Commencement Address
Walsh College of Accountancy & Business Administration
Zion Christian Church; June 20, 2009

Chinese proverb: “May you live in interesting times…”

Remember: “If life gives you lemons... get tequila, salt & call me!”

Great to be a business grad today – even in today’s economy

Critical needs for innovation and adaptation

Manufacturing, life sciences, transportation

Energy – my area of focus

Push for alternatives,

Carbon targets 2020 (20%) versus 2050 (80%)

Need for “Nobel-caliber” discoveries

Might think I was talking about being an engineer... but Hey!

Who makes all this stuff a reality?!? So many great ideas don’t get past “go” w/o finance, planning, strategy, marketing, etc

Even with that... the role of technology not just for new toys

But is powerful social dynamic to innovation
Drives needs, creates markets, builds on itself

What does any of this have to do with you? (Beyond obvious)

**Gunpowder**  Context – the collapsing timeline

Innovation history of civilization told in centuries

Wheel; tools; bow/arrow; gunpowder (9th century)

19th/20th Century began collapse to decades

Began with the invention of **dirigibles**, the assembly line, **airplanes**, **ice cream cones**

Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, **nuclear reactors**

The **traffic light**, nylon, **duct tape**, the bikini

**Holography**, the **computer**, **micro processors**, internet

Take music; **Vinyl records**...**tapes**... **CDs**... **mp3 downloads**

21st Century collapsing even further

**Computing power** *(Moore’s law power doubles every two yrs)*

**Impact of internet**, **cell phones**
Most of what you can’t live w/o didn’t exist when you were born

Ipod, TIVO, Xbox, IPhone, GPS

Exponential graph (Asymptote) –approaching a limit?

Great stuff... right? Maybe ... not

HYPERSPACE (Michio Kaku)

Failed search life in the universe (SETI, Carl Sagan, etc)

Can civilizations survive their own technological innovations?

Adapting to new paradigms

Germ warfare

Nuclear power and weapons

Climate change/greenhouse gas pollution

Accelerated gaps between haves and have-nots

Introduced into tribal dynamics the ability to end civilization

Ethics of technological advancements

What would be the warning signs?
NASA photo from space of earth and lights at night

Many of world’s hot spots in the dark (Afghanistan, Somalia, North Korea, Sudan, etc.)

Challenges of world hunger, disease, illiteracy, pain

Taking advantage of disadvantaged (1st world to 3rd & otherwise)

Stripping of resources

Sites for new plants, prisons, landfills, etc.

21st Century will be about meeting critical sociological challenges dressed up as technological advances

Energy, medicine, water and other vital resources

But the true challenge is not in the lab... it’s:

How to share

How to keep from getting too far ahead-or behind

Minimizing the gaps between haves and have-nots

How to keep social skills & character evolving at same pace

How to know when to say no...when to negotiate
In line with that concept... another element

**LYDIA**  
King of Lydia story (Plato’s Republic)

Who are you when no one is looking? *(Character/destiny)*

How do you call upon your own character?

By looking beyond the walls of your office or your cubicle, your daily life

By staying as open to ideas and “differences” as you are today and embracing them...

Keep an eye on the world’s issues and challenges

See technology (& its application in the market place) not as solution, but the **tool**

**CHEESE**  
(Mom never made friends w/cheese)

Build collaboration

With colleagues

With different disciplines – **Arts, international relations, architecture, engineering**...

With **national** and **international** partners
Continue your education

In your field, but also literature, science, philosophy, the big ideas

Love your neighbor

19th Century – across the fence

20th Century – across the country

21st Century – around the world

You are our true hope for the future

With you lies our ability to avoid catastrophe

I believe in you! And I’ll work with you... just...

Embrace differences; welcome change; learn from strangers

EAT THE CHEESEBURGER!