism/Oecumenisme* in which he examines the ecumenical dimensions of issues presented in the paper. This article, as well as his other writings on church unity and his practical ecumenical work, led to this invitation.

The Synod is called to discuss aspects of the church's presence in the American continents under the general theme "Encounter with the Living Jesus Christ: The Way to Conversion, Communion and Solidarity in America." Issues discussed in the preliminary paper for the conference by Jan P. Cardinal Schotte included: principles to be followed in proclaiming the Gospel, the relationship between culture and the Gospel, conversion to Jesus Christ in the Americas, interreligious dialogues and other religious movements, and the use made by the church of social doctrine dealing with the great challenges of the Americas (poverty, international debt, the culture of death, etc.)

Vandervelde attended the Synod for about two of its four weeks.

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NEWS FROM INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA--

"International" is the first word in the name of IAPCHE. That word increasingly describes the student body at Calvin Theological Seminary.

Of the record 298 enrollment, 64 students are from outside North America -- over 21%. Korea accounts for over half these students, followed by Indonesia, Nigeria, Japan, China India, Mexico, and eleven other countries.

Students from varying national backgrounds but with United States citizenship add another 53 students -- again, mostly Korean. Because the Christian Reformed Church in North America includes both United States and Canadian churches, the seminary does not classify Canadians as international students. If they would be included, however, the 43 Canadians would add substantially to the number of international students.

Therefore, it can be said over half the students at Calvin Seminary are "international" -- a foretaste of what the Psalmist prayed:

All nations whom thou has made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. Psalm 86:9

Special Lectures in 1998/1999

- ▶ **Thursday, January 15** - Dr. Stanley Walter, senior pastor of Rosedale Presbyterian Church and formerly Professor of Old Testament at Know College, University of Toronto, will speak at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Seminary Auditorium of "Preaching from the Books of Samuel."
- ▶ **Thursday, January 29** - Dr. Raynard Vander Laan of Holland Christian High School, Holland, MI will speak at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. in the Seminary Auditorium on "Jesus the Jewish Rabbi" I and II.
- ▶ **Thursday, March 12** - Dr. Jung Woon Suh of the Presbyterian College and Theological Seminary of Korea will speak at 10:00 a.m. in the Seminary Auditorium.
- ▶ **Thursday, March 17** - Conference on Expository Preaching -- Dr. John Ortberg of Willow Creek Community Church will speak as follows:
10:00 a.m. in the Fine Arts Center
1:00 p.m. in the College Chapel
7:30 p.m. in the College Chapel - a worship service
- ▶ **Thursday, April 11** - John Maxwell will speak at 10:00 a.m. in the Seminary Chapel.
- ▶ **Thursday-Saturday, October 29-31** - Conference at Calvin College and Seminary - "A Century of Christian Social Teaching: The Legacy of Leo XIII and Abraham Kuyper."
- ▶ **Wednesday-Thursday, October 13-14, 1999** - Stob Lectures - Calvin College and Seminary. John Hare will lecture in Gezon Auditorium.

Summer Sessions

- ▶ **Tuesday, May 26 - June 5** - 1st Summer Session - registration at 12:30; classes begin at 1:30 p.m.
 - The Psalms: from Text to Sermon - C. Bosma
 - Current Issues in the CRC - H. De Moor
 - Family Ministries - M. Hugen
 - Youth and their Culture - R. De Vries
- ▶ **Monday, June 8 - June 19** - 2nd Summer Session - registration at 12:30; classes begin at 1:30 p.m.
 - Ten Commandments - C. Van Reken

- Theology in America - H. Zwaanstra

▶ **Monday, August 24 - Sept. 4** - 3rd Summer Session - registration at 12:30; classes begin at 1:30 p.m.

- Ten Commandments - C. Van Reken

- Christocentric Preaching - S. Greidanus

The Institute for Calvinistic Studies in Korea, Sungnam, KOREA--

The Institute for Calvinistic Studies has published the first issue of their newsletter *Calvinist Viewpoint*. President Dr. Sung-Kuh Chung introduces the newsletter with the following article:

Greetings from the Institute for Calvinistic Studies in Korea (ICSK). I am pleased to produce the first *Calvinist Viewpoint*, a newsletter that we at ICSK hope to use to share the Calvinistic worldview and to spread the news of Calvinistic events to our readers throughout the world.

The Calvinist movement in the world is significant but it is particularly important in these times. Some people ask, "Why is Calvinism important?" The answer is very simple.

Modern society and even the church is being invaded by secular humanism and the New Age movement. These movements seek to destroy the truth like a cancer eating away at its victim. Calvin sought to teach the true standard of our life, the Bible.

That is why Calvinism is important. We must get back to the Bible and to the Reformation. We especially need to get back to the teaching of the reformers. We must adopt the one worldview that is based on truth. The only way we can do that is to have a Biblical perspective. The Bible is the standard of our whole life.

It is my hope that those who read the articles and events in *Calvinistic Viewpoint* will be influenced by its Biblical perspective and will seek to spread this worldview also.

To be added to the mailing list, contact:

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121-9- Bundandong
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Phone 82-342-709-3610

Fax 82-342-709-1153

E-mail icsk121@soback.kornet.nm.kr

Kosin University, Pusan, KOREA--

The Department of Education, South Korea, has named Kosin University among its top institutions in the following categories:

- ▶ Academic publications - 7th
- ▶ Facilities - 12th
- ▶ Financial management - 13th

These rankings are a source of great encouragement.

There are many fine institutions of higher education in Korea. Several of these institutions are Christian. It is important that the Christian universities demonstrate their commitment to high quality Christian education. It is clear that Kosin University, which seeks to work out of a Reformed, Christian perspective, is succeeding in its efforts to demonstrate such a commitment.

Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ontario, CANADA--

A year ago the Dooyeweerd Centre for Christian Philosophy (Redeemer College) signed an agreement with *The Edwin Mellin Press* to publish the collected Works of Herman Dooyeweerd.

The works are being printed in two series. Series A contains multivolume works as well as larger single volumes. Series B contains smaller volumes and volumes constituted by a combination of related articles, essays, speeches and other material.

During the past year the first four volumes of the A-Series appeared in print -- *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*. This work is in large part a translation of *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee* (lit. *The Philosophy of the Law Idea*), but also contains additional material and certain revision added by the author in close collaboration with the translators reflecting the further development of his thought in the twenty year interval since the original Dutch work was published.

The Dooyeweerd Centre for Christian Philosophy also plans to have this work published in the form of a critical or annotated edition at a later date but has decided to arrange for this reprint in the interim to meet ongoing demand.

Volumes B1 and B2 of the B-Series also appeared in the meantime.

B1: Christian Philosophy and the Meaning of History provides the reader with a suitable introduction to Dooyeweerd's philosophy, focused upon its critique of the modernist belief in the autonomy of theoretical thought. The second chapter deals with the meaning of history. It provides a basis for the third chapter which discusses the criteria of progressive and reactionary tendencies in history. The fourth and final chapter deals

with a reality still confronting Christianity today: the danger of the intellectual disarmament of Christianity in science and scholarship. The devastating effects inherent in both the accommodation of unbiblical motives by Roman Catholicism and the secularization of Christianity by modern Humanism are treated with a penetrating analytical profundity.

B2: Essays in Legal, Social and Political Philosophy is subdivided into three sections, each containing two chapters: I *Legal Philosophy* (sociology of law and its philosophical foundations; the relation of the individual and community); II *Essays in Political Philosophy* (the contest about the concept of sovereignty; the Christian idea of the state).

To order volumes of the Collected Works of Dooyeweerd, write:

Edwin Mellen Press
Attn: Ms. Irene Miller
Box 450
Lewiston, NY 14092
USA

Russian-American Christian University, Moscow, RUSSIA / Wheaton, Maryland, USA--

IAPCHE is pleased to add the Russian-American Christian University as an institutional member. The following is a letter written by RACU's founder and president, Dr. John Bernbaum.

Dear friends,

For the last two months, efforts by the Orthodox Church patriarchate, in partnership with xenophobic nationalists and Communist Party leaders, to restrict the freedom of religious organizations in Russia have hung like dark clouds on the horizon. Unfortunately, a new restrictive law has been passed by the Russian Duma, signed by President Yeltsin, and immediately put into effect. Because of ambiguities and contradictions in the law, as well as sections that are in direct opposition to the Russian constitution, the full impact of the new legislation will not be known until there are court hearings and appeals and until the implementing regulations are issued.

Religious rights lawyers in Moscow have told our staff that this law is targeted at the 14,000 religious organizations registered in Russia with the Ministry of Justice. Because RACU is a private educational institution, registered with the Ministry of Education, they said the law should not impact us. While we were greatly relieved to hear this, we remain concerned about many of our partner organizations in Moscow.

Despite this difficult context, RACU is prospering. We have 85 students enrolled in 16 classes and the hallways, classrooms and offices are filled with excited university students eager to learn from our gifted Russian and American professors. The reports from Moscow are very encouraging, and I sensed the excitement of the students when I participated in the opening convocation; that enthusiasm has not subsided. The opportunity for quality Christian higher education is a precious gift for our students and they take this responsibility very seriously.

Thanks for your interest in RACU. Shalom! John A. Bernbaum

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Regional Profile

The IAPCHE board members have been asked to submit profiles of the regions they represent. The following profile was prepared and submitted by Dr. Sidney Rooy, a member of the IAPCHE executive committee.

PROFILE OF LATIN AMERICA

Although historically this area bears the name of "Latin America", many propose that it be called "Indoamerica" or "Indoafroamerica". This proposal arises because of the significant Indian, mestizo and African presence in many of our countries. A brief characterization of this region follows.

History and Peoples

When the Spanish began the fifty year conquest of the area in 1492, a wide variety of cultures and peoples were found. Most ethnologists consider that their common origin stems from Asia. Their arrival may have been through the Aleutian Island chain or by direct marine routes. Estimates vary widely as to their numbers at the arrival of the Spanish, from 8 to 100 million indigenous people. The number frequently depends on whether one condemns or condones the invasion and its methodology. Many serious investigators place the figure at 50 to 60 million. Within 150 years the total population was decimated and reduced by 85 to 90%. Causes include the conquest, imported diseases, slavery and poverty.

From the 16th to the latter part of the 19th century an estimated 10 to 15 million negroes were brought as slaves to replace the dwindling Indian population. Particularly Brazil, northern South America and the Caribbean zones have significant black presence in their population. When black slavery was prohibited during the nineteenth century, quite a number of Asians were brought to some of the countries as indentured servants. This wave of Asians has been reinforced in the last decades by a new wave of immigration, chiefly to our capital cities. This new group has frequently been of the Protestant faith and has established numerous new churches, especially from Korea and Formosa. The majority tend to be Presbyterian and some Methodist.

The countries which have 40% or more of Indian populations are Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Guatemala, and Ecuador. Those which have between 40 and 91% mestizo (mixed Indian/white) populations include: El Salvador, Paraguay, Honduras, Chile, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Guatemala, Mexico, Columbia, Ecuador and Costa Rica. Peru and Bolivia also are more than 30% mestizo. Those whose inhabitants are nearly all white European immigrants are Uruguay and Argentina. The Caribbean islands are varied, because of the different colonial powers involved. The Indians were nearly completely wiped out there, while many blacks were imported as slaves, and consequently a significant mulatto presence can be noted. Thus, Haiti, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic (in that order) are almost entirely of black and mulatto (mixed black and white) origin, while Surinam, Brazil, Cuba and Puerto Rico have between 50 and 25% (in that order) of the same constituency. Nearly half of the citizens of Surinam are from Oriental background, chiefly Indian and Japanese.

It is difficult to estimate the ethnological proportions for all of Latin America, due to the widely differing size of the respective populations. The total population is more than 450 million. This is still one of the most rapidly growing areas in the world.

Political and Social Situation

Nearly all of Latin America revolted from Spanish domination and became independent republics in the early nineteenth century, though Brazil continued a monarchical system until 1889. The universal struggle between the liberal and conservative parties in the 19th and early 20th centuries centered on wresting civil liberties from the control of the Roman Catholic Church and the establishing of public education, registers of births and deaths, marriage, and especially freedom of worship. After 1920 the struggle continued through the ballot box, with the establishment of Catholic organizations aimed at social control through political parties, labor movements, social action groups, and youth organizations. Most of the countries maintained the Roman Catholic Church as the official state religion and continue to finance ecclesiastical needs of that church. Only in the last decades has there been a completely free religious situation in many of the countries, though in some sectors deep-seated prejudices against non-Catholics continue.

In spite of the adoption of constitutions modeled after that of the United States in most of the countries, democratic freedoms have frequently been nullified by repeated dictatorships right up to recent years. The last spate of such military dictatorships were ostensibly "needed" in order to fight Communism. They were supported and supplied with military equipment and training by the United States. In the period from 1954 (Guatemala) to 1990, seventeen of the Latin American countries suffered loss of civil rights and several hundred thousand people were tortured and killed.

The general social and economic situation has deteriorated rapidly in this area since 1950. The Second World War brought temporary improvement, due to the demand for foodstuffs and minerals and the consequent good prices paid. Post-war conditions lowered rapidly the purchasing power of salaries, and the poverty of the majority of the population has steadily increased. The cheap loans made in the 70's soon proved to be catastrophic, due to interest rates that soared above 15%. Many countries need to pay 25 to nearly 50% of their export income to simply pay the interest, without the possibility of reducing the capital owed. Bridge loans for interest payments only increase the total debt.

The conditions of "free trade", that is, no protective tariffs for local industry, has brought small and medium factories to bankruptcy. Competition with the multi-nationals has proven to be nearly impossible. Unemployment rates have soared. Reduced government spending and forced privatization has lowered education and health services. Diseases once thought eradicated reappear. The infant mortality rate is rising in some countries. One of the chief causes for lack of basic food and deteriorating health, has been the switch from local food production to export economies of goods to provide hard currency income. Now even basic foods need to be purchased and imported. A minority elite increase their earnings and live well, while two thirds of the populations suffer. Unemployment and destitution have increased sharply.

Religious Presence

At the time of the Spanish Conquest, three highly developed Indian civilizations existed: Mayan, Aztec and Inca. Mayan culture had reached its peak and was in decline. The Aztec and the Inca empires controlled many tributary peoples, which meant that when they were overcome by superior Spanish technology, the others were weakened and subsequently subdued. However, in their case, as with a great number of other people's groups, many nomadic in character, the conquest was slow, due to the great distances and much impenetrable terrain. Spanish Christendom was forcibly imposed. The result for the indigenous peoples was what some historians call "religions en juxtaposition". The formal and official rites and dogma were Roman Catholic, while the informal underlying religion remained expressive of former beliefs. While some syncretism took place, there were in reality two theologies and two types of praxis operative during the entire colonial period.

The present resurgence of indigenous religions is evidence of this situation.

The immigrant communities have followed their imported faith. Thus the exclusive religion permitted by the Inquisition until the independence movement was the Roman Catholic. Up to the 20th Century that remained the general situation, with the exception of a few large immigration groups, such as the German Lutherans in Brazil. However, in Brazil the situation was also altered as mentioned above by the slaves who brought and maintained significant strains of the African religions. With few exceptions Protestant growth has steadily increased, especially since the Second World War. Most significant growth has been within mestizo groups, followed by certain indigenous peoples whose social structures have been weakening.

The Protestants are frequently grouped by social scientists and historians in the order of their arrival in Latin America, as follows:

1. mainline denominational groups, including both immigrants and mission efforts, beginning in the mid-19th Century;
2. faith mission churches, usually of conservative and dispensational/millenarian orientation, beginning at the turn of the 20th Century; and
3. Pentecostals, now classified as classical Pentecostals, renovation and charismatic Pentecostals, and neo-Pentecostals. The three waves of Pentecostals, whose growth has been nothing short of phenomenal, began their advances both among Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions about 1910, 1950 and 1970, respectively. Estimates credit the Pentecostals with 75 to 80% of the total Protestant movement at the present time.

Recent statistics claim that over 10% of the population in Latin America have become adherents of the Protestant faith. That would mean that approximately 50 million of the 480 millions represent that faith. Puerto Rico and Guatemala with 27 and 26% are the highest, while Uruguay, Paraguay, and Colombia with 3% are the lowest. Cuba has 5% and Brazil, the largest country and most numerous population in Latin America has 16%, that is, 26 million of the total population of 156 million.

Educational challenges

The university movement had an early beginning in Latin American history. From the mid-16th Century they were established in the principal centers of the immigrant Spanish population. Especially the Jesuit order became renowned as the spearhead of much of the tertiary education here. The expulsion of the Jesuits from all of Spain, Portugal and France and all their colonies between 1754 and 1767 dealt a severe blow to the universities. About 2200 Jesuit priests were expelled. Other orders assumed much of the responsibility in the reconstruction period. However, the Independence period required more significant adjustments. During the liberal-conservative struggle for secularization, many public universities were begun.

Since the Jesuit order was a tenacious supporter of the Tridentine Thomistic theology, as well as of the Inquisition, most of the pre-Independence teaching reflected that position. During the 19th Century liberal progressive currents made their impact, and, especially in the latter part of the century, Positivism made inroads in some institutions. Of significant influence was the neo-Thomistic movement in the early 20th century, inspired in part by the theology of Jacques Maritain, with its emphasis on Christian humanism and its program of social organizations. University education in this century has been shared basically by the state and Catholic institutions. Since most of the professors have been nurtured in the Roman Catholic faith, such perceptions color education in all its levels and forms.

Protestant education, though limited and representative of only a small minority, until the recent past has

concentrated on the primary and secondary levels. During the past three decades numerous Evangelical (synonym of Protestant in Latin America) universities have been established. Some of the first were begun by the Seventh Day Adventists who have several in our region. Today many of the faith mission traditions are convinced of the necessity for Christian higher education. A Latin American organization of state accredited Evangelical universities was established by eight institutions from as many countries in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in July, 1996. Fifteen others in process of organization were represented.

However, the character of most of the representatives and the objectives mentioned in this meeting had more to do with the institution as a means for the evangelization of Catholics and the devotional life of evangelical professors and students. Little or no interest in the basic questions of faith and learning was evident, nor was there concern for the overwhelming majority of Protestant professors who are teaching today in the secular universities. The leadership of the new organization urged us to motivate IAPCHE in our concern for these teachers and problems. For this purpose we have made plans for the realization of a regional Latin American Conference to be held from January 18 to 22, 1999, in San Jose, Costa Rica.

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Essay

Reading the Subway Walls and Redirecting Communication Technology

By Charles C. Adams, Professor of Engineering, Dordt College

Introduction

This essay is based on a keynote address given at the 39th annual Ontario summer conference, sponsored by the Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto, in August, 1997. The title of that conference, *The Sound of Silence*, alludes to one of the myriad problems of modern communication technology. The theme of the conference was "a Christian approach to modern communication technology." It was particularly easy for me to accept the invitation to speak, because the conference title resonates for me with multiple allusions to the years 1965 through 1968. During those years I was an undergraduate in college, being moved by the songs of Simon & Garfunkel (who popularized the phrase "the sounds of silence" with their hit song of the same name), challenged by the writings of Hendrik Hart & the ARSS (The Association for Reformed Scientific Studies¹), and intellectually exercised by long-into-the-night discussions with a philosophically inclined young lady who would later become my wife.

But I don't wish to dote on 1965. I will merely use that time as a rich source of allusions to the issues encompassing the task of redirecting communication technology. Thus, what I hope to do in this extended essay is:

1. Review the nature of technology and technological artifacts, as seen from a reformational perspective.
2. Consider what might be called the "directedness" and the "directingness" of technologically produced things, that is, artifacts.
3. Discuss how one might go about "reading the subway walls and tenement halls," in other words, develop sensitivity to some of the distortions of modern communication technology.
4. Look at some possibilities for redirecting modern communication technology for Kingdom service.
5. Conclude with some thoughts on four characteristics that Christians will need in order to live obediently in the "cyber-century," namely, vigilance, resistance, technological sensitivity, and

humility.

Before jumping into a discussion regarding the nature of technology, I wish to ask a seemingly simple question: What does it mean to be a creature? The dictionary² definition of "creature" reads as follows:

- a. Something created.
- b. (i) A living being, especially an animal. (ii) A human being.
- c. One dependent or subservient to another, a tool.

It is b(i) that is the notion most people have-but I do not believe that we ought to be satisfied with that. We can get some help from the Scriptures by looking closely at Psalm 119.

The LORD exists forever; your word is firmly fixed in heaven. Your faithfulness endures to all generations; you have established the earth, and it stands fast. By your appointment they stand today, for all things are your servants. -Psalm 119:89-91 (NRSV)

It is in this context-creatureliness as servanthood-that I want to consider the meaning of technology as well as the meaning of technological artifacts (that is, the stuff of communication technology, like VCR's, computers, and distance learning laboratories).

Technology

Modern technology can be described in any of three distinguishable ways. It can be described as an activity, that is, something that people do. It can be described as an artifact or a class of artifacts. For example, we easily speak of "having the right technology" to work with. It can also be described as a kind of knowledge, that is, technological "know-how."

Stephen Monsma gives a more helpful definition of technology in his book *Responsible Technology*. There technology is defined as:

"...a distinct human cultural activity in which human beings exercise freedom and responsibility in response to God by forming and transforming the natural creation, with the aid of tools and procedures, for practical ends or purposes."³

I don't want to get into the details of this definition, but rather I wish to emphasize the point that technology is first something we do. Thus, in the light of Psalm 119, it is a way of responding to God, a way of serving him and our neighbors, a way of exercising our own creatureliness. But what is a technological artifact? First, it is something that is created (it is not autonomous) and it is dependent on or subservient to another (the designer, the user, ultimately the Lord). Secondly, because it is something created, it is therefore a servant. And in the spirit of Psalm 119-By your appointment they stand today, for all things are your servants-it is a creature, a servant of the Lord. If anyone has difficulty accepting, for example, that VCRs are creatures, servants of the Lord, then let me make it even more difficult by having you think of some other technological artifacts. Consider AK-47 assault rifles, iron maidens, or plastic, glow-in-the-dark, dashboard, hula-dancers-are these creatures "servants of the Lord?" It may be helpful at this point to distinguish between "natural" creatures and artificial or "artifactual" creatures (that is what Monsma is getting at when he talks about "transforming the natural creation"). But it is also necessary to realize that if all things are intended to serve the Lord, then, in some sense, all things must have the capacity for serving him in a disobedient manner. Disobedience in humans is intrinsic to our fallen state-it derives from our heart direction. Disobedience in natural, non-human creatures, however, is extrinsic to the creature, although it too derives from the fall. But

the fall, of course, derives ultimately from humankind's disobedience. Disobedience in technological artifacts, I would argue, can be intrinsic to the artifact because that artifact derives from human cultural activity. I am not saying that you can blame an iron maiden for the torture it inflicts, or an AK-47 for the slaughter that results from its use. But I am saying that those technological artifacts are intrinsically in opposition to the will of the Lord for his good creation.

At this point it is interesting to note that resistance to the idea that technological artifacts may be intrinsically in opposition to the will of the Lord finds some defense in the very proper and Reformed opposition to the notion of autonomous substance. We do not want to say that anything in creation is "evil in itself," and rightly so. But to argue from that position to one that views artifacts as mere tools, the good or evil of which is solely dependent on "how they are used," is to go to the other extreme and to wind up in what I might call the land of artifactual relativism. In that land, technological artifacts have no properties beyond the physical.

Directedness and Directingness of Technological Artifacts

Artifacts do have properties. A computer, for example, has a particular mass and volume. It also has a particular amount of random-access memory, a certain size display, and its microprocessor is characterized by a particular speed. But those are physical and spatial properties. Even though a computer is a physical thing, it has properties beyond the physical. For example, it has economic properties. It costs X dollars to purchase, it uses Y kW-hrs of electrical resources per year, and it uses Z hours of your temporal resources per year for maintenance. It also has aesthetic properties. It may transform your quaint little study into a high-tech laboratory with allusions to industrial and technological power. And the computer has moral properties. It makes possible very specific legal, ethical, and faith choices on the part of the user. These properties are intrinsic to the artifact, those who design and fabricate it design them into it—either consciously or unconsciously.

Thus technological artifacts are not neutral. They have both particular structure and direction (to use a well-worn reformational phrase). The structure has to do, most obviously, with those physical and spatial properties (perhaps even biological properties if we are thinking in terms of bio and genetic engineering). The direction—or directedness—of the artifact has to do with those economic, aesthetic, legal, ethical, and even faith properties—properties that we associate with normativity rather than the laws of physics. (That's not to say that there is not an economic, aesthetic, or ethical structure involved.) This point can be made concisely by saying that there is direction embedded in the structure of technological artifacts.

But technological artifacts also exhibit the characteristic of directingness. That is to say, artifacts not only have properties, but those properties direct the user in the use of the artifact. Carl Mitcham calls this the "volitional character" of artifacts⁴. Stephen Monsma calls this the "value-ladenness of technological artifacts."⁵ Let us consider a few examples. The clock is a technological artifact that leads us to see time in terms of mathematically measurable sequences of physical events (e.g., the rotation of the earth on its axis) and dissociated from human events. The AK-47 assault rifle has designed into it the potential for the rapid and violent destruction of human life and leads its user in that direction. According to Neil Postman, "eyeglasses refuted the belief that anatomy is destiny by putting forward the idea that our bodies as well as our minds are improvable."⁶ Eyeglasses may thus be considered the twelfth-century first step toward modern genetic engineering. The properties of a particular automobile—e.g., its horsepower rating—will direct a driver's pattern of pulling out into traffic. But the automobile also fosters both a spirit of individual freedom and autonomy, and the social conventions and activities that give expression to that spirit.

Let us, however, focus specifically on communication technology. For culture formation to occur at the social level there must be communication. The properties of a particular communication technology will direct that

culture formation. Consider the artifacts of typography; e.g., the printing press and books. The computer notwithstanding, the invention of the printing press, it seems to me, remains the most important technological event in the history of western culture. It directed us away from communal forms of knowing and learning and toward individual forms. It made democracy, as we know it, possible. It made the Protestant Reformation possible. And one might argue that it is at the root of all the problems that we evangelicals have with reconciling our view of individual salvation with the biblical notion of the Church as the bride of Christ. Or consider the television. The properties of television technology-presenting one with "fleeting images"-are such that it fosters communication of an "entertainment" kind rather than of an "academic" kind. It thus promotes: (1) The "Sesame Street" approach to learning, i.e., short, attention grabbing, snatches of factual material, short attention spans, instant gratification; (2) The "Nike" approach to politics, the central focus of which is the election campaign and its arsenal of 15-second TV ads designed to grab you quickly and emotionally without providing any rational content; (3) The "Saturday Night Live" approach to worship, where the music beguiles us with warm fuzziness, the liturgy keeps us totally involved without having to think too hard, and the preaching is a series of one-liners smoothly delivered by a stand-up comedian.

Reading the Subway Walls and Tenement Halls

The main point of this essay is that technological artifacts have directing properties and that we are responsible for being sensitive to those properties. Specifically, we ought to avoid the misuse of modern communication technology as well as to direct it for obedient, Kingdom service. This essay's title is based on a line from Simon & Garfunkel's song, "The Sounds of Silence:" ...the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls and tenement halls (Paul Simon, (c)1964). It is important to realize, however, that this is not a new problem. One is reminded of that when reflecting on some of the other songs by Simon & Garfunkel. One that makes this point rather well is from the album, *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme* and is titled *The Dangling Conversation*.

...And you read your Emily Dickinson, And I my Robert Frost, And we note our place with bookmarkers, That measure what we've lost....And the Dangling Conversation, And the superficial sighs, Are the borders of our lives. ("The Dangling Conversation," Paul Simon, (c) 1966)

What we are dealing with here is, at bottom, the same phenomenon. Whether we be lost in our reading of a book of poetry or surfing the net with Netscape Navigator, the bookmarks (either paper or electronic) indicate the degree to which we have become one with our fantasies and abstractions, and thus, indeed, those bookmarks become a measurement of the wholeness that we have lost. Our lives are then trivialized, bordered by "superficial sighs."

Consider the following contemporary examples of this trivialization. First, Donald Norman, in his book *Turn Signals are the Facial Expressions of Automobiles*⁷ describes the interaction between the camcorder and human as vicarious experiencing where the real experiencer and the vicarious experiencer are the same person. The real experiencer, however, fails to have the original experience because of all the activity of recording it for the later, vicarious experience. I recently spoke with a relative who confirmed the truth of Norman's description when he described to me his failed attempt to videotape Old Faithful, the geyser in Yellowstone National Park. Spending an inordinate amount of time (and using a significant amount of battery life) setting up the camcorder, his objective was thwarted by a dead battery just as Old Faithful erupted. He thus missed both the original and the vicarious experience. A colleague of mine also confirmed the truth of Norman's description when he proudly informed me that he had over 1000 hours in his home video collection. Here we have an even more absurd example of the camcorder trivialization of life. How would anyone ever find the time to watch 1000 hours of home video? And if one did, what would that say about the quality of one's life?

Another example of the trivialization of human life derives from the fact that modern technological artifacts have short life spans. Donald Norman distinguishes between two modes of representing information, saying that an artifact can have a surface representation (pages in a book, photographs) or an internal one (videotape). The problem is that artifacts that have internal representation need additional technology, like a VCR, in order to display the information. But technologies go out of date! Reel to reel tape recorders, 8 mm movie projectors, and turntables that can play 78 rpm records are examples of artifacts that, once commonplace, are now very difficult to obtain. The information contained on audiotapes, 8 mm film, and 78 rpm records is thus essentially lost. What does that suggest about the significance of those events in our lives that we commit to soon-to-be-obsolete technologies?

Perhaps the ultimate case of the trivialization of human life by technology is approached in a recent experience that I had viewing a promotional video that was produced by a large telephone company. The video tried to describe the communication life of a typical American family twenty-five years into the future. That communication life was centered on what the company would like to see as the telephone of the future—the videophone. As I watched the video I was impressed with the seemingly natural way in which people could "talk" to each other using the videophone. Facial expressions and even body language seemed to play a role akin to that in face-to-face communication. It was very impressive. However, after rewinding the video I could not help but reflect on the fact that I was being impressed by a video of a videophone. A problem with current communication technology such as the telephone, e-mail, etc. is that, due to the properties of the artifact, important aspects of face-to-face conversation are abstracted out of the conversation. But then, "watching a video" instead of observing firsthand a whole sequence of events entails that same problem. I came away with the wariness that my positive impression of the videophone ought to be qualified by whatever abstractions the video presentation may have created, thereby masking abstractions inherent in the videophone technology.

The nadir in abstract human experience is, of course, the "experience" of what has come to be called virtual reality. Decades ago, Aldous Huxley gave us a glimpse of virtual reality when he coined the term the feelies to describe a popular technological artifact in his book, *Brave New World*. Today we go to the movies for a visual and aural virtual experience. Some film technology, notably that used in "IMAX" type theaters, goes beyond seeing and hearing to affecting our sense of balance and place. But Aldous Huxley's feelies go well beyond that. Closed within a virtual reality booth, with electrodes feeding information directly to her brain, the passive citizen of *Brave New World* would see, hear, smell, and, most importantly, feel exactly what the programmers planned for her. Here we have the ultimate of abstract, out-of-body, artificial-or better, artifactual-experience where one is putting one's life into the hands of a technical elite.

Redirecting Communication Technology

At this point we need to move from recognition of brokenness to the challenge of bringing healing and redirection to modern technology. I am not a technophobe. My work at Dordt College is one of enabling Christians to work in the various fields of modern technology. Although I have never been much of a salesman, one part of my work that is most enjoyable to me is meeting prospective students and their parents and telling them about what it might mean to work as an engineer. Part of what I try to convey is recognition that "Our World Belongs to God," and "all things are his servants." I also try to convey a recognition of the brokenness and misdirection of modern technology and a recognition that to be born in the latter quarter of the twentieth century is to be called to responsible stewardship during the first half of the twenty-first century—the cyber-century. Then I try to get the prospective students to look at themselves and recognize that to be gifted with ability and interest in math, science, and computers may very well mean that one is called to bring healing to the brokenness caused by misdirected technology, to point out the direction that technology ought to take in the future. In other words, it is to realize the truth that Mordecai spoke to Esther, "that you have

come to royal position for such a time as this." Finally, I try to convey recognition that it takes effort-study and practice, in community with other Christians-to take up this task.

If we Christians are going to bring healing and redirection to modern communication technology, we need to know something about it. But that knowledge ought to be tempered by an attitude of skeptical anticipation. Let me give a few examples of where it is justified to enthusiastically anticipate change, but where we also need a good deal of skepticism.

Let's reconsider the videophone. Consider that the videophone will most likely have a switch whereby the people being called can turn on or off the video of themselves, depending on who is calling. What are the social implications of not turning on the video, or using that switch to turn it off? There are likely many situations where you would be willing to talk to the caller but would not wish to be seen by the caller. I want to suggest that the videophone will bring us-in terms of interpersonal social conventions-more than halfway from the situation of the common telephone to the situation of someone showing up at the front door of our house. This is despite what I believe will be its inability to provide us with true, face-to-face communication.

Now let's consider e-mail in light of what I just said about the videophone. E-mail presents us with a social situation that moves in the opposite direction as that of the videophone. We move away from the telephone toward greater social anonymity. That strikes many people (Christians particularly) as problematic. Social anonymity smacks of individualism and, somehow, of a degrading of our humanity. A key point to consider, however, is that the social is only one dimension of the whole act of communicating. Another dimension is the economic: stewardship of time and resources (a double-edged sword with e-mail).

Let's consider a different branch on the tree of modern communication technology: digital visual media and the movement to enhanced resolution. Imagine that you have replaced your 15-year old, 19-inch Sears TV with a 32-in Sony Trinitron, or your old VCR with a new S-VHS model. Or imagine that, for a family reunion, you were able to get your hands on a Hi-8 camcorder. Or perhaps you recently gave away your old PC with its low-resolution, 14-inch monitor, and replaced it with a newer model with a 17-inch, 1280x1024-resolution screen. I would argue with the authors of *Responsible Technology* that openness and clarity are norms for communication technology.⁸ The higher resolution that digital technology brings, is positively responsive to that norm and is therefore good. But, there are other norms beside those of openness and clarity. There are the economic and social norms that I mentioned in connection with e-mail and the videophone. Good stewardship, a fundamental economic norm, strongly suggests that we resist the scramble to update to higher resolutions every time a new model becomes available. This is especially obvious when we realize that the driving force behind the appearance of all those new models is greed.

Stewardship norms ought to have a significant impact on the way we view the future of music and video collections too. A stewardship norm in the area of energy utilization is "appropriate end use." This means that, for example, if you want to heat your home in the winter to 20°C, you ought not first have to heat part of it to 2000°C (as is the case with fossil fuels such as oil, coal, and natural gas). A parallel stewardship norm in the area of communication technology is that if you are only transporting symbols over long distances, you ought not to transport matter with them. Therefore compact discs, videotapes, and even DVD's are at best a temporary technological crutch to get us to the day when we will acquire the reading, listening, and viewing software we need by downloading it from a central electronic library. In that day, books will become electronic facsimiles with sufficient memory to hold a dozen or so of the books we are interested in reading at any one time. Video programs (movies, documentaries, etc.) will be immediately available for downloading and viewing. Any audio piece (from *St. Matthew's Passion* to *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary, and Thyme*) will also be immediately available for downloading and listening. The only "real time" programming will be sports events and election coverage. Even the news will be available to you "on line," much as it is today on

MSNBC.

What we may conclude from all this is that we need a good grounding in a Christian philosophy of technology so that we might assess holistically the pros and cons of new technological developments. But we all cannot be specialists in a field such as that. What we can and must have, however, is a good, solid, Christian worldview. So my first recommendation is that anyone who is concerned with the direction of communication technology ought to thoroughly immerse himself in Kuiper, Dooyeweerd, and the kind of written material that has been characteristic of the Dutch, neo-Calvinist tradition. Let me suggest three books that you ought not attempt to approach the cyber-century without having read: (1) Kalsbeek's *Contours of a Christian Philosophy*,⁹ (2) Monsma's *Responsible Technology*, and (3) Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death*.

Conclusions

Edward Tenner in his book, *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*¹⁰, maintains that the more technologically complex our society becomes, the greater is our need for vigilance. He suggests that in solving traumatic problems we bring upon ourselves different, chronic ills. For example, curing major traumatic diseases brings upon us the chronic ills of aging. In providing major breakthroughs in energy technology we bring upon ourselves the more subtle problems of environmental pollution and resource availability. And by providing major breakthroughs in communication technology we open ourselves up to more serious but not so immediately obvious problems, for example, fragmentation of community, the frenetic pace of life in the workplace, and the trivialization of our culture as we "amuse ourselves to death."

Vigilance means two things. It means approaching technology from a holistic perspective rather than from a narrow, technocentric point of view, so that we may have some hope of anticipating the "unintended consequences" of our technological dreams. It also means staying on top of the technology that is current. It is reactionary, and disobedient to our calling as God's servants in the cyber-century to turn our backs on technology in fear or disdain. No matter who we are, if we exist at this time, we are called to be stewards of the technology of this time.

Consider the last lines from Simon and Garfunkel's song, *The Sounds of Silence*:

*And the people bowed and prayed
To the neon god they made.
And the sign flashed out its warning,
In the words that it was forming.
And the signs said, the words of the prophets are written on the subway walls
And tenement halls.
And whispered in the sounds of silence.*

There is a chilling correspondence between the imagery of those lines, Aldus Huxley's *Brave New World* vision of a society amusing itself to death in the feelies, and the tranquil complacency that many of today's Christians have with regard to the direction of our culture, particularly with respect to technology. Sometimes I think that like ancient Israel, we are guilty of boiling a goat in its mother's milk, that is, using the practices of the surrounding pagan culture in an attempt to manipulate our God for the purpose of our own pleasure. So, therefore, I argue that we must resist, develop attitudes of resistance, and teach our children to resist. We ought to use the blessings of modern technology (for example, the muting button on your remote control!) to help us resist.

My final words have to do with technological humility. In part I will borrow from the words of an early communication technologist, Arthur C. Clarke. Clarke was one of the engineers who worked on the trans-Atlantic telephone cable in 1956. However, he is better known as a science fiction author. He is the author of *2001 A Space Odyssey*¹¹, the book on which the Stanley Kubrick film of the same name is based. In 1962 Clarke published a book of essays¹² that included one on communication technology entitled "Space the Unconquerable." In that essay he makes the point that communication is limited by the finite speed of light, and, when distances between points of communication become exceedingly large, communication as we know it, becomes unwieldy or impossible. For example, were human-kind to eventually establish colonies on planets around a star system, 100 light-years from earth, it would take a minimum of 200 years for any message sent to those colonies to be responded to. Consider Clarke's words:

"Space can be mapped and crossed and occupied without definable limit; but it can never be conquered. When our race has reached its ultimate achievements, and the stars themselves are scattered no more widely than the seed of Adam, even then we shall still be like ants crawling on the face of the Earth. The ants have covered the world, but have they conquered it-for what do their countless colonies know of it, or of each other?" (p. 138)

Have you heard words like that before? Consider the words of Isaiah 40, verses 21 to 23, where the prophet is trying to remind prideful humanity that they are but finite creatures, and that the Lord is the creator of the heavens and the earth:

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded? He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heaven like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in. He brings princes to naught and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing. (NIV)

The point of Isaiah 40 is not just to humble humankind in its scientific and technological hubris. It is also to comfort us, and not just spiritually comfort us either, but to comfort and encourage us as we seek to unfold and develop the Lord's creation, in obedience before his face. For consider those last three verses of Isaiah 40. They provide a context of comfort and encouragement in the face of the weariness that we at times may feel when we hear whispered, the sounds of silence.

He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (NIV)

1 Later renamed The Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACCS).

2 Microsoft Bookshelf 1996-97 Edition, American Heritage Dictionary.

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