

Will More Science Lead To A Better Life?

George Herndl is chairman of the English Department of Belmont Abbey College. This article is in response to comments by Robert E. Vermillion of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Professor Robert E. Vermillion laments the decline of support for American scientific research. His explicit warning is convincing: if

we use too little of the wealth produced by our present technology to support basic research, our technological advance will be slower than it might. We may fall behind other countries in this sort of development.

THE IMPLICIT argument behind his recommendations is more questionable. Professor Vermillion's premise is that improved technology constitutes better human life, and

that the "new ideas and directions" which we need will come from scientific discovery.

Recent decades have finally brought home to the general consciousness the Faustian or destructive potential of scientific technology. There is widespread uneasiness over the dehumanizing effects of our increasingly technocratic system.

There is a new sophistication about the progress myth - the naive assumption that the computer, synthetic yarns, plastics, and, in general, increasing productivity and material wealth make us better and happier. The religion of the increasing GNP has come under a lot of reexamination lately.

MOST OF THE conspicuous movements in thought since World War II (existentialism, black-humored literature and the theater of the absurd, the counterculture) and many of the most influential studies of our situation (by writers like John Galbraith, Lewis Mumford, Erich Fromm and Charles Reich) have rejected the scientific-positivist philosophy and the economic technocracy.

Some of the disaffection unfortunately takes anti-rational forms.

This is partly because reason and knowledge have been largely, and mistakenly, identified, for a couple of centuries, with mechanistic science and the industrial civilization descended from it. Professor Vermillion, for instance, thinks that the peaking of American scientific effort in such achievements as the moon-walk and the Batavia particle accelerator may be "the beginning of the decline of the Western world and its culture."

TODAY, HOWEVER, even scientific theorists recognize that "science" is not a synonym for "knowledge" (and certainly not for "culture"). It is increasingly known that one's tools and methods determine what can be



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perceived. Science -- or the scientist -- has tended in the past to deny the reality of whatever did not register on the viewing - screen of scientific methods.

The results of this habit of mind, and of our indiscriminate faith in the benevolence of material "progress," are evident: personal alienation, a widespread sense of the meaninglessness of work and of life itself, frantic pleasure-seeking and hedonism. These are conscious or unconscious expressions of the fact that technological affluence is not enough, and that pinning our hopes on it may be disastrous.

NONE OF us wants to give up his automobile or TV set, and certainly not the scientific medicine which protects the health of our children. But the "new ideas and directions" we need the most are those which will help us become masters rather than creatures of the technocratic juggernaut.

Presently that juggernaut creates new possessions simply because they can be created and sold for a profit. It makes us need these things in order to live, and so our lives are shaped by the inhuman operating principles of the industrial machine, rather than by any moral choice of our own.

Professor Vermillion thinks we should run faster on the scientific-technological treadmill. That's a good 19th-Century conclusion, but it looks forlorn in the light of the 1970s.

Belmont Abbey Host College Night For Area H.S.

Belmont Abbey's Wheeler Center was the site of a college night, Monday, September 15th.

The purpose of the college night was to acquaint local high school students with the colleges and universities within their home state. Some 80 colleges, technical institutes and professional schools were

Job Outlook Good For Med- Tech Majors

Prospective college students who are concerned about finding a place in the crowded job market after completing their education would do well to consider the major in Medical Technology at Belmont Abbey College.

Medical Technology is one of the newest and most rapidly-growing professions associated with modern advances in medical science. It is estimated that 90,000 registered medical technologists will be needed within the next few years. Expanded job opportunities in this field are due largely to increased dependence upon laboratory tests in routine check-ups, construction of more hospitals and clinics and increased governmental support of medical programs.

Many medical technologists work in general hospitals.

Positions are also available in research laboratories, clinics, physician's offices, educational institutions, drug companies, public health agencies and the armed services. According to Dr. Jeanne Stuart, chairman of the Department of Biology and Medical Technology at Belmont Abbey College, "The medical technologist is a vital link in the clinical team which performs the microscopic, chemical, bacteriological and other tests which are responsible for excellence in patient care. The responsibilities of a medical technologist are challenging and varied."

A recent national survey showed that starting salaries for

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Investment Co., in Winston-Salem, and that three other Abbey grads - Richard Hoeflinng, George Taylor, Jr. ('72) and Bob Daniel ('75) are top executives in the Company. Best of luck to all of you! Tom Bolton is with the Hartford Insurance Group in Charleston, S.C. He and his wife have two children. Greg Edmonds is in the graduate school of engineering at the University of Florida and was elected vice-president of Tau Beta Pi national engineering honor society. Dennis MacAvoy is with Johnson & Johnson selling dental supplies in Boston.

'72 - While on a convention trip to Portland, Maine, in June, Jack Hanahan spent a few days with Ed Cartoski and Joe ('74) in Riverhead, Long Island. Ed is stationed with the Service in Germany and Joe is a painting contractor in the Long Island area. Thank you, Pat Duffy, for providing a room at the Washington Hilton for Jay Briody to hold a "Mini College Night." All of us here are proud to hear of the good job you are doing there. Terry Spear is computer programmer for the University of Colorado.

'73 - Thank you, Jim Bowen, for sending so much news of Abbey alumni. Jim is in dental school at the Medical College of Virginia, along with Craig Whitt ('69), Chuck Janus ('74), and Rick Donzell ('75). Tom Jones ('74) is in graduate school and Tom Nolan is in the medical school. Tony Yeung has received his MS in Bio-chemistry from Bowman Gray and will go for his Ph.D. at V.P.I. in Blacksburg, Va. Bill Grizzard received his M.S. in Endocrinology Physiology from Virginia State University. Douglas Caskey is working for a pharmaceutical company as a chemist in Raleigh.

'74 - Congratulations to Anne and John Kuslac on the arrival of Michael Joseph. They live in Orlando, Florida. Douglas Keir is completing the Residency program in Hospital Administration at Charlotte Memorial Hospital and Medical Center. Congratulations on the arrival of your first child, Caroline, in February. Congratulations to Walter Achumba, who graduated from the Graduate School of Business Administration on August 7. Enjoyed the article in Update, the paper of Celanese Corporation, about Gene Best. Congratulations, Gene on your promotion by Celanese from senior technical specialist to chemist. Jack Wurple is with a pharmaceutical firm near Philadelphia, Penna.

'75 - Don Smyth is working in his father's lumber business in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Farley visited with him recently. Mark Koon is an auditor with the Hecht Company in Washington and Baltimore and lives in Bethesda. Ronald Uren has been accepted for graduate study in Business at Winthrop College.

IN MEMORIAM

Lawrence Allen (Jim) Sosebee, Class of 1965