

ENGINEERING

Engineering. Never before in my life have I thought so completely about the implications, the meaning, the calling, the work, and the fulfillment that this thing called engineering can have. This essay is an attempt (you will be the judge of its success) to bring down these thoughts, ideas, and inspirations into one place.

To much of today's culture, engineering is two things: a very difficult major and a great job opportunity once you graduate. I've been told both of these many times when I've shared my planned major with others. But, neither of these reasons come close to why I am majoring in engineering. I know without a doubt that God wants me here. In that case, engineering *must* be something more! The Lord surely doesn't want me spending the best four years of my life for a completely secular career. "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:33, NIV.) I am quite convinced that engineering is something that can and will glorify my Savior and Creator Jesus Christ.

So, what do we mean when we say engineering? Engineering is being used by God to participate in the process of liberating the Creation—all of it—from its bondage to decay. ("For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God." [Romans 8:20-21, NIV.]) God has decided to use the engineers He created to be a part of this process. What in particular does that mean? It means that we, engineers, use the knowledge we have and the skills and abilities that God has blessed us with to design and create things that will, as much as possible, bring a little

bit of Heaven onto this earth. Nothing we create can do this with any measure of perfection. And, material items can never replace the perfect love the apostle Paul outlined in 1 Corinthians 13. But they are a very important part of our service to God and to our fellow man.

It is the idea of fulfilling God's purpose for me that I find very attractive about engineering. The whole purpose of my life, the reason for my being and my creation, is to serve my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Anything that falls outside of this is not really important. (That is why I am excited to begin to understand how God can use me as an engineer.) Even at nineteen, I can see that I've wasted a lot of my life in areas where my focus was not serving the Lord. I didn't take my responsibility as a Christian seriously—I didn't take Christ's sacrifice for me seriously. Therefore, I am very attracted to focusing on serving Jesus in everything I do—even, no, *especially*, in my engineering.

What concerns me about engineering? The obvious answer would probably be all the work involved—and that is certainly true. But, there is something deeper that nags at my mind at this time. I've heard many points made (and made quite a few myself just above) about serving God in engineering. That is tremendous. But, I'm concerned if we begin to see engineering as the sole way that engineers serve the Lord. By no means! We have discussed quite thoroughly in class the fact that we cannot take one part of a man and separate it out and claim that it is the whole. We can't explain all of life solely as economic principles. We can't explain all human actions solely on the basis of molecular motion. It follows that we cannot explain an engineer's service to God solely on the basis of his engineering. Paul the apostle wrote, "...but have not love, I am nothing." (1 Corinthians 13:2, NIV.) That is just one of the aspects that we, as Christian engineers, must pay attention to in addition to our engineering.

There are many more. (Think of the modal scale that we have discussed in class.) Engineering is just a part of the whole of a Christian engineer.

As I look into my future as an engineer, there are two possibilities that come to mind. (God, of course, may have other ideas.) The first is working for the Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC). FEBC is a radio station headquartered in the Philippines that broadcasts the Gospel to countries in the Far East (hence the name). I've found that they do have a real need for mechanical engineers, and I feel that FEBC could be a great opportunity to work as an engineer. And, the requirements set forth in the essay "What's a Legitimate Need?" would be wonderfully met. The other possibility that I've considered is using my engineering education to help others in physical and technological ways in addition to spiritual ways as a missionary. God has really set a passion in my heart for telling others about Him, and I want to do that as part of serving Him. And, I am convinced that engineering can be a vital part of that objective—a tangible way of showing His love. In these scenarios, I don't think that engineering will change that much in ten years—at least, not the engineering done in such developing countries. A radio station still has the basic need of mechanically produced electricity, and the poorest people of the world will still, more than likely, need efficient means of getting water, growing crops, transporting themselves, etc. I would like to think that we will find better ways of doing each of these things within the next ten years, but the basic ideas and concepts will not change.

As I consider these future possibilities, there is another time to consider: the day I enter Heaven. Oh, how much I want to hear those precious words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Even thinking about that day, that moment, stirs my soul to its very core. If I am an

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engineer, will that "Well done." apply to my engineering, along with the rest of my life? I sure want it to, and here is why I think it can: Acting as a Christian, in general, means loving and caring for fellow humans—in spiritual, physical, and mental ways. This is a general way of stating a part of the purpose that God has given to each and every Christian. Engineering is part of accomplishing my duty as a Christian. It should be a complement to the rest of my life of serving the Lord. I pray that He will help me as I strive to accomplish that in everything that I do.