

# Teaching Technology Christianly

Do worldviews enter our technology classrooms?

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I have many fond memories of my time teaching the “technical” subjects at high school (woodwork, metalwork, design, computing etc). The design solution suggested by Naomi one day stands out among these. It was during a Year 9 class exploring the role of technology in society that I asked the students to think up a “dream” technology. Over the years I have heard a variety of weird and wonderful suggestions ranging from things like a personal wrist watch ATM with a “limitless bank account” to various takes on the theme of teletransportation. Naomi’s suggestion stands out from every other innovation suggested in these classes. After I had heard from the rest of the students who were busting to share their ideas, I asked quiet, faithful Naomi if she had one she would like to share. She said humbly and quietly, *“well mine is a little tablet that can be made cheaply and be small for transporting so that they can be transported to poor countries easily. When one of these tablets is dropped into a puddle or well of dirty water, it instantly makes it clean for drinking”*. I felt humbled by her Christ-like response. She self-sacrificed an opportunity to indulge herself in dreaming of something that would serve herself and she focused her technological pursuits onto serving others, in this case the poor and disadvantaged in developing countries.

This example of Naomi’s might at one level seem simplistic and possibly pious. However, it should stir up our thinking about the purpose of teaching technology and particularly in teaching young Christian minds to think biblically. It should raise questions of; *What is the purpose of technology? Why should Christians invent and innovate? Do Christians and non-Christians see the purpose of technology differently? How does God view our technological pursuits? What light does the gospel of Christ shed on how we understand technology and especially as we attempt to educate our young ones within the shadow of the cross?*

Perhaps we need at this point to acknowledge the clash of worldview stories that enters every one of our childrens’ classrooms everyday. Even in the classroom of the Christian school, the dominant cultural story of the western world enters through the syllabus material, (text books) the perspectives of the students who have been greatly shaped by this powerful narrative and sometimes the Christian teacher who may have unknowingly been shaped by an element of dualistic programming. In this dominant cultural story, technological progress and its pursuit is almost seen as a kind of saviour of humanity. It is believed that the spirit of

progress and that a science based technology (and a rationally organised society) will enable us to realise the ultimate human goal; freedom, happiness, and the comforts of material abundance – the “good life”. It is a worldview story that idolises technology at the cost of the environment and the powerless within our midst. However, there is another way to view technology; Another story, that shapes the Christians understanding of all of life. God created this world out of nothing (the ultimate design solution). There is a richness of blessing to be realized for the people God created to dwell in is world.

However the fabric of life has been tainted and distorted due to rebellion and sin. God's blue print for the world included a solution to this problem; the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The true story of the world points everything to the gospel and sees that the people of God are now to proclaim the good news of Christ and to partner together in the recreation of this damaged world.

This story is full of many rich blessings from God. Technology skills and the ability to innovate are some of these many blessings. However, like all good things distortions are possible (inevitable?). The western worldview has distorted the blessing of technology. Do we teach this in our technology classrooms? Do we nurture our young minds to be discerning about the subtle distortions. Or do we acquiesce to the shaping forces of the worldview that uses technology to self-serve, deceive and which produces materialism, idol worship and a false sense of hope for the future. This technology idolization is a strong theme of the culture that our students (and we) live, breath, learn and play in.

Teaching technology Christianly is not about producing luddite graduates. Teaching any subject Christianly seeks to teach students to recognise and rejoice in the blessings from God and to discern and resist the distortions of the truth as they proclaim the gospel as redemptive partners in the task of re-creation. A Christian technology curriculum will be one that embraces technology while teaching discernment and proclaims the truth about living in God's world; a truth that Naomi has rightly found in the gospel of Christ.