

**It is God's privilege to conceal things, but the
kings' pride is to research them.**

Proverbs 25:2

Science tells us how the heavens go.

Religion tells us how to go to heaven.

Galileo Galilei

Don't be childlike in matters of understanding.

Instead be childlike in matters of evil, but be perfect in understanding.

1 Corinthians 14:20

**The universe is full of magical things patiently waiting
for our wits to grow sharper.**

Eden Phillpotts

Editorial

I am Pawel. I'm 23 years old. I use Facebook, I Skype more than an hour a day. A day without some mp3s is out of the question. Sending e-mails all the time is more natural than having a cup of coffee in the morning. My phone is smarter than me – bought recently and already an indispensable tool. Addicted? Perhaps just adjusted to reality, where the virtual world is closely bound with the one we can touch and smell. Actually, judging by the development of technology in the last years, we might be able to experience the virtual world with more senses – sooner than we think.

In this Mozaik, we are trying to show different perspectives on the modern technology – its pros and cons. For the first time, we decided to ask the same question to three theologians that represents different Christian denominations – they show how their Churches perceive technology and how their communities make use of it. An interesting outlook on Internet is given by our Swedish author, Marta Gustavsson, who takes a look at our bodies seen through photoshopped low resolution. Another little stone to the discussion about the technology is given by David Masters. In 'Life Unplugged' he shares about being disconnected from the digital world. What would happen if there was no Twitter update? David takes us for a trip where we meet sounds of silence filling the space left by the computer ventilators. Finally, Simon Stevens explores rational choice theory applied to Internet use. A striking portrait of religious vitality provided!

Since we are talking about social networks... Remember to like us on Facebook (facebook.com/WSCF.E.Mozaik) and find the Editorial Team on the WSCF Connection (wscfconnect.org). You can follow us on Twitter, see the conferences on YouTube and perhaps in the future attend them without leaving your cosy flat. We just hope that the digital saturation will not deprive us of a deep and uniting spirituality. And that somewhere under our skin we will be smarter than our phone applications.

Peace and Grace be with you,

Paweł Pustelniuk

Think

- 6 Marta GUSTAVSSON – Body, God and the Internet Other
- 9 David MASTERS – Life Unplugged: Reconnecting with Your Deeper Self
- 12 Simon STEVENS – Who is My Virtual Neighbour?
- 16 From the Archives: Christine LEDGER – The Ideology of Science

Reflections

- 22 Piotr SZELAĞ – Uncovering Realities
- 25 Marek IGNACIUK – Does the Development of Technology Bring Us Closer to God?
- 28 Annelies VAN DE STEEG – The Face of God on Facebook?!

Resources

- 32 David MASTERS – Bible Study
- 35 Natalia MYKYTEI and Vladyslav VLASOV – Workshop: Media: An Alternative Truth
- 38 Maximilian KARRASCH and Gabor NEMET – Workshop:
When I was Young a Blackberry was 'Just' a Fruit
- 40 Worship from "Living in a World of Technology" Conference
- 43 From the Archives: Questionnaire

Federation

- 46 Katka BABICOVÁ – WSCF at Kirchentag-Heartbeat Youth Congress
- 48 Paweł PUSTELNIK – Global Education? Sure!
- 49 Pavlina MANAVSKA – A Few Thoughts about Technology
- 50 IEPC Report – Young Christians Share Church's Witness of Peace

*Science without religion is lame,
religion without science is blind.*

Albert Einstein



PHOTO: HRIPSIME MURADYAN

Body, God and the Internet Other



Marta Gustavsson is a Swedish master student in theology and perhaps soon to become a pastor in Church of Sweden.

In her thoughts as well as in her studies, political, feminist and body theologies are often contrasted by a strong emphasis on God's transcendence. Apart from this she likes her bicycle, cooking and listening to electronica.

Marta Gustavsson

Technology, is it for better or for worse? The question, of course, is a standard question posing the “good old days” perspective towards the perspective of progress and development. But when we start asking the questions of the “In Real Life” (IRL) life we used to know (as it is now, for many of us, too intertwined with the virtual one) to the sphere of the screens, we can learn new things about our lived realities’ biggest questions.

I have, myself, during the latest year been occupied very much with thoughts of relational and sexual misbehaviour, violations and violence. Questions of dominance, rapes and violence against partners were often perceived to occur preferably outdoors, by drunkards, by psychos, or for that matter in any way where the perpetrator was disconnected from the nice people you hang around with yourself. It is a struggle, for those working with domestic violence, to make people understand that the rapist can be a popular, nice guy. That maltreatment can occur between pink sheets, in a perfectly settled environment and that a couple even can fall asleep lovingly after. That an emotional wound can go “somewhere else” and stay there for a long time.

And what happens, when even a new setting is brought to the picture? Can we bear talking about violations in yet another sphere? Can we understand what media reports about perverts streaming photos of young girls, or the bad experiences of our own generation with Internet

flirting, as a continuance of what could go wrong in physical and face to face contact?

In a way, the Internet has similarities with the Outdoors. “There are a lot of psychos out there”, as we all know, plus violations made online are a bit like a rape in a distant park; the victim should not have been there anyway and should certainly not make such a willing impression. On the other hand, there are similarities to the bedroom setting. Often, in the landscape of Internet contacts, one can find as much trust and affection as in IRL encounters. And when trust is there, vulnerability will come as well.

Let me say something about screens. Normally when we talk about sexual or relational violations, we also encounter the issue of bodily violations. We refer to the pains that a body can carry, even though mind and language are incapable of recognizing them. But in our virtual life, when our bodily representation is a 100x140 pixel photo retouched in Photoshop, do our bodies not stay out of the picture? Have we not, so to say, found a way of transcending our bodily limitations to create the image of ourselves seemingly worthy of unbroken adoration? How can this super presentation ever turn into the failure it would be to become hurt?

Maybe, that is exactly why, you can form the picture of yourself as unquestionably desirable and people might believe it. Behind the screens,



imaging the ideal partner, loving the surface given, is even easier than in real life. You do not see what's behind. And to the person-image formed with language, one might give away bigger parts of one's inner life than what was really meant. Online trust can actually be even more one-sided than IRL trust.

Screens are means of protection. What is interesting with them, in my view, is that they are

in no way a new phenomenon. On the contrary, I believe, a concrete computer screen very well shows something terrifyingly real about all of our lived reality. A screen, in some aspect, is always there. All of our encounters are in some way carrying the self-transcendence of the self-created image. Even our flesh and blood bodies can be presented for certain interpretations.

The body can in some aspects give way to the

But if someone is hurt virtually, I do not believe the pain stays in the virtual. The maltreated mind will react, I believe, as if the body was involved.

immanency of the self, posing a limit for the lie of our relationships and perhaps thus give way to a lesser idolatry; a body is the sign of truth making human being forever aware that human being is not God, not totally self-created, without the capacity to communicate its mysteries on its own premises. On the other hand, in many cases, the body has been exactly a support of these lies, which is why virtual life for many people has a potential for being ‘truer’ – what is given away there can be the ‘inner truths’ of our thoughts, as we are not judged for our embodiments in the same way.

Our protecting screens are never protecting enough. Just as love, trust, curiosity and enthusiasm can go through plenty of borders; bad behaviour can also slip through the many barriers we use for protecting ourselves. I believe, in the case of Internet interaction, that there is a gap between the amount of trust we ourselves have in these interactions (which is often very high and often grows very quickly) and the ease with which we can misbehave, the fact that the face of the Other is not really there. The way out from one’s responsibilities can be taken with one click. What we leave behind, we will never see. In the discord between what we expect from the Internet Other and what we expect from ourselves towards the Internet Other, a moral hazard occurs. A lot is at play and no one is accountable for it.

If someone is maltreated bodily in our ‘real’ world, it will show in the body, stick there, become a part of its self-perceived space and limitations. But if someone is hurt virtually, I do not believe the pain stays in the virtual. The maltreated mind will react, I believe, as if the body was involved. In many cases, the body has been involved, in the phantasms and promises of the conversation. Trusting

these things to an online Other can be comparable to trusting your very limbs in the hands of others.

What concerns me is not a supposed exaggeration of the violations in the sphere of Internet – I can’t compare pains in a way that would make this meaningful. What is worrying me is that although we move out in a sphere where new rules for human interaction could be set, what instead has happened is a “no rules” paradigm where sexist patterns and patterns of dominance and violence are yet confirmed and further implemented.

There are few answers of how to systematically change the Internet social codes for the better, but I certainly believe our efforts are too few; as persons, as societies and as Christians. How would it be if Church chaplaincy would make a serious effort to preach the limits of online self-transcendence? If our churches could form teachings on how the immanent reality of hopes and longings, sufferings and pain, should be recognized also when we leave the IRL sphere for its virtual extension?

This could be an excellent question to engage in publicly; to both talk about ethics in the new times in a way that currently is quite absent and as a surplus effect also get a chance to refer to the depth of theology; letting God be God and through the lens of a God incarnate, understand that what is required of us is neither to ourselves turn God-like or to recognize the God-likeness in the Other, but on the contrary to ourselves turn human and to recognize the humanity in the other, even when hidden by a screen.

Life Unplugged: Reconnecting with Your Deeper Self

David Masters

Stand back from yourself for a moment. Turn off your computer, your television, your radio, your MP3 player. Unplug your wireless router. Switch off your mobile phone. Return to yourself in the silence. Spend a day walking, reading, resting, meditating. Draw a picture. Paint. Bake a cake. Write a poem, or a song. Explore the beauty of nature.

Let your attachment to technology speak during this time. Hear the inner voices calling you back. They will say to you: “I’m bored and restless. I don’t know what to do. There’s nothing to do. It won’t hurt to turn it on, just five minutes checking Facebook”. It’s almost an addiction. You’re feeling cold turkey, as recovering drug addicts call it.

The voices calling you back are just thoughts. You do not have to listen to them. You do not have to act on them.

Unplug for an hour the first time. The next time, try two hours. Then a morning or afternoon. Then a whole day. What about a whole week? How does the prospect of a whole week unplugged feel?

In the silence, listen to your inner life. Become aware of the mystery that resides within you.

Take strength and courage from words of wisdom.

The words of the mystics who have gone beyond virtual reality and reality to Reality.

Trappist monk Thomas Merton said the distractions of modern life – including technology – can lead us to forget who we are. Living in a constant stream of talk and noise, we “escape from our deeper self and the questions it poses”. Merton writes:

Now let us face the fact that our culture is one which is geared in many ways to help us evade any need to face this inner, silent self. We live in a state of constant semiattention to the sound of voices, music, traffic. [...] We are not fully *present* and not entirely absent; not fully withdrawn, yet not completely available. [...] We derive a certain comfort from the vague sense that we are ‘part of’ something – although we are not quite able to define what the something is. [...] We just float along in the general noise.

The general noise becomes comforting. We become afraid of the silence, afraid to unplug, to switch off. Merton continues:

If we are afraid of being alone, afraid of silence, it is perhaps because of our secret despair of inner reconciliation. If we have no hope of being at peace with ourselves in our



David Masters is a freelance writer. He lives in the UK with his wife, Siona.



The general noise becomes comforting. We become afraid of the silence, afraid to unplug, to switch off.



own personal loneliness and silence, we will never be able to face ourselves at all: we will keep running and never stop.¹

Self-discovery and growth – growing into life with God, with our true selves and deepest desires, is a journey. Irish poet and mystic John O’Donohue says the internet has removed this journey of discovery from our lives. The digital world, O’Donohue writes, has

truncated time and space. Marooned on each instant, we have forfeited the practice of patience [...]. The self has become anxious for what the next instant might bring. This greed for destination obliterates the journey. The digital desire for the single instant schools the mind in false priority.

O’Donohue says we end up lost. Not only do we lose sight of who we are, of our real priorities – we also lose sight of where we are on the journey towards our true selves.

There is such a constant whirr of movement that you never know where you are. You have no time to give yourself to the present experience. When you accumulate experiences at such a tempo, everything becomes thin. Consequently, you become ever more absent from your life and this fosters emptiness that haunts the heart.²

Breaking away from the digital world, from modern technology, from its distractions and noise, you escape the constant whirr of movement that distracts you from your real self. You might rediscover your true priorities. You’ll discover a new fullness to life – creativity and vibrancy you never knew you had.

O’Donohue writes: “When you regain a sense of your life as a journey of discovery, you return to rhythm within yourself”.³

The silence will be difficult. Silence is a new experience in a world of noise. You’ll want

to run away back to the comforts of noise and distraction. But is that really an escape? Amidst the distractions, the gentle voice of your true self will continue to call you. As the Psalmist asked, “where can I go to flee from God?”

Jesuit priest Anthony de Mello tells the story of the disciple who went to the master and said, “Could you give me a word of wisdom? Could you tell me something that would guide me through my days?” It was the master’s day of silence, so he picked up a pad. It said, “Awareness”. When the disciple saw it, he said, “This is too brief. Can you expand on it a bit?” So the master took back the pad and wrote, “Awareness, awareness, awareness.” The disciple said, “Yes, but what does it mean?” The master took back the pad and wrote, “Awareness, awareness, awareness means – awareness.”⁴

Come home to yourself. Remain in the silence. You’ll become more aware of your desires, your wants, of the people and the world around you.

1 Thomas Merton, *Essential Writings*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books,2000), p 74-75.

2 John O’Donohue, *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embracem*, (London: Bantam Books, 2003), p 37.
3 O’Donohue, *Divine Beauty: The Invisible Embracem*, (London: Bantam Books, 2003), p 38.

4 Anthony de Mello, *Awareness*, (Fount, 1997).

Who is my virtual neighbour?

Competition between religions makes for a vibrant market in which religion grows and flourishes.



Simon Stevens is an Anglican Priest and Chaplain to Loughborough University in the English Midlands. He studied theology at the Universities of London and Cambridge. He makes extensive use of the Internet throughout his ministry and is very interested in how society is changed by technology.

Simon Stevens

When Alexis de Tocqueville first set foot in the United States in the 1830s, he was struck by many differences from his native France. Though they were both predominantly Christian countries, they were poles apart. While he saw in France only ignorance and unbelief, the Church a stagnant force, he saw in the New World a vibrant religion. Whereas in Europe, democracy and religion seemed to be on diametrically opposing paths, in America liberty and religion seemed to go hand in hand. These two facts had to be linked, indeed he concluded, one must flow from another, and so religious liberty gave rise to great vibrancy of religion.

We may of course look back to the 19th century and wonder if ‘stagnant’ and ‘unbelieving’ are appropriate words, it looks like a golden era of faith, before the relentless decline in Christian belief, which has marked the period since then, through the process known to sociologists as secularisation.

Secularisation is a theory that is as old as sociology itself. In its simplest form it states elegantly that as societies modernise so there is a gradual erosion of the power and prestige of organised religion. Eventually what is left is an entirely privatised religion and a society in which all traces of the pre-modern state sponsored religion have faded away. To be modern is to be secular. As education and science spread, so there

is plausibility to non religious ideas. Likewise as religious diversity and therefore freedom of religion spread so universal truth claims loose their plausibility. Choice then is the key factor in the disappearance of religion from people’s lives. People choose not to believe.

The empirical evidence for this in Europe seems beyond question, one only has to look at the various statistics from Church bodies, so for example the Church of Scotland membership stood at 938,930 in 1981, by 2009 it had dropped to 464,355;¹ in Sweden less than 4% of the population now attend Church,² and in England active membership is now around a million and numbers of weddings and baptisms have fallen substantially in the last century.³

However what of the rest of the world? For in Africa and Asia religion is growing, and if, like de Tocqueville, we turn our attention to the United States, we find a very large nail in the coffin of the simple equation that to be modern is to be secular. For in the US there is consistently a far higher incidence of religious practice and belief than in most other western societies.

This has lead to the emergence, in the 1990s, within sociology of religion of a new paradigm to explain this unfortunate exception to the rule. This paradigm, known as the Rational Choice Theory of Religion, is the work of a group of

American academics and draws from economic theory. For scholars from the rational choice school, as its name might suggest, choice is everything. So far from ‘all refuting all’ actually competition between religions makes for a vibrant market in which religion grows and flourishes.

Rational choice theorists focus on the supply side of religion rather than the demand side as do the secularisation theorists. They argue that the more freely the religious market operates the easier it is to start new ‘religious firms’ because the start up costs are reduced. With no religious monopoly all groups are equal, forced to compete, their ministers work harder, the problem of free riding, the Christmas and Easter attendees who contribute very little to Church upkeep, is reduced as each organisation realises that their members could easily join that lot down the road. Thus spurned on they offer ‘better’ religious products which attracts more followers, which explains why strict churches flourish and liberal ones decline.

Rational choice theorists have shown, using census data and other sources,⁴ that in areas where there is great religious diversity there is a higher rate of church going. Not just in the United States but in for example in Latin America there is evidence of an emerging religious marketplace.⁵ The ‘others’ with whom one is in competition don’t even need to be geographically close. To give two conspicuous examples of European religious vitality: Ireland where Catholicism provided a sense of national identity against British Protestant dominance and Poland where Catholicism provided a bulwark against both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.⁶

However despite being widely received among American sociologists, there are few signs of any evidence to back

up the rational choice theory of religion in most of Europe. Where most people in France describe themselves as Catholic, most people in Sweden describe themselves as Lutheran but few actually attend the Churches they claim nominal membership of.

There is a place even in Western Europe in which all opinions are given equal air and in which communities can form and disintegrate and reform and loyalties change on a daily basis, a place of course that does not really exist – the Internet. One has only to spend a cursory amount of time perusing blogs and websites to find all manner of religious opinions competing with one another. Indeed it is a well known feature of blogging that it allows not only passive reading of posts but active comment on what has been written. This of course means that people who share the opinions of the authors can form a non geographical community around them. Indeed it is not just those who find themselves in agreement with blog authors but also those opposed to their views who frequently turn up to comment or even to organise websites of their own. Again we see people defining themselves over and against other groups that are the hallmark of the competition rational choice theory predicts.

There is also an increase in the supply of religion. Since the early days of religion on the Internet with small online user news groups in the 1980s the amount of religious websites have grown on literally a daily basis. With minimal time and effort required to start up a religious website (low start up costs according to RCTR is a predictor of religious vitality) and generally speaking it is the most conservative websites that garner the most reaction both positive and (most importantly) negative.



There are also signs that previously non-religious individuals are accessing religious material online. One study noted that 25% of Internet users had searched for religious or spiritual material online, up from 21% in 2000. Furthermore following the September 11th attacks on New York City 41% of Internet users asked, “many of whom had never considered themselves online religious seekers, said they had sent or received e-mail prayer requests”.⁷

So far so interesting but what about outside of the US? Can the Internet turn the tide of secularisation in Europe? Here I turn to one particular example. Last year the Pope offered a chance for traditionalist Anglicans opposed to the ordination of women and practising homosexuals a way to join the Roman Catholic Church as existing communities as part of a non geographical ordinariate rather than a conventional diocese. Though these groups are traditionalist in their faith and practice, they have relied heavily on the Internet, right from the word go. Despite the setting up of the Ordinariate of our Lady of Walsingham

receiving very little attention from the mainstream media, the establishment of an ordinariate portal and various blogs and websites has enabled these still numerically small groups (about 60 priests and slightly fewer congregations) to maintain contact online but also to spread their message. Even one retired Anglican Bishop, now ordinariate priest, is blogging with great passion and always if one examines the blogs a competitive spirit and a self definition of the self over and against the other, in this case the Anglican Church he has left behind, is found.

Of course it is early days for the Ordinariate and we do not know how the story will continue but what I am suggesting here is that as people search the Internet for answers this may be an answer to the problem of religious decline in the west.

Here I might end, except while perusing websites in preparation for writing I came across a blog written by a conservative Catholic priest. Himself an ex-Lutheran –

A world in which there is engagement with people’s ideas but not with the people themselves as they are physically not present, it is easier to dehumanise your opponents and dismiss them. It is easier to hate.

again note religious competition. He noted that he had discovered among the people who read and linked to his blog the Norwegian Anders Breivik, it was among the right wing Christian blogs that Breivik had read before the recent tragic events in Oslo. The blog author wonders if he had written anything to prompt such hatred.

Of course he had not, however we should note, this is the downside of a religious vitality based on competitive world views, built around networks of like minded individuals in which people choose their own truth: rational choice theory of religion predicts a world in which the long decline of organised religion is reversed. It predicts a world in which there will always be religion and a world in which many different communities can flourish.

However it is also a world with a sad absence of the understanding, dialogue and interfaith engagement which was the mark of much ecumenism in the 20th century. A world in which there is engagement with people’s ideas but not with the people themselves as they are physically not present, it is easier to dehumanise your opponents and dismiss them. It is easier to hate. A world in which choice can be choice not to engage and ideas developed in isolation become self reflecting and self reinforcing.

Religious vitality, it seems, like the Internet itself, is very much a two edged sword.

Further readings:

Alexis de Torcquville, “Democracy in America”, (Penguin, 2003).
G. R. Bunt, “Religion and the Internet”, in P. B. Clark (ed.) “The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion”, (Oxford, 2009).

For both sides of the RCTR/ Secularisation debate:
R. Stark, and R. Finke, “Acts of Faith”, (University of California Press, 2000).
S. Bruce, “Choice and Religion”, (Oxford, 1999).

For an explanation of the religious difference between Europe and America:
P. Berger, E. Fokas and G. Davie. “Religious America Secular Europe”, (Ashgate, 2008).
G. Davie, “Europe, The Exceptional Case”, (DLT, 2002).

Information on the Ordariate of Our Lady of Walsingham:
ordinariateportal.wordpress.com/

Endnotes:

- 1 The Church of Scotland Statistics are available on the BBC website <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-11065965>.
- 2 The European Values Survey gives a figure of 3.8% for weekly attendance 1999/2000 quoted in G. Davie, “Europe, The Exceptional Case”, (DLT, 2002), p 6.
- 3 The Church of England offers official statistics: <http://www.churchofengland.org/media-centre/news/2005/01/pr0106.aspx> shows that in 2003 the usual Sunday Attendance dropped below 1 million for the first time.
The decline of British Christianity as charted in Steve Bruce, “God is Dead: Secularization in the West”, (Blackwell, 2002), p 60-74. For example he cites 63% of British babies baptised between 1895 and 1950 but only 27% in 1993. In 1900, 67% of weddings occurred in the Church of England compared with 20% in 2000.
- 4 The first three chapters of the book “Rational Choice Theory and Religion”, ed. L. Young, (Routledge, 1997) presents much empirical evidence for RCTR. R. Stark, and R. Finke, “Acts of Faith”, (University of California Press, 2000), has extensive empirical evidence.
- 5 G. Davie, “Europe, The Exceptional Case”, (DLT, 2002), p 74-79 has the most succinct treatment of RCTR and it’s application to Latin America.
- 6 <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/evs/visitreligiousservices.jpg> illustrates this graphically.
- 7 Sourced from <http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/forums/religion.html>.

From the Archives: The Ideology of Science



Christine Ledger

Science and technology – think for a while what power and control they have put in our hands. We can fly to the other side of the world in a matter of hours – what superb transport. No longer do we fear smallpox and plague – what control over disease! Our houses have wall to wall carpet, our water is clear, pure and on tap. For dinner, we can choose from an enormous variety of foods. By pressing a few buttons we can speak to a person on the other side of the world. We can clothe ourselves for every season and in any colour.

Food, clothing, shelter, water, transport, communication, health. Our basic and material human needs are now met beyond the dreams of our grandparents, thanks to the power of science and technology.

And that's not all. There is icing on the cake. As well as satisfying our basic needs, science and technology have brought bonuses galore. They have carried people into space to survey stars and planets. Computers and robots have transformed work, removing sweat and drudgery. Babies made to our genetic fancy may not be too far away.

With technological change, our skills, our competence, our control over our lives and over nature have all increased enormously. Who are we to worry about technology?

There are many myths surrounding science and technology in our society. And I have been giving expression to one that is one of the most pervasive and, I believe, the most dangerous. This myth is that science and technology have increased, and will continue to increase, our competence and control. At best this myth conveys a half-truth; and at worst it seriously distorts and conceals reality.

First – the half-truth. Maybe one-third-truth is the more appropriate way to describe this. The way in which technology has satisfied basic human needs of food, water, shelter and the rest can only be said for, at the most, one-third of the world's hungry and poor there has been no dramatic improvement. The statistics of poverty and hunger are grimmer than ever. Even direct attempts to channel science and technology to the alleviation of poverty during the so-called 'Development Decades' after World War II failed dismally.

Well, you might say, that's just a matter of bad distribution. The technology is OK – it's the way we use it, hoard it, that is the problem. I will return to this point later.

Return now to the fruits of technology that we enjoy in the right one-third of the world. Consider the increased competence and control that we enjoy here.

Basic human skills of survival and self-reliance are being lost by our societies, fading from our corporate memory. If there were no bread in the shops, how many of us would have the skills and ingredients to bake our own?

I want to suggest that, in many ways, this aura of competence and control surrounds an empty shell. For in many ways our competence, as individuals and even as whole communities, has dwindled to the ability to turn on a switch. It is not competence we have gained, but increasing dependence on systems, seemingly beyond our control. With that dependence has come a deep sense of powerlessness and incompetence.

Basic human skills of survival and self-reliance are being lost by our societies, fading from our corporate memory. If there were no bread in the shops, how many of us would have the skills and ingredients to bake our own? If the oil supply ran out – no cars, no public transport – how would you get to the other side of the city? In the event of a disaster, a disaster which destroyed the complex web of technology that we cling to, how would our communities cope? Our dependence on sophisticated technological systems has eroded our sense of interdependence on each other as people living in community. As a result even our social skills – helping each other to grieve, to celebrate, to cope with problems – are shrinking. Is it any coincidence that it is in the most sophisticated technologically advanced societies that the occurrence of suicide is highest? The mystique of competence and control is a thin one.

Yet, even as this myth of competence and control is challenged, we cling to its corollary. We cling to faith in the 'technological fix'. By 'technological fix' I mean the trust that to all existing problems, a technological solution can and will be found. The contraceptive pill will solve the problem of over-population; IVF will solve the problem of infertility; nuclear power will solve the problem of the oil running out; Star Wars will solve the problem of nuclear weapons, which

were created to solve the problem of war. And of course it is only a matter of time before there is a technological fix for AIDS, for oil pollution, for the inconvenience of pregnancy. You can add to the list, I am sure.

We cannot deny that technological change has alleviated human pain and suffering in some areas of life. The invention of industrial machinery, computers, medicines has changed lives. But it is important to understand that these changes were not simple and in one direction. Many bred as many problems as they solved. Pollution, nuclear terror, industrial accidents, cancer and many other modern problems have been aggravated by technological progress and await the next technological fix.

Hence we come to challenge another myth about science and technology – that they are value-free, beyond politics. Technological change is often regarded as being inevitable and heading in one direction there is only one choice to be made; to be on the train or to miss it. There is little discussion about choices in technology, different models of technological development. Technology just keeps getting better, faster, more sophisticated, inevitably.

This perception of technology is closely interwoven with the way we understand scientific knowledge. Science is commonly regarded as being objective, value-free, removed from society and politics. Science gives us correct answers on which to base ever more refined and powerful technology. The fact that so much authority is invested in science is closely linked to the fact that its running mate, technology, is so rarely challenged.

This article was first published in the December 1989 issue of the WSCF Journal. It looked to offer a contribution to the faith, science and technology debates occurring at that time. Christine Ledger, of Australia, was the Co-Secretary General of WSCF (1986-1990) and the WSCF Treasurer (1999-2004). She holds a Masters in Science and Society. This article is based on a speech given at the WSCF Europe Conference on Genetic Engineering.

Though each generation may be becoming more literate in computer languages and techniques, each generation is becoming less literate in human history, values and politics.

However, cracks are beginning to appear in the value-free, apolitical image of science and technology. The immense amount of scientific research and technological development that is geared to the military machine is being deplored. Implications from unemployment levels and the nature of work itself flowing from the introduction of new technology are being drawn. And it is being realised that there are no easy answers to ethical dilemmas related to bio-medical research and development – genetic engineering, IVF, etc.

In examining science and technology through these cracks, I have found it useful to apply three criteria: justice, participation and sustainability. Many of the problems and dilemmas of modern science and technology can be seen as pivoting around injustice, non-participation and unsustainability. First, there is the injustice built into the economic and political systems which depend upon and support sophisticated technology, and which hinder the path of true human development. Second, there is the unsustainability of current patterns of resource use and wastage inbuilt to technological development and which threaten ecological catastrophe. Third, there is the non-participation of an increasing proportion of the world's people in decision-making due to the erosion and abuse of power.

For science and technology to serve the common good, ways need to be found for technological development to facilitate just distribution of power and resources, to work comfortably within the earth's capacity to sustain life, and to build upon and foster political economic systems that reflect the needs of all people. Only then will the other two-thirds benefit from the fruits of science and technology.

As students, we should be particularly concerned about whether our education, including our religious education, is preparing us for a world where difficult political and ethical issues related to science and technology are surfacing. Do you find that your education prepares you to understand and respond to genetic engineering, for example?

Increasingly our education system is preparing people to live in a technological age by emphasising technical skills. Maths, science, computer programming are prized more than ever at the expense of humanities. People are trained to fit into the network of computers, not to question it. I am reminded of my own scientific education. In a course on radio chemistry, I learnt about chemical and physical properties of uranium but was actively discouraged to explore biological or political properties. Yet it is this type of education which trains experts who are expected to have insight into ethical and political matters related to science and technology.

Just as our technology can render us incompetent and unprepared for emergencies in life so does our education leave us ill-equipped to approach the problems of society. Though each generation may be becoming more literate in computer languages and techniques, each generation is becoming less literate in human history, values and politics.

Ideally our education should equip us to be responsible and competent human beings. Our technology should do the same. The tragedy is that though both give us the illusion of having power over lives and over nature, it is only an illusion. Neither education nor science and technology can afford to pretend to be value-free. Rather, it is time for education, particularly scientific and religious education, to enable us to identify decisions facing us in society about

technological change and to equip us with the skills and confidence to find ways to participate in those decisions. Technological change is not linear and inevitable. Just as education can be shaped to foster self-reliance, initiative and responsibility, so too can technology. Much of current technological development centralizes power and wealth in the hands of a few. It leads to the wasteful and irresponsible use of natural resources. It alienates people from each other and from political processes. In a world where the majority of our scientists and vast reservoirs of human intelligence and natural resources are devoted to war, while millions are denied food, water and shelter, we cannot regard the current path that technology pursues as being responsible. Even those of us who taste the benefits of technology are on very thin ice if faced with crisis.

Technology need not be a 'naughty' word. It will not be if in our political processes, a technology strategy is chosen which strives for the just distribution of power and wealth; which conserves the resources of the planet carefully rather than plundering them or wasting them on war; which equips people with skills, understanding and the confidence to participate fully in society.

There are no easy answers to the questions raised by technological change. However, it is better for us to be prepared to seek the answers together rather than avoid them or to leave them to the experts. An education system which strived to bring together the wisdom and insight found in different disciplines and different cultures would be a key ingredient. When people with different experiences, different cultures, different talents, and different ideas meet, we may glimpse alternative futures. Technological change need not be inevitable and along a one way street. The challenge is to choose paths that enhance human dignity and competence.

TECHNOLOGY DPT.



REFLECTIONS

*Mozaik asked three theologians
to answer the question: “Does the
development of technology make us
closer or farther from God?*

*Should we expect
digital prayers
soon?”*

PHOTOS: JANKO STEFANOV



*They each
took a varied
approach to the
question and we hope you
enjoy each analysis from a
Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic tradition.*

Uncovering Realities

Translated by:
Paweł Pustelnik



Piotr Szeląg is a Catholic priest, born in Poland and is currently based in Rome, where he is finishing his PhD dissertation in canonical law at the Pontifical Gregorian University. He's planning to come back to Poland and share his experiences with his students. Piotr is interested in theology of culture, modern art and intercultural dialogue. In his free time he cooks for friends and family.

Piotr Szelaąg

A current outlook on the development of technology

Nowadays, many humanists, sociologists, psychologists, philosophers or theologians complain about the reality they encounter saying that the development of technology causes dehumanization of the relationships between the people. We tend to be further away from each other, we live in digital ghettos and many of the relationships we have are translated only into an apparent form of contact. Is that really true?

We have to see, that from the other point of view that new technologies enhance the process of building our relationships. The fact that we can communicate easily with each other makes us closer to each other. We know much more about the others and it is easier to make friends; but how does this affect the relation that a human being has with God? Being immersed in the blessings of civilization are we coming closer to God or conversely, are we becoming more distant?

Two simultaneous processes

From the very beginning, when we were created we encounter and are confronted with two points of reference. The first is the relation between us and God, whereas the second is based on our

liaison with the world in which the Creator has placed us. As a result of this, we face two constant processes in which we shape our relationship with God and with the created world. The first one can be called “the life of faith’, the second however is a realization of God’s call to ‘multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it’ – in this we can include the creation and development of technology.

From one point of view, the human being is reference to the reality that goes beyond the tangible world, it is juxtaposed with God's reality, but on the other hand, people are bound to this reality as they create it by creating culture, among others, through the development of technology. Therefore, we can see that in the human experience there are two realities that meet each other. And in the way God's message and the Gospel teaches us how to shape the world we live in, how to 'subdue it'. Technological innovations can help us in discovering God and shape our relationship with God.

The task and the chance

Everything that God has created and redeemed is good. Only human being's acts and the way that creation is used gains moral significance. The acts can be both good and bad. It depends on us to which the manor the creation will go. This applies to the relationships with God and other people.



Every one of us decides if she or he uses technology according to what God says and if technology does not substitute God. It depends on me whether I use technology to get to know myself better, to better understand others and the world that exists thanks to God. This leads to the further puzzle: has technology become an idol for us, which is the aim itself? It needs to be underlined that technology can enhance the process of approaching God, but it may cover God.

We can see people that have been experiencing dangers and difficulties related to the current development of technology. Some of them became its victims, some decided to withdraw and radically distance themselves from technology. Simultaneously, we can see those who in

technology have a chance to develop in many dimensions of their lives, also in their spiritual life.

The multitude of the situations, personalities and experiences makes the answer to the posed question risky, as the picture of the reality may become blurred. Though, we need to look for the answer looking at each and every case individually. What is more the point of departure for this reflection should be each of us.

Practical solutions

While raising the issue of the technological development, I believe that it is worth looking at concrete conquests of science and analyze them separately to see what their influence could be on the relationship we have with Jesus.



It already began in the 1960s, when technological development was not as advanced as it is now, the Second Vatican Council has called to use media in evangelisation.¹ Its participants understood the role of the media and perceived it as a tool and a chance to make God's Revelation closer. Nowadays, the main tool that can have certain significance in the relationship with God is the Internet.

This virtual space has become a modern Areopagus where people communicate with each other, exchanging information concerning all possible dimensions of our lives. Moreover, many people look for first-hand information on spirituality. The Internet gives huge possibilities, not only to educate but to share one's spiritual life and organize the activities of the religious communities.

One cannot forget about the dangers related to the Internet: online we encounter not only valuable information and initiatives but there is also a variety of absolutely insignificant, wrong or even perilous materials disseminated by various sects. The need for a considerate approach is essential.

We have to be aware of the fact that none of the technological blessings are able to substitute the participation in the traditional dimension of Church life: participation in liturgy exercising the sacraments, or experiencing the community.

The challenges and perspectives

We can see that as human beings we are not able to avoid challenges that we are faced with through the development of the technology in the same way that we cannot eliminate the spiritual dimension of our nature. Our task, therefore, is to constantly take the chance to saturate the cultural texture (and thus the development of technology) of society with the Christian spirit. Finally, we need to approach technology in a way that it can help us in uncovering the reality which goes beyond technology - the reality of God.

Further readings:

Foley, John, "The Church and Internet", *Pontifical Council for Social Communications*, (Vatican City, February 2002), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html.

Foley, John, "Ethics in Internet", *Pontifical Council for Social Communications*, (Vatican City, February 2002), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_ethics-internet_en.html.

John Paul II, "Apostolic Letter: The Rapid Development of the Holy Father John Paul II to Those Responsible for Communications", *Feast of Saint Francis de Sales, Patron Saint of Journalist*, (Vatican City, January 2005), http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20050124_il-rapido-sviluppo_en.html.

¹ Decree on the Media of Social Communications 'Inter Mirifica' available at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19631204_inter-mirifica_en.html.

Does the Development of Technology Bring Us Closer to God?

The view of an Orthodox theologian

Marek Ignaciuk

The question asked is a very broad issue with many layers; therefore we have to ask an additional question: what was the time and place of the development of technology? This development is something completely different in the first years of Christianity, in the Middle Ages, during the Industrial Revolution and today. We cannot agree more, that the process of building Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (VI Century) was the peak of the engineer skills, architecture. Its beauty was attracting not only the inhabitants of Byzantium but also influenced the Christianization of the Kievan Rus. The representatives of the Kievan Rus Vlodimir, after having participated in the liturgy in Hagia Sophia, are believed to have said "We felt as we have been to heaven". Then the country was baptized and therefore came closer to God.

The main task of the Christians is evangelization, passing God's Word no matter where one is, what the political system would be, or the difficulties that missionaries encounter. What helps them is their faith and of course, technology. Means of transport such as cars and planes (that we would not have thought of 150 years ago) – is this the

development of technology? Yes, definitely! Have they helped in preaching the Gospel?—Most certainly!

I am consciously neglecting other aspects of technology's development. Some of them were far from spreading love, brotherhood and peace but still, they have been used to make God closer to people. If someone says that planes are used in wars, railways were used in slave transportation and that Columbus' discoveries brought death – they are right. Though, here I would like to focus on the brighter side of life.

All of us live in a world where television, radio, mobile phones and Internet are around all the time. The multitude of means that are used is broadly understood by the Church. The Orthodox understanding of the word Church (in Greek: Εκκλησία or Ekklesia) is seen as a community of people that are led by a bishop, therefore the Church is the faithful and the media is used for the Church. The time we live in is not very friendly for the Christianity. It is rather more fashionable to be an atheist which is what is associated with

Translated by:
Paweł Pustelnik



Marek Ignaciuk has graduated from the Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw. His passions are music and cars. He is doing his best to teach at school what he was taught at university. Marek is an eager coffee drinker and biker.



development, technology and the intellectual attitude that offers empirical interpretation, instead of “superstitions and witchcraft” offered by Christianity according to definitions by ‘intellectuals’ and ‘people of science’.

The development of technology in the 21st Century has gained such a momentum, that an average citizen is not able to keep up with the novelties and innovations developing each and

every day. However, if there is certain demand for this modern equipment it means that people are using it to contact with the other people, to get to know more about the world, and get breaking news. Often, we get to know about the local events or concerts from our iPhones, not from an advertisement displayed at the Town Hall.

These are the challenges that Church needs to face and be open to. TV and radio broadcasts of worships enable the sick to spiritually participate in the celebrations of Easter or Christmas. They let people meditation and pray; isn't it dialogue with God? Haven't the disciples that were performing in the amphitheatres reached the people? Haven't they made their listeners closer to God? This comparison is not as abstract as it may seem if we take into account what the amphitheatre was for the ancients and what Internet is for us today. The Disciples of Christ were preaching not only in the temples, first and foremost they were using the blessings of technology they could access. I have no doubt that the priest preaching on TV or radio brings theology, ecclesiology and knowledge about the liturgics closer to the listeners. This is an obvious example of how technology helps to approach God.

Are these activities legitimate/valid/relevant though? Isn't it easier to approach a young person in the environment full of icons, frescos and the Orthodox songs? Of course it is easier, but first you have to make this person come to the church. And here comes the issue of our laziness.

Nowadays, to believe often means to be ridiculed and in the best case scenario the attitude is neutral. It is not prohibited to go to church on Sunday and even though it is not forbidden, the number of youth in attendance is very small. Some churches in Western Europe are being sold and transformed into discos not because of the benefit it gives to the community, but because of the lack of the faithful. Where are they? What do they do in their spare time, during the day when they are supposed to fulfil the words “Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.”

On Sunday nobody works – just as God said – but at the same time not many go to the church to pray. Is technology so absorbing that it distances us from God? It is enough to say how much time we spend watching TV or using the Internet – using these time robbers or as extreme Christians frame it ‘Satan's activities’.

In this situation, the contemporary Evangelists use the technology and engineers' inventions in order present theological treaties via radio, make Church Council decisions available online, and let people know about community meetings via text message. This brings us closer to God.

However, apart from that activity, there is a different one. What about e-confessions or e-prayer? These forms can have an effect that is extremely different from the assumed one. The idea is very innovative, but even the young people active in the online fora question its sensibility. Even those, who accuse the Church of conservatism, are against these solutions. Conveying information, broadcasting homilies, documentaries on TV – Yes, sacraments – No.

In the Orthodox Church the sacrament is God's seal that is exercised by a priest or bishop and I cannot imagine that this could ever be done via cable. To sum up, I would like to stress that technology can bring us closer to God, but we have to remember, that when using a knife you can both slice bread and kill a person. It depends only on how we are going to make use of the blessings and achievements of civilization.

The Face of God on Facebook?!

A personal story about using the Internet 'faithfully'



Annelies is an (Anglican) part-time studentpastor for international students in Utrecht. She also works as a pastoral counsellor. In 2006, she graduated from Utrecht University with a Master's in Biblical Studies. When not working, she spends her time on friends and family, outdoor activities, reading and singing.

Annelies van de Steeg

Two experiences...

It's end of July 2011. As so many others I'm shocked and grieved when I hear of the attacks in Norway. How is it possible that someone can do that in the name of Christianity? The next day I see on Facebook a 'Prayer for Norway'; an 'event' created by the World Council of Churches. I am invited to pray that night at 9pm GMT. A link directs me to their website, where I find a moving prayer, written on the day of the shootings. I share the event on my wall and encourage friends and family to pray. At 9pm I stop with everything I'm doing and pray, knowing that people all over the world will be praying this prayer now or in the coming day.

A few days later, I read on Facebook the comment from the World Council of Churches:

We would like to thank you all for your prayers and words of support. It is encouraging knowing that people, from different parts of the world, are praying in solidarity with the people of Norway for healing, visitation, justice and peace.

At the end of an average workday, I come home; the first thing I do is turn on my computer.

Facebook is my homepage on the Internet. I read up on what my friends have been doing, add some 'likes' and comments here and there and follow the links to entertaining or interesting articles. Before I know it, it's an hour later. I haven't done very much, except entertain myself and I tell myself off for not keeping track of the time.

Two of my recent experiences with using the Internet (and more specifically Facebook) that came to mind when I was asked to write something about the development of digital technology and the question whether it brings us closer or further from God.

Christians have been asking themselves this question ever since the first technological invention. Some Dutch Protestant Christians refused to buy and use a radio, convinced that it was the instrument of the devil. A few decades later, the same happened when the television entered in Dutch homes. The Internet did not cause that much controversy, though extensive use of the Internet is certainly frowned upon (and even forbidden) among various small but very conservative groups of Christians in the Netherlands. They are of the opinion that the Internet brings 'the world' with all its temptations into the home. To protect themselves and their children they use the Internet sparingly, for instance only for work or school and not for

(frivolous) amusement. What's more, the Internet disrupts family life and social interaction with friends and family.

When I look at my own experiences with the Internet, I know that they are partly right. I like technology and all it has to offer and I spend more and more hours online. Chatting on Facebook, surfing websites, checking what eBay has to offer or reading up on interesting blogs. And, to be completely honest, sometimes it does keep me away from spending time face to face with friends or even with God. Sometimes I intend to read a good book, go over to see a friend, or spend time in prayer, but then somehow I end up behind the computer and forget all about what I planned to do.

On the other hand, I passionately believe in using

technology for good things, things which bring us closer to God. When praying for Norway, alone in my room, I felt very much connected with other Christians. The prayer written on the website lifted my soul. For me that time of prayer was a sign of the Spirit at work in this world, despite all evidence to the contrary. In this case, the Internet was a means to uniting Christians all over the world. Moreover, it provided us with a way to put our feeling of shock and grief into words. I have experiences similar to this one when I search for fresh thoughts on a certain Bible passage or read about someone's story of faith in a blog.

So do I think that digital technology can bring us closer to God? Yes, I do! Provided that we use it wisely and faithfully and never forget spending time 'face to face' with God and others.

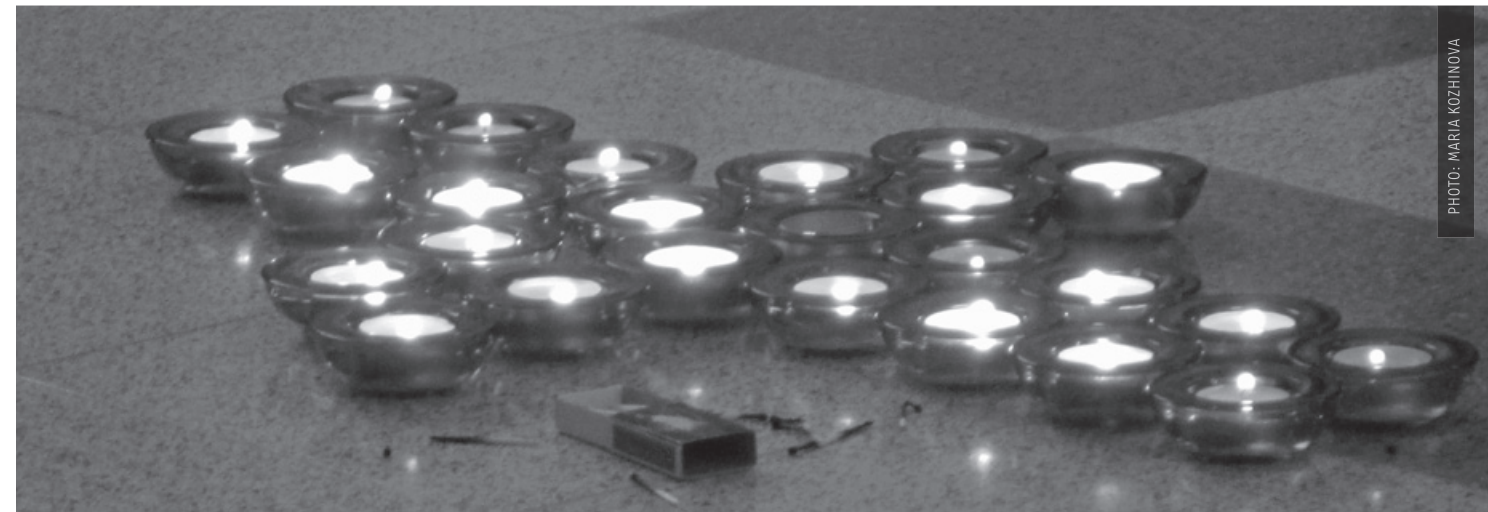


PHOTO: MARIA KOZHINOVA

RESOURCES

Talking through tough social issues — such as cloning — as Lutherans, as Christians, as church, means respectful, yet zealous dialogue rooted in shared faith. God is active in all realms of life — the scientific, the social, the political. God cares for creation, orders society, seeks justice, and draws us out of our individual lives to engage the world.

Margaret McLean

PHOTO: PAWEŁ PUSTELNIK



David Masters is a freelance writer. He lives in the UK with his wife, Siona.

David Masters

What is technology?

Matthew 7: 24-27

²⁴ A wise man [...] built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ [...] A foolish man [...] built his house on the sand. ²⁷The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell - and great was its fall!

Computer Scientist Alan Kay has cynically claimed: “Technology is anything that was invented after you were born”. Kay’s point is that we see technology as being about new inventions. In truth, technology existed thousands of years before we were born. Examples of technology include paper, shoes, keys, refrigerators and cars. Humans began inventing and using technology when they first started converting natural resources into simple tools. New technologies begin to be developed every day.

Wikipedia defines technology as “the making, usage and knowledge of tools, techniques, crafts, systems or methods of organization in order to solve a problem or serve some purpose”.

- What technology is in the room around you right now?

Who has access to technology?

1 Samuel 13: 16-22

¹⁶ Saul, his son Jonathan and the people who were present with them stayed in Geba of Benjamin, but the Philistines encamped in Michmash. ¹⁷ And raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies; one company turned toward Ophrah, to the land of Shual; ¹⁸ another company turned toward Beth-horon; and another company turned toward the border that looks down on the Valley of Zeboim toward the wilderness.

¹⁹ Now there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel; for the Philistines said, “The Hebrews must not make swords or spears for themselves”; ²⁰ so all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their ploughshares, mattocks, axes, or his sickles; ²¹ the charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the ploughshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads. ²² So on the day of the battle neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people with Saul and Jonathan, but Saul and Jonathan his son had them.

In this passage, the Philistines have control over who has access to the technology of

blacksmithery. This puts the Israelite army at a big disadvantage. It also affects Israel’s farmers, as they must pay a high price to have their tools sharpened.

- What technology do you have access to that other people in the world don’t have access to?
- What powers or forces restrict access to technology in today’s world?
- How might it be possible to challenge those powers and forces?

What values does technology serve?

Isaiah 2: 1-4

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

¹ The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills; and all the nations shall stream to it, ³ Many peoples shall come, and say:

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways

HOLY BIBLE

Username

Almighty

Password

Login

and that we may walk in his paths”.
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
⁴ He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Technology can be used to create life or destroy life. Blacksmithery can be used to forge swords or ploughshares. Fire can be used to keep warm, to cook food, or as a weapon. The pen can be used to write poetry or slander others. Much

It's not just how you use the technology that concerns us. We're also concerned about what kind of person you become when you use it.



technological research at universities is funded by the military or multi-national corporations.

The purpose of technology can also be transformed. Swords can be turned into ploughshares. The Internet, invented for military use, has become a tool of learning and dialogue.

The Amish, a Christian community living in Pennsylvania, USA, take a critical stance towards technology. They carefully evaluate new technology as a community before deciding whether or not they should use it. One example is the telephone: the Amish only have telephones outside their homes, in a wooden hut. As one Amish man explains:

We don't want to be the kind of people who will interrupt a conversation at home to answer a telephone. It's not just how you use the technology that concerns us. We're also concerned about what kind of person you become when you use it.

The primary question Amish people ask when evaluating a new technology is "Does it bring us

together, or draw us apart?"

- What kind of person would you like to be? What technologies can help you become this person, and what technologies might prevent you from becoming this person?
- What do you think would be good questions for evaluating whether or not to use a new technology?
- What values do you think technology should serve?

Further readings:

Wikipedia article on Technology, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology.
"Look who's talking," WIRED (magazine article on the Amish), www.wired.com/wired/archive/7.01/amish_pr.html.
Biblical references to technology, wikichristian.org/index.php/Biblical_references_to_technology.

Workshop Media: An Alternative Truth

Vladyslav Vlasov and Natalia Mykytei

We are living in an era where people are easily influenced and zombified by TV, newspapers and the Internet. This workshop helps to show people how unreliable media resources may be and allows for discussion on how much trust we have in the media. By giving participants both true and false information, the workshop shows the importance of questioning the information that the media feeds consumers.

The workshop can take between 1-2 hours depending on the length of conversation. It is best with a medium sized group (less than 20) so that everyone has a chance to share their opinions. Adapt the style/story to make it relevant to your group!

To prepare:

Print out real news stories regarding the new tribe located in Brazil, for example:

- "Isolated Tribe Spotted in Brazil", BBC News, 30 May 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7426794.stm>.
- "Finding Brazil's Isolated Tribes", Aljazeera, 24 June 2008, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2008/06/2008619125014463292.html>.
- "Brazil Isolated Tribe Photographed", Reuters Video Gallery, 30 May 2008, [\[photographed?videoId=83635\]\(http://photographed?videoId=83635\).](http://www.reuters.com/video/2008/05/30/brazil-isolated-tribe-</div><div data-bbox=)

- "Brazil reveals 'uncontacted' Amazon tribe", MSNBC.com, 30 May 2008 http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24895872/ns/technology_and_science-science/t/brazil-reveals-uncontacted-amazon-tribe/.

You can also use the video:

- "Uncontacted Tribe - Human Planet: Jungles - BBC One" available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5IWVVFHzuLE>

Collect newspaper clippings of various indigenous tribes in South America.

Create a fake newspaper article about discovering art produced by a young member of the tribal society in question.

Find basic photos of indigenous populations for South America.

Create child like drawings of jungle scenes that are slightly inaccurate to South America.

Place all the stories mixed together on a table for the participants to look through during the workshop. You can also choose to put everything together in a PowerPoint presentation rather than creating hardcopies of everything. Be creative when making fake news, print real articles using different styles, and play with Photoshop!



Natalia Mykytei is 22 years old and is originally from Yuzhnoukrainsk, Ukraine. Currently she is a student of Black Sea Petro Mohyla State University, in Mykolaiv, Ukraine, majoring in Translation/Interpreting. Other than dedicating her time with the Youth NGO "Iskra" she also enjoys youth work, intercultural communication, volunteering, literature, movies, and psychology.



Vladyslav Vlasov is 22 years old, Ukrainian, and currently a student of Black Sea Petro Mohyla State University, Mykolaiv, Ukraine. He is majoring in Translation/Interpreting and in his spare time represents the Youth NGO "Iskra" in Mykolaiv. Some of his other interests include: sports, cinema, foreign cultures, youth work.



The workshop:

The workshop must be presented to the group as a discussion of the uncontacted tribe integrating into our technological life-style. Give the workshop a title such as “Tribal Society vs. Technological Society”. This will prepare participants to discuss the ways in which technology has changed society and can be detrimental to traditional ways of life. However, the real goal of the workshop is to investigate truth and trust within the media.

The How can we be critical of online news sources?

Why is this so difficult?

Present the printed or online versions of news stories surrounding the discovery of the uncontacted tribe and the video to the group. Allow them time to talk about the tribe and the real story. Once you think that the group believes this aspect of the news, start feeding them fake information about the tribe. Use the fake newspaper clippings, basic photos of indigenous populations of South America and the child-like images. Tell the story of the young member of the tribe, and the art he/she has created and been found. Discuss the value of the art and the prospect of integrating the child and his/her art into ‘modern society’.

The extra pictures won’t quite coincide with the appearance of the tribe shown in the video and real news stories. Also, the drawings shown to participants should depict things the child may not have been able to see in the Brazilian jungle (like an elephant or other animals not native to the area). However, by directing the conversation away from the minor details hopefully these ‘mistakes’ will be overlooked. Direct the discussion towards the influence of technology the child would be faced with. By talking about technological influences on daily life, how tribal society would adjust to this and how art has changed due to technological advances, the group will be inattentive to a few mismatches in the fake story.

Example Questions:

- We come from the experience of technology advancing over time. What would it be like to be directly put into a society overrun with different technologies when coming from a basic tribal society?
- Would life be easier or harder?
- Is it appropriate for tribal communities to be brought into ‘modern’ society?
- Who gets to make that decision?

After about half the time you have for the workshop has passed reveal the truth to the group. Show them that much of the information was falsified and reflect on how easy it was to deceive them. Discuss the ways in which media can so easily use technology to share false information. Talk about the importance of double-checking information one gets from the media and the importance of being sceptical of what one reads. Try to think of examples where this has happened and what effects it had on society’s mentality towards certain issues. Stress the importance of using critical thinking and common sense when engaging with the media.



Example Questions:

- Why do we believe things on the Internet or in the news so easily?
- How has the media gained our trust?
- How has technology changed the way that the media works today?
- Is it appropriate that news is broken on Twitter and that traditional news sources, such as TV broadcasters, are using this as a source for their news feed?
- How has 24 hour news channels used the Internet to build up its content? Are they just filling time or educating the public?
- How can we be critical of online news sources? Why is this so difficult?



Max just finished his Bachelor of arts in protestant theology and pedagogy at the University of Münster (Germany) and will soon start his Master of Education. Soon he will be a teacher but on his way there, he is volunteering in different NGOs and youth organisations such as WSCF, CEC and Greenpeace.



Gabor Nemet is a 24 year old NGO activist from Novi Sad, Serbia working with people with disabilities. He is happily in love, has a big interest in technology and graphic and mobile development. Trumpet player, speedy driver and likes bowling.

When I was Young a Blackberry was 'Just' a Fruit

**Maximilian Karrasch
and
Gabor Nemet**

This workshop can be used for small or very large groups, as long as at least two groups can be formed from the entire group. The time spent on the workshop greatly depends on how much time you give groups to create the videos and the number of groups you have, as you need to allow time for viewing all the videos that have been created. Also, you can choose to lead a discussion afterwards regarding the necessity or burden technology creates.

Materials:

- Enough video cameras for each small group
- Enough copies of the below 'tasks' for each group to have one. If there are multiple small groups make sure to split the tasks evenly between them.

The Workshop:

This workshop allows participants to explore either the positive or negative effects of social media and technology on their everyday life. It doesn't take a lot of preparation; rather the creativity of participants. After dividing into small groups distribute evenly one of the following tasks:

Motto: "When I was young a blackberry was 'just' a fruit"

- As a group, you need to make an advertisement video promoting the prevention of the overuse of technology in daily and community life. Your opinion is that technology is not necessary in daily and community life.

You have 25 minutes to make a two minute video.

Motto: "The citizens of "Farmville" in a country called "Facebook-Land" share their feelings about their better life"

- As a group, you need to make a motivational advertisement video promoting the use of technology in daily and community life. Your opinion is that there is nothing better than using technology at every time and at every place.

You have 25 minutes to make a two minute video.

After the groups have finished, play the videos for the entire group. After the impending laughter subsides, you can lead a discussion/debate about whether or not we need to completely 'switch-off' from the technological world or if a balance can be found.



Example debriefing questions:

- Do you think 'going off the grid' or 'switching off' is an option today? Is it healthier than staying connected?
- Do you think we have a balance between the time we spend without technology and the time we are wrapped up using different technologies that connect us (phones, the Internet, etc)?
- How has the Internet made your life/relationships better/worse?



Worship

Based on the Catholic Worship created at the conference “Living in a world of technology: The changes in social behavior” in Lyliinen, Finland 29 March - 4 April, 2011.



SONG: *Ubi Caritas* (Taiz)

READING: *Can be taken from the Old Testament reading for the day or you can use Psalm 115.*

To Your Name Give Glory
¹ Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory,
for the sake of your steadfast love and

your faithfulness!
² Why should the nations say,
“Where is their God?”
³ Our God is in the heavens;
he does all that he pleases.
⁴ Their idols are silver and gold,
the work of human hands.
⁵ They have mouths, but do not speak;
eyes, but do not see.
⁶ They have ears, but do not hear;
noses, but do not smell.
⁷ They have hands, but do not feel;
feet, but do not walk;
and they do not make a sound in their throat.
⁸ Those who make them become like them;
so do all who trust in them.
⁹ O Israel, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹⁰ O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹¹ You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD!
He is their help and their shield.
¹² The LORD has remembered us; he will bless us;
he will bless the house of Israel;
he will bless the house of Aaron;
¹³ he will bless those who fear the LORD,
both the small and the great.
¹⁴ May the LORD give you increase,
you and your children!
¹⁵ May you be blessed by the LORD,
who made heaven and earth!

¹⁶ The heavens are the LORD’s heavens,
but the earth he has given to the children of man.
¹⁷ The dead do not praise the LORD,
nor do any who go down into silence.
¹⁸ But we will bless the LORD
from this time forth and forevermore.
Praise the LORD!

SONG: *Laudate Omnes Gentes* (Taiz)

READING: *Can be taken from the New Testament reading for the day or you can use James 1: 2-9.*

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁴ Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. ⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Silence

READING:
Searching for God
by, Rabindranath Tagore



Available at: <http://www.spiritual-short-stories.com/spiritual-short-story-252-Searching+for+God.html>

I have been seeking and searching God for as long as I can remember, for many, many lives, from the very beginning of existence. Once in a while, I have seen him by the side of a faraway star, and I have rejoiced and danced that the distance, although great, is not impossible to reach. And I have traveled and reached to the star; but by the time I reached the star, God has moved to another star. And it has been going on for centuries.

The challenge is so great that I go on hoping against hope... I have to find him, I am so absorbed in the search. The very search is so intriguing, so mysterious, so enchanting, that God has become almost an excuse the search has become itself the goal.

And to my surprise, one day I reached a house in a faraway star with a small sign in front of it, saying, "This is the house of God". My joy knew no bounds so finally I have arrived! I rushed up the steps, many steps that led to the door of the house. But as I was coming closer and closer to the door, a fear suddenly appeared in my heart. As I was going to knock, I became paralyzed with a fear that I had never known, never thought of, never dreamt of. The fear was:

"If this house is certainly the house of God, then what will I do after I have found him?"

Now searching for God has become my very life; to have found him will be equivalent to committing suicide. And what am I going to do with him? I had never thought of all these things before. I should have thought before I started the search: what am I going to do with God?

I took my shoes in my hands, and silently and very slowly stepped back, afraid that God may hear the noise and may open the door and say, "Where are you going? I am here, come in!" And as I reached the steps, I ran away as I have never run before; and since then I have



been again searching for God, looking for him in every direction and avoiding the house where he really lives. Now I know that house has to be avoided. And I continue the search, enjoy the very journey, the pilgrimage.

SONG: *Bless the Lord* (Taizé)

Invite worshippers to share short personal prayers or reflections. After each person shares sing Kyrie Eleison.

PRAYER: *Our Father* each in their own language.

Share the sign of Peace with everyone present.

SONG: *Laudate Dominum* (Taizé)



This questionnaire was prepared for the participants of the WSCF-Europe confererence "Living with Technology" 25-28 October 1985. They aimed to gather students from both humanities and science backgrounds to discuss the new challenges technology gives to WSCF Europe's work in universities and churches and to committed Christianity. The answers were used to make an analysis of how the participants viewed technology and to guide small group discussions. It is incredible that over 25 years later we are still grappling with many of the same issues.

We hope that you can use this questionnaire to spark discussions within your SCM or student group.

Indicate the strength of your agreement/disagreement on a scale from one to ten. One indicating that you strongly disagree and ten indicating that you strongly agree. Zero indicates that you are unclear.

questionnaire

1. Technology has helped humankind.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. More technology means more control of peoples' lives.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Technology will free us from the necessity of work.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. We cannot stop the development of technology.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. New technology means less pollution.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Humanities students' have no idea what technology is about.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Science students are not interested in ethical discussions
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. A computer is a neutral tool.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. The capitalist and socialist uses of technology are different.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. All scientific research has military implications.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11. Men are more technologically minded than women.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. Jobs are more important than ideological considerations.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Genetic engineering can solve the problem of world hunger.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
14. Scientists are trying to play God in genetic research.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
15. The Bible has no guidelines on 5th generation computers.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



PHOTO: MAX KARRASCH

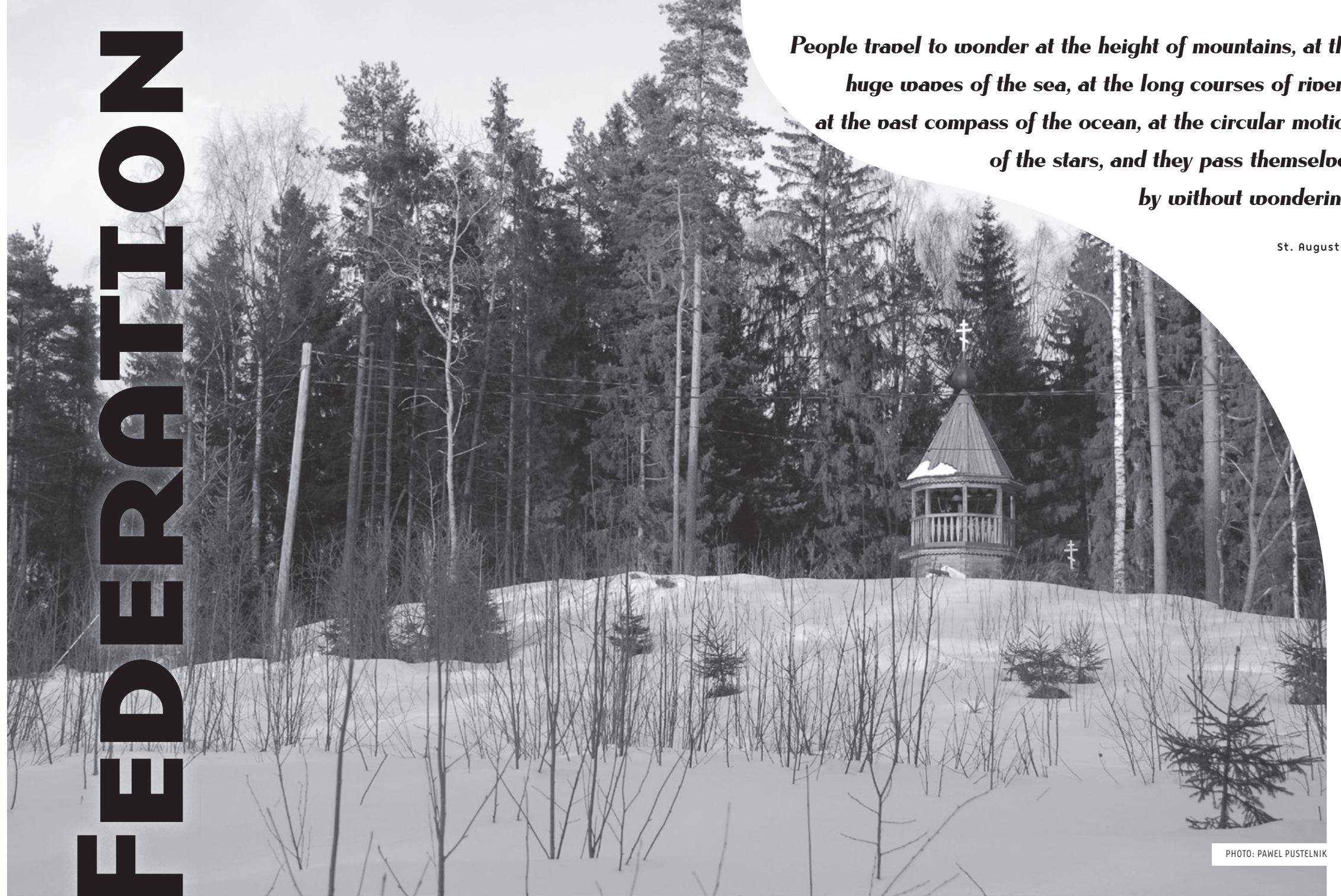


PHOTO: HRIPSIME MURADYAN



PHOTO: MARIA KOZHINOVA

FEDERATION



*People travel to wonder at the height of mountains, at the
huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of rivers,
at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion
of the stars, and they pass themselves
by without wondering.*

St. Augustine

PHOTO: PAWEŁ PUSTELNIK

WSCF at Kirchentag – Heartbeat Youth Congress



Katka Babicová is a Roman Catholic student from Slovakia. She has graduated with a BA in Swedish and is currently doing her MA in the Psychology of Language at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. She is the former European Regional Committee Vice-Chair and Links Coordinator and now serves as the Interim Regional Secretary of WSCF Europe.

Katka Babicová

Once upon a time, from 31 May until 5 June about 60 young people from Central and Eastern Europe shared each other's presence in a city of history Dresden, Germany.

What was going on?

“Heartbeat” Youth Congress preceded the socially, politically and spiritually shaped German Protestant Kirchentag 2011. The topic was a challenging question: “What does my heart beat for?” and was directly linked to the main theme of Kirchentag – “...there your heart will be also” taken from the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6: 21).

Intense and diverse exploring of our raison d'heartbeat started with a bible study on “Travelling and Migration” where we, not surprisingly, discovered that many of us do not live in our homelands anymore. This has many different implications on our identities – Christian, secular, personal features; whom we meet; where we are; who we are...

Among many of the interactive sessions on the topic to help us discover our interests was: History and my Identity – How did historical/political events shape my (Christian) identity? Answers offered by Mr. Reinhard Höppner, a German politician (SPD), with a story of how he became a politician because

there simply wasn't any other choice for him in the 1980s. Is there a choice for us now? So, why don't young people participate in public life and debates? This question was asked a couple of times during the congress hopefully setting a growing idea into the participant's minds.

Even though the 30 degree heat and the river side of the wonderful Elbe tempted us to go out – we got totally caught up inside by personal story telling of the Egyptian revolution in January by Noha Adel Fahmy, Nihad Nabil Fares and Bahaa Gamil Ghobrial - three young Egyptians guest speakers present for both us and the Kirchentag. How do we as Christians participate in society?

Bahaa told us about the churches' reluctant approach to the revolution; however this did not prevent them from participating. So, sometimes to oppose means to go against a part of yourself and your spiritual community. Interestingly, their participation varied a lot – even though all were from the minority of the intelligent, middle class in Egypt, they did not have the same opinion on the positive grounds of the revolution and future. On the other hand, some positive personal experiences of readiness to help and build together across differences in their society when it was needed, especially after the revolution, has to some extent led to the breaking down of some barriers, while people fought together.

Another aspect, particularly interesting from the technological perspective, was the role of social media as Facebook and Twitter were used for collecting people to march. However, this was and is only available to a small number of Egyptian citizens from the middle and upper class, which were said to be the main actors and that is why the current situation and future development is still in the stars, as the vast majority of the Egyptian population is poor and illiterate. “We will see what happens”, were the final words of the guests.

Apart from lectures the interactive and engaging activities, which gave space for all of us, were on the programme everyday and we could reflect on the direct and indirect historical, social and political influences on our identities, the role of Christianity and other spiritual teachings and cultural backgrounds.

After we uncovered some of the background for our very deep interests, we were better able to ask ourselves what we stand up and open our mouths for in society. Do we even do it? A voice from Belarus, Natalia Vasilevich, a religious rights activist in Belarus' hard political circumstances who has been persecuted, offered her experience as an example of a peaceful and non-violent type of resistance against the government and monopoly of church. We all, especially those of us living in free countries, could learn from her; especially how to engage in public debate and social activism.

After the Heartbeat congress, the main Kirchentag (kirchentag.de) started and we experienced a



social and religious event of a format not existing in other European countries.

So, what is the outcome, you ask? Meeting, learning about ourselves and the possibilities of future social engagements. Among other organisations, WSCF and EYCE provided such space in their campaigns and activities, which our interests and investments can make our heart beat faster for the good.

Global Education? Sure!



Paweł Pustelnik has recently graduated from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is sometimes here, sometimes there, but does his best to maintain contact with friends and family via the Internet. From October on, Paweł is commencing a PhD program at the Cardiff University and will try to research the importance of speculation on the carbon dioxide emissions market.

Paweł Pustelnik

Global youth events have one common feature: you never know what to expect from them. And if the event takes place in a remote place, that you have to look up on Wikipedia before departing, this means that you cannot predict anything. Welcome to the Third African University on Youth Development hold in Cape Verde in May this year.

Vaccination: no need for any; some sweet treats for the international banquet: tick; WSCF materials: tick; a piece of hand luggage (what else would you need for a week in Africa...) and the trip begins. We came from more than thirty from completely different backgrounds, with different experiences and various expectations. Most of us had a vague idea of the theme: global education can be understood in so many different ways.

The common ground for us was youth participation that was the main focus. While analyzing the World Youth Conference Declaration, Declaration of Brada and a recent letter concerning the youth addressed to the United Nations we all recognized the problem is that often youth presence in international forums is rather shallow. Therefore, this

issue needs to be addressed through global education initiatives in order to raise awareness. And here comes the question: how should we understand 'global education' itself? The Council

of Europe in its guidelines use the Maastricht's Declaration definition saying that,

Global education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the globalized world and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and Human Rights for all.¹

Having this definition in mind we were trying to open up for the new perspectives, contexts and initiatives.

There was one remarkable feature of that event – it was completely secular and therefore, there was no space for prayers, nor for spiritual moments that for us WSCFers, used to a different format, was perhaps not a challenge but, for sure, an awkward experience. The lack was painful and once again we felt that the format of the WSCF conferences has this special touch that is given by the spiritual dimension.

The training course also offered us a possibility to experience Cape Verde. Using school buses, the most accessible means of transport for groups on the island, we visited a couple of schools, had chance to talk to teachers and paint murals with the students. Global education became a reality for a moment – the youth from three continents were together working on a common project. It is hard to predict how long the mural will stay on the wall it was painted, but the experiences gathered will contribute to the better understanding between us young people from all over the world.

¹ The Maastricht Global Education Declaration
www.coe.int/t/dg4/nscentre/ge/GE-Guidelines/GEgs-app1.pdf.

A Few Thoughts about Technology: Reflections from the “Living in a World of Technology” conference

Pavlina Manavska

People really enjoy separating things; things that are bad for people and things that are good. There is this division between what is black and white. I wonder where they learned this from; always going directly for the extremes, either too high or too low. If we think reasonably can we always understand things like this?

Apostle Paul once said: “everything is allowed but not everything is useful”. What we need to concentrate on are the useful things. For different individuals there are different things that are wrong or right. Everyone has his/her own point of view. Evil is always right behind everything we do. It is just our choice and blessed will be the one that goes for the good thing instead of the evil.

When I start thinking about the impact of technology and the greatest innovation that is connected with Christianity, I first think of the printing press. Christianity wouldn't be imaginable without it. Printing the papers of the Bible was great; it not only helped believers to have the Holy Script, it helped to spread the News and reading became affordable for all people. Thanks to that we can enjoy reading our Bibles printed in different languages. It is just one example out of thousands.

Recently I've read an article and the author wrote that every time we cook good food with microwave oven or we enjoy a flush toilet,

technology comes to our touch. Like air or water, although not noticed as being remarkable, it remains essential to our daily life.

We should try to see the good and positive side first instead of refusing and being pessimistic.

This conference in Finland helped me to realize that there are a lot of ways I can use technology and benefit from them. It was such a great experience to hear about the technological things that we face everyday but we are not aware of.

It is self-evident that we live in a world of technology. I strongly agree that technology has surely been essential to us and I think that the world has so many things yet to be developed in order to help society and make it good place to live. Technology has a vital role as an activity that helps us if we are clever enough to use it properly.



Pavlina Manavska is 21 years old and is studying languages at university. She lives in Skopje, Macedonia and is a representative of the youth group of the United Methodist Church in Macedonia.



Young Christians Share Church's Witness of Peace



IEPC Report

A team of young Christians from the across WSCF were appointed by the World Council of Churches (WCC) to make a series of videos sharing the global churches' message of peace at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) in Jamaica this past May. The youth video team, chosen from the 100 national member movements of WSCF, consisted of Verónica Biech (Argentina), Mike Garcia (Philippines), Desireé Kamek (USA) and Derri-Ann Palmer (Jamaica). Christopher Chimangeni (Malawi) was unable to attend due to visa complications. The IEPC celebrated the WCC's decade to overcome violence through lectures, workshops, seminars, worship, and ecumenical dialogue.

Before the conference began Mike Garcia was looking forward to covering the conference:

Covering the event and interacting with different leaders of the ecumenical community around the globe is a huge task. I am praying that I can give my best to perform the task and be able to convey the core of the IEPC to the world so that we can achieve the peace that we are aspiring for.

Desireé Kameka, a representative from the USA, expressed the value of having young people to communicate one of the most important church events of the decade:

Young people inherently understand that communication with anyone in the world can occur instantly, information can be sent to an enormous network with a single click, interactive multimedia is the norm and one can transform the perspective of millions of people without ever walking out of their front door. The world is a network waiting for interaction. It is our ability to communicate through actions and words that bear witness to the incredible possibilities of the life-giving, beloved community which God desires of us and thus inspires others to 'go and do likewise'.

Using a one-on-one video style, the video team captured the event through personal stories and conversations posting them online at www.iepcstories.com.

The team visited the Mustard Seed Community, located in the marginalized and violence-prone neighbourhood of Kingston. See how the presence of the organisation has positively impacted the quality of life for members of the community at iepcstories.com/2011/05/20/visits-to-local-projects-mustard-seed-community/.

They also covered many workshops that took place over the course of the conference. One in particular entitled "Free the Cuban 5", found here iepcstories.com/2011/05/21/iepc-workshop-free-the-cuban-5/, captures two wives giving testimony about their experience of their



husband's imprisonment for the last thirteen years by the US government.

There was also a lot of time for meeting and discussing with the many people who attended. One interview with Rev. Kjell Jonasson, from Sweden, who is working for the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre, a joint project of the Jerusalem churches, the WCC and the Middle East Council of Churches is found here: iepcstories.com/2011/05/22/peace-in-the-holy-land/. He outlines how the Centre is a coordination point for ecumenical action in and for Jerusalem, Palestine and its churches. He suggests the Kairos Document is the most influential product for faith-based initiatives on peace in the Holy Land.

In the interview "A Radical Call to Just Peace", Christian peace activist Dr. Paul Oestreicher, an Anglican priest and member of the Religious Society of Friends, speaks about



his plenary address to the convocation with the powerful message: "A Different World is Possible!" In a video interview with the Communications Team Dr. Oestreicher explains the heart of his vision for Just Peace: iepcstories.com/2011/05/25/a-radical-call-to-just-peace/.

Another interview with a local youth Andre, iepcstories.com/2011/05/22/a-story-from-an-iepc-workshop-overcoming-armed-violence/, shares how his participation in HOLY, a program set up in Kingston that uses a holistic approach to social intervention, changed his outlook on life. HOLY engages with youth and young adults from violent inner city communities in activities which seek to re-socialize and equip them with the skills necessary to live in society without dependence on criminality for income and purpose.

Check out www.iepcstories.com to find more videos and reflections put together by the IEPC Youth Video Team. Hopefully you find them engaging and enlightening, perhaps even inspiring as you to continue the work of overcoming violence.



Submissions

As the ecumenical journal of the European Region of WSCF, Mozaik aims to provide a forum to explore and share your ideas, experiences and faith. It is a space to take up burning questions from theology, society, culture, education and other arenas; to explore Christian experience; to clear up misinformation; to provide a firm basis for dialogue and cooperation and to suggest innovative answers to the challenges we face. It is also a resource for SCMs, Churches and student groups to give ideas on how to interact with the topic at hand.

We accept essays and articles about 800-2000 words long, with footnotes, including some suggested readings when appropriate. For information about formatting please consult previous Mozaiks.

Mozaik is also a space to share news about your SCMs, to reflect on discipleship and culture and to express your creativity. So, we also value shorter articles, interviews, book and film reviews, reflections, resources, and reports from your SCM. Contributions of artwork, poetry, short stories, prayers, and liturgies are also strongly encouraged.

Submissions



Communicating Gender

The next Mozaik will follow the WSCF-E's latest gender conference "Communicating Gender: Gender identities in a globalised Europe" to be held in Løgumkloster, Denmark in October 2011.

To be human is to communicate. To be human is to be gendered. Whether communication is verbal, visual, or kinaesthetic gender pervades communications, particularly in verbal languages and the media. The use of language will have a powerful effect as the borders of Europe open. As people move freely between different cultures we can see a cross-fertilisation of languages. Moving towards gender positive language will promote gender equality and human rights.

Does God have a gender? Is gender violence found in what we say or just in what we do? Does my gender change when I cross a border? Is language a barrier for communication between genders? Are some languages more gender friendly? Can students use Facebook and Twitter to change the way we speak about gender?

If you are interested in answering one of these many questions or in contributing in any way to the next issue of Mozaik, please inform the editors as soon as possible at mozaik@wscf-europe.org. They will also be able to help you with any questions you may have.

Watch for the Call for Articles in your email inbox and on our website (www.wscf-europe.org) for more details.