

TRANSHUMANISM: HUMANS WITHOUT BODIES

by Andrew Yeager

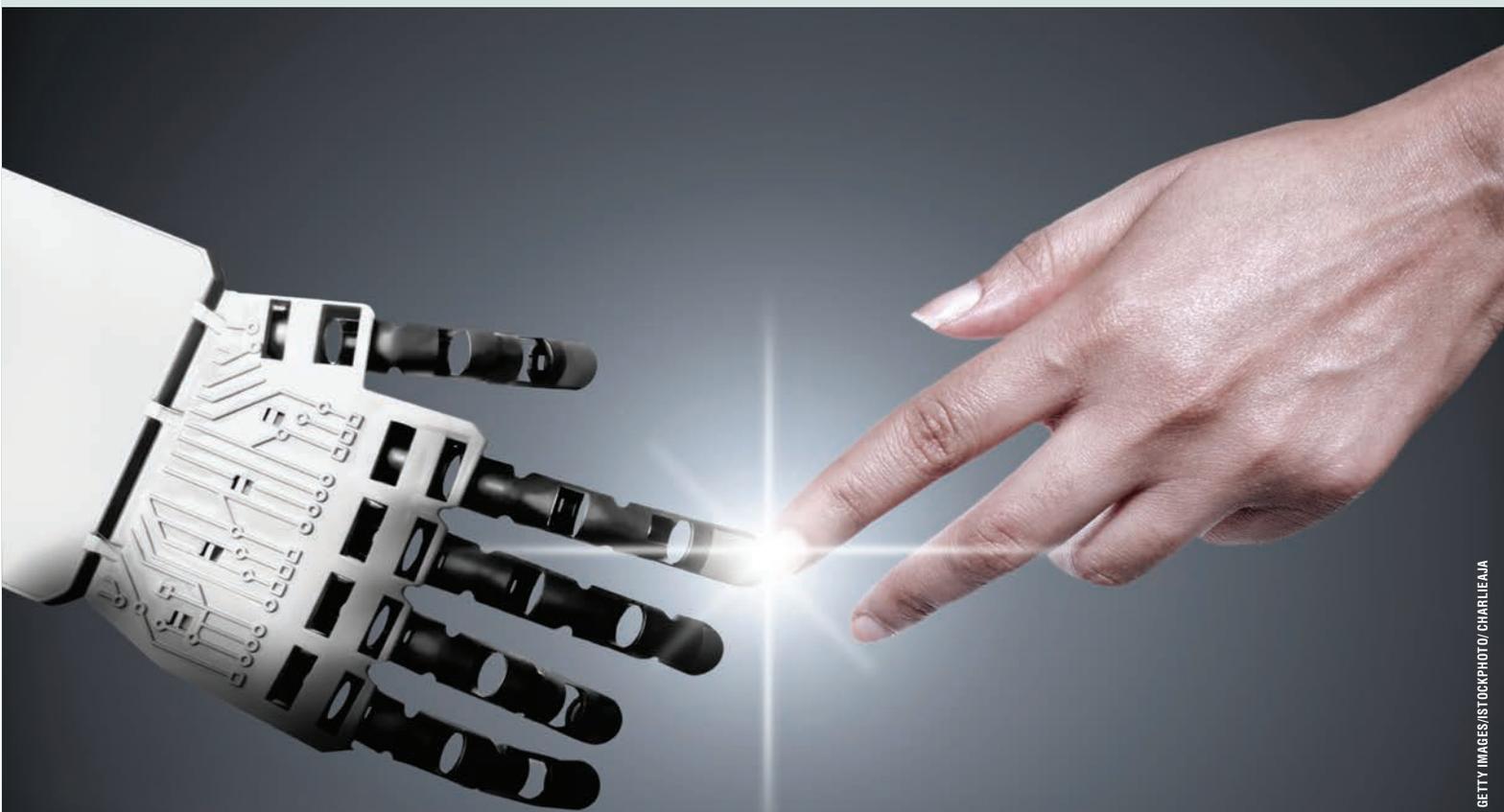
Transhumanism is the movement that awaits a revolutionary breakthrough in technology where a human personality is uploaded into a robotic body so that the human might live beyond bodily death.

Such a goal might seem absurd and far-fetched. But Ray Kurzweil, a high-profile transhumanist who joined Google as director of Engineering in 2013, is optimistic that man will completely meld with machines to achieve “technological singularity” and the age of partially robotic transhumans by 2045. Humanity will achieve immortality through a kind of disembodied robotic existence.

Understanding the goals

To understand transhumanism, we need to have a firm grasp on postmodernism, the prevailing philosophy of our age. Postmodernism operates from an atheistic worldview and sees human beings as the chance products of evolutionary development. Humanity is malleable and subjective, always evolving and changing, and human beings are nothing more than social constructs, the sum total of our subjective experiences.

Because of this, postmodernism sees no ethical problem with augmenting our bodies. If we don't like the bodies we were born with, our bodily characteristics can be changed. The field of bioengineering gives parents the ability to shop for preferred genetic traits for their



children. Human cloning, artificial wombs and genetically engineered populations are all possibilities on the technological horizon. Transgenderism is humanity's triumph over "male and female he created them" (GEN. 1:27; MATT. 19:4). Our bodies might have once constrained us. But postmodernism heralds the triumph over the limitations of our creaturely existence.

Transhumanists are on a search for an immortality, even though the Son of God already has defeated death for us. Christ is risen, and our future resurrection with Him on the Last Day is secure (1 CORINTHIANS 15).

In view of the Gospel of the bodily resurrection from the dead, who needs the bodyless humanity of transhumanism? Christianity proclaims an eternal future with a body — a

WILL PEOPLE EVENTUALLY END UP NOTHING MORE THAN ROBOTS WITH PERSONALITIES?

What does this mean for Christians?

We are fundamentally religious creatures. The notion that life ends at death might be intellectually satisfying for transhumanists, but such a hopeless belief can never satisfy our souls. Even atheists crave religion, an eschatology, a hope for a future. Transhumanism provides such a hope.

It substitutes faith in technology for faith in God. If we don't believe the story of the God who conquered death for us, transhumanism holds onto the hope that we can conquer death ourselves. But the dream of uploading one's mind into a robot to achieve immortality is the mere fantasy of individuals looking for comfort that they will never find apart from the Gospel.

If transhumanism shares anything with Christianity, it is the belief that death is an enemy to be defeated. What transhumanism doesn't share is the belief that death is an enemy that has been defeated at the grave of Jesus Christ.

That is precisely the answer Christianity should give to the religion of transhumanism — the true Gospel of the Resurrection.

real, human, creaturely body — immortal, restored and re-created in the image of the New Man, Jesus Christ, free of sin and death, to live with God forever.

In view of the Gospel promise, the dream of humans without bodies, of our minds being uploaded into robots so as to live forever, seems less like a dream and more like a nightmare. LW

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