

A REVIEW OF *REACHING FOR IMMORTALITY*. BY SANDRA GODDE.

Posted on Oct 26, 2022

Wipf & Stock, 2022.

An important new resource on the threat of transhumanism:

Nearly a century ago Aldous Huxley penned his chilling and prophetic *Brave New World*. In this dystopian novel he mapped out a future in which science and technology, instead of greatly helping mankind, became the undoing of human nature and personhood. But this may have seemed like a long way off back in 1932.

Today however it is right at our doorstep. Many of us know about the Great Reset, the World Economic Forum, and Klaus Schwab. An adviser to them is the Israeli philosopher, transhumanist and atheist Yuval Noah Harari. Several months ago he said this:

If you go back to the middle of the 20th century ... and you think about building the future, then your building materials are those millions of people who are working hard in the factories, in the farms, the soldiers. You need them. You don't have any kind of future without them. Now, fast forward to the early 21st century when we just don't need the vast majority of the population, because the future is about developing more and more sophisticated technology, like artificial intelligence bioengineering, Most people don't contribute anything to that, except perhaps for their data, and whatever people are still doing which is useful, these technologies increasingly will make redundant and will make it possible to replace the people.

One more quote to tie all this together. In 2004 ethicist Wesley J. Smith released the book, *Consumer's Guide to a Brave New World*. In it he said this:

In essence, transhumanism is a futuristic misanthropy. These people and kindred would-be enhancers think that human life has no special meaning in itself, but that the value of any life – animal, human, posthuman, machine,

space alien – depends on the individual’s measurable capacities. . . . In the transhumanist catechism, natural humans aren’t good enough, smart enough, strong enough, athletic enough, beautiful enough, or genetically diverse enough. Transhumanists throw out the very idea of “normality,” indeed of there being any virtue at all in remaining fully human. They fervently pray (in the secular sense, naturally) that anyone dissatisfied with their natural condition may be able one day to visit the local redesign clinic to have themselves and their progeny remade to order.

With things like biotechnology, AI, futurism and transhumanism all rushing ahead at lightning pace, some concerned commentators have been speaking out, with a number of good books now out to sound the alarm. One of the most recent volumes is that by Godde.

The Australian theologian and Christian apologist offers us a concise look at how the biblical view of who we are, our value, and our humanity radically differs from the vision of the transhumanists and their allies. Indeed, the Judeo-Christian worldview makes all the difference in the world in this discussion.

While Godde acknowledges that there are some religious transhumanist groups around (but not many), the simple truth is, these groups and individuals searching for immortality will never find it, but will drag down humanity with them. The foundational belief that being made in the image of God is what gives us our unique and inherent dignity is lost in their schemes.

Like all secular utopians, these folks have simply created their own religion: “transhumanists have substituted biotechnology for God as a higher power to worship.” And like all false religions, they are doomed to fail. Says Godde, “Christianity is about human transformation, but not in the way the technological solutionists propose. . . . Both Christianity and transhumanism aspire to Godlike powers and perfection for human beings, but Christianity maintains that this cannot be achieved apart from the grace of God.”

Reaching *for* Immortality

CAN SCIENCE CHEAT DEATH?



A Christian Response to Transhumanism

Sandra J. Godde

Foreword by Graham Joseph Hill

Reaching for

Immortality: Can Science Cheat Death?: A Christian Response to Transhumanism by Godde, Sandra J. (Author), Hill, Graham Joseph

(Contributor) 

In this quite brief book (less than 100 pages), the main movers and shakers in the transhumanist, futurist and immortality-seeker movement are examined, along with their beliefs, values and goals. She mentions Schwab and Harari and others, but reminds us of names more familiar to most. Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook fame is one of them.

He of course speaks of a new “Metaverse” arising, and excitedly talks about an “embodied internet” and the like. His glowing conception of what lies ahead however is just as faulty as are his past accomplishments. Most of us have already experienced the massive invasion of privacy found in the social media, as well as the control, censorship and endless attacks on those who dare to think differently than the FB overlords want us to. Says Godde:

“Zuckerberg states that new forms of governance and ecosystem building will be required for the metaverse and assures us that privacy and safety concerns will be addressed.” Yeah right, can’t wait for that. We already see how Communist China is using these new technologies to further consolidate absolute control over the masses.

And she also discusses other familiar names, such as Elon Musk. He of course is pushing ahead with his Neuralink, “a brain-machine interface that promises to change everything.” It certainly will. And this is not just the stuff of science fiction and the future:

“A lesser version of Neuralink is already being used for Parkinson’s patients. If Musk’s Neuralink discoveries advance, our future entails possibilities where technology will blur the distinction between our individual persons and machines.”

And that is just fine by many of these techno-activists. They DO want to move beyond mere humanity. They are quite happy to see mankind left behind, replaced by new species and/or new technologies. As is always the case, those shouting the loudest about ‘saving humanity’ are those who are most willing to see it wiped out and replaced by something ‘better’ and something more ‘efficient’.

Godde rightly cites earlier prophetic voices which have warned about where all this is heading, including Orwell, Huxley and C. S. Lewis. She laments that their concerns about “unethical science and unconstrained technology” have largely gone unheeded.

Of course even Christians are not saying we are just rapt with our fallen, sin-soaked and degenerative world that we now live in. Christians of all people do look forward to something better. We envisage and wait for a new heaven and a new earth. “It is not just a utopian dream, but a destination with a guide and a known path.” That cannot be said about the transhumanist dreams of getting us to the promised land.

It is not enough that both groups want a better future. The differences are too massive, and lead us in quite different directions:

Christians want to be better human persons; transhumanists want to be trans- or posthumans. What it means to be fully human is very different to each group. There are profound and systemic differences in these two worldviews, including radical human enhancement goals that are incompatible with the final eschatological promise that is offered to us by Christ in the resurrection and the world to come. Transhumanists want to move beyond being human as we know it, including shedding the biological body. Both worldviews have deification claims but they are based on mutually exclusive goals, because at the foundation of their visions lay diverse and competing anthropologies.

Yes, it is different anthropology indeed: “The essential characteristic of humans being made in the image of God is that our personhood is derivative from, and dependent on, our Creator and defined by its relation to God. . . .To seek the infinite in human finitude or the ultimate in the conditional, is a profound error that leads to ultimate estrangement.”

That is because proper anthropology always follows from proper theology. Since most of the transhumanists are secular or even atheistic (like Harari), they will never have the proper and necessary theological ground on which to stand to carry out their lofty but ultimately unobtainable goals.

In sum, most of the modern trans- movements and belief systems are to be fully eschewed. Transhumanism is one of them. Transgenderism would be another. But not all should be avoided. The transcendent living God “who alone has immortality” (1 Timothy 6:16) is one that we should rush toward, and not away from.

Those who are united with God through Christ will find the one and only path to true immortality, and the complete end to all suffering and death. Many thanks to Godde for making this case.

(Australians can find this book here: www.koorong.com/product/reaching-for-immortality-can-science-cheat-death-graham_9781666736748?ref=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.koorong.com%2F)

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