The Just War Tradition in the Present Crisis

Is it ever right to go to war? Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese provides understanding of just war tradition from a biblical perspective.

Searching for Answers

Recent events have prompted Christians to ask moral questions concerning the legitimacy of war. How far should we go in punishing evil? Can torture ever be justified? On what basis are these actions premised? These problems remain especially acute for those who claim the Christian faith. Fortunately, we are not the first generation to face these questions. The use of force and violence has always troubled the Christian conscience. Jesus Christ gave his life freely without resisting. But does Christ's nonviolent approach deny government the prerogative to maintain order and establish peace through some measure of force? All government action operates on the premise of force. To deny all force, to be a dedicated pacifist, leads no less to a condition of anarchy than if one were a religious fascist. Extremes have the tendency to meet. In the past, Christians attempted to negotiate through the extremes and seek a limited and prescribed use of force in what has been called the Just War Tradition.



The Just War Tradition finds its source in several streams of Western thought: biblical teaching, law, theology, philosophy, military strategy, and common sense. Just War thinking integrates this wide variety of thought through

providing Christians with a general orientation on the issues of war and peace. This tradition transcends denominational barriers and attempts to supply workable answers and solutions to very difficult moral problems. Just War has its origins in Greco-Roman thinking as well as Christian theology: Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin have all contributed to its development.{1}

Just War thinking does not provide sure-fire ways of fighting guilt-free wars, or offer blanket acceptance of government action. It often condemns acts of war as well as condones. Just War presents critical criteria malleable enough to address a wide assortment of circumstances. It does not give easy answers to difficult questions; instead, it provides a broad moral consensus concerning problems of justifying and controlling war. It presents a living tradition that furnishes a stock of wisdom consisting of doctrines, theories, and philosophies. Mechanical application in following Just War teachings cannot replace critical thinking, genius, and moral circumspection in ever changing circumstances. Just War attempts to approximate justice in the temporal realm in order to achieve a temporal but lasting peace. It does not make pretensions in claiming infinite or absolute justice, which remain ephemeral and unattainable goals. Only God provides infinite justice and judgment in eternity through his own means. "'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Deut. 32:35; Heb. 10:30).

The Clash of Civilizations

To apply Just War criteria we must first have a reasonable assessment of current circumstances. The Cold War era witnessed a bipolar world consisting of two colossal opponents. The end of the Cold War has brought the demise of strict ideological battles and has propelled the advent of cultural divisions in a multi-polar world. Present and future conflicts exist across cultural lines. The "Clash of

Civilizations" paradigm replaces the old model of East vs. West.{2} People are more inclined to identify with their religious and ethnic heritage than the old ideology. The West has emerged as the global leader, leaving the rest of the world to struggle either to free itself from the West or to catch it economically and technologically. The triumph of the West—or modernized, secular, and materialist society—has created a backlash in Islamic Fundamentalism.

Fundamentalism does not represent ancient living traditions but a modern recreation of ancient beliefs with a particular emphasis on political conquest. Fundamentalists do not hesitate to enter into battle or holy war (jihad) with the enemies of God at a political and military level. The tragic events of 9/11 and the continual struggle against terrorism traces back to the hostility Islamic fundamentalists feel towards the triumph of the West. They perceive Western global hegemony [ed. note: leadership or predominant influence] as a threat and challenge to their religious beliefs and traditions, as most Christian fundamentalists and evangelicals feel threatened by the invincible advance of modern secular society. The error of fundamentalism lies in thinking it can recreate the past and enforce those beliefs and conditions on the modern world. Coercion remains at the heart of fundamentalist practice, constituting a threat potentially worse than modern secular society.

This cultural divide causes Christians to reconsider the basis of warfare premised on the responsibilities of the state to defend civil society against the encroachments of religious extremism that fights in the name of God and for a holy cause or crusade.

This may sound strange at first to theological ears, but an absolute principle of Just War states that Christians never fight for "God and Country," but only for "Country." There is only a secular and civil but necessary task to be accomplished in war, never a higher mandate to inaugurate God's kingdom. In

this sense Just War thinking attempts to secularize war by which it hopes to limit its horrendous effects.

Holy War or Just War

An essential distinction divides Just War from holy war. Just War does not claim to fight in the name of God or even for eternal causes. It strictly concerns temporal and political reasons. Roland Bainton sums up this position: “War is more humane when God is left out of it.”{3} This does not embrace atheism but a Christian recognition concerning the value, place, and responsibilities of government. The state is not God or absolute, but plays a vital role in maintaining order and peace (Matt. 22:21). The Epistles repeat this sentiment (Rom.13; 1 Peter 2: 13-17; 1 Tim.2; Titus 3:1). Government does not act as the organ or defender through which God establishes his kingdom (John 18: 36).

Government does not have the authority to enforce God’s will on unwilling subjects except within a prescribed and restricted civil realm that maintains the minimum civil order for the purpose of peace. Government protects the good and punishes the evil. Government serves strictly temporal purposes “in order that we may lead a tranquil and quite life in all godliness and dignity” (2 Tim. 2:2). God establishes civil authorities for humanity’s sake, not his own. Therefore, holy war that claims to fight in the name of God and for eternal truths constitutes demonic corruption of divinely sanctioned civil authority.

The following distinctions separate holy war and Just War beliefs. Holy war fights for divine causes in Crusades and Jihads to punish infidels and heretics and promote a particular faith; Just War fights for political causes to defend liberty and religious freedom. Holy war fights by divine command issuing from clerics and religious leaders; Just War fights through moral sanction. Holy war employs a

heavenly mandate, Just War a state mandate. Holy war is unlimited or total; anything goes, and the enemy must be eradicated in genocide or brought to submission. The Holy War slogan is “kill ’em all and let God sort them out!” Holy war accepts one group’s claim to absolute justice and goodness, which causes them to regard the other as absolutely evil. Just War practices limited war; it seeks to achieve limited temporal objectives and uses only necessary force to accomplish its task. Just War rejects genocide as a legitimate goal. Holy war fights out of unconditional obedience to faith. Just War fights out of obedience to the state, which is never incontestable. Holy war fights offensive wars of conquest; Just War fights defensive wars, generally responding to provocation. Holy war battles for God to enforce belief and compel submission. Just War defends humanity in protecting civil society, which despite its transitory and mundane role in the eternal scheme of things plays an essential part in preserving humanity from barbarism and allows for everything else in history to exist.

Why Go to War?

Just War thinking uses two major categories to measure the legitimacy of war. The first is called *jus ad bellum* [Latin for “justice to war”]: the proper recourse to war or judging the reasons for war. This category asks questions to be answered before going to war. It has three major criteria: just authority, just cause, and just intent.

Just authority serves as the presupposition for the rest of the criteria. It requires that only recognized state authorities use force to punish evil (Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2). Just War thinking does not validate individual actions against opponents, which would be terrorism, nor does it allow for paramilitary groups to take matters in their own hands. Just authority requires a formal declaration. War must be declared by a legitimate governmental authority. In the USA, Congress

holds the right of formal declaration, but the President executes the war. Congressional authorization in the last sixty years has substituted for formal declaration.

Just cause is the most difficult standard to determine in a pluralistic society. Whose justice do we serve? Just War asserts the notion of comparative or limited justice. No one party has claim to absolute justice; there exists either more or less just cause on each side. Therefore, Just War thinking maintains the right to dissent. Those who believe a war immoral must not be compelled against their wills to participate. Just War thinking recognizes individual conscientious objection.

Just cause breaks down to four other considerations. First, it requires that the state *perform all its duties*. Its first duty requires self-defense and defense of the innocent. A second duty entails recovery of lost land or property, and the third is to punish criminals and evil doers.

Second, just cause requires *proportionality*. This means that the positive results of war must outweigh its probable destructive effects. The force applied should not create greater evil than that resisted.

Third, one judges the *probability of success*. It asks, is the war winnable? Some expectation of reasonable success should exist before engaging in war. Open-ended campaigns are suspect. Clear objectives and goals must be outlined from the beginning. Warfare in the latter twentieth century abandoned objectives in favor of police action and attrition, which leads to interminable warfare.

Fourth, *last resort* means all alternative measures for resolving conflict must be exhausted before using force. However, preemptive strikes are justified if the current climate suggests an imminent attack or invasion. Last resort does not have to wait for the opponent to draw “first blood.”

Just intent judges the motives and ends of war. It asks, why go to war? and, what is the end result? Motives must originate from love or at least some minimum concern for others with the end result of peace. This rules out all revenge. The goals of war aim at establishing peace and reconciliation.

The Means of War

The proper conduct in war or judging the means of war is *jus in bello* [Latin for "justice in war"], the second category used to measure conflict. It has two primary standards: proportionality and discrimination.

Proportionality maintains that the employed necessary force not outweigh its objectives. It measures the means according to the ends and condemns all overkill. One should not use a bomb where a bullet will do.

Discrimination basically means non-combatant immunity. A "combatant" is anyone who by reasonable standard is actively engaged in an attempt to destroy you. POW's, civilians, chaplains, medics, and children are all non-combatants and therefore exempt from targeting. Buildings such as hospitals, museums, places of worship and landmarks share the same status. However, those previously thought to be non-combatants may forfeit immunity if they participate in fighting. If a place of worship becomes a stash for weapons and a safe-house for opponents, it loses its non-combatant status.

A proper understanding of discrimination does not mean that non-combatants may never be killed, but only that they are never intentionally targeted. The tragic reality of every war is that non-combatants will be killed. Discrimination attempts to minimize these incidents so they become the exception rather than the rule.

Killing innocent lives in war may be justified under the principle of *double effect*. This rule allows for the death of

non-combatants if they were unintended and accidental. Their deaths equal the collateral effects of just intent. Double effect states that each action has more than one effect, even though only one effect was intentional, the other accidental. Self-defense therefore intends to save one's life or that of another but has the accidental effect of the death of the third party.

The double effect principle is the most controversial aspect of the Just War criteria and will be subject to abuse. Therefore, it must adhere to its own criteria. Certain conditions apply before invoking double effect. First, the act should be good. It should qualify as a legitimate act of war. Second, a good effect must be intended. Third, the evil effect cannot act as an end in itself, and must be minimized with risk to the acting party. Lastly, the good effect always outweighs the evil effect.

Given the ferocity of war, it is understandable that many will scoff at the notion of Just War. However, Just War thinking accepts war and force as part of the human condition (Matt. 24:6) and hopes to arrive at the goal of peace through realistic yet morally appropriate methods. It does not promote war but seeks to mitigate its dreadful effects. Just War thinking morally informs Western culture to limit its acts of war and not to exploit its full technological capability, which could only result in genocide and total war.

Notes

1. The following books are helpful sources on Just War thinking: Robert G. Clouse, ed. War: Four Christian Views (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991); Paul Ramsey, War and the Christian Conscience: How Shall the Modern War be Conducted Justly? (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961); Lawrence J. Terlizzese, "The Just War Tradition and Nuclear Weapons in the Post Cold War Era" (Master's Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1994).

2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

3. Roland H. Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Evaluation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), 49.

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The Technological Simulacra: On the Edge of Reality and Illusion

Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese says that our addiction to technology is heading toward the opposite of the life we want.

What Saccharine is to Sugar, or The Technological Simulacra: On the Edge of Reality and Illusion

"Anyone wishing to save humanity today must first of all save the word."{1} – Jacques Ellul

Simulacra

Aerosmith sings a familiar tune:

"There's something wrong with the world today,
I don't know what it is,
there's something wrong with our eyes,

we're seeing things in a different way
and God knows it ain't [isn't] his;
there's melt down in the sky. We're living on the edge."{2}



What saccharine is to sugar, so the technological simulacra is to nature or reality—a technological replacement, purporting itself to be better than the original, more real than reality, sweeter than sugar: hypersugar.



Simulacra, (*Simulacrum,* Latin, pl., *likeness, image, to simulate*): or simulation, the term, was adapted by French social philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) to express his critical interpretation of the technological transformation of reality into hyperreality. Baudrillard's social critique provided the premise for the movie *The Matrix* (1999). However, he was made famous for declaring that the Gulf War never happened; TV wars are not a reflection of reality but projections (recreations) of the TV medium.{3}

Simulacra reduces reality to its lowest point or one-dimension and then recreates reality through attributing the highest qualities to it, like snapshots from family vacation. When primitive people refuse to have their picture taken because they are afraid that the camera steals their souls, they are resisting simulacra. The camera snaps a picture and recreates the image on paper or a digital medium; it then goes to a photo album or a profile page. Video highlights amount to the same thing in moving images; from three dimensions, the camera reduces its object to soulless one-dimensional fabrication.{4}

Simulacra does not end with the apparent benign pleasures of family vacation and media, although media represents its most recent stage.{5} Simulacra includes the entire technological environment or complex, its infrastructure, which acts as a false "second nature"{6} superimposed over the natural world, replacing it with a hyperreal one, marvelously illustrated in

the movie *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). As liquid metal conforms itself to everything it touches, it destroys the original.{7}

Humanity gradually replaces itself through recreation of human nature by technological enhancements, making the human race more adaptable to machine existence, ultimately for the purpose of space exploration. Transhumanists believe that through the advancements in genetic engineering, neuropharmaceuticals (experimental drugs), bionics, and artificial intelligence it will redesign the human condition in order to achieve immortality. "Humanity+," as Transhumanists say, will usher humanity into a higher state of being, a technological stairway to heaven, "glorification," "divinization" or "ascendency"in theological terms.{8}

God made man in his own image and now mankind remakes himself in the image of his greatest creation (image), the computer. If God's perfection is represented by the number seven and man's imperfection by the number six, then the Cyborg will be a five according to the descending order of being; the creature is never equal or greater than the creator but always a little lower.{9}

Glorious Reduction!{10}

www.probe.org/machinehead-from-1984-to-the-brave-new-world-order-and-beyond/

Hyperreality

An old tape recording commercial used to say, "Is it real or is it Memorex?" By championing the superiority of recording to live performance the commercial creates hyperreality, a reproduction of an original that appears more real than reality, a replacement for reality with a reconstructed one, purported to be better than the original.

Disneyland serves as an excellent example by creating a copy of reality remade in order to substitute for reality; it confuses reality with an illusion that appears real, "more real than real."{11} Disney anesthetizes the imagination, numbing it against reality, leaving spectators with a false or fake impression. Main Street plays off an idealized past. The technological reconstruction leads us to believe that the illusion "can give us more reality than nature can."{12}

Hyperreality reflects a media dominated society where "signs and symbols" no longer reflect reality but are manipulated by their users to mean *whatever*. Signs recreate reality to achieve the opposite effect (metastasis){13}; for example, in Dallas I must travel west on Mockingbird Lane in order to go to East Mockingbird Lane. Or, Facebook invites social participation when no actual face to face conversation takes place.{14}

Hyperreality creates a false perception of reality, the glorification of reduction that confuses fantasy for reality, a proxy reality that imitates the lives of movie and TV characters for real life. When reel life in media becomes real life outside media we have entered the high definition, misty region—the Netherlands of concrete imagination—hyperreality!{15}

Hyperreality goes beyond escapism or simply "just entertainment." If that was all there was to it, there would be no deception or confusion, at best a trivial waste of time and money. Hyperreality is getting lost in the pleasures of escapism and confusing the fantasy world for the real one, believing that fantasy is real or even better than reality. Hyperreality results in the total inversion of society through technological sleight of hand, a cunning trick, a sorcerer's illusion transforming the world into a negative of itself, into its opposite, then calling it progress.

Hyperreality plays a trick on the mind, a self-induced

hypnotism on a mass scale, duping us by our technological recreation into accepting a false reality as truth. Like Cypher from the movie *The Matrix* who chose the easy and pleasant simulated reality over the harsh conditions of the "desert of the real" in humanity's fictional war against the computer, he chose to believe a lie instead of the truth.{16}

The Devil is a Liar

A lie plays a trick on the mind, skillfully crafted to deceive through partial omission or concealment of the truth. The lie is the devil's (devil means liar) only weapon, always made from a position of inferiority and weakness (Revelation 20:3, 8). A lie never stands on its own terms as equal to truth; it does not exist apart from twisting (recreating) truth. A lie never contradicts the truth by standing in opposition to it.

A lie is not a negative (no) or a positive (yes), but obscures one or the other. It adds by revealing what is not there—it subtracts by concealing what is there. A lie appears to be what is not and hides what it really is. "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14).

A lie does not negate (contradict) or affirm truth. Negation (No) establishes affirmation (Yes). Biblically speaking, the no comes before the yes—the cross then the resurrection; law first, grace second. The Law is no to sin (disobedience); the Gospel is yes to faith (obedience). Truth is always a synthesis or combination between God's no in judgment on sin and His yes in grace through faith in Jesus Christ. "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Law without grace is legalism; grace without law is license.{17}

www.probe.org/law-and-grace-combating-the-american-heresy-of-pelagianism/

The devil's lie adds doubt to the promise of God; "Indeed, has

God said, 'you shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"(Genesis 3:1 NASB) It hides the promise of certain death; "You surely will not die" (Genesis 3:4). The serpent twists knowledge into doubt by turning God's imperative, "Don't eat!" into a satanic question "Don't eat?"{18}

But it is Eve who recreates the lie in her own imagination. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6).{19}

Sight incites desire. We want what we see (temptation). Eve was tempted by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) after seeing the fruit, then believed the false promise that it would make her wise. "She sees; she no longer hears a word to know what is good, bad or true."{20} Eve fell victim to her own idolatrous faith in hyperreality that departed from the simple trust in God's word.{21}

The Void Machine

Media (television, cell phone, internet, telecommunications) is a void machine.{22} In the presence of a traditional social milieu, such as family, church or school, it will destroy its host, and then reconstruct it in its own hyperreal image (Simulacra). Telecommunication technology is a Trojan Horse for all traditional institutions that accept it as pivotal to their "progress," except prison or jail.{23}. The purpose of all institutions is the promotion of values or social norms, impossible through the online medium.

Media at first appears beneficial, but this technology transforms the institution and user into a glorified version of itself. The personal computer, for example, imparts values not consistent with the mission of church or school, which is

to bring people together in mutual support around a common goal or belief for learning and spiritual growth (community). This is done primarily through making friends and forming meaningful relationships, quite simply by people talking to each other. Values and social norms are only as good as the people we learn them from. Values must be embodied in order to be transmitted to the next generation.{24}

Talking as the major form of personal communication is disappearing. Professor of Communications John L. Locke noted that "Intimate talking, the social call of humans, is on the endangered species list."{25} People prefer to text, or phone.{26} Regrettably, educational institutions such as high schools and universities are rapidly losing their relevance as traditional socializing agents where young people would find a potential partner through like interests or learn a worldview from a mentor. What may be gained in convenience, accessibility or data acquisition for the online student is lost in terms of the social bonds necessary for personal ownership of knowledge, discipline and character development.{27}

An electronic community is not a traditional community of persons who meet face to face, in person, in the flesh where they establish personal presence. Modern communication technologies positively destroy human presence. What philosopher Martin Heidegger called *Dasein*, "being there," (embodiment or incarnation) is absent.{28} As Woody Allen put it, "90 percent of life is showing up."{29} The presence of absence marks the use of all electronic communication technology. Ellul argued, "The simple fact that I carry a camera [cell phone] prevents me from grasping everything in an overall perception."{30} The camera like the cell phone preoccupies its users, creating distance between himself and friends. The cellphone robs the soul from its users, who must exchange personal presence for absence; the body is there tapping away, but not the soul! The cell phone user has become

a void![{31}]

The Power of Negative Thinking

According to popular American motivational speakers, the key to unlimited worldly wealth, success and happiness is in the power of positive thinking that unleashes our full potential; however, according to obscure French social critics the key to a meaningful life, lived in freedom, hope and individual dignity is in the power of negative thinking that brings limits, boundaries, direction and purpose.

Negativity gives birth to freedom, expanding our spiritual horizons with possibilities and wise choices, which grounds faith, hope and love in absolute truth, giving us self-definition greater than our circumstances, greater than reality of the senses. To freely choose in love one's own path, identity and destiny is the essence of individual dignity.

According to French social critics Jacques Ellul and Herbert Marcuse, freedom is only established in negation that provides limits and boundaries, which tells us who we are. Technological hyperreality removes all natural and traditional limits in the recreation of humanity in the image of the cyborg. The transhuman transformation promises limitless potential at the expense of individual freedom, personal identity and ultimately human dignity and survival.

www.probe.org/into-the-void-the-coming-transhuman-transformation/

All limitless behavior ends in self-destruction. Human extinction looms over the technological future, like the Sword of Damocles, threatening humanity's attempt to refit itself for immortality in a grand explosion (nuclear war), a slow poisoning (ecocide) or suicidal regressive technological replacement. Stephen Hawking noted recently that technological

progress threatens humanity's survival with nuclear war, global warming, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering over the course of the next 100 years. Hawking stated, "We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we must [recognize] the dangers and control them."{32}

In asserting "NO!" to unlimited technological advance and establishing personal and communal limits to our use of all technology, especially the cell phone, computer and TV, we free ourselves from the technological necessity darkening our future through paralyzing the will to resist.{33}

After we "JUST SAY NO!"{34} to our technological addictions, for instance, after a sabbatical fast on Sunday when the whole family turns off their electronic devices, and get reacquainted, a new birth of freedom will open before us teeming with possibilities. We will face unmediated reality in ourselves and family with a renewed hope that by changing our personal worlds for one day simply by pushing the off button on media technology we can change the future. Through a weekly media fast (negation) we will grow faith in the power of self-control by proving that we can live more abundant lives without what we once feared absolute necessity, inevitable and irresistible. "All things are possible with God" (Mark 10: 27). When we exchange our fear of idols for faith in the Living God the impossible becomes possible and our unlimited potential is released that will change the world forever!{35}

I see trees of green, red roses, too,
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue, and clouds of white,
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky,
Are also on the faces of people going by.
I see friends shaking hands, sayin', "How do you do?"
They're really sayin', "I love you."

I hear babies cryin'. I watch them grow.
They'll learn much more than I'll ever know
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.{36}

"[I]f man does not pull himself together and assert himself . . . then things will go the way I describe [cyborg condition]." – Jacques Ellul{37}

Notes

1. Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), vii.

2. Aerosmith, *Eat the Rich*, "Livin' on the Edge," Sony, 1993.

3. The same is true of the game last night—I caught the highlights on ESPN—no difference really—it never happened! The Presidential debates, my Facebook page, 911, televangelism, the online (electric) church: all reproductions, all exist at the level of Santa Claus in a dreamy, surreal world not really real: hyperreal, really!

4. French social critic Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979) described dimensional reduction in human nature through the process of "mimesis" very similar to Baudrillard's conception of *simulacra* (technological simulation) and Ellul's *la technique* (technological order). *Mimesis* eradicates all protest and opposition to the prevailing technological normalcy and silences all conscientious objections to the obvious or self-evident benefits (taken for granted) and blessings of technological progress. Like a frontal lobotomy when a section of the brain is removed that leaves all necessary automatic biological functions but removes the capacity to higher

critical thinking, effectively silencing all differences, removing unique personality, individuality, and private space. The person is reduced to *one dimension* without the critical higher thought process or skills. Mimesis or mimicry transcends the adjustment phase to new technology known as *Future Shock* and brings the population into a direct and immediate relationship with the technological environment comparable to prehistoric and primitive cultures in their relationship to their natural milieus, climates and habitats. Mimesis replaces the traditional social environment with a technological one, an imitation or mimicry (simulacra). Mimesis removes the ability to feel alienation. Through reduction of the individual to a cell (atomization) in the social body, one never feels out of place, discomfort or disease, etc., because there is no longer any sense of individuality or difference. Anesthetizing the soul kills the pain of maladjustment to modernity leaving all feelings alike; joy is indistinguishable from hate. What do people feel after a lobotomy? They feel nothing, *comfortably numb* describes postmodern sentimentality.

Mimesis reduces the population to impulsive consumers. Material goods tie us to the system. “People recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed and social control is anchored in the new needs it has produced” (Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in Advanced Industrial Society* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1964], 9). People are in love with their technology. Consumer objects express passion and spirituality; “For example, cars are not simply neutral transportation objects but beloved expressions of soul.” Their self-image is locked in the kind of cars they drive, houses they live in: “From teen dreaming about a hot set of wheels to the self-imagined sophisticate, it is image that dictates our purchase . . . Most of us can’t imagine why anyone would buy a Hummer except to flaunt his financial

ability to conspicuously consume . . . . Anyone who doubts the role of image needs only drive a rust bucket" (Lee Worth Bailey, *The Enchantments of Technology* [Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2005], 7). "Image is everything!" Modern technological materialism has become the antithesis of the Christian way of life. Jesus said, "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15).

5. Orders of Simulacra:

Renaissance: Copies of Original

Industrial: Mass Production of Original

Hyperreality: Recreation of Original

Metastasis: Reverse effects of the hyperreal stage of simulacra proliferate, comparable to the spread of cancerous tissue. "Metastasis: the transfer of disease from one organ or part to another not directly connected with it" (Benjamin F. Miller and Claire Brackman Keane *Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine and Nursing* [Philadelphia: Saunders, 1972]). Hyperreality "more real than real" purports to be a technological improvement on nature and "the signs and symbols," (language) and institutions of traditional society, "better than real;" however, despite the apparent success of the hyperreal stage to deliver on its promise of improvement or "progress," opposite results threaten social stability. Disneyland gets boring. Media technology isolates people rather than bringing them together. Social media turns out to be anti-social. The automobile extends the commute to work. The computer increases the average work load and illiteracy, reduces jobs, depersonalizes individuals, kills privacy, creates universal surveillance, makes pornography and depictions of violence readily accessible to children. The cell phone is actually an excellent bomb detonating device. The computer atrophies human intelligence, logic, and thinking (creative and problem solving skills); through societal

dependence on the computer people have forgotten how to think for themselves, and solve problems in any other way. The computer is not a simple tool used to organize knowledge, making it readily accessible, but as the centralizing technology through the digitalization process it recreates the world in its own image. Instead of happiness, the technological order is producing mass neurosis evident in the increase in depression, anxiety, attention deficit disorder, anorexia, bulimia, suicide and the mass inability to differentiate between reality and illusion.

Metastasis in the Orders of Simulacra according to Baudrillard also reflects Jacques Ellul's critical technological analysis in his assertion of the law of diminishing returns (law of reverse effects), *The Technological Bluff* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990). Once the threshold of reversal in technological progress is reached, a saturation point, beyond which any further advance is completely unnecessary (and thus further progress despite mass optimism) will produce reverse or opposite effects than intended. The technological threshold is reached when new technology is imposed on the population which was unnecessary prior to its invention. When necessity for a new technology appears after its invention the threshold of beneficial effects inverts and harmful consequences, side effects—intended or not—rapidly multiply. There is no use or felt needs for much of the technology developed in the 20th century; TV, computer, jet engine, rockets, atom bomb, cell phone, innumerable widgets and gadgets, so use is found and need artificially created. People have no felt need for a technology that does not yet exist. When useless technology is developed for its own sake (knowledge for knowledge's sake), rather than liberation it displaces *the good of mankind to the glory of God* as its object or *telos* and becomes an end in itself. The general population never asks for new technology; rather, technology is developed according to the technological imperative—whatever can be done should be done. Its beneficial use is unquestionably assumed and its use promoted through

mass advertising and commercials (technological propaganda), and in short order a new necessity is added to the litany of technological requirements. As the list of “must haves” and “can’t live without” grows in order to keep pace with the tempo of modern life, *users* voluntarily surrender their freedom for self-imposed technological necessity, blissfully unaware of any potential side-effects or untoward consequences.

The technological condition may be compared to generational slavery. Those born into servitude accept it as normal. The “happy slave” remains so through refusal to recognize his condition as “slave.” He embraces the world as he finds it with all his material needs and appetites satiated. There is no reason to protest, compounded by the fact that he has no ability to do so. A slave will always remain a slave until he recognizes that he is a slave. And without an intellectual horizon to lift him above his condition as a real possibility he will forever remain a slave. The first step to freedom for the slave is to recognize his condition of slavery and the possibility of a different way of life through self-determination, but that is impossible without a degree of abstract analysis and a measure of critical reason. Comparatively, technological determinism imposes its frightful inescapable necessity as a natural order without a meaningful future beyond the present way of life. In stripping society of critical ability to reason and negate that order from a metaphysical view, humanity has lost its only absolute reference point outside its own limited existence and above its concrete situation from which to criticize technology and bring it under ethical control and moral limitation. God is greater than any technological idol made by human hands and provides an immovable ground from which humanity can reassert control, but mankind’s Creator, Savior and Helper does him no good if he does not believe in his power or worse confuses it with the status quo, so that the apocalyptic power of God’s confrontational judgment that leveled Babel (Genesis 11),

Egypt (Exodus), Jerusalem and Rome is convoluted through blessing the technological utopia as *New Atlantis*.

The idolization of technology follows in the wake of modern science and rationalism but has a dehumanizing effect rather than amelioration. New technology brings new necessity and demands rather than freedom that exacts its price from humanity and nature, resulting in a much more complicated and dangerous world. The Apostle Paul stated that if we have food and shelter we should be content (1 Timothy 6:8). The accumulation of material things beyond meeting basic needs becomes a new burden, an added necessity not there before, resulting in bondage not freedom. People are owned by their possessions, must work harder for their technology and have been reduced to cogs in the wheel of progress rather than individuals with inherent value made in the image of God. From electricity, to phones, appliances to automobiles to computers, cell phones, *ad infinitum, ad nauseam* each new technology begins with the promises of convenience and improving modern life by making it faster, then through habitual use it becomes necessary, eventually addictive. From the basic material needs of food and shelter modern life has added dishwashers, microwave ovens, vacuum cleaners, TVs, cars, computers and most recently the cell phone as necessary for life in modern times. The devaluation of human life pays for the technology that is developed for the sake of expanding the frontiers of knowledge and exploration rather than creating the condition of freedom. Human freedom is lost with each new artificial technical necessity, resulting in an increasingly nihilistic society; where power increases, choice is lost, resulting in increased meaninglessness. Nihilistic sentiment develops along with technological power; "*We know that power always destroys values and meaning* . . . Where power augments indefinitely there is less and less meaning" (Jacques Ellul, *Perspectives on Our Age* [New York: Seabury, 1981], 45). Technological necessity proliferates along with technological power over nature, reducing the scope of

available choices, options or way of life that differs from those ensnared in the modern mechanized mainstream. What possibilities for a decent way of life are open to those who own neither car nor home, do not use a cell phone or computer, or possess at least a college degree? How *successful* will any corporate organization, church, school or business be if it does not use modern communication technology, radio, TV, computer or advertising techniques (propaganda) to promote its cause or product? As the world conforms itself to technological necessity, "you must get a cell phone and use a computer or risk getting left behind," it loses touch with the reality outside these devices, which is reduced and recreated online. For example, the traditional "church service" where believers join together in the unity of faith around the communion table as community and family becomes the embarrassing forgery of a lone spectator in front of a one dimensional monitor.

6. Paul Tillich, *The Spiritual Situation in Our Technical Society* (Macon, GA: University Press, 1988), 7. "Tillich describes the creation of a 'second nature' that results from science's attempt to control nature. Second nature in turn subjects man to the same domination he wishes to exert over nature, making himself subject to the very thing he had created to liberate him" (Lawrence J. Terlizzese, *Trajectory of the 21st Century: Essays on Theology and Technology* [Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2009, 155]).

7. Baudrillard's description of Simulacra is reminiscence of Herbert Marcuse's depiction of "Mimesis" in *One-Dimensional Man*. Mimesis: the total identification of the individual with technological environment that mimics, apes or imitates historical social conditions, for example the city replaces nature, the automobile replaces the horse and carriage, TV replaces the family hearth, social media substitutes for personal relationships. Muk-bang replaces family members at the dinner table, traditional institutions that requires a

personal presence, school and church, are rapidly transferring to the online medium. Likewise Jacques Ellul in *The Technological Society* describes technological advancement or "*la technique*" as creating a new environment, one that overlays both the natural and historical social environments with an urban/industrial/digital one.

8. Braden Allenby and Daniel Sarewitz, *The Techno-Human Condition* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), 1-13; *Humans Need Not Apply*, CGP Grey, 2014. The Transhuman Transformation is the ultimate in works salvation that lifts humanity to the next stage in evolutionary development through technological immortality or digitalized godhood that replaces all his physical corruptions with artificial replacements in the simulated heaven of a computer server. The computer does not dominate the will of humanity, enforcing universal peace through fear of annihilation as in the movie *Colossus: The Forbin Project* (1970), but assimilates humanity digitally and recreates it in its own image or highest ideal. The robots are not taking over, rather humanity is surrendering its will and decisions to the computer in tired resignation of life which has become too difficult by its own design.

9. "O LORD . . . What is man that you are mindful of him or the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little lower than the angels and crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:4, 5). "Angels," Elohim (God) in Psalm 8:5 refers to the divine visitation (theophany) mentioned in verse 4, the Angel of The LORD, i.e., Genesis 18; 19; 22:15; 32:24-32; Exodus 12:12, 13. Humanity was made highest in God's created order, below the creator and above the angelic host in the chain of being; "Don't you know you will judge angels?" (1 Corinthians 6:3). Angels are "ministering spirits sent to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

10. We are not saying one cannot reduce a complicated argument, book, movie etc., to its main points in outline form. We are saying that reduction does not replace the

original, as somehow “better.” A well-done outline does not alleviate the audience’s responsibility to discover for itself, to pick up and read, but will inspire the audience to do so. Reading Calvin’s *Institutes*, or Augustine’s *City of God* or Thomas’ *Summa Theologica* in PowerPoint or Cliff Notes is comparable to watching the Super Bowl in highlights instead of in its entirety from kickoff.

The proliferation of the digital camera as appendage to the cell phone has created the absurd phenomenon of reduction of reduction in the class room. As the PowerPoint slide has allowed professors to reduce all learning to three pertinent bullet points per slide, so students have followed their cue in picturing the text (taking a picture of the slide). Instead of suffering the laborious and tedious task of jotting down a simple outline in a note book, a helpful mnemonic practice, they take a picture of it, reducing the slide to digital acknowledgement and temporary storage before deletion, in order to make room for the pictures of tomorrow night’s Harry Potter costume gala. Education isn’t what it used to be, it just isn’t!

11. Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 166 ff.

12. Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (New York: HBJ, 1986), 43.

13. The projections of visual media may have their origins in “the desert of the real” as Baudrillard puts it, but what the spectator sees on his screen, monitor or photograph should not be confused with “reality,” but recreated reality mediated through an electronic medium. Marshall McLuhan’s famous maxim for media analysis, “The medium is the message,” undergirds this critical understanding of media technology. Any fan of live entertainment or sports knows immediately that TV broadcast of a live venue is an entirely different event than being there live behind home plate or on the fifty yard line. Preference for the surreal, sterilized, cartoonish, Apollonian

images on TV and in film, rather than seeing the actual blots, blemishes and facial scars of people, perspiring athletes or hearing the crack of the bat is not the central moral issue, which does not come down to preferences, which are already conditioned by excessive media exposure at an early age. The failure to distinguish between reality and hyperreality constitutes the greatest dangers of the technological simulacra. When the general audience mistakes or confuses the hyperreal for reality, it allows itself to be deceived. When it believes what it sees on TV to be the literal unbiased truth, when in fact TV broadcasts a highly opinionated reconstructed version designed to transport its audience to a dream-like existence, the audience loses touch with reality and becomes immune to moral conscience, guilt and remorse for its actions—for example, war, ecological destruction, racism, etc. Group deception and delusion is rooted in personal inability to distinguish fact and fantasy, reality and illusion creating a strange self-hypnotic mass psychosis, easily persuaded by the predominate image projected into its thinking. "Brainwashing" or "mind control" are not the best choice of words, yet the terms still resonate for many people in describing the immediate effects of visual media on the audience. Electronic media bypass the rational process and speaks directly to the emotional or subconscious. Media effects the shaping of behavior through mass appeal of image, a reproduction of reality framed in drama and grounded in the erotic (sex appeal), moving the mass to do something (doing is being), buy, give, join, fight, etc., without the ballast of critical reflection that will spare a people from rushing headlong into disaster. The irrational nature of the emotional appeal was the cause for Plato's expulsion of artists, musicians and dramatists from his fictional utopia *The Republic*. By allowing irrational appeal free reign, the public loses the appeal to critical reason as the measure of truth and the people become prone to deception and mass manipulation by a tyrant. Likewise Jesus urges all to pause in rational reflection, "to count the cost" like a king going to war or

building a tower, before deciding to follow him (Luke 14:25-33).

The failure to discern the difference between reality and illusion in mass and social media is due to the intoxicating effects of hyperreality and the loss of critical reason in the public's media consumption. Electronic media numbs awareness to reality and allows escape to fantasy, as the universal *soma* (perfect drug from Huxley's fictional tale *Brave New World*). The condition of intoxication or "drunkardness" is one of self-induced madness, so the self-hypnotic condition of electronic media creates a similar neurosis. Karl Marx criticized religion as "the opiate of the people," accurate for the masses living in the industrial conditions of the 19th century, but obsolete as a description of the masses since the invention of television, which has replaced religion as the opiate of the people.

When image dominates a societal mindset and learning, emotional (sex) appeal moves the population in mass conformity or group behavior that ousts critical reason in herd mentality, subject to the whims of the image makers, propagandists, clergy, advertisers, etc. Ellul noted two orders of thinking determined by the means of learning: image and language. Image learning presents knowledge as a totality, each image is a world, complete and ready-made, certain of its own truthfulness, imparting its information instantly so long as we occupy the same space as the image. "The image conveys to me information belonging to the category of evidence, which convinces me without any prior criticism" (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 36). The image impresses itself on the character of the learner through unconscious acceptance that does not follow the logical sequence of language from start to finish, beginning to end but produces a haphazard collage of contradicting light totalities that appeal immediately to the moment (instant gratification). Image based learning produces a monolithic mentality or stereotypical

thinking and prescribed behavior. Critical reason is never allowed to assert differences; extremes are normalized so that everything is accepted. This is very apparent in the current PC orthodoxy widely accepted in the Millennial generation, the first generation raised on the computer, that stupidly pontificates that any assertion of difference between sexes, races, religion, etc., etc., amounts to “hate-crime.” For example, the gay lifestyle is no longer an acceptable alternative to monogamy but now has legal sanction as part of the mainstream establishment, despite its irrational and unnatural character. Islam is accepted as a religion of peace and compatible with Western democracies, yet no proof is ever offered to support this claim from the history of Islam. And the universal inanity of technological neutrality that provides the false sense of individual control over technological use, rapidly degenerates to technological necessity and inevitability of technological progress in actual daily behavior. Technology cannot be both neutral in its character under control of human choices and necessary or not under control of human choices, but autonomous (developing according to its own inner logic) at the same time; yet this inherent contradiction is completely ignored by all advocates of unlimited technological progress, Transhumanists, Futurists or simply all those who feel invested in the latest innovation: intellectuals, preachers, writers, professors, technogeeks, technognostics and technophiles. The smartest people in society appear completely oblivious to the contradiction of believing that technology is neutral in its essence yet necessary in application, rationalizing its rapid acceleration, not because they are bad people but because their thinking is dominated by the image of unlimited progress and human perfectibility projected onto them from the computer, rather than a rational way of thinking growing out of the book and lecture. Computerization of all human life creates the cardinal value of speed for its own sake (faster is better), which necessarily leads to nonlinear or irrational (emotional) learning through images because it is easy,

instant, and unconscious, producing stereotypical categories and behavior. The word expressed in speech and writing produces opposition to image domination of the computer because it is slower, linear and critical.

The second order of thinking Ellul says comes from language or the spoken and written word which must follow an arduous task of connecting letters, words, sentences and thoughts to each other through the process of speaking, reading and writing which follows the contours of logical sequence in step by step growth in knowledge and reason. Language learning does not begin with the self-asserting certainty of the totalitarian image, but develops progressively from "the unknown to uncertain and then from the uncertain to the known." (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 36); dialectically including doubt, objection, protest or difference in the attainment of knowledge. Language is rational, self-aware or conscious, certain of what it knows but never exhaustive in its claim to absolute total knowledge, therefore it remains critical or open to differences of opinion and further learning; there is always something new to learn, discover and explore. Language allows for personal identity through individual choices that are free but never absolute or final beyond correction or criticism. In the total world imposed by the image, knowledge is absolute with nothing new possible, therefore it must be accepted uncritically.

Because language is rational it also produces the highest standards in ethics and morality-rooted individual values and beliefs. Rationalism always produces the greatest moralism. In the ancient world the rational school of philosophy (Stoicism) based on their belief in logos (universal reason) was also the most ethical in their practice of universal peace, and equality. In world religions Buddhism stands as the most rational in its beliefs of simple universal truths leading to practical moral behavior (Four Noble Truths: life is suffering, suffering is caused by selfish desire, suffering is

alleviated by limiting selfish desire, curb selfish desire through the practical application of the Eightfold Path). Modern Rationalism culminating in the 19th century was also one of the profoundest in moral character in all strata of society, education, politics, economics and religion. The ethic of love rooted in the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man was considered the essence of Christianity in the 19th century (Harnack, *What is Christianity?*). The Jewish rabbinical approach to learning through language is legendary for its rationalism and strict legalism as well as its Islamic counterpart in the Muslim devotion to the Koran, Sharia Law and iconoclasm.

In the second order of language, ethics are grounded in personal choices as a product of rational criticism, which allows for meaningful differences of opinion and the free creation of values. In the first order of image learning, all views are standard and all behavior an expression of group conformity. "The image tends . . . to produce conformity, to make us join a collective tendency" (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 35). Thus the two orders of thinking are opposed to each other. The first order in totalitarian fashion is in the process of eradicating the second order through purging critical reason from the mindset of the population like a mass spiritual lobotomy that removes part of the brain that contains the higher function of reason and abstract thought process. The image overwhelms the word through reduction and then removal and remaps the collective mind to think accordingly, freedom of thought is left open as possibility only because most people cannot think for themselves but are programed through media saturation. Note the drift in social media from glorified email responses on Facebook to the forced shrinkage of the word to 120 characters on Twitter, to finally pictures only on Tumblr, and Instagram. The second order in critical toleration of the image does not want to eradicate it, but put image in its place, not as an expression of truth or reality but a simple illustration in service of the word

and higher critical function of human nature through which humanity creates its self-definition, limits and significance. The second order of language thinking does not separate rational discourse in philosophy from a dramatic presentation in literature, or the arts, film or TV, etc. The Twentieth Century French Existentialists demonstrated the compatibility of rational discourse through abstract prose and exposition and the concrete embodiment of their ideas in dramatic forms such as plays, novels and movie illustrations. Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel wrote the most penetrating philosophical analysis of the modern condition of alienation as well as the greatest poetic description of modern despair and hope, for example, compare Sartre's tome Being and Nothingness with his play "No Exit" or Camus' essay on The Myth of Sisyphus to his novel The Stranger. Theologian Paul Tillich argued likewise that art serves as the spiritual barometer of culture. Through rational analysis of art, literature and drama the church will gain a better read on the spiritual climate of the society it hopes to evangelize and better tailor its message of the gospel to the concrete situation expressed through peoples felt needs. Even Jacques Ellul the leading social critic of visual media and advocate of word over image adopted a similar method of point and counter point as the existentialists by pairing the most penetrating sociological analysis of technology, raising the question how to limit autonomous technique and answering it with an allegorical interpretative method of the biblical text under the respectable umbrella of Barthian theology through his ethic of limits or nonpower. Compare The Technological Society to his biblical exposition of Genesis in The Meaning of the City.

14. On Facebook, friends can number into the thousands. New friends are just a click away; you don't even have to know them or even meet them to be friends. Aristotle said that friends are the people we eat with every day. Simple enough to grasp, but what does an ancient Greek philosopher know

compared to the moguls of social media?

15. Baudrillard and Eco validated Gasset's thesis in *Revolt of the Masses* that science and technology sows the seeds of its own demise by elevating the mass of humanity through its values of discovery, invention and discipline, yet the mass revolt against those values that brought them to dominance. This is the same basic thesis that argues we are the victims of our own success as applied to capitalism and the accumulation of wealth. One generation works to achieve a level of wealth that the next generation inherits with all the benefits of wealth but none of the sacrifice of the previous generation. Therefore it squanders it not knowing the value of wealth not having to work for it and being raised in privilege.

Gay Marriage is another recent example of simulacra. The hyperreal replaces the real with a copy made in our own image. Contemporary society is under a spell, thinking it can remake the institution of marriage founded in the Bible between one man and one woman (Genesis 2 and Matthew 19) to include its opposite or whatever the courts deem acceptable; eventually the courts will accept the union of people and their pets. Already the Disney Corporation has changed the name of The Family Channel to Free Form, an ominous precursor to the dissolution of meaning to the sacred word family in American popular culture and its reprobate legal system.

16. Reality and Truth are not coequal or synonymous terms, but signify different metaphysical orders. Ellul noted that the unity of reality and truth expresses "the unity of being" (Ellul, *Humiliation of the Word*, 96), or the right relationship between the Creator and his creation. Truth belongs to God's essence alone, as the One Eternal Absolute. Reality expresses the multifaceted finite human concrete situation. When our reality aligns with God's truth we experience the peace of redemption that passes understanding, harmonious being. Reality is the realm of sight that leads us

away from the truth of the invisible God who cannot be seen and is found only through the word (speech, talk, conversation, discourse, lecture, song). The visible is the realm of false idols incarnated as very real visible powers (gods): Money, the State, and Technology (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 94, 95). The order of reality is the order of human life which Nietzsche argued may include error. "Life no argument—We have fixed up a world for ourselves in which we can live-assuming bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content: without these articles of faith, nobody now would endure life. But that does not mean that they have been proved. Life is no argument; the conditions of life could include error." (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage, 1974), 177 [121]). Iconoclasm then becomes the mission of the church as it proclaims the gospel and demolishes spiritual strong holds which is the battle for the mind "destroying speculations . . . raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:3-6); "iconoclasm is always essential to the degree that other gods and other representations are manifested . . . Today reality triumphs, has swept everything away and monopolizes all our energy and projects. The image is everywhere, but now we bestow dignity, authenticity and spiritual truth on it. We enclose within the image everything that belongs to the order of truth" (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 94, 95).

17. In terms of an ethic of technology biblical truth translates as limit before use or law before license. For example, When adults set time limits on media use for their children anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour of screen time be it TV, computer or cell phone, they are practicing an ethic of technology.

Social critic Jacques Ellul stated; "The 'yes' makes no sense unless there is also the 'no' . . . the no comes first, death before resurrection. If the 'No!' is not lived in its reality

the yes is a nice pleasantry, a comfort one adds to one's material comfort, and as Barth has conclusively shown the No is included in the gospel" Quoted in Lawrence J. Terlizzese, *Hope in the Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Cascade: Eugene, OR, 2005), 127; Jacques Ellul, *False Presence of the Kingdom*, 25.

18. Original Divine Command: "From any tree of the Garden you may eat freely, but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:16, 17 NASB).

Satanic Recreation of the original command: "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'"(Genesis 3:1 NASB).

Imperative turns into question through a simple shift in voice emphasis, "Don't eat!" to "Don't eat?", inciting disobedience instead of obedience as its effect, confusing the knowledge of good and evil.

19. The hyperreal replaces the real with a copy made in our own image. A copy is never greater than the original and to believe that a glorified reduction, a snap shot somehow surpasses the original shows just how far along the popular delusion has advanced. Simulacra is portent to antichrist: "The one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders, and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness"(2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). Mass media qualifies as "a deluding influence": remaking the image of God in the image of an image. "Language is unobtrusive in that it never asserts itself on its own. When it [mass media] uses a loudspeaker and crushes others with its powerful equipment, when the television set speaks, the word is no longer involved, since

no dialogue is possible. What we have in these cases is machines that use language as a way of asserting themselves. Their power is magnified, but language is reduced to a useless series of sounds which inspires only reflexes and animal instincts" (Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 23).

The first commandment teaches that "You shall not make any graven images . . . you shall not bow down to them nor worship them (Exodus 20:4, 5). The construction of image is always a reduction from an original and imperfectly copies what it claims to represent; presenting a false image of God, an idol. The idol transforms its worshipers into its own image. All those who worship idols become like them (Psalms 115).

By worshiping the creature humanity dehumanizes itself by bowing down to the created order lower than itself. The prohibition against worshiping idols is meant to spare God's people from corrupting God's glory by reducing the invisible Creator to the visible creation and enslaving themselves to the works of their own hands. Idolatry exchanges "the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man . . ." (Romans 1:23). The idol is the construction of man, representing his ideal of God (image) in his own image, which in turn recreates man as slave in the image of the idol. Here we see perfectly in the biblical model of idolatry, the same Transhumanists enterprise of constructing an ideal image (cyborg) in the image (mankind) of an image (the computer), leading not to human ascendance or godhood but dehumanization or slavery by placing humanity lower than its own creation (the cyborg condition). Man builds an idol he thinks represents God which in truth is a reduction of the glory of God into the image of the creature and lowers himself through worship of the false image of God making himself a slave to a thing that appears real but really does not exist outside of humanity's faith in its own self-projection.

The first commandment prohibits "graven images" the invisible God cannot be seen in the works of human hands (Acts 17). All

images of God are an affront to his holiness and danger to his children. Idols reduce God to the false image which then further reduces worshipers.

Iconoclasm is the central liberation mission of the church in its declaration of the gospel.

“No one can see God and live” (Exodus 33:20). “Images are incapable of expressing anything about God. In daily life as well, the word remains the expression God Chooses. Images are in a completely different domain—the domain that is not God and can never become God on any grounds” (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 91).

20. Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 96.

21. God’s revelation comes only through the spoken word received by faith never through sight, which must remain subservient to the oral, spoken invisible message. “Faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). “We look not at the things that are seen, but at the things that are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:18). “We walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, conviction of things not seen . . . By faith we understand . . . Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11). “The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written; ‘The righteous live by faith'” (Romans 1:17). “Set your mind on things above [the invisible Christ, “the way, the truth and the life”], not on the things that are on earth [the visible, material, tangible, concrete reality of the present world].” “Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:2). The aural, auditory sense or put simply the ear is the organ of perception and faith never the eyes. Sight brings only doubt; despite popular opinion seeing is not believing, but unbelief. The desire to see the truth is rooted in doubt and unbelief; “Unless I see .

. .” doubting Thomas said, “. . . I will not believe” (John 20:25). “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe” (John 20:29). “Sight played an enormous role in the Fall and caused all of humanity and language to swing to its side. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that the Bible so often relates sight to sin. Sight is seen as the source of sin, and the eye becomes the link between reality and the flesh. The eye is seen as the focusing lens of the body (but only of the body). The Bible speaks of the lust of the eye and of the eye as the source and means of coveting. Now we know that covetousness is the crux of the whole affair, since sin always depends on it. “You shall not covet” (Ex. 20: 17) is the last of the commandments because it summarizes everything—all the other sins” (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 100, 101). Because Eve looked upon the fruit, she lusted after wisdom, the knowledge of good and evil, a possession she desired but did not work for or earn that did not belong to her. “Eve coveted equality with God . . . She coveted autonomy of decision” (Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 101). Lust is born from sight of the material possession. The Tenth Commandment lists a prohibition of desire on what does not belong to us but is rightfully our neighbor’s: his wife, house, domesticated animals and servants, all must first be seen before desired. Today we call these possessions status symbols, spouse, house, cars, money, etc., etc., all the objects of consumer desire that dominate our visual horizon through advertising, commercials and the all-pervasive world of image, which fills us with materialistic greed.

22. Technological convergence brings TV, computer, cell phone, video game (telecommunications) together as one medium. Professor of Philosophy Andy Clark notes that the cell phone is the gateway to the cyborg condition: “The cell phone is, indeed, a prime, if entry-level cyborg technology” (Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2003], 27). The cell phone has evolved from a clumsy

mobile phone into a sleek microcomputer that puts the full resources of the internet at the fingertips of the user.

The computer medium heralds the absolute closing of the human mind and cultural diversity by subverting all ends to its means it creates the condition necessary for total domination of the human spirit. All total systems subvert ends to means in their revolutionary beginning, such as the Napoleonic empire, fascism and communism. “By any means necessary,” or “for the good of the cause” becomes the motto of the radical on the road to totalitarian paradise (Serfdom). The computer coopts all nontechnical areas; in the form of “technical aid and support” subverting their ends by overbearing means. As the absolute single point of convergence for all humanity the computer fixes its own organizational categories on every person, discipline (field) or organization that uses it. The passage of admission to digital utopia is technical conformity (surrender). All nontech people and fields must soon learn the ways of the computer, if they expect to survive in the new universal cyber regime (the technological order). Liberal Arts, for instance no longer exists as a separate track or discipline in a dialectical counter balance to Science. Beholden to the computer for success it has sold its spiritual birth right as moral conscience through cultural critic or prophet to the rational establishment. By way of apt analogy, in the past when churches received State support through official recognition as the established religion they became in effect the court prophets, chaplain’s to the king. They “sold out” to the powers that be, forfeiting their divisive voice. Dissent is never allowed in any total system by definition, otherwise it would not be total. Those who profit from the system are not in a position to disagree with its direction without mortal endangerment. The old maxim “never bite the hand that feeds you” was rigorously applied by the official religions in the past. Likewise, rarely is a critical voice heard today through the prodigious production of liberal arts in media, except for science fiction film. The old

dichotomy of art and technology embodied in the Intellectual verses the City model has resolved itself in the computer. Chilton Williamson, Jr. noted the subtle reeducation the older generation of writers must endure in order to practice their craft using the computer. “Writing ought to be, technically speaking, among the simplest and natural of human actions. The computer makes it one of the most complex and unnatural ones. It is nothing less than a crime against humanity, and against art, that a writer should be required to learn how to master a machine of any kind whatsoever in order to write a single sentence. But no writer today can succeed in his craft if he does not learn to become a more or less skillful machine operator first.” (“Digital Enthusiasm” in *Chronicles* [June 2014, 38.6], 33). The end or goal of writing (to be read by others) has been subverted by means of the computer (Subversion: to corrupt an alien system for different ends from within, for example; primitive Christianity was subverted by the political forces of the later Roman Empire, creating Christendom). Computer subversion of humanity has been repeated simultaneously with writing since the digital revolution in the 1990’s.

By giving children at the earliest age possible a computer to play with and master, turning work into play, the technological oligarchy has guaranteed that they will grow to become computer technicians in some degree and has successfully circumvented the nasty reeducation process necessary to all revolutions in the past. As the product of the digital revolution the Millennial generation has inherited the onerous responsibility of being the first generation raised on the computer as their defining characteristic. They are the first non-national generation, identifiable by digital acuity, video game addiction and the cell phone, rather than by race, gender or creed. The world that they create will ultimately prove their humanity or not.

One machine that can do everything controls everyone, even now

as I write an unsolicited advertisement appears on my computer screen telling me that “Technical support is designed to monitor your system for issues.” Positively Orwellian! No greater insidious subtlety to seduce the human spirit than the emerging global technological order has appeared since the Tower of Babel!

All total systems are inherently corrupt and eventually self-destruct.

23. Philosopher Michael Foucault builds on Jeremy Bentham’s purposed panoptic system theory by arguing that Bentham’s proposed universal prison surveillance system that kept prisoners under constant watch has been extended to contemporary society through media saturation. Law Professor Jerry Rosen argues that through social media society has entered a condition he describes as “Omniopticon” where we are all watching each other (*The Naked Crowd*); Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 152; Reg Whitaker *The End of Privacy: How Total Surveillance Is Becoming a Reality* (New York: New Press, 1999).

24. Hyperreal communities, churches, schools, dating sites do not allow for individual charisma, personal persona, flamboyancy, speech impediments, warts, blemishes, ugliness, beauty, intelligence, everything thing that makes an individual unique disappears behind the brilliance of a cartoon reality.

The modern socialization process once reserved for family, church and community in traditional society has been usurped by media and the State. Socialization is the rather sensitive and all important process through which values are imprinted on youth. Socialization is everything! Society receives its understanding of right and wrong, good and evil in a word normalcy through socialization. In the mission of the church socialization is equal to evangelism. If the church successfully evangelizes a society, converting everyone to the

Christian faith, it must then pass those values to the next generation, if it fails to do so it must then start the whole evangelization process over. Regrettably, the American church is learning this lesson the hard way, after surrendering the socialization process of Christian youth to media, and public schools. The most media saturated and technologically adapt generation in human history is rapidly becoming the most nihilistic since late antiquity.

Media transmits collective values directly to the social body by passing the individual consciousness. Mass media transmits its own values of consumption and materialism that traditional family, church and community as social agents cannot compete with according to social critic Herbert Marcuse. Media transmits the values of "efficiency, dream, and romance." "With this education, the family can no longer compete." The father's authority is the first traditional value to fall.(Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization: A Philosophical Inquiry to Freud* (New York: Vintage 1955, 88).

25. John L. Locke, *The De-Voicing of Society: Why We Don't Talk to Each Other Anymore* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 19.

26. The only reason people give as to why they use media technology is because of its convenience, it is easier to send an email or text than write a letter and use a postage stamp. However, ease of use and convenience shows lack of understanding as well as accountability. "I use it because it is easy" is hardly a thought-out moral defense for one's action! And here is where the trap lies for all of us. The history of technology demonstrates that convenient and pervasive use over time slowly turns into necessity. What was once done because it was so easy to do, eventually must be done. TV, computer and most recently the cell phone, these technologies never appeared as necessities but convenience, but now they are irresistible necessities. Convenience turns into necessity because it was so easy to send a text, or

email, we have forgotten how to communicate in any other way, or refuse to relearn those old ways. Convenience dulls the spirit and numbs the mind, producing stupidity and apathy by removing all other practices from our intellectual horizon. Beware of anything thing that looks so easy, it is nothing more than a hook to necessity. The old saying, "If it sounds too good to be true it probably is," applies to technology as well. "Whatever appears to make your life easier right now in the long run may make it more difficult." Convenience turns into habit, habit turns into need, need turns into addiction.

27. The friendships forged in traditional institutions create the social support network for an individual throughout his professional career. As an online professor I did not know how to write a letter of recommendation for a student I have never met in person. Education has become so dominated by technical learning, all students in essence are studying to be engineers in their field whether teachers, medical practitioners, social workers etc.; they are taught efficient methods as administrators or managers of large groups of people.

28. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962).

29. Quoted in Locke, *The De-Voicing of Society*, 43.

30. Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word*, 122. "Even more, it [the camera] keeps me from proceeding to cultural assimilation, because these two steps can be taken only in a state of availability and lack of preoccupation with other matters – a state of "being there." (Ibid).

31. In line with Baudrillard thesis on the orders of simulacra, popular cell phone use, namely texting, demonstrates regressive effects of the latter stage of simulacra: metastasis or reversal of effects. It is quite common to see people texting and even preferring texting to any other mode of communication, especially phone calling,

when it is obviously easier to call and talk than it is to text, time wise and in terms of context and amount of content necessary for successful conversation, yet texting is preferred because of its impersonal nature; people prefer the harder task of texting because it is impersonal, however, impersonal communication is less effective to the point of communication.

32. *Radio Times* (January 2016). Hawking said bluntly, "I think the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race." Quoted in "Rise of the Machines" in the *Dallas Morning News* Sunday, February 14, 2016, 1P. Recognizing and controlling the dangers of progress is a call for limits and boundaries to technological acceleration possible only through negation.

33. The fear of living without the necessity that controls us reveals the modern condition of technological determinism. In confronting determinism we must appeal to "the individual's sense of responsibility . . . the first act of freedom, is to become aware of the necessity" (Ellul, *The Technological Society*, xxxiii).

Necessity (whatever we fear we cannot live without) is always a limitation placed on human nature, such as the basic biological needs to eat and sleep. Necessity limits freedom and therefore power and ability. Death is also a necessity, without which new life and growth cannot take place. However, death is the last enemy, which is defeated finally in the resurrection of the saints (1 Corinthians 15:50-58). To believe as Transhumanists do that death can be overcome through technological enhancement can only result in abomination. Professor of Computer Science Matthew Dickerson prophetically asks, what if the Transhuman "transformation is based on something that is not true? What will we be transformed into?" (*The Mind and the Machine: What it Means to be Human and Why it Matters*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2011), xiv.

34. A campaign to “JUST SAY NO!” to further technological advance that threatens human existence, such as artificial intelligence, must be a collective effort for the entire human race, but begins with our own personal individual choices in limiting technological use, i.e. TV, computer, cell phone, and automobiles, and set boundaries to consumption on all consumer products. Resist the digitalization of traditional life through technological transfer of community to the online medium. Despite the convenience of a total online education it is unconscionable and detrimental if online students never encounter a real college classroom, talk face to face with a professor and argue in group discussion with peers. Likewise, the church cannot remain the Body of Christ by shunting its responsibilities to parishioners, new members and seekers by declaring online and televised services equal to a live one. “Do not forsake the assembly of yourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25) prohibits a total digitalization of Christian worship and community. Christ said, “Where two or three have gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). The bodily presence necessary for community conveyed in these passages must not be allegorized by techno-gnostics who equate physical isolation in front of an electric screen to be “just as good” as being there.

35. We are enslaved to what we fear we cannot live without whether it be money, sex or technology. The rich young ruler did not follow Christ because he could not imagine life without his wealth, the security, comfort and power it bestowed was greater than the promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ. “Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:24). The disciples were in shock at Jesus’ utter intolerance to devotion to anything other than God: “You cannot serve God and money [technology, power]” (Matthew 6:24). Knowing their own attachment to wealth, they despaired, “Who then can be saved?” (Mark 10:26). It appears impossible to give up what we fear we cannot live without. “What shall we eat? What shall we drink?

What shall we wear?" (Matthew 6:25); the perennial anxiety and pursuit of the faithless and fearful enslaved to material (bodily) necessity; "Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing [enhancement]?" (Matthew 6:25). "For after all these things the Gentiles [unregenerate] seek" (Matthew 6:32). "But Lord Jesus, we cannot live without cell phones and computers, any more than we can live without money! Get real, be reasonable—Lord you are asking the impossible of mortal sinners." And Jesus agrees, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27).

36. Louis Armstrong – *What A Wonderful World* Lyrics | MetroLyrics

37. Ellul, *The Technological Society*, xxxi.

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The Technological Simulacra [no footnotes]

What Saccharine is to Sugar, or The Technological Simulacra: On the Edge of Reality and Illusion

"Anyone wishing to save humanity today must first of all save the word." – Jacques Ellul

Simulacra

Aerosmith sings a familiar tune:

“There’s something wrong with the world today,
I don’t know what it is,
there’s something wrong with our eyes,
we’re seeing things in a different way
and God knows it ain’t [isn’t] his;
there’s melt down in the sky. We’re living on the edge.”



What saccharine is to sugar, so the technological simulacra is to nature or reality—a technological replacement, purporting itself to be better than the original, more real than reality, sweeter than sugar: hypersugar.

This article with footnotes

Simulacra, (*Simulacrum,* Latin, pl., *likeness, image, to simulate*): or simulation, the term, was adapted by French social philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) to express his critical interpretation of the technological transformation of reality into hyperreality. Baudrillard’s social critique provided the premise for the movie *The Matrix* (1999). However, he was made famous for declaring that the Gulf War never happened; TV wars are not a reflection of reality but projections (recreations) of the TV medium.

Simulacra reduces reality to its lowest point or one-dimension and then recreates reality through attributing the highest qualities to it, like snapshots from family vacation. When primitive people refuse to have their picture taken because they are afraid that the camera
steals their souls, they are resisting simulacra. The camera snaps a picture and recreates the image on paper or a digital medium; it then goes to a photo album or a profile page. Video highlights amount to the same thing in moving images; from three dimensions, the camera reduces its object to soulless

one-dimensional fabrication.

Simulacra does not end with the apparent benign pleasures of family vacation and media, although media represents its most recent stage. Simulacra includes the entire technological environment or complex, its infrastructure, which acts as a false "second nature" superimposed over the natural world, replacing it with a hyperreal one, marvelously illustrated in the movie *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991). As liquid metal conforms itself to everything it touches, it destroys the original.

Humanity gradually replaces itself through recreation of human nature by technological enhancements, making the human race more adaptable to machine existence, ultimately for the purpose of space exploration. Transhumanists believe that through the advancements in genetic engineering, neuropharmaceuticals (experimental drugs), bionics, and artificial intelligence it will redesign the human condition in order to achieve immortality. "Humanity+," as Transhumanists say, will usher humanity into a higher state of being, a technological stairway to heaven, "glorification," "divinization" or "ascendency"in theological terms.

God made man in his own image and now mankind remakes himself in the image of his greatest creation (image), the computer. If God's
perfection is represented by the number seven and man's imperfection by the number six, then the Cyborg will be a five according to the descending order of being; the creature is never equal or greater than the creator but always a little lower.{9}

Glorious Reduction!

www.probe.org/machinehead-from-1984-to-the-brave-new-world-order-and-beyond/

Hyperreality

An old tape recording commercial used to say, “Is it real or is it Memorex?” By championing the superiority of recording to live performance the commercial creates hyperreality, a reproduction of an original that appears more real than reality, a replacement for reality with a reconstructed one, purported to be better than the original.

Disneyland serves as an excellent example by creating a copy of reality remade in order to substitute for reality; it confuses reality with an illusion that appears real, “more real than real.” Disney anesthetizes the imagination, numbing it against reality, leaving spectators with a false or fake impression. Main Street plays off an idealized past. The technological reconstruction leads us to believe that the illusion “can give us more reality than nature can.”

Hyperreality reflects a media dominated society where “signs and symbols” no longer reflect reality but are manipulated by their users to mean *whatever*. Signs recreate reality to achieve the opposite effect (metastasis); for example, in Dallas I must travel west on Mockingbird Lane in order to go to East Mockingbird Lane. Or, Facebook invites social participation when no actual face to face conversation takes place.

Hyperreality creates a false perception of reality, the glorification of reduction that confuses fantasy for reality, a proxy reality that imitates the lives of movie and TV characters for real life. When reel life in media becomes real life outside media we have entered the high definition, misty region—the Netherlands of concrete imagination—hyperreality!

Hyperreality goes beyond escapism or simply “just

entertainment.” If that was all there was to it, there would be no deception or confusion, at best a trivial waste of time and money. Hyperreality is getting lost in the pleasures of escapism and confusing the fantasy world for the real one, believing that fantasy is real or even better than reality. Hyperreality results in the total inversion of society through technological sleight of hand, a cunning trick, a sorcerer’s illusion transforming the world into a negative of itself, into its opposite, then calling it progress.

Hyperreality plays a trick on the mind, a self-induced hypnotism on a mass scale, duping us by our technological recreation into accepting a false reality as truth. Like Cypher from the movie *The Matrix* who chose the easy and pleasant simulated reality over the harsh conditions of the “desert of the real” in humanity’s fictional war against the computer, he chose to believe a lie instead of the truth.

The Devil is a Liar

A lie plays a trick on the mind, skillfully crafted to deceive through partial omission or concealment of the truth. The lie is the devil’s (devil means liar) only weapon, always made from a position of inferiority and weakness (Revelation 20:3, 8). A lie never stands on its own terms as equal to truth; it does not exist apart from twisting (recreating) truth. A lie never contradicts the truth by standing in opposition to it.

A lie is not a negative (no) or a positive (yes), but obscures one or the other. It adds by revealing what is not there—it subtracts by concealing what is there. A lie appears to be what is not and hides what it really is. “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

A lie does not negate (contradict) or affirm truth. Negation (No) establishes affirmation (Yes). Biblically speaking, the no comes
before the yes—the cross then the resurrection; law first, grace second. The Law is no to sin (disobedience); the Gospel is yes to faith (obedience). Truth is always a synthesis or combination between God's no in judgment on sin and His yes in grace through faith in Jesus Christ. "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Law without grace is legalism; grace without law is license.

www.probe.org/law-and-grace-combating-the-american-heresy-of-pelagianism/

The devil's lie adds doubt to the promise of God; "Indeed, has God said, 'you shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"(Genesis 3:1
NASB) It hides the promise of certain death; "You surely will not die" (Genesis 3:4). The serpent twists knowledge into doubt by turning God's imperative, "Don't eat!" into a satanic question "Don't eat?"

But it is Eve who recreates the lie in her own imagination. "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6).

Sight incites desire. We want what we see (temptation). Eve was tempted by "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) after seeing the fruit, then believed the false promise that it would make her wise. "She sees; she no longer hears a word to know what is good, bad or true." Eve fell victim to her own idolatrous faith in hyperreality that departed from the simple trust in God's word.

The Void Machine

Media (television, cell phone, internet, telecommunications) is a void machine. In the presence of a traditional social milieu, such as family, church or school, it will destroy its host, and then reconstruct it in its own hyperreal image (Simulacra). Telecommunication technology is a Trojan Horse for all traditional institutions that accept it as pivotal to their "progress," except prison or jail. The purpose of all institutions is the promotion of values or social norms, impossible through the online medium.

Media at first appears beneficial, but this technology transforms the institution and user into a glorified version of itself. The personal computer, for example, imparts values not consistent with the mission of church or school, which is to bring people together in mutual support around a common goal or belief for learning and spiritual growth (community). This is done primarily through making friends and forming meaningful relationships, quite simply by people talking to each other. Values and social norms are only as good as the people we learn them from. Values must be embodied in order to be transmitted to the next generation.

Talking as the major form of personal communication is disappearing. Professor of Communications John L. Locke noted that "Intimate
talking, the social call of humans, is on the endangered species list." People prefer to text, or phone. Regrettably, educational institutions such as high schools and universities are rapidly losing their relevance as traditional socializing agents where young people would find a potential partner through like interests or learn a worldview from a mentor. What may be gained in convenience, accessibility or data acquisition for the online student is lost in terms of the social bonds necessary for personal ownership of knowledge, discipline and character development.

An electronic community is not a traditional community of persons who meet face to face, in person, in the flesh where they establish
personal presence. Modern communication technologies positively destroy human presence. What philosopher Martin Heidegger called *Dasein*, "being there," (embodiment or incarnation) is absent. As Woody Allen put it, "90 percent of life is showing up." The presence of absence marks the use of all electronic communication technology. Ellul argued, "The simple fact that I carry a camera [cell phone] prevents me from grasping everything in an overall perception." The camera like the cell phone preoccupies its users, creating distance between himself and friends. The cellphone robs the soul from its users, who must exchange personal presence for absence; the body is there tapping away, but not the soul! The cell phone user has become a void!

The Power of Negative Thinking

According to popular American motivational speakers, the key to unlimited worldly wealth, success and happiness is in the power of
positive thinking that unleashes our full potential; however, according to obscure French social critics the key to a meaningful life, lived in freedom, hope and individual dignity is in the power of negative thinking that brings limits, boundaries, direction and purpose.

Negativity gives birth to freedom, expanding our spiritual horizons with possibilities and wise choices, which grounds faith, hope and
love in absolute truth, giving us self-definition greater than our circumstances, greater than reality of the senses. To freely choose in love one's own path, identity and destiny is the essence of individual dignity.

According to French social critics Jacques Ellul and Herbert

Marcuse, freedom is only established in negation that provides limits
and boundaries, which tells us who we are. Technological hyperreality removes all natural and traditional limits in the recreation of humanity in the image of the cyborg. The transhuman transformation promises limitless potential at the expense of individual freedom, personal identity and ultimately human dignity and survival.

www.probe.org/into-the-void-the-coming-transhuman-transformation/

All limitless behavior ends in self-destruction. Human extinction looms over the technological future, like the Sword of Damocles,
threatening humanity's attempt to refit itself for immortality in a grand explosion (nuclear war), a slow poisoning (ecocide) or suicidal regressive technological replacement. Stephen Hawking noted recently that technological progress threatens humanity's survival with nuclear war, global warming, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering over the course of the next 100 years. Hawking stated, "We are not going to stop making progress, or reverse it, so we must [recognize] the dangers and control them."

In asserting "NO!" to unlimited technological advance and establishing personal and communal limits to our use of all technology,
especially the cell phone, computer and TV, we free ourselves from the technological necessity darkening our future through paralyzing the will to resist.

After we "JUST SAY NO!" to our technological addictions, for instance, after a sabbatical fast on Sunday when the whole family turns off their electronic devices, and get reacquainted, a new birth of freedom will open before us teeming with possibilities. We will face unmediated reality in ourselves and family with a renewed hope that by changing our

personal worlds for one day simply by pushing the off button on media technology we can change the future. Through a weekly media fast (negation) we will grow faith in the power of self-control by proving that we can live more abundant lives without what we once feared absolute necessity, inevitable and irresistible. “All things are possible with God” (Mark 10: 27). When we exchange our fear of idols for faith in the Living God the impossible becomes possible and our unlimited potential is released that will change the world forever!

I see trees of green, red roses, too,
I see them bloom, for me and you
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.

I see skies of blue, and clouds of white,
The bright blessed day, the dark sacred night
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.

The colors of the rainbow, so pretty in the sky,
Are also on the faces of people going by.
I see friends shaking hands, sayin’, "How do you do?"
They’re really sayin’, "I love you."

I hear babies cryin’. I watch them grow.
They’ll learn much more than I’ll ever know
And I think to myself
What a wonderful world.

“[I]f man does not pull himself together and assert himself . . . then things will go the way I describe [cyborg condition].” – Jacques Ellul

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Machinehead: From 1984 to the Brave New World Order and Beyond

Wherever the survival of humanity is threatened we find the work of Satan. In the previous century that was Fascism, then Mutually Assured Destruction during the Cold War. Today, Satan hides behind the ascendancy of the global Empire of Technology: assimilation of humanity into the machine, creating a new planetary being: the Cyborg. I believe people best understand large conglomerates when personalized, such as, referring to the Federal Government as "Uncle Sam," so I have chosen to name the Brave New World Order: Machinehead!

Post-Orwellian World

Say good bye to Orwell's nightmare world of *1984*![{1}] And welcome to Machinehead: the Brave New World Order and beyond!

Machinehead is what I call the technological idol or the planetary being taking shape in the convergence of human and computer intelligence, a global cyborg. "Machine" is defined as *one global system with many subsystems.*

Experts already recognize the global system as a superorganism, one life-form made of billions and billions of individual parts or cells like an anthill or beehive, with one mind and one will. Thus, the global machine consists of millions of subsystems interfacing one over-system. Mankind acts as agent for the global machine's ascendancy, creating a technological god in its own image.

The suffix "head" refers to the *divine essence* as in "Godhead" (Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. Acts 17: 29).

Machinehead is the replacement of all traditional views of God with the new Living God of the Machine, best illustrated by the recent movie *Transcendence* (2014), which depicts the computer's awaking to consciousness in one mind and will, the Singularity!

Two prophets of modernity plead in dire warning for us to reconsider modern faith in expansive government and escalating technological acceleration. The first and most notable was master political satirist and critic George Orwell (1903-1950), famous for *Animal Farm* and *1984,* and the second, English literatus Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), author of *Brave New World (BNW)*.

Orwell envisioned the end of history in the all-powerful political dictatorship of *Oceania* marked by perpetual war, omnipresent government surveillance, thought control, and the ubiquitous media projection of Big Brother.

Orwell gave us the foundation of the current age in Cold War politics, but does not serve as guide to the future, which belongs, if humanity allows it, to the apparent benign technophilia of *Brave New World* that follows upon Orwell's cruel political combat boot in the face!

The Cold War Era and *1984*

Orwell divided his fictional geopolitical borders into three grids: *Oceania, Eurasia* and *Eastasia,* shadowing accurately Cold War divisions between Western and Eastern Bloc countries allied behind NATO (Oceania) and Warsaw pact nations (Eurasia), leaving the Third World (Eastasia) as pawns (proxy wars) for interminable power battles between the two Super Powers (Super States). Perpetual war characterized normative relations between the super states in *1984* with the objective to further consolidate the State's power over its own citizens. The threat of war inspires fear in the population and offers government the opportunity and justification for

further largesse and control. War insures a permanent state of crisis, leaving the population in desperation for strong leadership and centralized command and control.

The wars of *1984* were a side note to the main thrust of the novel, omnipotent government control. The novel introduced the world to the ominous character Big Brother. The central drama takes place in *Airstrip One,* the capital of *Oceania*, formerly London, England, where Winston Smith the protagonist struggles to maintain his dignity as an individual, under the crushing gears of Fascist government.

Popular criticism asserts that Orwell had Stalinism in the cross hairs in his novel. However, that interpretative ruse acts as an escape clause for the West to disavow any participation in totalitarianism. Most Americans falsely assume that *1984* applied to the Soviet Union and not NATO. Eurasia (the Eastern bloc) was a mere literary foil. Orwell's social criticism applies to all forms of totalitarianism, especially the subtle power structure of the West hidden behind democratic rhetoric, media bias, and an acute lack of national self-criticism. *Oceania* was Orwell's analogy and commentary on the future of the West after World War II. The NATO alliance, founded in 1949 the same year Orwell published *1984,* was the target of Orwell's criticism—not the Soviet Union.

Brave New World Order in the 21st Century: The Imperial Machine

Huxley's novel *Brave New World* foresaw a techno heaven on earth that knows nothing of wars, political parties, religion or democracy, but caters to creature comforts, maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain; total eradication of all emotional and spiritual suffering through the removal of free choice by radical conditioning from conception in the test tube to blissful euthanasia.

Television was the controlling technology in *1984*, so in *BNW* control is asserted through media, education and a steady flow of *soma*—the perfect drug and chemical replacement for Jesus. "Christianity without tears" was how Mustapha Mond the World Controller described soma. "Anybody can be virtuous now. You can carry at least half your morality around in a [pill] bottle."{2}

Spiritual perfection commanded by Jesus, "Be ye perfect, even as your heavenly father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48), will be given to all through genetic programing, sustained through chemical infusion and mental conditioning (propaganda). If *1984* was about power for the sake of power, *BNW* emphasizes the kinder, gentler technological dictatorship that does not promise happiness, but delivers it to all whether they want it or
not!

Brave New World Order amounts to technological totalitarianism, analogous to Huxley's "World State" motto: "Community, Identity, Stability."{3}

The "imperial machine" as it has been called by political scientists acts outside the traditional political process and in tandem with it when needed with no central geographical location or person or groups with any discernable hierarchical structure that directs it; the United States, Great Britain, United Nations, The People's Republic of China or The European Union are not the power brokers of 21st century Empire, but its pawns.
Technological Empire rules as an all-encompassing, all-pervasive power, shaping human destiny in its own image.

Transvaluation of Man and Machine

A titanic transvaluation (reversal in the meaning of values) between superstructure (intangible ideological system: beliefs, convictions, morality, myth, etc.) and infrastructure

(tangible urban development: roads, buildings, houses, cars, machines, etc.) begun with the Industrial Revolution will finally be complete some time during the 21st century. Infrastructure replaces superstructure. Technology has become our belief, religion and hope, what was once a means (technology) to an end (human progress) has replaced the end with the means. Technology replaces humanity as the goal of progress; technology for technology's sake not for the good of mankind or God's glory.

The reversal of meaning is found everywhere in postmodern society beginning with the death of God and unfolding in lock step to the death of man, progress, democracy and Western Civilization; concomitantly paired with an equal ascendency of all things technological, until the machine ultimately replaces humanity.

Marxist regimes were fond of calling their systems "democratic" or "republic" such *as the People's Republic of China* despite the fact that the *Dictatorship of the Proletariat* bears the opposite meaning. The majestic word *Liberal,* once meant freedom from government interference and rule by inner light of reason in the seventeenth century, had come to be synonymous with government regulation and planning by the twentieth century.

The cruelest irony in the transvaluation process is that the triumph of mankind over nature and tradition in the modern world has resulted in his replacement by the machine. Humanism of the modern period promoted the Rational as ideal type of Man. This ideal was already adapted to the machine as *1984* and *Brave New World* illustrated through the removal of faith and the attenuation of human nature to mechanical existence. French Intellectual Jacques Ellul argued further that "This type [of man] exists to support technique [technological acceleration] and serve the machine, but eventually he will be eliminated because he has become superfluous . . . the great

hope that began with the notion of human dominance over the machine ends with human replacement by the machine."{4}

The Devil's Logic

What we fear will happen is already here because we fear it; it will overtake us according to our fears; it will recede according to our love. (1 John 2)

Human Replacement does not necessarily mean total human extinction, a cyborg race that fundamentally alters human nature will cause a pseudo-extinction—meaning part of humanity, the Machine Class, those most fit for technological evolution will ascend to the next stage, leaving the great majority behind. The movie *Elysium* (2011) offers an excellent illustration: the technological elite, who reap all the benefits from technological advance control the earth from an orbiting space station. H. G. Wells in his famous novel *The Time Machine* painted a similar picture of human evolution that branched into two different species: the hideous cannibalistic Morlocks, "the Under-grounders," their only principle was necessity, feeding off the beautiful, yet docile Eloi, "the Upper-worlders," whose only emotion was fear.{5}

When fear dominates our thinking, love is absent from our motives. To say, "It is necessary" in defense of technological practice, abdicates choice, giving unlimited reign to technological acceleration, i.e. abortion, government surveillance, or digital conversion. "Fear" and "necessity" are the devil's logic. Necessity imposes itself through fear of being left behind by "technological progress."

Necessity is not the Mother of Invention, but the Father of Lies! New technology becomes necessity only after it is invented. There is no conscious need for what does not yet exist. Technological need establishes itself through habitual use creating dependence and finally normalcy in the next generation who cannot relate to a past devoid of modern

technological essentials.

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,” serves as our mandate, if we wish to create a future of universal love and empathy instead of universal speed and memory.

Knowledge without wisdom leads to disaster. “Where is the wisdom lost in knowledge?”{6} Wisdom is the loving use of knowledge. Love counsels limits to knowledge for the liberation of all. Fear dictates limitless necessity, enslaving all.

A choice faces us. Say “yes!” to God and “no!” to *limitless* advance. Otherwise mankind faces replacement by the new digital god: Machinehead!

Notes

1. George Orwell, *1984* {New York: HBJ, Inc., 1949}, 17)
2. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 285.
3. Ibid, 1.
4. Lawrence J. Terlizzese, *Hope in the Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 104-105).
5. H.G. Wells, *The Time Machine* (New York: Bantam, 1982 [1895]).
6. T.S. Eliot quoted in Huston Smith, *The World’s Religions: Our Great Wisdom Traditions* (San Francisco: Harper, 1991, 5).

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Human Enhancement and

Christianity

Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese says that our obsession with perfection and improvement drives the human enhancement movement. But the key is to rest instead in Christ's perfection.

Perfection and Human Enhancement

Americans want to be perfect and the science of Human Enhancement promises to deliver that ideal. Perfect looks, athletic ability, intelligence, greater productivity, increased longevity and even moral perfectionism are all within reach or so many think. Human Enhancement is the current fashionable term for all the new ways to alter the body and mind to make people more fit and adaptable to the ever changing pace of progress. Human Enhancement is not an organized school of thought, but a societal-wide trend aimed at achieving perfection. Drugs can be used to enhance an athlete's physical performance in order to perfect his swing or increase a student's intelligence by improving memory and attention span, creating a straight A student. Cosmetic surgeries make women more beautiful and appear younger. The right administration of certain drugs will increase empathy in the brain and help prevent spousal infidelity. Growth hormones given to children make them taller and increase their chances of success. Sex selection is now possible so that you can have the perfect boy/girl balance in your family. Eventually embryos will be screened to remove undesired genes that lead to obesity or genetic diseases and even determine hair, skin and eye color. You will be able to custom order the perfect child.



The crux of the Human Enhancement issue surrounds values of perfectionism that desire the technology necessary to make these things possible. Perfection represents a controlling obsession for many Americans. We demand perfect grades from our children. An A- can question an entire academic career. Why not an A? We demand perfection at work. Americans are the hardest workers in history, who have internalized the Protestant Work Ethic like no other people.

And most of all we want perfect bodies that defy age and sickness, epitomizing youth and vitality. Women suffer the hardest under the burden of perfection. Media is saturated with images of young beautiful blonde bodies selling things. Writer Natalia Ilyin asks in her book *Blonde Like Me* the important questions concerning beauty; "Where does our fetish for measurement come from? How do we decide that one person is more good-looking (and therefore 'better') than another? Why do comments made about our fat go to our bone? What happened along the way that made size six beautiful and size twenty a crisis?"{1}

Perfectionism reveals the age old desire of humanity to aspire to divinity. In the past we only had myths to follow, but today enhancement technology brings the realization of perfection ever closer.

Apollo as the Old Greek Ideal

We derive our ideals of perfection from historical precedent and desire to master ourselves and the world around us. Our Puritan heritage is one major source for our obsession with work, thrift, education and industry. Our moral perfectionism has an ancient history we can trace as far back as the fifth

century monk Pelagius who advocated moral perfection and the power of the will and works righteousness. But our obsession with bodily perfection is even older, and like so many things in the modern world it has its roots in the ancient Greeks. Ilyin notes that "Measurement is the apparatus of mankind's search for perfection. We hear all our lives about the 'perfect body,' 'perfect proportion,' 'perfect features.' But what does perfect mean, really? Where do we get the idea of 'perfect?'"{2}

The Greek philosopher Plato taught that perfection exists in an ideal world outside the everyday one. The perfect apple exists as an idea and common apples we come into contact with are pale imitations of that ideal. None of the apples we see can compare but they all derive their nature as apples from the ideal.

Greek religion, too, is still present in striving for perfection. Apollo the sun god was believed to embody the perfect human form: young, blond, athletic and male. A beautiful body meant a beautiful mind. "Your blond hair meant that the purity of the sun lived within you. Apollo's blond symbolized the beauty of the power that could order and control nature. It symbolized the beauty of the rational mind."{3} The burden of physical perfection was not always the concern of women, but was first located in young men. However, because the Apollo Cult was homoerotic the image of perfection was transposed to women in Christian times. The beautiful blonde images that consume our culture, such as the blonde on the cover of *Shape* magazine, are really "Apollo in drag," as Ilyin states.{4}

The burden of female perfection reverberates in a recent song by Pink who sings to her daughter,

> *Pretty, pretty please*
> *don't you ever ever feel*
> *like you're less than perfect;*

pretty, pretty please
if you ever ever feel
like you're nothing,
you are perfect to me.{5}

The ideal of perfection has a way of making us feel like we can never measure up.

Perfection represents an unrealistic goal in any area of life and will always produce the accompanying sense of failure. The desire for divinity as imitation of Apollo or the perfect human form, a striving towards an angelic existence, will always let us down.

Eugenics and Human Enhancement

The goal of Human Enhancement is to improve humanity. This sounds like a noble intention, but as we uncover its meaning it appears to be fraught with complications. In the past this was known as *eugenics* or the science of human breeding. Most famously, eugenics is remembered as the basis of Nazi genocide, but it was extremely popular in the United States as well, which served as inspiration and precedent for the Nazi program. Many laws were passed in the 1890's and early 1900's preventing the "feeble-minded," or epileptic, schizophrenic, bi-polar and depressed individuals from marrying and imposing forced sterilization in order to inhibit them from passing on their negative traits.

Eugenics was discredited after the holocaust. Society abandoned it with good cause, yet eugenics is making a comeback. With the advent of biomedical technology it is now possible to continue the goal of trait selection. Prenatal testing for diseases through the procedure of amniocentesis identifies many complications such as Tay-Sachs, Down Syndrome, sickle-cell anemia, hemophilia, and cystic fibrosis, and also tells the sex of the child. Although prenatal testing

can result in early treatment, women may also choose to terminate their pregnancy. This practice has already resulted in an imbalance between male over female children in some regions of India. Ethicists fear the practice will eventually lead to the termination of fetuses believed to carry the genes for obesity, homosexuality, alcoholism and like a ghost from the past, *low intelligence*, even if these genes do not actually exist.{6}

The philosopher Philip Kitcher notes two types of eugenics. The first is known as coercive eugenics and was implemented through state manipulation. Second, he indentifies a new kind of eugenics called "laissez-faire eugenics,"{7} also called "liberal eugenics" because it holds the individual choice of trait determination as sovereign. Through sex selection the perfect boy/girl balance may be achieved along with the elimination of perceived birth defects and genetic flaws, sparing parents the anguish of watching children die slow deaths. However, prenatal testing that leads to trait selection does not resolve the quandary of abortion that is currently necessary to achieve parental goals. Eugenics is grounded in values and preferences for a certain type of person justified under the rubric of "improvement." The new eugenics offers no opposition to market forces from eventually predetermining any physical characteristic thought most advantageous for success in liberal society, and may return us to the Superman ideal. History teaches the dangers of preoccupation with perfect human form, but people have no ears to hear the lessons of history. We appear destined to repeat the mistakes of the past if we do not change our values that prize strength over weakness or curb our desire for perfection in our children.

Cyborgism

Human Enhancement adopts the cyborg image as its ideal. "Cyborg" was a term coined in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and

Nathan Kline, two research scientists wanting to redesign the human body in order to make it adaptable to the inhospitable environment of outer space. It has since come to be applied to the entire human and technological merger. Cyborg is short for *cyber organism*. A cyborg is any living thing that has been adapted to a technological apparatus so that the two are now inseparable. The first animal cyborg was a rat in 1960. It had a Rose osmotic pump attached to its tail which injected chemicals into the body in order to regulate its life support system.{8} Cyborgism is the belief that human adaptation to technology represents the natural development of evolution. Humanity has always used some form of technology, whether fire, knife or arrow, to enhance its existence. The current trend towards our complete absorption into a technological world represents the culmination of a long symbiotic relationship between humanity and its machines. People are, as philosopher Andy Clark says, "Natural-Born Cyborgs."{9} This view argues that we are technological animals, meaning it is human nature to use technology and define ourselves by it.

In her famous essay *A Cyborg Manifesto*, Donna Haraway argues that the Cyborg is the new metaphor or ideal of human existence because it simultaneously transcends and includes all differences.{10}

Both theories argue that the lines of demarcation between humanity, nature and machine are rapidly disappearing. Like a scene out of the movie *Blade Runner* we are rapidly approaching a time where the organic and inorganic worlds will completely merge and the words "natural," "human," and "machine," will no longer mean different things.

This position does not view humanity as either special in some way, or distinct from nature, or possessing a rational soul. It springs from materialism [the worldview that says there is no reality beyond the physical, measurable universe]. Clark argues that this ancient prejudice blinds us from our true technological nature.{11} Clark is right in identifying what

Christians call the *imago dei* or image of God as the primary demarcation between humanity and the rest of nature. If this traditional boundary line is lost, the current ideal of "improvement" and "perfection" that leads to a higher evolutionary form can flourish unimpeded.

Perfection in Christ

Human Enhancement has restored sight to the blind, brought hearing to the deaf, enabled the lame to walk, and healed diseases—things once thought only possible by miraculous powers. It promises to extend our life expectancy and further increase communication. The realm of possibilities does appear limitless to what new technology will accomplish. However, the ideal of perfection driving our technology is based on an overestimation of human powers and the failure to recognize that our perfection has already been accomplished.

Christians can agree that human beings are technological animals. This is no different than when Aristotle said people are social animals. This just means it is human nature to be social or technological; but we disagree with the notion that we are nothing more than that. Although we were made in the perfect image of God (Gen. 1:26), that image was lost in part due to Adam's sin. We can survive in the harsh conditions of the natural world with technology, which is nothing more than extensions ourselves. But we cannot restore that image without a spiritual rebirth that only God can give us through the work of Christ which we appropriate by faith. Technological enhancement will not lead us to perfection. "Man cannot live by bread alone" (Matt. 4:4). The Bible calls Jesus Christ the "last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45) by which it means he was the perfect man sent to restore the human race. "And having been made perfect, He became to all who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:10). Humanity constantly strives to recover that lost image through its own good works and religious striving. The technological fetish of our day is

simply another form of that works righteousness or humanity trying to earn its own salvation and perfection. It is the old works righteousness of the Pelagian heresy dressed up in modern garb.

You are called to find your rest in Christ, to accept who you are and not to imitate Apollo (physical form and beauty) or the Cyborg (technology and progress) in reaching for perfection, for they are redeemed in Christ as well. Christ has already accomplished perfection and we are perfected in Him; "you have been made complete [perfect] in Him" (Col. 2:10). And through Christ we can extend his example of perfection to the world. "For I am confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6). Stop striving for a perfect ideal you can never reach. The Psalmist writes, "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). This is a very difficult task for perfectionists. Our charge is to accept the perfection of Christ, to accept that we have been accepted in Him!

Notes

1. Natalia Ilyin, *Blonde Like Me: The Roots of the Blonde Myth in Our Culture* (New York: Touchstone, 2000), 111.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 112.
4. Ibid., 113.
5. Pink, "Perfect" in Greatest Hits…So Far!!! La Face Records, 2010.
6. Philip Kitcher, *The Lives to Come: The Genetic Revolution and Human Possibilities* (New York: Tounchstone, 1997), 188.
7. Ibid., 19.
8. Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs: Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15.
9. Ibid., 26.
10. Donna J. Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science,

Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the late Twentieth Century" in *Posthumanism*, ed. Neil Badmington (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 69-84.
11. Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 26.

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The Church and the Social Media Revolution

Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese examines social media's massive communication shift, with insights for the church.

What is Social Media?

Any media that uses two-way communication as opposed to one-way communication is *social media* rather than *mass media*, such as TV, radio, and print which deliver a message to a mass audience. Mass media is not personal like the telephone, or letter writing; it is directed to the crowd or to a particular niche in the crowd that does not allow for the audience to talk back, with some exceptions. Mass media is not social because it does not permit a conversation with its audience. Social media, such as social websites like Facebook, Twitter, and the new Youtoo Social TV website, allows for dialogue and two-way communication between speaker and audience. It is dialogue rather than monologue. Social media use is not limited to just the popular websites. Any form of electronic communication involving computers and cell phones is part of the social media revolution because these technologies offer the individual the ability to respond.



It is estimated that one-third of the world is now connected to the internet. If you have an email address you are involved in social media. This sizeable amount constitutes a revolution in communication because it changes the *way* we communicate and it changes *what* we communicate. In calling social media a revolution we simply mean this is a new way of communicating. It does not mean mass media will be abolished. Media, along with most technological progress, operates in a layering system where a new layer or technology builds on the old one rather than abolishing it. Mass media begins with the printing press. The telephone, radio, and TV come later. Television remains the most prominent mass medium; while the printed word has not disappeared, it is certainly not as central as it was in the nineteenth century. The computer adds another layer to our media and brings them all together. It will overshadow them all, but not abolish them.

With about a third of the actual world online or engaged in social media, it is necessary that the church, which is in the business of communication, makes sure its message is accurately represented there. But the task is not as easy as starting a new profile page since there are certain problems that must be addressed as we communicate.

The Medium Is the Message

Close to 2,247,000,000 people use social media worldwide. This is a remarkable change in just a few years and easily qualifies as a new way of communicating, unprecedented in the history of the world. It is a revolution because it changes the way we communicate from face-to-face individual contact to an electronic mediation with certain advantages and disadvantages.

We have all heard the saying, “the medium is the message.”{1} This means the way we say something is as important as what we say, or that the medium affects the content of what is said. Preaching is not unaffected by this principle. Simply because someone preaches the word of God does not mean immunity to the potential negative aspects of his chosen medium just as with radio, TV, and the internet. For example, radio and TV are effective in reaching a mass audience, but this usually must come at the expense of the quality of the message; it must be toned down to fit these media. Any subject with many ideas and complex logic may work in a book format but not on TV. Telephones put you in touch with a disembodied voice, superior to not talking or letter writing, but still not as good as actually talking to someone in person. Anyone involved with persuasion in business deals where you absolutely must communicate a convincing point knows the importance of body language, tone of voice, eye contact, appearance, and attitude—all conveyed by personal presence but lost over the phone. The phone itself shapes what you say by how it is said. It reduces communication from all five senses to one: hearing. The results are predictable: the phone reduces communication compared to actually being there.

A basic law of media says the wider the audience the less substantive a message simply because it must appeal to the common denominator in the general audience. The more people you want to reach, the less of a message you will have, which means keep it simple when it comes to a general audience so the majority of people can understand it. This is the drawback of instant and mass communication. We sacrifice quality of thought and depth of analysis for instant access to a mass audience and for immediate applicability of a general principle. In other words, we are telling people what to do without reflection, which is time consuming, slow, and simply awkward. Analysis is meant for the personal level, and mass communication is not personal. The reductionist trend in media can be circumvented to some extent through niche audiences

which many social media sites actually represent. This is a fair reflection of actual communities. What is society but the collection of smaller groups put into a whole?

Disembodiment

Social media represents a disembodied form of community. This of course is the nature of long distance relationships and communication. The reduction of knowledge to its simplest forms brings with it the sense that knowledge or community is simply information. The gospel can be communicated as information but it is more than that. The same is true with traditional forms of preaching, books, or even TV. We know after all has been said there still remains a side of the gospel that must be experienced or encountered in real people. The gospel must be embodied and not simply read about or talked about. This was the gist of Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians: "you are a letter of Christ . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Cor. 3:3-4). We might as well say written not electronically on the transient screen with flickering pixels, but in flesh and blood and in one-to-one encounters with friends, family, and neighbors. Media, as good as it is, cannot substitute for personal experience of God and fellowship with others. This brings the idea of an online community, church or school into question. There is no doubt that people communicate effectively this way, even on Facebook, and they can learn through this medium just like any traditional means, but there is a doubt as to how qualitative one's learning or one's community will be if there is no personal encounter. Can long lasting bonds and relationships form strictly through electronic means?

Social media is excellent at giving you a wide audience just like TV and radio and even meeting new people, but it is not a replacement for face-to-face contact. Media technology may

best be seen as an excellent supplement to relationships and community, but not a replacement. It can be used to stay in touch and keep people connected, but in cannot ultimately replace our community and social network of actual people. I think the goal of an online church should be to get people out from behind a computer and into contact and fellowship with others. Social media can facilitate friendship, but it cannot replace it. We are warm-blooded creatures and need other warm-blooded people to have community, something a computer screen cannot provide. Social media serves as a supplement to community, not a substitute!

Social Media and Privacy

What happens in Vegas stays on Youtube, Facebook, and Twitter. Privacy is dead. The computer killed it, and no one cares. Every step forward in technological progress has a price to pay. We have moved forward in creating social media which enables us to communicate with a wider audience, but society has paid a terrible price with the loss of privacy. The computer remembers everything. This reality should cause some pause and reflection on what we say simply because it can be potentially recalled and even used against us. Employers routinely check Facebook pages of potential employees. Creditors use Facebook to collect debts. The police use Facebook to find people and build cases against them. We think of social media as fun and games, much like a video game, when in fact it is much more serious. All social media communication such as email or texting exists in a nether world between an illusion of privacy and the potential public access by everyone. The user falsely assumes his message is private without realizing it may be available to anyone. Future generations will archive and access all that we say today.

Even more seriously, the NSA is currently building a supercomputer called the Utah Data Center scheduled to go

online in 2013 that will monitor all your digital actions including email, cell phone calls, even Google searches.{2} It will be able to track all your purchases electronically. Whatever you do digitally will be available for scrutiny by the government. I know you wanted to hear how great social media is for communicating, evangelism, and so forth, and it is great, but there are pitfalls and dangers that we must also confront. Let's not get so swept up with our enthusiasm for social media that we stick our head in the sand when it comes to the dangers. This is the greatest problem I see Christians make when they analyze technology. They see only the advantages and positive sides of their technological involvement and refuse to consider what may go wrong. It will not create a damper to analyze the potential problems of our technology use, rather it will make us sober-minded as we are commanded to be (1 Peter 1:13, 4:7 and 5:8).

Dialogue vs. Monologue

Social media does offer a great advantage over the traditional means of mass communication that the church has used in print, TV, and radio. Social media represents a democratization of media including TV. Mass media is traditionally one-sided communication or monologue where one powerful voice does all the speaking, especially on TV. Social media allows for multiple voices to be heard at once and in contrast with each other, allowing for a dialogue and conversation as opposed to the pedagogy of monologue. This is significant because, as we are told by media experts like Marshall McLuhan and Jacques Ellul, propaganda is usually the result of only one voice being permitted in a discussion or the absence of dialogue, much like in a commercial where only one view point is promoted. McLuhan notes the importance of dialogue with media: "The environment as a processor of information is propaganda. Propaganda ends where dialogue begins. You must talk to the media, not to the programmer. To talk to the programmer is

like complaining to a hot dog vendor at a ballpark about how badly your favorite team is playing."{3}

Really, for the first time in history does the general public have a chance to talk back to knowledge brokers and those creating information and to those creating faith. A few tell the many what to think through mass media; through social media an individual tells the mass what he thinks. Social media offers a multitude of voices on all topics. It may appear chaotic and directionless at times, and at other times there appears incisive wisdom. Social media reflects the turmoil and sanity of its users. Social media is many things, but unlike its big brother mass media, social media is not propaganda. The church needs to soberly join this conversation.

Notes

1. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964).

2. James Bamford, "The NSA is Building the Country's Biggest Spy Center (watch what you say)" in *Wired* March 17, 2012.

3. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Message: An Inventory of Effects* (New York: Bantam, 1967, 142); Jaques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage, 1965).

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On Black Holes and Archangels

Dr.Terlizzese too often hears from Christian leaders and

laymen that film, philosophy, literature, music, mythology, etc. (arts and humanities), are polluted wells that Christians do better to avoid rather than risk contamination. Yet no such warning is ever given about science and technology, always readily accepted under the rubric of natural revelation, except for some strange birds like Jacques Ellul or Neal Postman. "On Black Holes and Archangels" attempts to bridge this hypocritical divide in knowledge through raising art to the status of science as a legitimate source of knowledge concerning God and the human condition. As professor Lewis Sperry Chafer once wrote, theology uses "any and every source."

Reversal of Theological Priorities



When theology students talk about general revelation they mean science. God shows himself through the natural world; the movement of the stars, the rhythms of biology, the complexity of chemical synthesis, the beauty of the Grand Canyon and the like. Invariably, they almost always neglect human nature as a prominent theological source in acute reversal of theological priorities.

Comparatively, the bible says very little about the nature of the cosmos and the animal kingdom; instead it focuses on Adam's Race (humanity), Adam's prominence as divine vice-regent, his fall from innocence, the pain and suffering ensuing from a ruptured relationship with the Maker; the creation of the Hebrew people and the sacrificial offering of his Son (the Second Adam [Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:45]) in the plan of redemption.

The Bible is mostly about Israel's reluctance to serve God. Their obstinate disobedience, their refusal to recognize absolute righteousness of the One God, the pleading of the prophets to return to the Truth; their judgment and horrifying dissolution, but final salvation thanks only to the divine

mercy of their heavenly Father, “all Israel will be saved” (Romans 11:26). Israel serves as paradigm for all people, as the new creation of humanity in the Second Adam that brings the renewal of God’s creation, the natural world; “A shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse . . . the lion shall lay down with the lamb . . . they will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD” (Isaiah 11:1-9; 27:6).

The theological reversal of priorities places science and reason over religion and faith, which interprets human nature in light of the cosmos rather than the cosmos in light of human nature and salvific transformation; as Adam goes so goes nature; “Cursed is the ground because of you [Adam];” “the creation will be set free from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Genesis 3:17;
Romans 8:19-22).

This reversal is reminiscent of C. P. Snow’s critical paradigm called the *Two Cultures*.{1} Snow elucidated the theory that modern epistemology splits between science and the humanities, or said simply, between religion and science, between subjective and objective knowledge, creating an imbalance that favors one way of knowing over the other. Any juxtaposition in knowledge will result in the denigration of religion or science that fails to recognize their inherent compatibility.

Evangelicals are quick to latch onto the split in knowledge, recognizing science’s superiority as source of knowledge and engine for technological acceleration in a theological reversal of priorities that recognizes all things scientific and technological as gifts from God, even offering metaphysical justification for technological acceleration under the theological rubric of general revelation, yet disparaging the humanities as a polluted well. However, science is not general revelation, it is only the philosophical lens used to interpret it—which is not

incorrect, just incomplete. A consistent application of general revelation must include the humanities as a valid source of knowledge on human nature as equal to science: philosophy, religion, literature, art, film, etc., all present a valid interpretation of human nature that serves as sources for theology. L. Sperry Chafer's argued decades ago that theology uses "any and every source."{2}

What is General Revelation?

Most evangelical theology divides revelation or God's self-disclosure into two categories called general revelation and special revelation, a division of knowledge going back at least to Saint Thomas Aquinas, receiving its greatest expression in the early modern period with the theory of the *Two Books* by Francis Bacon. The first book of the knowledge of God comes from the natural world, discerned and interpreted by reason, open to all—hence general knowledge; modern science and philosophy grounded in rationalism develops from this theological base. The second book of knowledge of God was considered Holy Scripture, discerned and interpreted through faith supported by reason—hence it is not open to all, only the faithful.

General revelation refers to the knowledge of God outside of the Bible in nature, history, and personal experience; it is open to all people and anyone can understand it. Special revelation refers to the knowledge of God revealed in the Bible alone, such as the dual nature of Christ as the God/Man, the Trinity, the story of redemption and the knowledge of salvation. It is special because only those who accept the word of God by faith know these truths discerned by the Spirit of God (1 Corinthians 2). The two forms of revelation always complement each other. However, special revelation has greater authority than general revelation as the exclusive source for knowledge of salvation. We are saved through special revelation and never through general revelation which largely

teaches humanity's need for God, but offers no solution because that will only be found in special revelation.

God's presence is revealed in nature but in a very limited way. Humanity actually knows very little about God from general revelation. People talk about "the love of God" but that is not a concept drawn from the natural world. The poet Tennyson said "nature is red in tooth and claw," meaning nature is cruel and unforgiving. The reality of nature as hostile and uncaring does not reflect the character of God. We know God is love, only because the Bible, not nature, tells us He is love (John 3:16; 1 John). Seeing a grizzly bear mother eating her young on a nature documentary convinced me of the truth of Tennyson's statement.

General revelation means God reveals himself through the humanities as well as the sciences. The opening of the evangelical mind begins with a view of revelation that takes the arts and humanities as seriously as the sciences as a valid source of knowledge.

On Black Holes and Archangels

As the astronomer sees and reflects the divine glory of the cosmos, so the philosopher, musician, novelist and film artist reflects the inner light of soul—as complicated, profound and stunning as the swirl of galaxies, as explosive as a supernova and as deep and forbidding as a black hole! Artists explore remote and inhospitable depths of inner space. They transport the human spirit to destinies Magellan, Columbus and Verrazano never dreamt of; where Voyager will never encounter, where the telescope sees blindly . . . where angels fear to tread!

Art explores inner recesses of human nature and delivers subjective knowledge on topics such as anxiety, alienation, despair, boredom, hate, faith, love, fear, courage, lust, oppression and liberation, not quantifiable or objective, but just as real and valuable to Christian theology as the

scientist's observations. Theologian of Culture Paul Tillich insightfully argued that art was the spiritual barometer of culture: "Art is religion."{3} In order to understand culture and the ultimate questions it asks in relating the Gospel message, the theologian must turn to philosophy, literature, paintings, music, etc.

Science and art are not in competition. Just as reason and faith complement each other as sources of knowledge, so subjective and objective knowledge act as two halves of the same coin—the union of the left and right sides of the brain. "Historian of Evil" Jeffrey Burton Russell writes,

> *This question of how we know seems unfamiliar because we have been brought up to imagine that something is either "real" or "not real," as if there were only one valid world view, only one way to look at things, only one approach to truth. Given the overwhelming prestige of natural science during the past century, we usually go on to assume that the only approach to truth is through natural science . . . it seems to be "common sense" . . . there are multiple truth systems, multiple approaches to reality. Science is one such approach. But . . . science is . . . a construct of the human mind . . . based on undemonstrable assumptions of faith. There is no scientific proof of the bases of science. [There is] no real difference between the subject and objective approach to things . . . science has its limits, and beyond those limits there are, like other galaxies, other truth systems. These other systems are not without resemblances to science, but their modes of thought are quite different: among them are history, myth, poetry, theology, art, and analytical psychology. Other truth systems have existed in the past; still more may exist in future; we can only guess what thought structures exist among other intelligent beings.{4}*

Only novelists, film makers, poets and theologians can communicate the possible thought structures of angels, demons

or ETI's. How does the thought process of an archangel differ from that of seraphim and cherubim? The *Star Trek* franchise may be our best introduction to alien civilizations in the absence of any hard evidence.

Elysium: The Acceleration of the Status Quo into Outer Space

The recent (2013) science fiction movie *Elysium* depicts the human condition as it has existed throughout human history and extends it to the space station Elysium. In the year 2154, the class difference between the haves and the have not's appears in bold relief. Elysium is a haven for the wealthy and technologically powerful elite who rule the sub-proletariat peoples of earth living in squalor, misery and deprivation. Los Angeles is reminiscent of the shanty towns of Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo today. The few control the many through the accumulation and withholding of wealth and technological power, especially medical machines "Med-Bays" that reverse cell damage and heals all sickness and disease, granting virtual immortality. A self-appointed champion of the people Max Da Costa (Matt Damon) with nothing left to lose—since his exposure to a fatal radiation dose has left him with five days to live—mounts an assault on Elysium and accomplishes the impossible, a revolution that gains control of the space station's computer system and the robot guardians, turning them against the establishment and bringing relief to the people of Earth.

Elysium serves as a great cinematic example of liberation theology and window into the human condition that never changes despite technological acceleration that empowers the few to control the many. In any late stage of civilization, from Egypt and Rome to modernity, the same conditions prevail: the elite rule the many and technology makes no difference in alleviating social inequalities. Technological advance, as the movie portrays, only accelerates the status quo so that the

struggle for freedom and equality of all people simply takes place off the earth on a space station.

The Enlightenment idea of progress envisions a global advance of humanity across all social lines. Any concentration of power and wealth in an elite group to the neglect of the rest of the planet, regardless of how technologically advanced or socially integrated, is not progress but regress. *Elysium* reflects contemporary global conditions—the status quo, the way things actually are, projecting them one generation or forty years into the future.

When technological acceleration grants the world equal social conditions, such as the elimination of poverty, hunger and disease in Africa and Latin America as in the Western world, or the ready accessibility of health care in the United States as in the Netherlands or Canada, then we do justice to the noble word "*Progress*." In the absence of social equality, technological growth renders the same absolute social imbalances and universal disillusionment in the modern world as existed in the late Roman Empire, the concentration of power in an elite, ruling ruthlessly over the masses without hope of change, except on a global scale that moves rapidly towards dissolution, where robot guardians replace the Praetorian Guard.{5}

"Nein! Nein! Nein!"

There is no saving knowledge of God in history, science, economics, philosophy, math or whatever. NO! NO! NO! I am in complete agreement with Karl Barth on this point: "Nein! Nein! Nein!" No! Absolutely not! Never! The saving knowledge of Christ comes only through the word of God and centers on the work of Jesus Christ for all mankind. The knowledge of God in general revelation is not saving knowledge of the Gospel. If one could know God through the means of general revelation then it would make special revelation and the coming of Christ superfluous and useless. General revelation only condemns and

functions for Gentiles like the Law of Moses for Jews (Romans 1:18-32; Galatians 3).

General revelation prepares humanity for special revelation. Knowledge of God and the human condition in general revelation creates the need for special revelation. General revelation shows humanity its sinfulness and need for a savior; "How majestic is Your name in all the earth. Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens . . . What is man that Thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:1-4). Job gave the only possible answer as a finite being when reminded of wonders of God's creation: "I know You can do all things . . . I declared that which I did not understand . . . I retract and I repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6). "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). General revelation demonstrates God's absence from humanity; it reveals the "UNKNOWN GOD" (Acts 17:23).

Special revelation meets that need for reconciliation with God in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Salvation cannot come from any other avenue than special revelation, a major theological premise the great theologian Karl Barth staunchly defended. According to Barth, all revelation is special revelation and all revelation imparts the saving knowledge of Christ.

General revelation brings the knowledge of God's absence, consciousness of alienation from the divine, much as the Mosaic Law brings the awareness of sin (Romans 1-3); but only to set us up for the knowledge of the Savior that comes from hearing the gospel of Christ preached (Romans 4-10). "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).{6}

Notes

1. C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1959).

2. Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology, Vol. One* (Dallas, TX: Dallas Seminary Press, 1947), 5. Chafer defined systematic theology as "A science which follows a humanly devised scheme or order of doctrinal development and which purports to incorporate into its system all truth about God and His universe from any and every source."

3. Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 7.

4. Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), 18, 19.

5. Carroll Quigley, *The Evolution of Civilizations: An Introduction to Historical Analysis* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1979); Roderick Seidenberg, *Posthistoric Man: An Inquiry* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1950); Albert Schweitzer, *The Philosophy of Civilization* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus, 1987, 1949); Lawrence J. Terlizzese, *Hope in the Thought of Jacques Ellul* (Eugene, OR; Cascade, 2005).

6. Emil Brunner, *Natural Theology: Comprising Nature and Grace* by Professor Dr. Emil Brunner and the reply *No!* by Dr. Karl Barth (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002, Reprint).

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"Are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha Writings Part

of the Apocrypha? Why Aren't They Scripture?"

I can't find any solid information on the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha [Ed. note: (Greek, "falsely attributed") Jewish writings of the period between the Old and New Testament, which were attributed to authors who did not actually write them] **and why these books are not consider inspired scripture. I know they are considered false writings, but why? Are the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the Old Testament Apocrypha considered the same thing? Could the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha be just a branch of the Old Testament Apocrypha? And therefore the same principles are applied to the Pseudepigrapha and the Apocrypha about why they are not considered scripture?**

The books that you are referring to did not meet the standards of canonization. I suggest you read *From God to Us: How We Got Our Bible* by Norman Geisler and William Nix. The Apocrypha is a different set of works that have traditionally been handed down along with the Old Testament by some Christians but not Jews. It is recognized as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox church, but not Protestants who acknowledge its importance as intertestamental literature and even consider it helpful to read for spiritual development, but do not accord it the same status as Scripture. There are multiple theological and historical problems with these books. And their authorship remains unknown.

Dr. Lawrence Terlizzese

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“Jehovah is the Only Name of God!”

Posted on Probe’s Facebook:

Having just been looking at several sites including Wikipedia for God’s name (which I already know from scripture) it never ceases to amaze me how wrong some people are. There is only one truth and God’s name Jehovah is in the original scriptures over 7000 times. Jesus said in His Model prayer “Let Your name be sanctified.” How can we sanctify it if we don’t use it, as sanctify means “make known.” God and Lord are just titles like king or judge or doctor. So unless you are going to be completely truthful then it would be better for none of these sites to say anything. People the truth is out there, it’s up to you to do your own homework like I did.

The Name of God is not “Jehovah”! God revealed His Name to Moses in Exodus 3:14 as YHWH, popularly known as the Tetragrammaton or “the four letter name” which means “I AM” or “the eternal one” or “the self-existing one.” The exact pronunciation of this Name was lost to history with the destruction of the last Temple in Jerusalem. It was uttered only once a year on the Day of Atonement. Although the Name appears thousands of times in the Old Testament, it was never spoken; instead Adonai was used in its place, which was a generic reference to God. Many English translations use LORD to show where the Name appears in the Hebrew text. The word “Jehovah” was coined by scholars around the 17th century through combining the vowels from Adonai with the consonants of YHWH.

More importantly than the actual pronunciation or even spelling of the Name was its meaning; in revealing His Name as

“I AM,” God declared that He cannot be identified with a name because that limits the eternal one to a finite and temporal description. In ancient times a name denoted the character of its object, setting limits to it (Ecclesiastes 6:10), and gave the name-giver a particular power over the named, such as with the name God gave to the first human Adam which means man and positioned him at the pinnacle of creation; in turn Adam was responsible for naming all the animals which established his authority over them (Genesis 2:20). A proper name for God suggests a limitation to the finite world much like the pagan deities of Egypt. However, because God is eternal He remains outside of the cosmos and in control of it. A name sets a boundary to His eternal being. In other words, God’s Name revealed to Moses was a Name that cannot be named or as it has been called “the ineffable Name.” In the context of Exodus God was confronting and destroying the pagan Egyptians and their false gods, which all had names that represented particular aspects of the finite world: the sun, the moon, the underworld, the river, etc. God declared that He is different than those limited gods because He is Wholly Other, all powerful and eternal. He cannot be represented or personified by the cycles of nature.

Naming divinity in the ancient world made the gods personal, but extremely limited in their abilities and powers. The gods of paganism were personifications of nature; for example, Ra was the sun god that gave life, but his power did not reach to the underworld. Zeus controlled the sky, but not the sea which belonged to Poseidon. The gods did not ultimately rule the cosmos, but were subject to a universal principle of fate; not even the gods could escape their predetermined destinies.

YHWH declared Himself “holy” or different from the limited pagan gods. Yet, He was personal too in that He did not rule by caprice; His followers could pray to Him, reason with Him and even argue with Him as with any personal deity in the hopes that He would change His mind (Genesis 6:6; Numbers 11,

14:11-19). YHWH was both eternal and personal, a radical departure from the ancient pagan belief in limited gods and unpredictable fate.

The New Testament embodies the fullness of this infinite yet personal God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God becoming man in John 1 was the equivalent of YHWH revealing His Name to Moses in Exodus 3. Just as the eternal one did the impossible by limiting Himself with a proper name, so through the incarnation God did the impossible in the minds of strict monotheistic Jews by becoming man (John 5:18; 10:33), a concept the Jews thought so blasphemous that they wanted to stone Jesus for claiming to be "the Son of God" a title he used to identify himself as God (John 10:36). Just as Jesus used "Son of Man" in order to show his complete identity with humanity, God chose self-limitation in emptying Himself and took the form of a man in Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:6-8).

Yet "Jesus" is not the Name of God and "Christ" (the chosen one) of course is a title. Jesus means "salvation" and although He was the incarnation of God, He was still limited and still a man, like us in every way except for sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus of Nazareth was not superman and had no special magic powers or abilities. All that He accomplished was through faith in his Father God and by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 14:10). Jesus is the name of a man, who identified himself as "I AM" (John 8:58). He was the God/Man who humbled himself in death, bringing salvation to humanity, and because of His suffering it is the name of Jesus that God exalts above every Name (Philippians 2:8-11). And only through calling on the name of Jesus does humanity experience salvation (Acts 4:12). The exaltation of Jesus Christ makes the whole debate over the proper Name of God a moot point, since it is the name of a man that is greater than even the Name of God.

It is therefore biblically inaccurate, linguistically mistaken and theologically impossible to make reference to "Jehovah" or

“Yahweh” as the Name of God. It is best that we abandon the entire use of the name Jehovah and simply return to the word LORD in our English translations wherever the Hebrew reads YHWH with the understanding that this is “the ineffable Name” that means “the eternal self-existing one,” who is Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and who remains forever present with us through the Holy Spirit.

Lawrence Terlizzese, Ph.D.

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“Are Dreadlocks OK for a Christian?”

Is it okay for a Christian to wear dreadlocks?

The answer to this question will depend on the motive of the person wearing the dredlocks. Why are they wearing them and what are they saying by it? This approach applies equally to any style of dress. There is no Christian haircut or clothing style. There are only Christians who wear clothes or wear their hair in a particular way for a certain reason. It might be a good way to start off a conversation with someone who wears dreadlocks by asking why he or she wears their hair that way. Generally, dredlocks represent a person’s close connection to Reggae music and Rastafarianism; but not necessarily, since in our society people adopt certain trends and styles simply for the novelty and then are on to the next fashion. Clothing, like food, should not be a source of contention for Christians. Romans 14 tells us that every

believer is responsible before the Lord for their actions and that because we have the Holy Spirit, we will be able to make the right choices that are pleasing to the Lord.

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