

# CHRISTIAN LIGHT PUBLICATIONS

MAY - JUNE 2009

## The Tower of Google

*Avoiding addiction to information technology*

The tower on the plain of Shinar was never finished. The builders wanted a tower higher than anything built before, and a monument to themselves—a temple, a rallying point, and a unifier. But God stopped the work by confusing their common language. No longer able to communicate, the frustrated builders threw down their tools. To this day, languages still divide the earth's peoples.

Reading about the Tower of Babel recently, I was surprised at one of the things God said about the men of that day. In my own words, "Now nothing they want to do will be impossible for them" (Genesis 11:6).

Fast-forward a few thousand years. A lot of "impossible" things have happened in the last century. Man, using his God-given abilities, has learned to fulfill many dreams of the ancients. We can navigate earth and ocean, sky and space, and man is reaching for more impossible things to accomplish.

Consider Google. Google is only a company—people with big ideas, computers, and algorithms—but to me Google is symbolic of the Internet and of the masses of information and technologies that are available today. It is symbolic of "impossible possibilities."

Google is big and complex, fascinating, and sometimes scary.

The company name comes from the name of the figure that has a 1 followed by a 100 zeros: a *googol*. One of its goals is to make easily available all the world's knowledge. Its unofficial motto: "Don't be evil."

A single search on Google's Internet search engine yields oodles of results—it would seem that Google is well on its way to its goal of organizing all the world's information.

An executive of a wireless technology company once said, "Google is like God. God is wireless, God is everywhere, and God sees everything. Any questions in the world, you ask Google."

I think the man has hit upon something worth considering—does the technology we use today make people feel a bit more like God? Information technology has empowered us and made the globe our community. It breaks down barriers of time, space, and language.

Maybe it is this property of technology that makes it so addictive. It was Adam and Eve who first wanted to be like God, and were tricked into thinking it was possible.

We can see from the Garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel that this is nothing new. Man has been worshipping the work of his hands and trying to "be God" for a long time. Sinful human nature doesn't change until sinful humans put God on the throne of their hearts.

As God-worshipping people, we need to take God's approach in dealing with our changing world. Those of us in a younger generation need to walk carefully, recognizing that it is we, not our parents, who will live most of our lives in the digital age. Our generations will need to make the right

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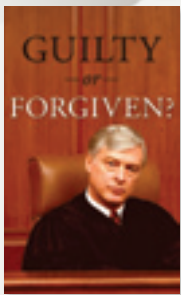
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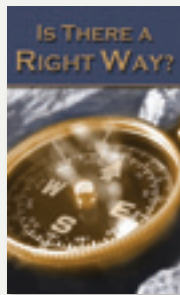
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decisions on technology.

Our choices will determine whether or not we will join the rest of the world in worshipping technology.

I think we all appreciate and use information technology—after all, these words aren't just pokeberry juice splattered on birch bark. The question we face isn't whether or not to use technology, but *how much* technology to use.

We also need to know that God cares *how* we use information technology. From cell phones to online banking, spiritual wisdom and common sense will help us make good decisions about information technologies, devices, and services. Let's ask ourselves some questions about our information technology.

*Motive.* What is my motive?

*Time.* Will this save or waste my time?

*Expense.* Am I wasting money? Is this a need or a want?

*Temptation.* What additional temptations will this bring into my life? Will it hurt my spiritual growth?

*Kingdom growth.* Will I use this information technology to spread the most important information in the world—the Gospel? Will the way I use this glorify God, me, or someone else?

The technologies we use will be either a blessing or a curse to us. Remembering the Tower of Babel, let's make decisions we can be confident God will bless.

—Caleb Crider

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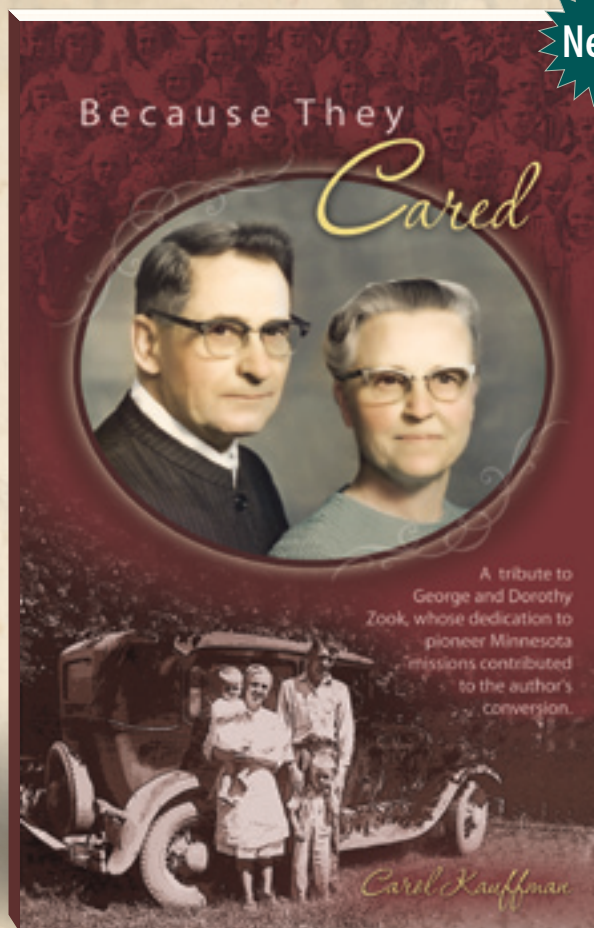
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