

## Tied to Technology? How the Technocratic Paradigm Can Be Overcome in Christ

John Cuddeback, Ph.D.

October 2, 2016

St. Agnes Church Hall, Arlington, VA

1. “Thanks solely to this encounter – or renewed encounter – with God’s love, which blossoms into an enriching **friendship**, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being. Here we find the source and inspiration of all our efforts at evangelization.” Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, #8

2. “We have to accept that technological products are not neutral, for they create a framework which ends up conditioning lifestyles and shaping social possibilities... Decisions which may seem purely instrumental are in reality decisions about the kind of society we want to build.”

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*, #107

3. “The technological paradigm has become so dominant that it would be difficult to do without its resources and even more difficult to utilize them without being dominated by their internal logic.” *Laudato Si*, #108

4. “This conflict is between the unnatural progeny of inventive genius and men. It is a war to the death between technology and the ordinary functions of living. The rights to these human functions are the natural rights of man, and they are threatened now, in the twentieth, not in the eighteenth, century for the first time. Unless man asserts and defends them he is doomed, to use a chemical analogy, to hop about like sodium on water, burning up his own energy.” Andrew Lytle, *I’ll Take My Stand* (published in 1930)

5. “It is only because the man had been sent into exile in the railway train that he has to be brought back home in a motor car. It is only because all machinery has been used to put things wrong that some machinery may now rightly be used to put things right. But I conclude upon the whole that it may be so used...” G.K. Chesterton, *The Outline of Sanity*, p. 148

From *Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age*, by Sherry Turkle

6. “Face-to-face conversation is the most human—and humanizing—thing we do. Fully present to one another, we learn to listen. It’s where we develop the capacity for empathy. It’s where we experience the joy of being heard, of being understood. And conversation advances self-reflection, the conversations with ourselves that are the cornerstone of early development and continue throughout life.” 3

7. “We say we turn to our phones when we’re ‘bored.’ And we often find ourselves bored because we have become accustomed to a constant feed of connection, information, and entertainment. We are forever elsewhere.” 4

8. “... even a silent phone inhibits conversations that matter. The very sight of a phone on the landscape leaves us feeling less connected to each other, less invested in each other.” 4

9. “Conversation is on the path toward the experience of intimacy, community, and communion. Reclaiming conversation is a step toward reclaiming our most fundamental human values.” 7

10. “We are being silenced by our technologies—in a way, ‘cured of talking’.” 9

11. “Technology enchants; it makes us forget what we know about life. The new—any old new—becomes confused with progress.” 13

12. “Our manners have evolved to accommodate our new priorities.” 19

13. “If we are unable to be alone, we will be more lonely.” 23

14. “Conversation cures.” 25

15. “Our mobile devices seem to grant three wishes, as though gifts from a benevolent genie:

first, that we will always be heard; second, that we can put our attention wherever we want it to be; and third, that we will never have to be alone. And the granting of these three wishes implies another reward: that we will never have to be bored.” 26

16. “When we move from conversation to mere connection, we get a lot of **unintended consequences.**” 27

17. “One CEO says he cries out in frustration, even to longtime employees, ‘Apologize to him. Face-to-face. You were wrong. Say you are sorry.’” 33

18. “Eye contact is the most powerful path to human connection.” 36

19. “In the new communications culture, *interruption is not experienced as interruption but as another connection.*” 37

20. “Boredom and anxiety are signs to attend more closely to things, not to turn away.” 38

21. “Every time you check your phone in company, what you gain is a hit of stimulation, a neurochemical shot, and what you lose is what a friend, teacher, parent, lover, or co-worker just said, meant, felt.” 40

22. “Reclaiming conversation begins with reclaiming our attention. These days, average American adults check their phones every six and a half minutes. We start early: There are now baby bouncers (and potty seats) that are manufactured with a slot to hold a digital device. A quarter of American teenagers are connected to a device within five minutes of waking up. Most teenagers send one hundred texts a day. Eighty percent sleep with their phones. Forty-four percent do not ‘unplug,’ ever, not even in religious services or when playing a sport or exercising.” 42

23. “These days being alone feels like a problem that needs to be solved, and people try to solve it with technology. But here, digital connection is more a symptom than a cure. It expresses but does it doesn’t solve the underlying problem—a discomfort with being alone.” 46

24. “Have we forgotten what conversation is? What friendship is? Is talking to machines companionship or abandonment?” 51

25. “Just because technology can help us solve a ‘problem’ doesn’t mean it was a problem in the first place.” 53 \*\*

26. “Every new technology offers an opportunity to ask if it serves our human purposes. ... But what I’ve found is that once people have texting, chat, and email available, they stick with them even when they suspect that these are not the right tools for the job. Why? They are convenient. They make us feel in control. But when we allow ourselves to be vulnerable and less in control, our relationships, creativity, and productivity thrive.

We are at a crossroads. So many people say they have no time to talk, really talk, but all the time in the world, day and night, to connect. When a moment of boredom arises, we have become accustomed to making it go away by searching for something—sometimes anything—on our phones. The next step is to take the same moment and respond by searching within ourselves. To do this, we have to cultivate the self as a resource. Beginning with the capacity for solitude.” 56

27. “Children develop the capacity for solitude in the presence of an attentive other. Consider the silences that fall when you take a young boy on a quiet walk in nature. The child comes to feel increasingly aware of what it is to be alone in nature, supported by being ‘with’ someone who is introducing him to this experience.” ... “So we practice being ‘alone with’—and, if successful, end up with a self peopled by those who have mattered most.” 65 \*\*

28. “If we care about solitude, we have to communicate this to our children. They are not going to pick it up on their own.” 66

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