

Chalmers, who endeavored to explain the idea (said of philosophers) that “one starts as a materialist, then one becomes a dualist, then a panpsychist, and one ends up as an idealist” (p. 180). Chalmers knows that each of these perspectives necessarily entails accepting different metaphorical lenses, none of which can be definitively proven by science or philosophy.

O’Gieblyn thus finds Bernardo Kastrup’s “shortcut through this trajectory” particularly fascinating. For Kastrup, consciousness is all that exists, and the “entire observable world is patterns of excitation” of a “universal mind” that is the cosmos (p. 185). “By the time you seriously consider all the options and their limitations,” O’Gieblyn writes, “the idea of God begins to seem just as crazy as anything else” (p. 185). She knows how this sounds, and immediately wonders if she’s predisposed to this position because of her previous faith and her desire for meaning. And she is correct: there can be no way out for the honest skeptic. “It’s not as though I never experienced God’s presence or guidance as a Christian; it was that I could not, as so many of my friends and classmates managed to do, rule out the possibility that those signs and assurances were merely narratives I was constructing” (pp. 187–88).

I found this refreshing precisely because O’Gieblyn knows it cuts both ways. If Christians and materialists could admit to sharing this limitation, we might have a new starting point for genuine, and possibly life-changing, conversations. O’Gieblyn has done her scientific and philosophical homework, and she’s found the stumbling stone for everyone: consciousness. For despite the arrogance of titles like Daniel Dennett’s *Consciousness Explained*, scientists and philosophers familiar with quantum physics know that there is a lot up for debate here. The hard problem of consciousness is not a God-of-the-gaps thing, where we tack the “mystery” label on something we can’t explain and then return to happy-clappy worship. It’s a whole world of weirdness, and God could be behind it all. Or not.

O’Gieblyn’s intellectual honesty leads her to be able to pinpoint exactly what it is she is rejecting when she rejects the Christian God. She identifies first with Job, and then with Ivan in *The Brothers Karamozov*. In a pivotal conversation between Ivan and Alyosha, Ivan can’t stomach the fact that God’s work in this world would require innocent children to suffer. He says, “I would rather remain with my unavenged suffering and unsatisfied indignation, *even if I were wrong*.” While O’Gieblyn’s Moody Bible Institute classmates saw Alyosha’s response of loving faith the point of the passage, “what the novel had made clear to me was that I deeply admired Ivan in his rebellion, just as I had admired Job in his” (p. 235). She was able to reconsider

her apostasy as an act of courage. She is not rejecting God, but a “system of human thought” (p. 236).

This frankness is reason enough for me to wish I could have a regular coffee date with O’Gieblyn. But I’m barely scratching the surface of this wide-ranging, insightful text that does an especially superb job of analyzing the ideology of digital culture. All cultural metaphors create meaning and then disappear from view as metaphor. The digital age’s primary metaphors (brain as computer; mind as nodes on a network) have left us with a particular view of being, “which might be described as an ontology of vacancy—a great emptying-out of qualities, content, and meaning. This ontology feeds into its epistemology, which holds that knowledge lies not in concepts themselves but in the relationships that constitute them, which can be discovered by artificial networks that lack any true knowledge of what they are uncovering” (p. 245). In short, in the twenty-first century, individuals don’t lead out of good character with altruistic motives. Memes gain influence not by being good ideas, but by being irresistible click-bait. Although O’Gieblyn describes this ideology with incredible journalistic restraint, there can be no doubt. This is our epistemological crisis, and it is not going anywhere anytime soon.

Carefully researched and beautifully written, *God, Human, Animal, Machine* provides an excellent starting point for meaningful discussion between atheists and believers. It is a valuable resource for anyone interested in the relationships between science, technology, and religion.

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## TECHNOLOGY

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**A CHRISTIAN FIELD GUIDE TO TECHNOLOGY FOR ENGINEERS AND DESIGNERS** by Ethan J. Brue, Derek C. Schuurman, and Steven H. VanderLeest. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2022. 226 pages including discussion questions, endnotes, credits, and indices. Paperback; \$28.00. ISBN: 9781514001004.

Finally! The long-awaited update to *Responsible Technology: A Christian Perspective* (Stephen V. Monsma, ed., Eerdmans, 1986) is here, and this new book is well worth the wait. Framed as a practical field guide for engineers, it is also adept at illuminating some of the philosophical issues that swirl around the interface of technology and Christian faith. Hearty pats-on-the-back to Ethan Brue, Derek Schuurman, and Steven VanderLeest for undertaking and completing this grand project in such fine fashion.

# Book Reviews

It begins with an inspiring discussion of the connections between humankind's technological hopes and dreams and our ultimate hope in our Maker. Historical accounts and personal stories by each author will surely be an encouragement to young people who are curious about technology from a Christian perspective. Indeed, this book would make a good text for a university-level "Introduction to Engineering" course. The book continues with an insightful survey of how technology relates to the biblical story. This includes a discussion of humanity's first great commission to steward the earth, as well as the influence of fall, redemption, and re-creation on our engineering enterprises.

It gets even more interesting (and philosophical) as the authors next address the popular false narrative that all technology is inherently neutral. Several examples help to expose myths about the universal usefulness and neutrality of tools, the ends justifying the means, and forms of technological determinism. This is followed by a discussion of what constitutes responsible and discerning design, including technological mediation and unintended consequences. This naturally leads into the real "meat" of the book, which deals with design norms, or guiding principles that designers should seek to follow.

The authors extend the original list of norms in *Responsible Technology* to include categories of analytical, cultural, clarity, social, stewardship, harmony, justice, caring, and faithfulness. Common ethical frameworks are then presented that build on these design norms. This is excellent background knowledge that will greatly benefit engineering students, as well as practitioners. Although a Christian worldview pervades the entire book, it is explicitly addressed in "Modern Towers of Babel" (chapter 6) which explores the results of sin on engineering and resulting technologies. A helpful distinction between finiteness and fallenness illuminates this discussion.

The engineering of electric vehicles provides a fascinating example of how important historical context and past industry contribute to understanding in current designs. With this background, the design norms are then applied to envision the responsible development of a future electric vehicle. A chapter on technology and the future follows, with discussions of technological optimism, pessimism, and transhumanism. A biblical view of the future of technology concludes this section by framing it all in a Christian perspective. I imagine this section will be exciting for young engineers as they envision how God is calling them to use future technologies to influence the world for good and not for ill.

However, I found the second-to-last chapter (on technology for evangelism and missions) to be the most

interesting. Here we are reminded that technological work is a legitimate Christian calling, since "Our worship does not start and stop with the formal service in a church building ... worship can and should be an ever-present mindset and continuous act" (p. 175). And training as a technologist not only enables one to use technology in serving others physically, but it also provides access to the technological community where one can have an even more profound influence. The authors emphasize that "While Christians from a wide variety of vocational backgrounds can serve as missionaries in developing countries, only those with a highly technical education can serve as missionaries to this corporate mission field. Technical expertise opens doors" (p. 168). Readers are encouraged to develop their own unique and creative ways to use technology to love their neighbor. But this is about as close as the authors get to discussing what may be an important calling for many Christian engineers, that of the evangelist/apologist. I would like to have seen more discussion on how the expertise of engineers enables them to answer questions on science and faith apparent disagreements, questions asked by both skeptics and believers. Engineers are uniquely qualified to serve as mediators and peacemakers in the science and faith conversation, and unfortunately, perhaps due to size constraints, this aspect was not mentioned in the book.

Finally, I hope that readers make it to the last chapter since I found it particularly meaningful. It consists of a series of emails between a young engineer and his former engineering professor and mentor at a Christian university. Although the letters are fictional, they raise many questions that often arise within the first years of an engineering career. And the good professor dispenses his wisdom with keen insight and grace. Overall, I found this book to be a much-needed addition to the conversation on technology and Christian faith. And I think it should be widely considered as required reading in the first year of engineering programs at Christian universities. The questions for reflection and discussion at the end of each chapter are very thoughtful and provide a helpful resource in this regard.

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**THE LIFE WE'RE LOOKING FOR: Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World** by Andy Crouch. New York: Convergent Books, 2022. 226 pages, including notes. Hardcover; \$25.00. ISBN: 9780593237342.

In *The Life We're Looking For*, subtitled *Reclaiming Relationship in a Technological World*, author Andy Crouch examines modern Western life given the ubiquity of and our dependence on technology. This is not a book about technology—you will not learn anything