

## Letters

beliefs, let alone an existential one. Chapter 3 (titled “Transhumanism, the Posthuman, and the Religions: Exploring Basic Concepts”) is only 24 pages long; five pages offer definitions of transhumanism and posthumanism, and the last page lists discussion questions. So, the authors attempt to characterize the world’s major monotheistic and karmic religions *in only 18 pages*. In-depth doctrinal arguments are needed, but they offer only thin and disappointing caricatures of belief systems that are held dear by most of the human race. Religion scholars may find this interesting, even compelling, but it will leave true believers cold.

Leaving undone the hard work of defining criteria by which the faithful in one tradition or another would judge technological enhancements, Mercer and Trothen speculate about the future using an ill-conceived conservative-to-liberal continuum. Where depth is needed, tautologies take center stage. In effect, they make the simplistic argument that some people will resist enhancement technologies because unspecified religious or political convictions make them resistant.

*Religion and the Technological Future* offers an intriguing view of the future, but it assumes that technoscientific progress will come with an oppressive loss of control. Yes, heartfelt faith traditions will, in one way or another, be changed by emerging technologies, but is it inevitable that believers will face an existential crisis? And if emergent technologies actually threaten what people truly value, will they not be rejected?

Consider nuclear weapons. After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the accelerating arms race cast a dark shadow over civilization. Books and movies such as *Fail-Safe* and *On the Beach* left little room for hope. Then, in 1964, *Dr. Strangelove* flipped the narrative, presenting “The Bomb” as a ridiculous farce. People and societies adapted to the existence of nuclear weapons and moved on with life. Will they not also adapt to whatever the technological future brings?

In this century, advanced robots, computer systems, and who-knows-what will certainly emerge, but God is everlasting, and he promises that believers will have everlasting life. So, let his will be done, *on Earth as it is in heaven*, notwithstanding whatever dark shadows of change may come.

*Reviewed by David C. Winyard Sr., Department of Engineering, Grace College and Seminary, Winona Lake, IN 46590.* ◀

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### Agriculture: An Industrial Paradigm or an Ecological Paradigm

I read with interest Terry Gray’s “Pronuclear Environmentalists: An Introduction to Ecomodernism” (*PSCF* 73, no. 4 [2021]: 195–201) and found the article very informative. Gray advocates for increased intensification of agriculture, arguing that this will free up other land for wild nature. However, the impacts of such intensification will not and cannot remain localized.

I grew up in Iowa, where the native tall grass prairie ecosystem was replaced by one of the most intensively industrial agricultural regions on the planet. Grassland flora and fauna are now among the most at risk on the continent. The deep prairie loam soils have been greatly reduced in depth and become compacted by heavy machinery. Fertility is largely maintained by inputs of fossil-fuel based synthetic fertilizers. Flooding impacts have intensified due to the loss of most of Iowa’s grasslands and wetlands. Water quality due to agricultural use is a major issue in Iowa and throughout the Mississippi River watershed.

Hope lies in the application of techniques (such as in-field prairie strips and wetland restoration) to soften these impacts. But more fundamentally, agriculture needs to move from an industrial paradigm that treats land as just an economic asset to an ecological paradigm which recognizes the land as a gift from the Creator and treated accordingly.

Lynn Braband  
ASA member

### Called to a God-Centered Garden or City?

Thank you to Lynn Braband for his response to my article (Terry Gray, “Pronuclear Environmentalists: An Introduction to Ecomodernism,” *PSCF* 73, no. 4 [2021]: 195–201). Admittedly, he was responding only to a near peripheral comment, but one that in some ways engages the heart of the article. I sense a “back to the Garden” spirit in his comments and especially in the last sentence. I will not deny the several problems with industrial agriculture that he points to, but the solutions to these are not to return to a de-industrialized agriculture. The productivity of modern agriculture is a necessary development and is fully consistent with a Christian stewardship view of creation which is not a mere preservation of God-created and wild nature. It includes development