

News Commentary

[NEWS COMMENTARY, Adventist Review]

Fifty minutes went by before the Kansas City Fire Department arrived. By then the fire had engulfed hundreds¹—hundreds of books, that is.

This was a deliberate destruction of good books, full of knowledge and information. It was “the funeral pyre for thought in America today,” according to Tom Wayne, who started the blaze. Wayne, owner of a large used bookstore, had had enough of society’s disregard for books. With more than 20,000 books in surplus and no place to store them any longer, he contacted everyone from libraries to Goodwill stores in an effort to donate the books. These were not cheap dime novels; he had everything from today’s best sellers to “obscure titles like a bound report from the Fourth Pan-American Conference held in Buenos Aires in 1910.” Yet no one wanted them.

As the books went up in flames, Wayne vowed to burn more every Sunday as a protest of people not reading books. Drawn by the bizarre fire, people stopped out of curiosity to see what was being thrown into the fire. Many just stood and watched, but some stopped to rescue a few books.

There was a time before the Xbox and Google when reading a book or writing a letter were preferred methods of unwinding. But now reading and writing are being quickly replaced by aimless Web surfing and impersonal text messaging.

Modern technology is leading to a gradual decline of our potential as God’s creation. We must not compromise ourselves—God created us in His image ... to design and create, to think and reason. To be less is to succumb to being a lost and forgotten art.

¹ Source, “Unwanted books go up in flames,” Associated Press via CNN.com, <http://tinyurl.com/2r4ule>, accessed June 19, 2007.