



Design and Technology

Design and Technology show us God the designer, the wise creator and efficient administrator.

(See also Art and Craft Perspectives)

- ‘I was there when He set the heavens in place. When He marked out the horizon on the face of the deep, and when He marked out the foundations of the earth. Then I was the craftsman at His side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in His presence, rejoicing in His whole world and delighting in mankind.’ - **Proverbs 8:27-30**

Towards thinking about and Teaching Technology Theologically

The first article in the Apostolic confession of faith states, ‘I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.’ Maker is synonymous for Creator and Creation may be defined as ‘that free act of God whereby He, according to His sovereign will and for His own glory, in the beginning brought forth the whole visible and invisible universe, without the use of pre-existent material, and thus gave it existence distinct from His own and yet always dependent on Him’ (L.Berkhof)

God creates ex nihilo (although the biblical words used for ‘the creation’ do not specifically give this meaning) and He also creates from pre-existing materials, but creation is a declarative act to make God’s glory manifest. God did not create to meet any need but to declare His inherent glory in the works of His hands.

In the beginning

Then God said.....

And God saw that

God created..... and it was so.

it was good.

As creatures we create, because, as image-bearers of God, we reflect the eternal character of God who has sovereignly chosen creativity as a method of revealing His invisible attributes. (Romans 1:20) We create because of the mandate to exercise dominion over the lower creation, something which constitutes the very essence of man, and which requires the use of our special rational, moral and creative faculties. We create because we are fallen creatures who have to overcome the effects of God’s curse on creation in order to survive.

The Design Process summarised below illustrates that from the outset man has had problems with finding a biblical approach to Design and Technology.

Design

We’re naked.

Death

Make

Sewed fig leaves

The Lord God made tunics of skin.

Evaluate

Have you eaten?

Without the shedding of blood.....

However, Adam and Eve in their first Craft lesson were taught that Design and Technology have moral and spiritual dimensions and that its results cannot escape evaluation by the Creator God, jealous for His own glory.

Encouragements and Warnings from the Scriptures

The Scriptures are full of references to the things that people have made. The humble milk bottle, **Judges 4:19** and the exquisite, priestly garments made for 'glory and beauty' **Exodus 28:1-4**. The strange commission for golden boils, **1 Samuel 6:5** ordered to be made to the glory of God and the costly alabaster boxes filled with fragrant oils used as a world-wide memorial to Mary's 'good work' for her Lord. **Mark 14:3-9** Simple, every day objects, hammer, axe, nails, **1 Kings 6:7** and **Isaiah 44:9-17** – note their different uses, and lavish, visionary descriptions of a city whose name is 'THE LORD IS THERE', **Ezekiel 40-48** are mentioned in the Scriptures so that we can grasp the scope and importance of the made environment and see that the 'chief end of man' can be realized through technological capability.

“There the ships sail about” - Psalm 104:26

- A psalm of praise to the sovereign Lord for His creation and providence.
- A celebration of the wonderful and gracious works of God and His wise and powerful management of His creation.

However, even though the work of man seems comparatively weak even beside Leviathan, who plays in the great and wide sea, the ship is there! What imperfect man can do using his skill, placed alongside what God has done with His absolute perfection, in a song which entreats God to 'rejoice in His works,' should be the ultimate encouragement to us all, as to the significance of our work.

Design and technology are a part of our nature as is our language and our worship. It is the ultimate expression of service and the tool for exercising wise dominion.

A Word of Warning – The cause and end of consumerism - Ezekiel 27 – 28

Tyre – a rich and prosperous trading and manufacturing nation; perfectly situated geographically, rich in natural and human resources with a skilled workforce at all levels of trade and industry. Having access to the finest materials and the widest range of goods and services, they were the envy of the world.

(This is not condemned but seen as a sign of God's blessing and favour. Tyre was originally assigned to the tribe of Asher on Jacob's death-bed blessing.

Genesis 49:20 'Bread from Asher shall be rich, and he shall yield royal dainties.

'Thus says the Lord God, "because your heart is lifted up, and you say 'I am a god..... ..'your heart is lifted up because of your riches.'"

'You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and beauty till iniquity was found in you. By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned.....'

'Therefore I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, you..... shall be no more forever.'

Fifty-Two Days that Started a Revival - Nehemiah 6:15-16

‘So the wall was finished and all the nations around us saw these things they perceived that this work was done by our God.’

In 1865, C H Spurgeon published the first issue of ‘The Sword and Trowel’. The title was inspired by those who re-built the walls of Jerusalem led by Nehemiah and Ezra, **Nehemiah 4:17** – ‘Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon’.

Then, chapter 8 ... Ezra brought the Law – stood on a platform of wood they had made for the purpose – read the Law of God to all who could hear with understanding – and the people wept – and rejoiced.

Technology and Theology!

Computers can serve us in becoming administrators for the work God gives us to do.

‘Go to the Source of all information before going to information as your source.’ Paul Riley

- ‘You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet.’ - **Psalm 8:6**
- ‘Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule.....’ - **Genesis 1:26**
- ‘Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it.’ - **Genesis 1:28**

Man has been given dominion over the earth and is allowed to rule over the works of God’s hand. Creation is not to be worshipped and thus take the place of the Creator, **Romans 1:25**. Man’s technology is to serve us not to dominate us, its advancement and tradition is not to deceive, captivate or distract us from the one true God. Therefore, we must learn to rule the technology we have; not allowing it to rule us. It should serve us so that glory is given to God who is Creator and Truth.

Computers can help us rule creation more efficiently when we rule them and they do not rule us.

Computers enable God’s people to move effectively: -

- a) govern and manage the world
- b) communicate and relate together
- c) find out about God’s world (e.g. encyclopaedia, educational programmes)
- d) develop their God-given creativity

We want our students to become computer-literate in this increasingly technological society. We want our students to begin to comprehend the dangers of:

- a) allowing computers to control our time
- b) being drained of spiritual life
- c) becoming too individualistic and self-sufficient
- d) the potential for idolatry when computers take the time we would otherwise spend with God and are used to fill the longing for meaning in life which only God can fill.

Resources

Refer to “Towards a Christian Curriculum” by Barbara Lord