

# Christian HealthCare

## NEWSLETTER

### MEMBER LETTERS:

#### We reread the cards when it's a tough day

In December I was telling a friend about Samaritan and what a blessing it is that our monthly check goes directly to people, and that we send an encouraging note and pray for the families. "Honestly," I said, "would you rather trust an insurance company or the Body of Christ?"

Later I wondered to myself how it would actually work if we had a need. Well, God answered my question in January when my wife was suddenly in the emergency room. I called Samaritan and the gentleman who answered prayed with me and for my wife. Three surgeries later the bills are being paid in a timely manner, and in most cases we enjoy a significant discount, to the benefit of the members.

I must say the notes of encouragement and prayers are the greatest gift. Our family room is lined with cards and we reread them when it's a tough day. We know God's got this!

George and Carol  
California

### 7 reasons to share your Samaritan story

#### #SharingWorks

Now is a good time to share your Samaritan story with family and friends and encourage them to consider joining in the ministry of bearing one another's health care burdens.

**Reason #1: It glorifies God when we tell others how He is working.** Matthew 5:16 says, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

**Reason #2: Join in the fun on social media.** Be encouraged by what others are saying and add your voice. Use #SharingWorks on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest.

**Reason #3: Fellow Christians need ethical health care options.** New member Carrie wrote to us, "When I became aware that Obamacare required our insurance plan to pay for abortion, I was relieved to discover Samaritan Ministries." (See [ObamacareAbortion.com](http://ObamacareAbortion.com).)

**Reason #4: Fellow Christians need to know about affordable health care options.** A recent *Washington Times* article reported, "Politicians at all levels of government are fearing another round of sticker shock for consumers this fall as insurers jack up prices."

**Reason #5: Influence public opinion.** Bloomberg News recently featured health care sharing in its reporting. It has

announced a year-long project to interview people who don't have insurance about ways they are dealing with the changing market for medical care. If you are interested, visit [bit.ly/bloomsurv](http://bit.ly/bloomsurv).

**Reason #6: It could be worth a hundred bucks.** You can receive a \$100 credit on your monthly share for each household you tell that joins Samaritan Ministries.

**Reason #7: Help build the kingdom of God.** Churches, ministries, and missionaries can often save money on health care by joining Samaritan, leaving more resources to go towards the Great Commission. ♦

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**CONTACT US**

newsletter@samaritanministries.org

**FOLLOW US**

On Twitter: samaritanmin  
On Facebook: Samaritan Ministries

**EDITORS**

*Jed Stuber, Editor*  
*Michael Miller, Managing Editor*  
*Ray King, Editor Emeritus*

**ART DIRECTION**

*Dan van Loon*

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**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES:**

PO Box 3618, Peoria, IL 61612  
telephone: 309-689-0442  
telephone (toll free): 877-764-2426  
fax: 309-689-0764

**Sharing Summary from April**

Shares: \$27,230,067  
Needs: \$27,228,718

Unshared Needs in Negotiation: \$ —

New Needs: 4,082  
Total Needs: 8,438

New Rewards: 201  
Miscarriages: 16  
Final Rewards: 16

Personalized prayer requests of the members with Needs are in the Prayer Guide. Please use your version of the Prayer Guide to support the members assigned to you.

Member Households: 76,895  
(as of 3/22/18)

**Contact Us: 877-764-2426 Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org**

**Questions about?**

- Your medical need
- Shares you are sending or receiving
- Your membership

**Email**

- needs@samaritanministries.org
- membership@samaritanministries.org
- membership@samaritanministries.org

**Phone Menu**

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- 1 - 2
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Health Resources

**Have a Need? Use the Health Resources app on Dash.**

- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook.
- Use Medibid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (free), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

**Remember:**



**1 SEND A NOTE—**

Burdens can be lightened emotionally as we encourage one another in the Lord.



**2 PAY YOUR SHARE—**

Burdens can be lightened physically as we do our part to financially meet others' needs as they would in our time of need.



**3 ALWAYS STAY ALERT IN PRAYER—**

Burdens can be lightened spiritually as we unite to call upon the God of the impossible.

## Functional medicine versus dysfunctional medicine

by Dr. Eric Potter

**F**unctional or dysfunctional medicine? Easy choice right? Who wants dysfunctional medicine? By definition, it does not work. But, what makes a medical model “functional”? If only the answer was simple. Wait, it is simple. Functional medicine works by getting patients back to living a healthier, more abundant life through the best of natural and conventional medicine aimed at root causes while treating the patient as an interconnected whole—simple but not simplistic.

Let’s walk through what my imaginary, yet average patient, “Mrs. Jill,” experiences in the dysfunctional conventional world. Jill is a 40-year-old fatigued patient, tired of not only her chronic stomach issues, but the way she is treated by the 10 well-meaning doctors she has seen over the years. Her visits have been quick, disjointed, and non-productive affairs. She still has no diagnosis or relief. Some of the medicines she has been told to try have actually made her worse. She has given up on most of them. All the standard tests, even a stomach scope, yielded nothing significant. Now eight years into this chronic mess, she struggles with additional weight around the hips along with intense menstrual cramping. The specialists can only agree on two things: that they don’t

know what is wrong and that the gut and other systemic issues are not connected. No one seems interested in the big picture here.

Jill runs out of conventional specialists and decides to take a different approach with a functional medicine M.D. Maybe this M.D. will be able to put some of things

### Finally, a doctor interested in the whole picture.

together for her. After all, this functional M.D. has requested her past records so her case can be reviewed prior to the visit. In addition, the pre-visit questionnaire strikes her as refreshingly extensive. She realizes just how much further this one goes into each area of her life. She dutifully answers questions about the composition of her diet. How much wheat and dairy? She thoughtfully answers questions about how many courses of antibiotics she has taken over the span of her life. Was she a C-section and was she breast-fed? The questionnaire asks and she calls her mom to verify the answers. This whole experience is becoming rather

surreal. This functional M.D. will know a lot of information about her before they even meet.

The appointment day finally comes, none too soon. She arrives early for her 90-minute initial visit, wondering what would fill a 90-minute visit. Normally, she would try to get her top two or three concerns out, but now she has all this time. Oddly, the waiting room is not filled with a crowd of people checking their watches. Then, the nurse brings her back to an exam room for a final informational review and the standard vital signs. This is another reminder of the 10 extra pounds she has collected in the preceding six months. That part is all too familiar.

After the nurse leaves, Jill glances around for the usual pharmaceutical propaganda promises. It’s not there. Then she is startled by knock on the clinic room door. Dr. Functional enters and introduces himself. After a short description of the visit plan, Dr. Functional asks Jill to start at the beginning with her story. With a few questions from the doctor, Jill spends 30 or 40 minutes describing her disappointing path toward wellness. This time she gets to tell the whole story.

Dr. Functional continues the dialogue with a review of that detailed pre-visit questionnaire. As he walks

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## Doug Dagarin ALERT Cadet

by Jaclyn Lewis

**D**oug Dagarin helps shepherd fathers using what he's learned from his walk with God the Father.

He's the Eastern Region Leader of ALERT Cadet, a father-son discipleship program for boys ages 8-17 that is part of ALERT Academy. ALERT Cadet's goal is to help fathers grow their family relationships and impart a Biblical worldview in the context of those healthy relationships.

After Doug's sons, Stephen and Andrew, aged out of ALERT Cadet, Doug wanted to build up others the way that he's been built up through the program and through the life experiences God has given him.



Doug and his wife, Barbara, have six adult children and 15 grandchildren.

"God has been awesome in our family," he says. "The older I get, the more I realize that there's nothing of value in this life except the relationships that we have with Jesus and with one another. That's really all we have. The rest is just fluff."

Doug says that, since meeting Christ at age 26, he has realized that his old perception of God as a cold, distant being was inaccurate.

"He's a relational God," Doug says.

He says that this discovery of his father-son relationship with God is what has strengthened his relationships with his children and given him a shepherd's heart for the families in ALERT Cadet.

"It's my heart to help fathers have the tools they need to connect with their sons and to raise them to Biblical manhood," Doug says.

Fathers are also encouraged to apply the principles they're learning in ALERT Cadet to their relationships with their daughters.

Doug first got involved in the ALERT Cadet ministry in 1996, when he and his older son, Stephen, joined the program. He experienced firsthand how healthy family relationships make it possible to impart a Biblical worldview to children.

As one example, when Doug's younger son, Andrew, was an ALERT Cadet, Andrew would faithfully keep his ALERT Cadet journal and share his journal entries with his dad.

"We're talking about a young man, ages 13 to 16, who on an almost nightly basis was sharing his heart with me about what God was showing him, which sometimes became



a springboard to talk about what was going on in this life," Doug says. "Those were formative years in his life. And to this day, at age 22, he and I can talk about anything. I wouldn't have that if we hadn't laid that foundation.

"That's who God is. We can't impart Christianity or the Gospel without convincing a person that Jesus is a relational person. We were created for relationship. Jesus died for that relationship, and that's what He's all about. That can be more easily communicated by a dad whose heart is turned toward his son or daughter."

The ALERT Cadet program consists of three main components to help facilitate this kind of healthy discipleship relationship between fathers and sons: instructional handbooks, service projects, and father-son camps.

As sons complete material and achieve milestones, they are awarded ranks, ribbons and other special awards displayed on the ALERT Cadet uniform. ALERT Cadet families close in proximity form units and participate in unit activities together. "Remote families"—ALERT Cadet families who are

too far from other families in the program to form a local unit—have the option to wear uniforms and participate in regional activities or ceremonies if they wish. When sons age out of the program, ALERT Cadet gives these young men leadership opportunities in their unit and at camps.

“You can see that we are a military-style organization,” Doug says, “only because we see that, for the great majority of young men, that venue really turns their crank. Not that they’ll all want to go out and be soldiers. I’m not a military person. The uniform doesn’t turn my crank. We just find it functional to create a sense of belonging and a way to recognize sons for things they accomplish.”

As part of Doug’s support to ALERT Cadet families from eastern Canada to Virginia, he prioritizes staying in touch with and visiting ALERT Cadet families, especially remote families.

“I love to see the family dynamics, sitting around the supper table for hours sharing stories and sharing my heart,” says Doug. “I just love leaving somebody’s home thinking I did something.”

## We want a young man to know that he’s on this earth to serve.

Three times a year, Doug attends home education conferences to spread the word about ALERT Cadet and encourage families.

“We get families who come up to our table and we talk with them about their struggles and successes as home educators,” Doug says. “Sometimes they end up leaving the

table and we never even talk about ALERT Cadet. I just try to build them up as successful families.”

Additionally, Doug puts on two father-son camps a year.

One is a three-day service camp, with group devotions, one-on-one father-son time, recreational time, and a significant service project. At one service camp, Doug says that the campers will buck (cut) logs, then split, haul and store 15-25 cords of firewood for a private school.

“We’re trying to create in young men a ministry mindset more than a vocational mindset,” Doug says. “We want a young man to know that he’s on this earth to serve.”

The other camp, designed for members of the Leadership Training Corps (LTC), is structured to help older sons and fathers learn how to respond in difficult situations by formulating and executing a strategic plan.

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### Why SMI?

**Doug Dagarin and his wife**, Barbara, joined Samaritan Ministries in 1999 because of their pro-life convictions.

Doug, Eastern Region leader of father-son discipleship ministry ALERT Cadet, says that, while he and his wife are signed up for Medicare, he has no plans to leave the ministry.

“I continue my membership with Samaritan Ministries because sharing medical needs with my brothers and sisters has become a way of life, and I don’t want to become dependent on the government,” says Doug.

“My heart is to be a part of the Body of Christ in this way in terms of sharing medical needs with my brothers and sisters.”

He also says that the ministry has caused him to be more careful with his health care spending. “I know somebody in the Body of Christ will need to pay for whatever money I spend on health care,” he says.

For example, when looking at the itemized bill for his wife’s hip replacement surgery, Doug found two \$7,000 charges for a single post, the leg portion of a replacement hip.

“I called the hospital and said, ‘There’s only one leg, but two posts listed on the bill,’” Doug says.

He eventually learned that the surgeon had initially opened the wrong sized post, and had to open a second to get the right size. Since posts can be sterilized and repackaged, the manufacturer usually eats the cost of an extra opened post, but in this instance, the extra charge had been overlooked.

“People pay those things all the time because nobody ever questions it,” Doug says. “That’s \$7,000!”

“I just appreciate that a Christian health care sharing ministry, where we take care of each other’s needs, causes us to be responsible and hold medical people accountable a little bit more than someone who just pays an insurance premium.” ♦



## How to help your kids overcome screen-time syndrome

by Jacqueline Franks

**S**creen time, in its multiple forms, will be part of your children's lives at some point. But parents must ask themselves how early and to what extent?

### An educational edge?

Some parents think they're giving their child an educational edge, like Susan who bought her 6-year-old son, John, an iPad when he was in first grade. She thought, "Why not let him get a jump on things?" John's school had begun using the devices with younger and younger grades—and his technology teacher had raved about their educational benefits.

Dr. Nicholas Kardaras,<sup>1</sup> one of the country's foremost addiction experts who counseled Susan and her son, John, writes, "She started giving John screen time to play different educational games on his iPad. Soon, he discovered Minecraft, which a teacher assured was "just like electronic Lego." She remembered how much fun she had as a child building Legos. At first, Susan

was pleased. John seemed engaged in creative play. She did notice that the game wasn't quite like the Legos she remembered—after all, she didn't have to kill animals and find rare minerals to survive and get to the next level with her old game. But the school even had a Minecraft club, so how bad could it be?"

"John became more and more focused on his digital game, losing interest in baseball and reading while refusing to do his chores. As his behavior continued to deteriorate, Susan tried to take the game away but John threw temper tantrums. His outbursts were so severe that she gave in, still rationalizing to herself over and over again that "it's educational."

But it's even worse than we think.

### Dose of reality

There's a line; cross it and parents may actually unintentionally be doing significantly more harm than good.

Consumer experience psychologist Liraz Margalit writes:

Tablets are the ultimate shortcut

tools: Unlike a mother reading a story to a child, for example, a smartphone-told story spoon-feeds images, words, and pictures all at once to a young reader. Rather than having to take the time to process a mother's voice into words, visualize complete pictures and exert the mental effort to follow a story line, kids who follow stories on their smartphones get lazy. The device does the thinking for them, and as a result, their own cognitive muscles remain weak.<sup>2</sup>

Digest the information below on screen time, even though it might feel uncomfortable, and arm yourself with the truth about the potential damage screen time is capable of imparting—particularly in a young, still-developing brain.

There's a reason Steve Jobs was a conscientiously low-tech parent. Silicon Valley tech executives and engineers enroll their kids in no-tech Montessori or Waldorf schools. Google founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page went to no-

tech Montessori Schools, as did Amazon creator Jeff Bezos and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales.<sup>3</sup>

### Screen time, a digital drug

We now know that smartphones, iPads, and Xboxes are a form of digital drug. Recent brain imaging research is showing that they affect the brain's frontal cortex—which controls executive functioning, including impulse control—in exactly the same way that cocaine does. Technology is so hyper-arousing that it raises dopamine levels—the feel-good neurotransmitter most involved in the addiction dynamic—as much as sex.

But what about kids who aren't "addicted" per se?

Let's be clear!

Even in children with "regular" exposure, we should be aware that screen time is creating subtle damage considering the "average" child clocks in *more than seven hours a day*.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Victoria Dunckley observes that many of the children she sees suffer from sensory overload, lack of restorative sleep, and a hyper-aroused nervous system, regardless of diagnosis—what she calls electronic screen syndrome. These children are impulsive, moody, and can't pay attention—and the damage is shown on brain scans.<sup>5</sup>

### Weaning and retraining

Unfortunately, screen time has replaced the outdoor time and become a kind of babysitter. Children used to play outside, where, in unstructured natural environments, they learned and practiced their social skills.<sup>6</sup>

And, like the story of Susan and her son, we need to get our children back to playing with Legos and toys

that don't think for them!

Scientists know we can train and retrain the brain. It is moldable. Through our environment, we can make the brain weaker or make it stronger. Despite everything we might think is good—like electronic "educational" games—we have unfortunately remolded our children's brains in the wrong direction.

We can rewire and retrain the brain by being intentional. It's so much easier to start young!

Occupational therapist Victoria Prooday writes:

#### 1. Train delayed gratification.

- Make them wait! It is OK to have "I am bored" time—this is the first step to creativity
- Gradually increase the waiting time between "I want" and "I get."
- Avoid technology use in cars and restaurants, and instead teach them waiting while talking and playing games.

#### 2. Don't be afraid to set the limits.

##### Kids need limits to grow happy and healthy!

- Make a schedule for meal times, sleep times, technology time.
- Think of what is GOOD for them—not what they WANT/DON'T WANT. They are going to thank you for that later on in life.
- Limit constant snacking. Parenting is a hard job.

#### 3. Teach your child to do monotonous work from early years as it is the foundation for future "work-ability".

- Folding laundry, tidying up toys, hanging clothes, unpacking groceries, setting the table, making

lunch, unpacking their lunch box, making their bed.

#### 4. Have fun with your children.

- Read aloud, wrestle with your kids, make a Mexican or Italian meal together, do a family game night or a treasure hunt in the house or yard. Push the table aside and dance with them, laugh about what they did when they were really little, take walks and look at the clouds!

Victoria concludes:

Kids will change when parents change their perspective on parenting. Help your children succeed in life by training and strengthening their brain sooner rather than later!<sup>7</sup>

Remember, parenting is about progress, NOT about perfection! You are reading about this because you are a parent who wants to do all you can to help and advance your child in the right direction.

You can do it! ♦

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Member Jacqueline Franks practiced as a registered nurse for 20 years and battled infertility before becoming a mom. She lives on a farm in Indiana and enjoys blogging about her interests: preventive natural medicinals, great books, working with special-needs children, healthy and green living, organic gardening and enjoying God's creation.

#### Sources:

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6. bit.ly/deepjustplay
7. bit.ly/prooday

## **The Next Story: Faith, Friends, Family, and the Digital World**

by Tim Challies

reviewed by Michael Miller

**F**or Christians, the digital age has proven to be both boon and bane.

It allows us to spread the Gospel, find and share resources, communicate, encourage, and make contact with other believers like we've never been able to.

But it also opens us to innumerable temptations like we've never faced to lust, waste time, waste money, be led away from the truth, break up marriages, and become isolated from our own families and the physical Body of Christ.

In his excellent book *The Next Story: Faith, Friends, Family and the Digital World*, Canadian author, pastor and blogger Tim Challies sees that high-tech change as having the same effect on society as the Soviet Union's 50-megaton Tsar Bomba had on an Arctic island. That hydrogen bomb literally reshaped the island. Similarly, Challies writes, the digital explosion has "reshaped the landscape of our lives, destroying and creating, splitting things apart and bringing them together in new ways."

But Challies' goal isn't to sound an alarm about the dangers that the digital age—the Internet, smart phones, portable music players, etc.—poses to Christians. In many ways, Challies embraces most things digital, enjoys them, uses them. He's been blogging since 2002 (challies.com), when the term "blogging" was just coming into use. You can friend him on Facebook and follow him on Twitter. And if you had his number, you could call him on his iPhone, which is what he used to respond

after I sent a question to his email address.

Technology, he points out, is the result of human creativity, which we have since we bear God's image. "Technology is the creative activity of using tools to shape God's creation for practical purposes."

His experience and use of digital technology doesn't make him a hypocrite or compromised source. It means that he knows what he's talking about. It's also apparent that he has thought through the implications of living in a digital age. Most importantly, though, he looks at the theological implications. That's the heart of his book.

Challies admits, as we should, that we can't avoid being affected by digital society anywhere we go in the world, no matter the level of the technology we ourselves possess. Even in poverty-stricken countries, you're more likely to find a cell phone (and television) in a hovel than you are to have access to running water. In our wealthy Western society, the situation is magnified. And even if we don't own smart phones or a PC, never watch TV or YouTube, and don't even know what an iPad is, we still live in a world inhabited by people who do. It's incumbent upon us to be familiar with the technology and the effect it has on our society and understand how it has changed us.

He is honest about his own struggles with many aspects of the digital explosion, another thing which gives his insights legitimacy.

"I began to feel as if maybe, just maybe, all of my devices, gigmos,

and gadgets owned me as much as I owned them," he writes in his introduction.

So, Challies has become convinced that Christians must learn not to avoid digital technology—we can't—but to "live in a digital world with virtue and dignity." In the book, he tries to find the "sweet spot" where theory, experience and theology intersect, to find how a thinking Christian can respond to digital technology with "disciplined discernment."

"There are always spiritual realities linked to our use of technology."

A first step is to realize that "the things we create can—and will—try to become idols in our hearts ... drawing our hearts away from God rather than drawing us toward him in dependence and faith." Despite the fact that our ability to create is God-given, technology is subject to the curse just like we are, so it can be used as a tool to serve our Creator or to rebel against Him.

How does this show itself in our lives?

- In our compulsive Facebook usage, or compulsive checking of our smart phones or tablets, for the latest message or headline.
- In our decreasing ability to focus on one task at a time because we're so willing to be distracted by our phones or email, or feel compelled to respond to the beeps and buzzes that infiltrate every waking moment.

*Continued on page 12*

## Your Family and Media (an excerpt from *The Next Story*)

**No parent would** ever put his child into the driver's seat of a car without first teaching him how to drive—without first showing him how to accelerate gently, brake properly, use the turn signals, react in an emergency. It is only when we have taught our children and mentored them that we allow them to set off on their own. Yet far too many parents are sending their children into an increasingly digital reality without proper training, without Biblical instruction. If we want our children to use their technology well, if we want them to use it for God's glory, we need to be willing to teach and train them.

Here are seven steps to consider when it comes time to introduce new media, new technology, to your family.

**Educate.** Before you can help your family use technology well, you will need to educate yourself (and by reading this book you've taken a good first step). As you introduce digital devices into your home, make sure you learn why your children want a device and what they intend to do with it. Research what their peers do with such devices—what they actually do with them. Think about what the device says it will do, but also how it might inadvertently influence your life. Do not be in a hurry to introduce devices, but take time to think about them with disciplined discernment.

**Fence.** Once you have introduced a new technology into your home, or decide that your child can now have access to it, you will need to erect fences and boundaries. Put boundaries around the time they dedicate to these devices (certain days of the week on which they may and may not use them; the number of minutes or hours on those days on which they may use them) and put boundaries around the ways they use these devices—this may involve telling them which websites or how many text messages they may send).

**Mentor.** As your children begin to use these devices, watch them and mentor them to ensure

they are using them well. Sit with your children as they use their new Facebook account, and watch them as they begin to explore the Internet. Instruct them, explaining what they are doing well and helping them when they make those inevitable bad decisions.

**Supervise.** Supervise your children as they use their devices. Do not give your children full and unlimited access to the Internet, and do not give them computers they can use behind the privacy of closed doors. Instead, keep the computer in a public place, and let them know that all of their use should be considered public. Explore some of the hardware and software solutions available to parents to filter out inappropriate content. Let your children know that using cell phones and computers are privileges that fall under your jurisdiction.

**Review.** As your children use their technologies, ask them what they've done through their devices. It is a good idea to find reports of what they have done—what they have looked at, what they have read and said. Many filters and other parental controls will alert you of inappropriate use.

**Trust.** As your children grow, give them more trust and express greater confidence in them. As they mature, they will grow in their ability to use their technologies well and will earn a greater measure of your trust.

**Model.** While you instruct your children, be careful to model disciplined discernment in your own use of technology. Your lessons will fall flat if you are searching for inappropriate content or if you are addicted to your cell phone. Model restraint and ownership of your devices. ♦



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## Technology and the quest for control

by Mark Blocher

Many living today have never read George Orwell's *1984*, a foreboding novel in which he prophetically forecasts that corporatism, socialism, authoritarianism and totalitarianism would bring about the eventual demise of individuality, individual freedom and ultimately threaten the survival of the human race. In his fictional futuristic narrative, Orwell warned of the dangers to humankind when a few "enlightened" souls collaborate to "improve" the lives of the unenlightened masses. In the novel, Orwell describes how a technologically advanced fictional world uses "Big Brother" technologies, propaganda machines (news media), and revisionist education to cast the elites in a favorable light and turn the public against all dissidents. The Big Brother government eradicates words like "bad," forbidding its use in public discourse, replacing it with words like "un-good." Promising personal peace and affluence, Orwell's *1984* narrative describes how the few acquire power over the many, and the novel ends with

this disturbing picture: "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stomping on a human face forever." His message is clear: the human quest to control, even for supposedly utopian purposes, inevitably devolves into totalitarianism and tyranny.

I was reminded of *1984* when I recently gave a short presentation on an emerging philosophy that calls itself "transhumanism," a worldwide

**We face the truly terrifying prospect of a few utopian dreamers, lacking moral restraint and filled with hubris, dominating the lives of billions by technological means.**

intellectual movement based on the belief or theory that the human race can advance well beyond its current physical and mental limitations, especially by means of science and technology. The movement contends that humans are in the very early stages of evolutionary development, and that the tools of science and technology give us ways to overcome natural biological limitations and usher in a dazzling post-human epoch. Pointing to develop-

ments in artificial intelligence, nanoscience, neuropharmacology, computer-brain integration and genetic enhancement, transhumanists utilize Orwellian doublespeak to predict a reachable golden age where we produce "better humans" and finally conquer Nature. Of course, the Transhumanist Declaration speaks of this utopian dream in the most charming, humane language. Like Orwell's *1984* "dystopia", nothing is bad—just ungood.

Long before these transformative technologies ever existed, C. S. Lewis warned about the consequences that would follow the human quest to use science and technology to

achieve the submission of Nature to human dominance. Man's power over nature actually means the power of a few over many, with each successive generation exercising power over its successors. Lewis wrote, "If any one age really attains, by eugenics and scientific education, the power to make its descendants what it pleases, all who live after it are the patients of that power. They are weaker, not stronger: for though we MAY have put wonder-

ful machines in their hands, we have pro-ordained how they are to use them. ... The real picture is that of one dominant age ... which resists all previous ages most successfully and dominates all subsequent ages most irresistibly, and thus is the real master of the human species. But then within this master generation (itself an infinitesimal minority of the species) the power will be exercised by a minority smaller still. Man's conquest of Nature, if the dreams of scientific planners are realized, means the rule of a few hundreds of men over billions upon billions of men. There neither is nor can be any simple increase of power on Man's side. Each new power won by man is a power over man as well. Each advance leaves him weaker as well as stronger. In every victory, besides being the general who triumphs, he is also the prisoner who follows the triumphal car. ... The power of Man to make himself what he pleases ... means the power of some men to make other men what *they* please." (*The Abolition of Man*)

Orwell's and Lewis's warnings seem even more timely amid the rapid development of powerful new technologies that transhumanists covet in their vain attempt to re-engineer humans at a time when society lacks a unifying moral consensus on what counts as a human person. The doublespeak used in the ongoing debate about the identity and moral status of preimplantation human embryos and the willing accomplices in higher education, government, and the news media who perpetuate the dehumanizing of the unborn, the infirm and the enfeebled validate Orwell and Lewis' concerns. We

face the truly terrifying prospect of a few utopian dreamers, lacking moral restraint and filled with hubris, dominating the lives of billions by technological means.

Do you think this is not possible? Consider this: How much control over your daily life do the Internet, social media, mobile devices and computer programmers exercise? How much wealth have the few who own these platforms of control amassed and now use to expand their control even further? Their powerful platforms in just a short period have distorted

## How much control over your daily life do the Internet, social media, mobile devices, and computer programmers exercise?

human relationships and perverted social norms. We know from some early research that these platforms re-wire the human brain, form and fuel addictions, and contribute to many social pathologies that harm marriages, reputations, and overall human well-being. These platforms disrupt sleep and work productivity, and these media platforms bring into your home people you would not otherwise invite into your home. Their technologies not only possess the power to satisfy wants, they create new wants.

Because of these supposedly "values neutral" technology platforms, Americans no longer talk to each other, they entertain each other. They do not exchange interesting ideas, they exchange images and often profanity-filled, uninformed opinions. They do not argue with well-reasoned, logical propositions;

they argue emotively—about good looks, celebrities, movies, and commercials. Americans worship their dogs, abort their babies, and post pictures of their food on Instagram and Facebook. They drive angry and anonymously on crowded highways where everyone in front of them is an idiot and everyone behind them is a fool, jeopardizing public safety with texting. Through these technology platforms people willingly turn over their personal financial information to online retailers to get free delivery of everything from food to fantasies. They pay to submit

their DNA to strangers at MyHeritage.com, Ancestry.com and 23andMe to discover their "heritage." Yet they plaster memes on their social media timeline and bumper stickers on their cars declaring personal

freedoms they long ago forfeited on the altar of personal peace and affluence.

Do you think Zuckerberg (Facebook), Bezos (Amazon), Page and Brin (Google), and Cook (Apple) really care about your freedom? Do you believe they lose sleep because they lie awake at night thinking only about how to improve your life? Do you really believe that elite scientific researchers who capture massive amounts of your tax dollars to conduct research so they can patent unique human genes for their own financial benefit really have your best interests in mind? Sure, there is good (or maybe unbad) to be found in virtually all of the technologies we currently use, and in technologies whose publicized purpose is to prevent disease, disability and premature

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- In our reliance on unreliable sources for “truth” by turning to “crowdsourcing” (information compiled as a consensus rather than as fact) or wikis (where anybody can add or edit content).
- By allowing screens (on our PC, phone, TV, whatever) to become another layer of mediation between our individual selves and others, decreasing face-to-face contact and leading to dehumanization of those we love—or should love. Included in this is the realization that there are real people on the other side of the connection and that we tend not to be as cautious with what we type on a monitor as what we would say in person.
- By depending on digital devices to be our memories—which they can do efficiently and, most of the time, dependably—to the detriment of our physical memory, which includes knowing and remembering God’s Word.
- By succumbing to the temptation of exhibitionism through sharing unimportant and, in many cases, intimate details of our lives with total strangers around the world, in the process proudly assuming they want to know these details.
- By becoming impatient in the rest of our lives when we can have instant gratification from digital technology.
- By losing track of time as we surf the net or play a game and, as a result, wasting a valuable resource.
- By hiding behind online anonymity.

- By equating information with knowledge despite a lack of wisdom in how we use it or accept it.

So what’s a user of digital devices to do, particularly a Christian user?

Challies has plenty of suggestions and triggers for thinking. He ends each chapter in Part 2 with applications and questions for reflection.

The essence of his advice is to discipline ourselves in our use of technology and question our motives, the potential effect of the addition of more devices to our lives, and the placement of our trust. Are we trusting in our devices to accomplish for us what we should be trusting God or the Body of Christ to accomplish for us? Are we wasting precious resources of time and money through our devices? Have we become disconnected from real people? Where is our relationship with our family and what impact are devices having on them? Do we prefer mediation through our devices to contact with human beings?

Ask yourself the hard questions, Challies writes, and answer them honestly.

He also offers plenty of advice as we go about reforming our use of technology—and its use of us.

Here’s a sampling:

- “Be visible; be accountable; be real; be mature. And always distrust yourself. It may sound harsh, but be willing to doubt your motives, your heart. Take a moment to pray before answering an antagonistic e-mail; bounce your ideas and articles off trusted friends before posting them; be slow to speak (or type) and quick to listen.”
- “We need to see the superiority of face-to-face communication

and prioritize it above what is mediated. We cannot afford to become lazy, to allow pragmatism and convenience and ignorance to define the ways we communicate with one another.”

- “The caution that marks our speech must also mark our texting, our e-mailing, our commenting, our blogging and our tweeting. The fact that we communicate at all should cause us to stop and to consider every word. The fact that we communicate so often today and do so before so great an audience should cause us to tremble.”
- “Identify your distractions, measure your use of media, find the ‘beeps’ in your life that demand your attention, and find what dulls your mind. Then destroy distraction, find focus, and seek solitude through vacations from digital devices.”

Challies gets into specifics on these and other topics, but his overall message, which he himself continues to try to practice, is simply to employ discipline in our use of technology so that it is at our disposal rather than the other way around. ♦

death. Who would argue against this? However, there is a difference between reverse engineering a disease to find an effective way to prevent its onset or alleviate its effects, and re-engineering the engineer! Transhumanists and their allies are most attracted to the latter. They are not motivated to simply push back the effects of the Fall; they desire to be the cosmic managers of the universe.

Man's quest to secure godlike control over Nature is nothing new, as we observe from the Biblical account of the Fall in Genesis 3, and in the Genesis 11 narrative about the Tower of Babel. In the Genesis 11 narrative, humans enjoy a common language that unifies them, and they share a common ambition—"Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth." In direct defiance of God's post-Flood command to "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth," they sought to seize ultimate control over their lives. Such human hubris seems quaint considering the primitive technology they possessed, especially when we compare it to the technologies we possess today. God's response to the Tower of Babel utopian dreamers is remarkable. "And the LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.'" God seems to be saying that fallen human beings united by common interests, the ambition to control and access to technology to bring about that con-

trol, are virtually unlimited in their potential for evil.

God's solution to the utopian dreams at Babel was to confuse their language, disrupting communication and coordination. The result was God got His way: they abandoned their utopian project, dispersed and filled the earth. Having read the end of God's story in Scripture, we know that humans do not end up transforming themselves into post-humans, achieving immortality by technological means. God himself transforms humans from mortal to immortal beings through his own supernatural means, not the puny technologies of God-denying fools. Although much harm can be done to humans by other humans in the name of "progress," there is no reason for the believer to despair. God remains sovereign over every square inch of his creation. ♦

*Member Mark Blocher is the President/CEO of Christian Healthcare Centers (chcenters.org). He served as Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Cornerstone University for 15 years. He is the author of The Right to Die? Caring Alternatives to Euthanasia and Vital Signs: Decisions that Determine the Quality of Life and Health.*

"My job at an LTC camp is to help dads grasp what it means to teach critical thinking," Doug says. "Then what he's experiencing with his son at the camp he can take home and apply with his entire family.

"We have a common failure, as parents who have a strong desire to protect our children, to overprotect our children," he continues. "It's one of my desires to help dads see the need to create freedom within healthy boundaries to let their sons and daughters make choices, be there to support them and to help them clean up their messes, but not try to keep them from making the messes."

Additionally, Doug emphasizes the importance of encouraging young men and women to be cultural "game changers" by following the design laid out in 2 Peter 1, prioritizing the development of virtue over acquiring knowledge to gain worldly advantages.

"To me, Biblical manhood or womanhood is understanding the significance of creation as a God-ordained event which defines our purpose, our identity, and becomes our means of fulfillment through appropriate relationships and proactive engagement of our culture and environment with the person of Jesus," he says.

"I don't want young men and women to accept the rules as they are. I want them to define what the Biblical rules ought to be, live by those rules, and implement them wherever they can." ♦

## Prayer for the Persecuted Church

*Hebrews 13:3 tells us to “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer. Each month, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.*

### **Algerian believer released**

Praise God that Algerian Christian Slimane Bouhafs has been released after 18 months in prison, International Christian Concern reports. Slimane was accused of insulting Islam and Muhammad on social media. His health reportedly deteriorated from his inflammatory rheumatism while imprisoned, and he suffered aggression from other prisoners due to his Christian faith. *Thank God that Slimane is free and reunited with his family. Pray that other Christian prisoners in Algeria also will be freed.*

### **Another Algerian church closed**

A fourth Algerian church has been forced to close following a 15-day warning, World Watch Monitor reports. While authorities in the Muslim nation say they closed the church for safety reasons, pressure against Christianity has been intensifying through regulations regarding public meetings and safety standards. *Pray for the church in Azagher to be able to meet for worship, for authorities to stop discriminating against Christians, and*

*for the salvation of authorities in charge of church closures.*

### **‘Faith affidavits’ required**

“Faith affidavits” are now required in Pakistan when applying for government jobs or filing identity documents following a High Court ruling, ICC reports. *Pray for those believers to have peace and boldness in speaking out against the law, for favor in applying for government work, and for His intervention in Pakistani legislation.*

### **Uzbeks harassing children**

An 8-year-old child was taken out of school for interrogation during recent raids on Christians in Uzbekistan, ICC says. The raids are part of an effort to use relatives of ethnic Uzbek Christians to pressure Christian family members to stop meeting with other believers. Baptists have said that police “watch us, follow, and threaten us with court cases and fines to stop us attending church.” *Pray that Uzbek authorities will stop harassing children, that Christians there will be protected, and that Christ’s love would be made known through the circumstances.*

### **Eritrean Christians arrested**

More than 115 Eritrean Christians were attacked in their homes, arrested and taken to underground prisons in December, ICC reports. The nation is often referred to as the “North Korea of Africa” for its treatment of Christians. The Communist government also pressures Christians economically, leaving them unable to pay for food, rent and other necessities of life. Political power is also used against anyone applying to one of the four recognized religious organizations. *Pray for the underground Christian Church there, for*

*believers in prisons, and for religious freedom for Eritreans.*

### **Three attacked by Hindus**

A pastor and two church members were attacked by about 20 Hindu extremists on March 28 in India’s Uttar Pradesh state, WWM says. The extremists entered the Evangelical Churches of India building and bolted it from the inside as the men were preparing for a monthly baptism service. Extremists frequently claim the baptisms are forced. One of the men suffered head injuries. *Pray for the recovery of the three, for protection against further attacks, and for boldness among the Christians in Uttar Pradesh.*

### **5-year-old attack victim healing**

Trinity, a 5-year-old Indonesian Christian girl, is healing well from injuries in a bomb attack on a Samarinda church yard in November 2016, WWM reports. The attacker, wearing a T-shirt promoting jihad, threw the bomb from a motor bike as he rode by. Two other children playing in the yard were injured and one killed in the attack. Trinity has finished the first phase of treatment in China, where she will return for a second phase. See her singing praises at [bit.ly/trinitysings](http://bit.ly/trinitysings). *Praise God for Trinity’s progress and pray for complete healing for her and the other two surviving children.* ♦

*For more on the persecuted church, contact International Christian Concern ([persecution.org](http://persecution.org), 800-422-5441) or World Watch Monitor ([worldwatchmonitor.org](http://worldwatchmonitor.org))*

## Functional versus dysfunctional medicine

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through her life story, he explains that birth by C-section alters a patient's gut bacteria later in life. He continues describing how multiple rounds of antibiotics in the childhood years can further disrupt gut bacterial balance. He turns to dietary habits and explains how her low fiber, high dairy, high sugar diet almost guarantees gut problems by this time in her life. Dr. Functional definitely has her attention. She's beginning to understand her body. Finishing the story of her health, Dr. Functional hints at more connections.

Dr. Functional asks Jill to sit on the exam table to run over a few physical findings—clues. She expects the usual and brief exam. Interestingly, Dr. Functional methodically works down from her eyes, through a detailed exam of her mouth and teeth, then her thyroid, skin stretch, fingernails, joints, skin moisture, a detailed neurologic exam including a tuning fork buzzing her joints. Of course, the heart, lungs, and abdomen receive their due attention. This is definitely more detailed.

They return to their seats and Dr. Functional begins. "Thank you Mrs. Smith for this opportunity to be a part of your healing journey. Let's discuss the big picture of your health as we relate the details together. First, being a C-section baby and receiving multiple antibiotic rounds as a child set your gut up for imbalances and maybe yeast overgrowth. By the time you were in your 30s, your diet of inflammatory foods had a few years to make this even worse. The stress of motherhood, lack of sleep, fast food, and little time for exercise took a toll on your body. Your defenses against the gut inflammation and imbalance

began opening the walls of your intestines for both food proteins and bacterial chemicals to cross the threshold leading to inflammation. The unhappy intestinal lining and surrounding muscles responded with many of the expected symptoms of pain, bloating, occasional nausea, and diarrhea. Because the changes in your gut cannot be seen with scopes, your gut looked normal to the GI specialist. We have some advanced tests that help us confirm this situation and guide how to treat your issues specifically. These tests

## Are you ready to move towards a healthier more abundant life?

look at the extensiveness of your leaky gut and whether food sensitivities, parasites, or yeast may be contributing to your overall picture.

"Earlier I mentioned that I would surprise you with other connections. Women with leaky gut and bacterial imbalances (called dysbiosis) often experience hormone imbalances. These may be simple cramps and irregular cycles, or polycystic ovaries, fibroids, and infertility. Basically, the inflammation from the gut spills over and bathes the ovaries with inflammatory hormones. This means that your gut issues are likely causing your hormones issues. Let's take this two steps further. First, these hormones and the inflammation in the gut trigger weight gain through interacting with other hormones. Depending on whether the inflammation or the hormones are stronger, the weight may settle in the waist or the hips respectively.

Second, inflammation and hormones combine forces to affect energy levels. Because inflammation triggers higher cortisol from your adrenal glands, you are experiencing chronic fatigue from chronic elevation of cortisol.

"So, your symptoms have a cause rooted in your life both present and past. By recognizing this root cause in your gut, we can target therapies that have far-reaching benefits for you. We will start with a few tests. At your next visit, we will discuss how these tests impact your treatment program. The treatment program will address nutrition and other lifestyle factors as well as supplements that will restore proper functioning to your GI and hormonal systems. My last question is, "Are you ready to move towards a healthier more abundant life?"

Finally, someone interested in the whole picture. Jill gets a twinkle in her eye as she says "yes." In the coming months, she works hard to clean up her daily nutrition and follow the program. Month by month, progress builds. It seems slow at first, she begins to doubt, but she keeps pressing. As the changes take hold, so does her hope. One morning she wakes and says, "Yes, I am beating this. Functional Medicine has helped me to function again, to live a healthier life." ♦

*Samaritan member Dr. Eric Potter is the founder of Sanctuary Functional Medicine, a Direct Primary Care in Franklin, Tennessee.*



**SanctuaryFunctionalMedicine.com**

*For more information about doctors who provide Direct Primary Care, including many Samaritan members, visit [SamaritanMinistries.org/dpc](http://SamaritanMinistries.org/dpc).*

I am the bread of life;  
whoever comes to Me  
shall not hunger, and  
whoever believes in Me  
shall never thirst.

John 6:35

**N**ever hunger and never thirst. How can this be? A few verses later (verse 51) Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

Some of those who heard Him asked, How can He do that? Many of His disciples turned back from following Him. What was He saying?

In verse 63 Jesus explained, "It is the Spirit Who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." The physi-

cal food and drink we consume each day sustains our physical life. Jesus gave His life so that anyone who comes to Him and believes in Him can have eternal life.

Take some time to read John 6:36 and the verses following. Read similar ideas at the beginning of Isaiah 55. Jesus is the only Source of eternal life. He alone can satisfy our spiritual hunger and thirst. Come to Him.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King