Conclusion

The church is living in an age when the HIV/AIDS pandemic is equated with death. This paper has highlighted the need for the church to establish her presence in the strategic mission so as to eradicate AIDS. Many people have died because of AIDS and many more are still to going through the traumatic ordeal of the epidemic without receiving any remedy. The case is serious and a time bomb that has exploded and become the greatest concern for governments, humanitarian agencies, scientists, the press and theologians.

Because of these concerns the church has the role of care and support, advocacy, education in order to eradicate the disease. As we continue to live under this terrible killer disease, let us never lose sight of the Christian optimism. AIDS will be defeated both morally and radically. The church only needs to live on despite the challenges, carry out the mission it demands and increase its commitment to the people God created and whose dignity the church must up-hold. The concerted effort of the church with the state in the fight against HIV/AIDS is a ray of hope I the devastating era of HIV/AIDS pandemic I the world

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The Church as a Prophetic Voice in Media Cultures in Korea and Kenya: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Postmodern Korean and Korean societies have embraced media technology with a greater focus on the expansion of social economic spheres and with the objectives of playing leadership roles in new digital technology in Asia and Africa respectively. Korea has made significant strides in economic development in the past six decades and is already considered a key player particularly in internet connectivity and smartphone penetration. In that context media production and consumption are plentiful, speedy and innovative. Bearing comparable goal, Kenyans are rapidly embracing new media technology especially internet and online networking. With an elaborate national plan, Kenya's digital technology growth is aimed at achieving Africa's "Silicon Valley" status. In both contexts, information and communication technology has been celebrated as an indicator of or a path to economic success even where palpable negative impacts have been recognized. But the anthropological, epistemological, sociological and economic rationalistic perspectives from which media technology is viewed, are reductionist and leave significant metaphysical gaps.

From the contention that media technology is not neutral, this paper examines media's liturgical nature and their capacities to form culture with an elaborate focus on the place of the church as a prophetic voice. Since human interaction with media is not simply a data transmitting process but an elemental human formative process, a clear understanding of media's social, cultural and spiritual *telos* is essential beyond economic prosperity façade. The church therefore can play a significant role in nurturing congregations with discerning understanding of the relationship between God, technology and humans, and ways of engaging the media redemptively.

This comparative study identifies some of the dominant worldview characteristics within which media are designed, flourish and operate. Given that media are not religiously neutral, the writer has suggested several reflections and responses for the church's effective witnessing. From a ritual view of technology, this paper brings a reformational worldview to bear in the area of media, equipping 21st century Christians with insights of engaging media culture appropriately, appreciatively and stewardly.

Introduction

Though there are many positive changes that the media technology has brought in Kenya and Korea, there are a number of consequences that show considerable impact on culture. New media are dynamic and ubiquitous in nature. In this study the term "new media" is used to refer to the forms of communication in the digital world, most significantly over the internet, involving creation, accessing, sharing, selling and swapping of contents via desktop and laptop computers, smartphones and tablets. For the purpose of clarity, the name "Korea" is used to refer to an East Asian country in the south of Korean Peninsula officially recognized as The Republic of Korea or simply as South Korea. This should be distinguished from North Korea or The Democratic People's Republic of Korea situated in the northern half of the Korean Peninsula.

As people embrace the emerging media technology, there are consequent cultural transformations among users as shaped by the ingress of the new technology and life perspectives that media help to propagate. One particular aspect in modern life that new media has shaped is the subject of truth. Whether media has either broadened or blurred the concept of truth is a significant question the church can explore. This paper addresses the following key questions.

  i. What are the emerging elements of media in light of historical development of new media technology in Kenya and Korea?
 ii. To what extent are people embracing the new media in Kenya and Korea?
iii. How do these technologies form or shape users' cultural desires, relationships, and their operational definition of truth?
 iv. What are the resulting life patterns as shaped by new media? and;
  v. How should the church engage and respond to media culture redemptively?

The Significance of the Issue in Korea and Kenya

The timeliness of this study is justified by the dramatic scale of the transformation that the new media technologies are having among Kenyans and Korean users, particularly the younger generation, and the high regard most

people have for the emerging new media. In Korea, the youth (under 25) constitutes about 45.4 percent of the country's 50 million people (KSIS, 2009), and 81 percent of the total population lives in urban areas according to UNICEF. By design and architectural trend, dominance of high-rise apartments resulting in high density urban residences tends to lay good foundations for internet wiring in Korea (Ok, 2009). The quest for success particularly in education is a contributing factor to the digital revolution. Korean culture is deeply impacted by Confucianism, a perspective that highly regards excellence in education. This explains the competitiveness in the college entrance exams and the near ubiquitous private tutoring and crams schools where most Korean pupils spend after-school tutoring (Jang, 2006). New media rides on dynamic technological development which tends to permeate prevailing cultural norms bringing in characteristics that form or modify social systems and cultural values.

In Kenya, for instance, 80% of the population trust media institutions as tools for informing, educating and entertaining (Opiyo, 2009), and most of these institutions have largely embraced new media technology. Research by Portland Communications and Tweetminster also ranks Kenya second in the continent after South Africa, in using Tweeter, a popular social network (Mumo, 2012). The same research shows that young people tweeting from mobile devices are driving the growth of social media in Africa.

However, a speedy adoption of new social media in Kenya and the widespread use of media in Korea have had inadequate intellectual or ethical reflection on its liturgical nature and capacity to form cultural desires. Insufficient evaluation of the fundamental impact of new media particularly from a scriptural-reformational perspective may be due to the prevailing, incorrect though accepted, view that interaction with media is a neutral activity—simply as an information transmitting structure or as speaking for the good of the common man, rather than reflecting a certain worldview commitments. How then can the church apply a biblically faithful and become salt and light in the society? The answer lies in the life and practice of Christians in engaging cultures. Hunter (2010) refers to this as believers living as "faith presence" in the cultures (p. 35).

But the reality of non-neutrality in all of life demands a unique way for cultural engagement. That is, a deliberate, thought-out, philosophically-consistent activity

of vocational and societal living that is proactively designed to reflect an authentic perspective on the world with an aim of understanding it. In media milieu, engaging the culture calls for attentiveness to presuppositions, persistence and willingness to transform, since media are not neutral and always disseminate their own values. By engaging media culture from reformational perspective, media's capacity to reshape relationships, connect people globally, alter core assumptions and values, increase communication speed and economic and political processes can be appropriately understood.

Approaches to Media Technology

The so called "Technorealists" have captured considerable attention by arguing a via between the messianic *technisists*, who think technics will save the world and reactionary technophobes, who think technics represent evil incarnate (O'Harrow, 1998). Broadly, the emergence of new media technologies has been explained in different theories and approaches. New media are not merely the consequence of technical inventions, but derive from certain process of cultural formation. Technical inventions are extensions humans as McLuhan (1964) notes. And new inventions often improve on the old media (for example, Gutenberg improved writing, digital media improved analogue and wireless improved wired telegraphy).

The way information and communication technology (ICT) has been 'glorified' as a pillar for economic prosperity, has made media some of the core tools for expressing cherished beliefs, ritual practices, and worldviews in contemporary Kenyan and Korean societies. Where negative outcomes of new media have been observed, particularly addictions moral decadence the media have been blamed for corrupting people's ethical framework.

In a broader perspective, however, the ethnographic corpus, the nature of media and their capacities to form cultures have been explained anthropologically, epistemologically and sociologically as identified by Mitcham and Macky (1983, p.1-7 cited in Monsma, 1986, p.13):

> i. *An anthropological approach*, which considers technology as making activity intrinsically rallied to the nature of humankind.

ii.   *An epistemological approach*, which considers technology to consist of certain procedures and knowledge of the making process.

iii.   *A sociological approach*, which views technology and its pervasive effects as the defining mark of thought and action in modern society.

Whereas these approaches appropriately identify some key aspects of technology, they do so characteristically by emphasizing only one dimension of the created order while minimizing other dimensions. They thus present a reductionistic, biased picture of the complex whole, that is, a cultural formative process (Atwood, 1998). These reductionism views, therefore, do not offer much help in understanding a holistic nature of media technology. They also highlight man's (and woman's) mandate at the Garden of Eden as cultural formers and stewards (see Genesis 2).

More recently, Carr (2010) and Hipps (2006) have based their description of technology from Marshall Mcluhan's book *Understanding Media.* For instance Hipps states that "Every medium is an extension of our humanity. All forms of media (any human invention or technology) extend or amplify some part of ourselves." (p. 34). For Carr, "Every technology is an expression of human will" (p. 44) including that extend our physical strength, our senses (for example binoculars extends eyesight), our intellect, or ones that reshape nature. These definitions provide additional clarity both from an epistemic viewpoint and also from a practical perspective.

A holistic approach is seeing technology as a totality of human formative process in a culture and technics as entities of that formative process. Schuurman (1995) and Ellul (1980) attempted to explore a view of technology by steering clear of reductionism and asserting that technology is a complex human process. For example, Schuurman defines technology as "the human formation of nature with the help of tools for human purposes" (p.5) while Ellul sees technology as a method, or "la technique," that is, the totality of methods and skills employed to maximize human efficiency.

Exploration of Media Context: Experiences of Korea and Kenya

While Kenyan and Korean societies share aspirations for further economic development, information and communication technology (ICT) has been identifies as one of the key areas that might contribute to greater prosperity. The attention given to communication technology as a pillar for prosperity (as in Kenya's Vision 2030) and the fact that internet-based technologies are increasingly popular, their influence on the contemporary cultures are bound to increase as well. The governments of both countries hold a pragmatic view of media technology mainly because of the economic benefits. This economic rationalistic view has seen a major investment in ICT—for it is viewed as an economic cog in many aspects of society: communication industry, finance industry, agriculture, military and even in education. While the cost of ICT in Korea is generally cheap, there has been a deliberate effort to also reduce the cost of ICT in Kenya, particularly regarding access to the internet.

The cultural impact ensuing from increased interaction with new media technology is based on the contention that technology is not neutral. However, media propagate values and beliefs emanating from certain worldviews. One such worldview is economic rationalism—a perception that as long as something (in this case new media technology) is good for economic gain, it is worth pursuing regardless the side effects.   Related to economic rationalism is consumerism, a term used in this paper to mean a social and economic order that encourages the purchase of goods and services in ever-greater amounts as one way of reaching human satisfaction. Though technology has brought numerous benefits to humanity, its usage if unchecked can be more disruptive and destructing to human relationships. And this is the context in which the church becomes a guiding agent to its congregation.

Anthropological Problems in Media Mediated Cultures

i. Non-neutrality of Life

There is no neutrality in all of life despite a pervasive myth to the contrary particularly in postmodern times. The principle rationale behind the myth of neutrality lies in a dualistic view many people hold, owing to their cultural orientation and perhaps how they are reluctant to think deeply about things (Edlin, 2009). Dualism is an approach to life which suggests that there are two ways of seeing and being in the world; sacred (ideal) and secular (natural) and

that each is confined to its own sector of reality. While such duality between the natural and ideal world leads to difficulties in conviction, the visible world has paved the way to scientific discoveries, acknowledged scientific laws and shaped cultures. Plato is regarded as the father of modern dualism and was the center of the Greek thought (Edlin, 2009). It is dualism and the myth of neutrality that has caused many people to think that they are free of philosophical assumptions (Goheen & Bartholomew, 2008), and falling into the fallacy that, "things are just the way they are," and that things are done in a natural away from any deliberate effort. Kanitz (2005) observed that in our thoughts, we always start with a "densely populated intellectual ground with various worldviews firmly entrenched and others competing for space" (p. 105). And just as life is a reflection of cherished presupposition beliefs and commitments, so too is the media.

ii. Non-neutrality of New Media

> "In this heady age of rapid technological change, we all struggle to maintain our bearings. The developments that unfold each day in communications and computing can be thrilling and disorienting. One understandable reaction is to wonder: Are these changes good or bad? Should we welcome or fear them?" (Technorealism, n.d.)

The question raised at the end of the above opening statement of *Technorealism* is worth examining particularly in a media saturated culture like Korea and Kenya, societies with extremely high regard for information and communication technology. Though discussions of media technologies often assume a deterministic stance and exhort their usage in improving life in terms of efficiency, economic productivity and broader access to information, they subsequently affect an individual, family, work and the socio-economic aspects in unpredictable ways, introducing new forms of pressure and distraction. They also posture new challenges to cohesion within human relationships for they shapes people's cultural desires and how they respond to life issue such as marriage, love, beauty, suffering, life and death, business, salvation.

But human interaction with new media does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, it happens in a cultural context full of competing assumptions. Within a culture, people practice cultural "liturgies," a term Smith (2009, p. 25) uses to mean valued and repeated activities that take place at the shopping mall, the sports arena and the academy. He argues that immersion into these liturgies forms one's cultural desires and communicates what "the good life" (p. 25) looks like and shape human identities by forming the most fundamental desires and most basic attunement to the world. New media and their organizational structure reflect pre-existing tendencies that are characteristic of postmodern life views and shape our social practices and responses to our day to day activities. They tend to "legitimize certain ways of thinking, imagining, and enacting the most basic aspects of life" (Song, 2001, p. 8).

Media technology and the content they carry are thus not neutral. Any claimed neutrality in media can only be a reflection of an incorrect understanding of the entire media context (Harris and Taylor, 2008). Couldry (2000) also observes that, "The media process does not merely interact with the rest of society; [rather], it has a major impact on how the rest of society understands and imagines itself" (p. 54). Discussion on the anthropological problem of new media is essential because the church and the society in general often finds itself in a hollow core resulting from superficial neutrality, but in reality operating in the profoundly ideologically committed world of media.

Worldview Characteristics in the New Media Context

Having identified the nature of new media technology as non-neutral, it is important to point out some of the dominant worldview characteristics in the contemporary media milieu. This is helpful especially because it is important to grasp the nature of prevailing life views so as to better engage them from a biblically faithful perspective.

i. Capitalism and Commodification

According to Karl Marx (1867a), commodity is the heart of capitalism since the wealth of those in societies where the capitalist mode of production exist, "presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities; its unit being a single commodity." (p.43). For Marx the commodity is the 'economic cell-form' (Marx, 1867b, p.19) of a capitalistic society. In capitalism, commodities are bought and sold in markets. The term commodification originates from Marx's notion of commodity fetishism, but its connotations can be traced back to Adam Smith and his deep ambivalence about the moral implications of markets and competition. The concept "discusses social relations conducted as and in the form of relations between commodities or things" (Bottomore, Harris, Kieman, and Miliband, 1983, p.87). In the context of commerce and business, commodification is a process through which social and human relations are reduced to an exchange relation. Plumwood (2002) asserts that the economic rationality of capitalism, whose essential characteristics are the identification of rationality with egoism and competition and the interconnected concern

to exploit property formation and economic development, supports strategies that decrease ethical acknowledgment of the other-than-human world. Capitalist democracy hardly restrains itself from absolute exploitation of the media, and with a progressive and pervasive medium, emerges new possibilities for exploitation.

A classic example of commodification in Korea involves celebrity culture as is evident in a front-page headline story published in the *The Korea Times* (October 20, 2009): "Figure skating sensation Kim Yuna has been the biggest hit item in the local ad market, even raising concern that excessive exposure in various campaigns could write off her value in the end". Here, we see a set of heavily-loaded sentence with "commodity" terminologies; "hit item, "ad market, "write off" and "value" (Kamary, 2009).

ii. Economic Rationalism and Culture Industry

Economic rationalism, which is the belief that if something is good for the economy it is conclusively good, is shaping the contemporary mindset among Korean and Kenyans. Culture industry is a thesis proposed by Frankfurt school's Adorno and Horkheimer (1993) which asserts that cultural industries exist to enforce (or reinforce) the capitalist culture. It is also referred to as a mass culture or pop culture (as the Korean pop culture known as *Hallyu*) which capitalism uses to control the individual consciousness thereby "industrializing" and commodifying it through aura and manipulation of desires (Harris and Taylor, 2008). New media appears to be moving inexorably towards a larger control over its gradually more unthinking society, aligning itself to despotism, and pursuing homogeneity. Grant (n.d) also predicted that possibly capitalism will crush under the heaviness of its own cultural trash.

Korean and Kenyan celebrities, mostly young musicians, comedians and television anchors, have been elevated to a near cult status. Attention given to these celebrities is a deliberate crowd-pulling 'spanner boys (and girls)' only decorated as magnificent representation of a living being to promote the illusion of equal access to the totality of consumption. In advertising, celebrities bridge consumer cultures. They are the connecting fiber between the materiality of production and culturally contextualized connotation of consumption and its relation to communal identity (Marshal, 1997).

iii. Consumerism

In cultures where consumerism is dominant life view, transformation of a non-commodity into a commodity or to assign a monetary value to something that traditionally would not be considered in monetary terms, for example, an idea, identity and gender, becomes a norm (Frow, 1997). Postmodern worldview produces an individualistic, consumer driven society (Cracknell, 2008). Simpson (1993) describes postmodernity as a culture of consumption since everything is perceived as a consumer item including knowledge, meaning, truth and spirituality. Consumed by new media's network and influence, post-modernity aims at marketing products to individuals (consumers), emphasizing the quest for the shelf (products) rather than of self (relational human being) (Cray, 1998).

Most Koreans and Kenyans in urban cities tend to seek approval for their fashion, eating habits and lifestyle in general from the media. New media's impact in propagating consumerism manifests itself in the culture industry; the new media's prevailing characteristic. New media have in effect regarded culture as a theatre of operation placing consumers on an acquisition treadmill powered by postmodernist world— a key feature of economic rationalism through its captivations of ever-consuming fans (Harris and Taylor, 2008).

iv. Idea and Product Placement

Along with advertising comes "idea placement" —a deliberate move to have a particular message integrated in the new media content. These 'fixed' messages take diverse forms; political or business and they are made to sway the audience to think or act in certain ways. Adorno & Horkheimer (1993/ 1944) claim that the media culture industry seeks to construct and put complex ideas inside the audience's awareness. The psychoanalytic perception of users has been taken up by the media culture industry in order to trap the audience so as to direct them

subliminally. Harris and Taylor (2008) describe this idea as "colonizing commodifying logic whose grip on the individual and collective has grown ever more firm in the intervening decades" (p. 84) This trend is a kind of enslaving commodifying routine whose clench on consumers is dictating expenditure and the operations of their home economics.

v.   Individualism

The cult of individuality has opened up a new horizon and possibility for all beliefs and ideals where values have been re-evaluated, re-molded, re-constructed—and each new value has been made in the image of its creator: the individual (Krasnow, 2012). The notion that the individual is free to think whatever he wants, say whatever he wants and believe whatever he wants is largely practiced in Western culture – which apparently is often taken as the fashionable worldview that promises 'good life', liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is often followed by "I don't care" attitude; a prevalent attitude of non-judgmentalism meets moral relativism. Krasnow (2012) observes that people are inculcated into the cult of individualism—by families, who insist on specialty of an individual; by schools, which demand that students specify fields; by advertising which compels us to carve out who we are by consuming certain commodities; by capitalism which teaches us that to succeed is to win in a competition of yourself against all others; and by the ever-growing new-age and pop psychology culture which tells us to create our own realities (Krasnow, 2012).

It is presumed that while particular technological and organizational landscapes of online communities shape the character and culture of internet experience, it is also apparent that pre-existing cultural assumptions (worldviews) influence decisions made in designing and configuration of online networks (Song, 2009). Philip Howard's "embedded media" perspective also assumes the mutual structuration of technology and shaping of the society (Howard and Jones 2004).

From a cultural anthropology perspective, the internet can be viewed as a compelling context within which assumptions, meanings, and definitions about fundamental philosophies of community and personal identity are employed, contested, and legitimized (Song, 2009). This approach to online communities is significant in itself, for it goes beyond the notion that the internet is primarily

about the elimination of the spatial and temporal barriers to communication. Song (2009) notes that popular approaches to the internet have frequently assumed the "transmission model" of communication, that is, understanding the internet solely in terms of its "instrumentality", as it transmits information through space and time (p. 8). Alternatively, James Carey's (1989) assertion of a "ritual model" perceives communication as a representation of an underlying order of things, not to perform functions but to manifest a continuing and fragile social process. To Carey, understanding "communication [including in new media] as culture," is to consider its fundamental process of upholding the very basic reality of everyday life.

Engaging Media Culture as a Prophetic Voice

What is Cultural Engagement?

For the church to be prophetic in cultures to which they belong, it has to understand that media is as religious as Christianity is. From the contention that there is no religious neutrality in all of life, media environment presents contemporary cultures in Korea and Kenya with competing religious worldviews some of which are inconsistent with their core beliefs. As Jethani (2012) states, media are the dominant lens through which people see the world, and for this reason the media also shapes their worldview. Our daily interactions with new media and their characteristics of repetition and abundance have lasting effects on the users' lives. Human life as a religious practice involves a heart commitment embedded in certain life views and powerfully shapes people's cultural desires. According to Smith (2009), it is who we are that influences what we do, that is, our identities drive our actions, from soul to body. These identities include not only thoughts and ideas, but also visions and passions, motives and wills shaped by the culture. To bear witness as a prophet therefore calls for attentiveness to the existing presuppositions, persistence because new media like educational process, are not neutral and always carry their own values (Brummelen, 1994). The church must be willingness to enter the media "wilderness" for it to be light unto the world.

Decades ago, Francis Schaeffer (1976) warned that modern cultures would be vulnerable to manipulation through the media, especially through the television. "Television manipulates viewers just by its normal way of operating," because its images seem so compelling. The truth, however, is otherwise because the

viewer is not granted a pristine receipt of objective reality, but an "edited symbol or an edited image of the event" (p. 240). At the present time, those compelling images that Schaeffer referred to are readily available at our palms through smartphones, ipads and tablets. Thus, we interact with media images in most aspects of life and may be making contact unconsciously with secular religious views of love, relationships, entertainments and shopping.

When new media is viewed from a reformational perspective, the church (people and the institution) are encouraged to engage in not only media context but all cultures by subjecting every idea, theory, invention and technology, under the redeeming Lordship of Christ. To engage new media, Christian users should be ready to face the challenge of contextualizing the Gospel in the digital environment. Christianity reveals a God who uses all sorts of media to get his message across, from pillars of fire to bright stars, from burning bushes to a talking donkey (Vogt, 2011). God is deeply concerned over media technology and their power to shape faith. At the 43rd World Communications Day, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged Catholics to boldly enter the "digital continent" (Vogt, 2011, p.19). Despite being over 80 years old, Benedict recognized this digital world for what it is: a ripe mission field for the Church.

> "Without fear we must set sail on the digital sea, facing into the deep with the same passion that has governed the ship of the Church for two thousand years… We want to qualify ourselves by living in the digital world with a believer's heart, helping to give a soul to the Internet's incessant flow of communication" (p. 22).

An article published in *The Christian Post*, suggests that value of the digital relationships cannot simply be dismissed since that is where many people are - in the digital age (*The Christian Post,* 2009). Jesus' command in the great commission entails going and making disciples and thus committed Christians ought to act on the contemporary cultures and influence it as light and salt. It is a faithful extension of Great Commission mandate to understand the calling, and to make disciples of all nations to extend beyond nations in geographic sense. This encompasses occupational communities and social communities (including digital communities). For the church, this is one way of being Christ's witnesses.

Toward a Reformational View of Media Technology

From a reformational perspective God's creation reflects who He is. Romans 1:20 states that "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse". Apostle Paul suggests

that by general revelation people can find sufficient knowledge of God. This includes new media technology. But the created world does not symbolize God in totality. Proponents of pantheism are fundamentally misguided when they fail to distinguish between the Creator and the creature as narrated in Genesis 1-3.

God has provided guidance, in His Word, that describes and prescribes the creation and usage of technology. The Bible is replete with references concerning technology and indeed, and the Bible is itself is an example of a technology, as written communication, that has had significant impact on cultures and how we communicate. The printing press for example is a technology which enabled mass production of written works and from whence electronic texts were developed and widely used in the internet, new media (Whiting, 2011). Whiting observes that there are over 800 technology related references in the Bible that start with the letter "A" (for example altar, ark, armor).In this sense, like words, mathematics, art, language and music, new media can be seen as another language that God has given us to understand and explore his world. As with all languages, this can be done either obediently or disobediently to his creation ordinances. Human beings as God's image bearers also create things that reflect their nature. Carr (2010), in expressing McLuhan's notion of technology, states that "Every technology is an expression of human will" (p. 44). Carr divides technologies into four categories: ones that extend our physical strength, our senses, our intellect and ones that reshape nature. For example binoculars extend our sense of sight allowing us to see farther. McLuhan (1967) argues that every medium is an extension of our humanity. All forms of media (i.e., any human invention or technology) extend or amplify some part of ourselves). This is an epistemic and practical perspective of technology which is helpful for deeper exegesis of a biblical view of technology.

Roy (2002) suggests that "Technology is, without any doubt, the world's most powerful and fastest growing religion" (p. 667). The term religion is used to mean that which relates to or manifests faithful devotion to an acknowledged ultimate reality or deity (Merriam-Webster, 2003). It is possible that information and communication technology can be regarded as deity in contemporary culture due to its omnipresence and highly esteemed status. As Duke (2009) states, "Man's wisdom and technology have increased to the point that it appears nothing is unattainable or beyond man's power. We have built great earthly kingdoms. Human wisdom, wealth, and technology have become our gods…. God

has been replaced by manmade inventions" (p.19). Russell (1928) writes that machines are worshipped and hated at the same time. "Machines are worshipped because they are beautiful, and valued because they confer power; they are hated because they are hideous, and loathed because they impose slavery." (p. 64). This rings a bell when we consider the account of the "golden calf" in Exodus 32.

The Scripture is clear about whose glory people should make things. The creative works demonstrates our character of human beings as God's image bearers and God will judge them according to the works and the things they have made (Revelation 20:12). In Exodus 20:4, God forbids people from making anything that is designed to be worshipped since idols are "the work if men's hands and those who make them are like them" (Psalm 115:4-8). But after the fall, the works of man (and woman) reflected and continue to reflect a radically sinful nature as a result of sin.

From a ritual view of media, Christians will better the profound passage described in John 1: 1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God" (KJV). In the creation account (Genesis 1), God uses his word to create the cosmos. Words do not only convey ideas but they provide a complex relationship between the Creator and the created for communion goes beyond transmission of information. This concept expands our understanding of: how God's creative work reflects His character and attributes, how human creativity is rooted in the fact that are made in the image of God, how human creative works reflect our human character, how the fall has affected the human technics, how human technics relate to Christ's redeeming work, how technological freedom in Christ must be guided by what is helpful and wise, not just what is lawful, and, how human technics can be created and used redemptively for the glory of God (Atwood, 1998).

In addition to leading discussions, designing sermons and reflecting on biblical approaches to media, the church may also consider emphasizing quiet times; moments that is unplugged from the technology which tends to clutter their lives. Silence helps to re-engage with thoughts. Quite time offers a space to listen for God's small, still voice, which speaks to our hearts and minds. These times of complete worship and pleading with God, and remind us how utterly dependence on Him for every part of our lives. Following Christ in a media

culture demands that believers become aware of how they use the media and how much they depend on the media to shape the routine of our lives, and respond to related issues in a biblically faithfully way.

Reflections and Response for Media Engagement

How should we then live? Asking the question "How should we the live?" helps Christians to consider living out a worldview that shapes the moral fabric of a society and gives direction to humanity. Smith (2009) explains that a faithful liturgical anthropology recalibrates cultural examination and critique regarding human desires by recognizing the (de-and-trans) formative power of practices— communal, embodied rhythms, rituals and routines. These life practices uniquely and unconsciously prime and shape our desires in the most fundamental cravings. New media often carry the images that shape these basic desires, so that if it is to enhance biblical faithfulness, new media also must function through the prism of a Christian worldview.

The church is to be aware and ready to examine cultural symbols which have become representatives of what is "normal." For example, Hunter (2010) draws the attention of symbolic capital overlapping with social and economic capital which is crucial for anyone living in a media culture. Hunter's contention is supportive of the cultural engagement mandate that is incremental, covenantal, multi-generational, sustainable and structural.

Since culture formers and cultural influences operate within the spheres of the society where real cultural capital exists, active engagement of media culture as witnesses for the redeeming message of the gospel is vital. By cultural capital, Hunter (2010) refers to the social institutions that govern the society, including business, media, education, government, church, arts and entertainment and the social sector. Their collective output of ideas, films, books, theology, websites, restaurants, investments, social work, laws, medical breakthroughs and technology shape the direction of entire communities and nations. It is within these cultural groupings or units that Christians ought to seriously remain awaken as contributing culture formers with the liberating truth.

The biblical perspective of life and reality must be lived out in all areas of life so that the current generation of Christians may train children, whether in Christian schools, at home schools and at church as through the biblical

consciousness which Schaeffer sees as a flow of biblical history.

> "There is a flow to history and culture. This flow is rooted and has its wellspring in the thoughts of people. People are unique in the inner life of the mind—what they are in their thought world determines how they act. This is true of their value systems and it is true of their creativity. It is true of their corporate actions, such as political decisions, and it is true of their personal lives" (1976, p.19).

The word of God constitutes the total reality which the church bears in its prophetic voice. The total reality that we inhabit is the Word of the living God and as the book of Acts 17:28, states, "In Him we live and move and have our being." The Bible's pictures of the church intimate that it is both familial and schoolish in character. The church is the family of God, the Father of his people (Eph. 3:15; Matt. 6:8-15). The church is the household of God (Ephesians 2:19), led, ruled, and served by those who have proven themselves capable of doing that at home (1 Tim. 3). Teaching is a prominent feature of the church in the New Testament (e.g., Colossians. 3:16; Ephesians. 4:20-24; 2 Thessalonians. 2:15).

Spheres of Cultural Formation and their Worldview Impact

The worldviews which media perpetuate may sustain or reshape the moral fiber and social conscience of the culture, including of the church. Media have been in the forefront in expressing and propagating the new cultural shift and often give a glimpse of what to expect next. The mainstream media's agenda-setting function continues to influence people's cognitions in the way these media outlets determine prominent issues, persons and other objects. For example, research on priming has shown that the issues emphasized in the news become the issues used by voters to evaluate political candidates. Research has also found an empirical relationship between agenda-setting effects and the strength of people's attitudes and opinions (Jenkins, 2006). This really shapes how people respond to fundamental life issues, including Christians.

The church can be one of the most unique channels of cultural influence. When Christians embrace the common goals of both engaging cultures and leading people's souls to God's saving grace, the possibilities for positive cultural influence dramatically increase. However, the threat that postmodernism and other contemporary cultural idolatries in Kenya and Korea poses to the church

and lack of a biblical view radically undermine a Christian way of life. Greene's comment reflect this state of affairs: "As we enter the twenty-first century, the powerful current of postmodernism is sweeping Western thought. Postmodernism not only denies absolute truth and value but now undermines confidence in the independent existence of human personality itself (2003, p. 70)."

In pluralistic societies like Korea and Kenya where competing worldviews exist, the church can be a vital place for cultural and desire formation and helping people to point their desires toward God as the object of worship. Postmodernism may have made it even more challenging to work in a highly technological society; nevertheless believers must be obedient to Christ. In the wake of postmodernism where relativity of belief is acknowledged, Christians are called to detect, critique, expose, and reject, lies of postmodernity. The role of the Church (people and not buildings) is to move towards a biblically faithful witnessing as the embodiment of the Christ's body. The church, like Christ, should be bold enough to seek justice in market place, schools, media and transportation.

An act by YMCA in Korea can be a good example of Christians engaging culture through their organization. Responding to the report that North Face outdoor brand was exploiting buyers through exaggeration of prices for its jackets, these Christians choose to speak for the minority as they sought justice in the market place. (*The Korea Times*, April 16, 2012). The group called for a press conference and sought audience from relevant authorities leading to an amicable solution. The church (both as institution and as a people) must shun a 'laissez-faire' attitude toward technology which leaves young Christ followers to fend for themselves. In the case of YMCA, the young men might not have gone deeper to examine how cultural desires are shaped by worldviews propagated by certain lifestyles within the culture, but their action was certainly bold.

For the church to effectively be the prophetic voice of the culture, it has to be a philosopher since the Bible is emphatic that Christians are to seek and love wisdom. It encourages believers to seek wisdom from God. "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him" (James 1:5 ESV). In addition the Scripture says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Psalm 111:10 ESV). The pursuit of truth and knowledge is a biblically faithful task and schools, church and homes should share this goal. The perverseness of

dualism which dichotomizes reality by separating knowledge, wisdom, and philosophy from the Christian belief should be explored as false and be rejected. Christ is the Lord of all knowledge and of all things (Colossians 1:15-20).

Living Out and Voicing Out Prophetically

An effective cultural engagement and impact can be realized by practically living out the Christian faith in all vocational contexts. The Christian mandate to live faithfully in obedience to God and share the gospel finds great opportunities when Christians discerningly interact within the existing spheres of the society by demonstrating the incarnational truths of the Christian faith. Hunter's (2010) suggestion of "faithful presence" (p. 35) describes a context in which Christians can find the inspiration to rediscover dignity in their work, to practice their skills with excellence, and to use their vocation as a means of living out their faith and voicing out prophetic voice within cultures.

For example, Christians who spend considerable time online may do the following:

- See themselves as having the potential to be salt and light to the online communities and begin to respond and comment on posts or images of common topics on social media (including love, beauty, celebrity status and economic crisis) from a biblical perspective.

- Sharing their own or other people's articles, quotations, discussions, news links that bear witness to the light of the gospel or require a Christian thought to bear in them.

- Rather than shying away from new media, Christian parents and grandparents should engage media with their children, helping them to discern what is right from wrong.

- Taking an active part in promoting, advertising and discussing positive Christian media content with network of friends, family and co-workers.

- Embracing the free PR opportunity that social media provides and Tweet or post on Facebook the latest Christian movie or PC video

game or blog about deep spiritual issues that engage audiences in quality conversations.

- Encouraging churches and other Christian organizations to design social media pages and forums for members to share ideas and encourage one another.

- Write letters-to-the-editor on newspapers about how new media can be understood and used in a God-honouring way.

Historically, the Christian faith has been responsible for greater cultural impact. For example, it is Christians who manifested Christ's love in the establishment of hospitals, the flourishing of art, the best scholarship. In Korea and Kenya, it is Christian missionaries who established churches, schools and hospitals leading to milestone social developments. These, as Hunter (2010) also notes became the most profound and world-changing kind of service and care—again, not only for the household of faith but for everyone. It is a perspective and lifestyle that Christians need to recover today.

To have a greater impact as Christ's ambassadors, Christians employed in new media related jobs and those who use them, need to deliberately understand their vocations as mission fields. This is important because most believers spend much time and interactions at their work places than they do at church on Sundays or in missions during short mission trips. If indeed there is any truth in McLuhan's (1967) claim that the medium is the message, then the message of the gospel is conveyed by the medium which is the church's life in the world. The church is a direct reflection of Jesus Christ, God's medium sent to be —"not just to proclaim"—a message of healing and hope to the world. That is how Christian should then live out and voice out prophetically.

Conclusion

Though digital media play a significant role in socio-economic development in the two contexts (Kenya and Korea), exploring media's elemental character, cultural impact and spiritual implications is one way of promoting Christian responses which nurtures clear understanding and stewardship. This is what this paper has examined by outlining certain competing presumptions, some of which bear narrow (reductionistic) approached to meaning of technology

(primarily of a secular religious nature), and the implications of which lead to distress rather than celebration.

As a dynamic process by which people in dialogue and electronically construct meanings and share emotions, media context is heavily value laden – it is never neutral. Media are liturgical in nature since they not only enable us to transmit and share data but also form people's desires and our practice (worship). A reformational perspective views contemporary media as God's gift to humanity, which can be used in genuine stewardship to serve the culture faithfully. This suggests that Christians living in postmodern cultures mediated by a plentiful supply of media can be actively involved in media milieu as part of God's creation. Thus, the church must take its place as a prophetic voice of being salt and light.

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