

A LETTER TO THE FUTURE



Derek Schuurman | derek@calvin.edu

Derek is an Opa and a professor at Calvin University.

TO MY dear grandchildren,

If God blesses you with a normal life span, you will live to see the year 2100. At that time, I will have passed and been buried next to your Oma (who is already in glory), awaiting the day of resurrection. This letter is my encouragement to you, to be read sometime

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in the future, after I am long gone.

I was born in the late 1960s, so what advice could I possibly have for you in the late twenty-first century? Indeed, I would have found it odd to receive a note from my grandparents written in the early 1900s – a time when radio and automobiles were first appearing, and the Wright broth-

ers had just demonstrated flight at Kitty Hawk.

If the Lord tarries in his return and, by God's common grace, humanity has averted world war, pestilence and climate disaster, I can only imagine the technological marvels (and pitfalls) you will face. I can visualize a world buzzing with AI-powered robots, cars and drones, with outposts on Mars. I suspect keyboards and screens will be as antiquated in your time as telegraph keys are in mine, with omnipresent computing controlled by gestures, voice and brain signals.

DO YOU READ YOUR BIBLE?

While the world changes, God's norms for his creation endure. In the words of Jesus, "until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear

from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matt. 5:18). For this reason, it's important for you to daily immerse yourself in God's word, which is useful for "correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

The biblical story answers basic questions like: What is the nature of reality? What does it mean to be human? What is wrong with the world – and what is the remedy?

There will be rival stories in your era that will compete with the biblical story. In fact, I've become convinced that technological often come wrapped in rival stories that shape our imaginations – so stay alert!

Every era has its own idols that will seem fashionable and compelling. In my time, idols include expressive individualism and technology (both of which may persist in your time). Like a fish swimming in water, we're often unaware of the cultural presuppositions that surround us and inform how we live. The Bible urges us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is



Derek and his two grandsons.

good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). Each new generation needs to pray for insight and for the help of the Holy Spirit to discern the times.

SABBATH AND PRAYER

We also need to cultivate practices that shape us more into the kind of people God would have us be. And that's where ancient wisdom might be able to help – recovering practices like keeping Sabbath, service, reading God's word and daily prayer. Hopefully, you will learn some of these things as I did from my parents, and your parents did from us. In a

sense, you yourselves are a kind of letter from your grandparents into the future (see 2 Cor. 2:1-3).

Already now, in the early twenty-first century, I am praying for you – and prayer can span vast time and space. My prayer is that the circle will be unbroken, that you may be found faithful in your time, and one day join your Oma and me in the world to come. Until then, may God bless you and keep you, may he make his face shine upon you, and may he give you peace – even amid an uncertain future.

Signed with love from your Opa. >