

Reformation
& Revival



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In my early ministry on Long Island, before I knew much about the prophetic Word and the apostasy, God visited my congregation with a strong awakening. Then I began to hear Christian voices telling me, "These are the last days, days of apostasy. There will be no great revivals anymore." The message discouraged me. I lost something.

But in His mercy, the Lord awoke me. Sure, there was apostasy, and *I was allowing it to get hold of me!* Apostasy is of the devil. Shall I give place to the devil?

I repented. And God led me to Norway and right into the thick of a very strong revival ministry. He renewed my whole ministry and vision of revival.

The problem is not the *apostasy* so much as it is the lukewarmness and the need of the power of the Holy Spirit which will make the churches *apostolic* again.

I want to be a committee of one *against* the devil and apostasy, and *for* revival!

Armin R. Gesswein

Today we have an entire generation of professing Christians who are deeply ignorant of the Bible and church history. Having fallen prey to the "trickery of men," they are being "carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:14). Rather than being allowed to set the church's agenda, they need to be awakened to the fulness of their deception.

Alan Morrison

The world is coming either to Christ or to Beelzebub, and the proponents are arming themselves on both sides.

Statement of Calvinists, Herrnhut, 1801

A Review Article

Greg Beaupied

Creating a New Civilization

Alvin and Heidi Toffler

Atlanta: Turner Publishing Inc., 1995.

112 pages, cloth, \$14.95.

The Tofflers' book, *Creating a New Civilization*, is a return to the aspirations of the cities of Enoch and Babel and all they represent—what is known as the City of Man. The book's purpose is to alert us to the cresting Third Wave that will soon engulf the older systems and technologies of the industrial Second Wave. All of this is more than conflicting technologies and philosophies; it is an exaltation of human worshipping the digital god of the microchip. In the Tofflers' view all of our hopes for the future depend upon our ability to make everything we believe and all we practice subservient to the Third Wave. We are entering the technological eschaton; Man will be divided into Third Wave sheep and Second Wave goats. Those who warn of "the end of history" (p. 27) are merely experiencing the anguish of outmoded thinking, and they must change, or be swept aside. Religion, psychology, sociology, politics, marketing, banking, families, economics—all of what is human—will bow before this techno-baal.

The City of Man Revisited

Cain was the patriarch of the ungodly. He was sent into exile, a sentence of wandering for the killing of his brother, Abel. God banished him into the wilderness, but Cain desired to create a city for himself, a new Eden based upon the cleverness of the unregenerate mind. Cain founded a city named Enoch, after his son, but the metropolitan dream was exposed as a sinful nightmare under the reign of Lamech. The city of Enoch was the forge of technology,

instruments of music, tools, and weapons of cruelty—all to be used by a civilization at enmity with God.

The evil of humanity reached its awful epitome before the Great Flood, but soon the spirit of Cain returned as Babel reached for the heavens. Babel was an attempt to recreate the mountain of paradise on the plain of Shinar. Again, technology was essential. No stone or mortar was suitable for their tower, but bricks served as substitutes for stone and pitch for mortar. Babel was enhanced by man's ability to communicate and work cooperatively, but their plans were so presumptuous that God had to "come down" to see this minuscule bump on the plain, which the inhabitants of Babel thought could reach to heaven. God was not in danger of actually having a competitor, but men were in danger of believing such a thing possible. It was not the technology, but their willful independence that threatened a return to the pre-Noahic terrors.

The history of the Bible is the recycling of the City of Man theme. God's people are to be sojourners upon the earth awaiting the Jerusalem to come. The earthly Jerusalem was to serve as a pattern of the heavenly reality, but men could not restrain the impulse to do evil in the sight of God. Jerusalem was leveled by the descendants of Babel, rebuilt as a sign of God's renewable grace and flattened again by Rome. Here we see the two-sided face of the sin of the City of Man. This City hates God and any who would build His city, but it also hates other cities that stand in its way. Augustine said, "Thus, we have two wars, that of the wicked at war with the wicked and that of the wicked at war with the good" (p. 329). The Third Wave vision is the vision of the City of Man, at war with other cities and at war with the City of God. We will now turn to some of the specifics of the case.

Arguments

1) An important consideration in our examination is con-

cerned with how the philosophies of the Tofflers' book are to be used in society. One of the chief architects of our American society is Newt Gingrich; therefore, his comments in the foreword are germane to our discussion. He characterizes the Tofflers' position as one that "understand(s) that development and distribution of information has [sic] now become the central productivity and power activity of the human race" (p. 14). This notion harkens back to the very root judgment against Babel. With reference to Babel, Gage frames the issue this way: "The strength of this wicked generation rested in their unhindered communication, an advance which so facilitated their communal cooperation" (p. 139). No longer is technological innovation simply the ability to produce marvelous implements and structures (bricks instead of stone), but now it stands to reclaim what the Lord undid at Babel, to allow men to accumulate and exchange vast amounts of information. This exceeds the commonality of language as a usable skill because digital storage is able to manipulate millions of bits of data.

The theological concern is not with digital capacities per se, but with the human tendency to subordinate these abilities to Cainite purposes, to overpower men and to believe that God is subject to what we may wrongly consider to be our vast power. The power claims of Babel seem greatly exaggerated because they actually pale to insignificance when compared to Absolute Power. Digital power is indeed an exponential leap in data usage, but even this is just as insignificant as the speech of Babel when compared to the power of God. The challenge for man is to use these abilities to God's purposes of justice, and the danger is seeing these new abilities as occupying God's throne, "the central . . . power activity of the human race."

Mr. Gingrich is a politician, and he understands that this new power is ultimately political power. This new political

power may be seen as new patterns that diminish former ideas of nationality, but nevertheless it is power that serves politics. Jerusalem was condemned for its political desires. Dumbrell reminds us of Jerusalem's sin of turning from God to politics: ". . . it would seem, then, the sin which is acknowledged clearly involves Judah's replacement of trust in Yahweh's kingship with what could be achieved through political kingship and adept diplomatic maneuvering" (p. 9).

2) Augustine said the City of Man wars against other cities (*supra*). This is a dominant theme of the Tofflers which they express as Third Wave victories over static Second Wave sluggards. First Wave considerations barely deserve any notice at all as they are already a defeated foe, exiled to the backwaters of modern life. "The conflict between Second and Third Wave groupings is, in fact, the central political tension cutting through our society today" (p. 25). Second Wave groups recognize the death match, and "Despite their differences, these Second Wave groups quickly coalesce to oppose Third Wave initiatives" (p. 73). Those who want to be victorious will join the winning side in this war and embrace Third Wave strategies.

3) The other half of Augustine's statement is the more serious issue. Third Wavers, as visualized by the Tofflers, are represented as indifferent toward God, but they are actually returning to the religion of their pre-Flood brethren. They say religion is shaped by the new civilization, not the other way around. Dumbrell informs us that cities were seen as religious extensions. "The legendary foundation of the city was invariably understood to be a religious act. Even the site itself was determined by some divine intervention or theophany, i.e., the manifestation of some god to a mortal" (p. 2). The religious hope of Babel was a return to Eden without the perceived encumbrance of God.

The Babel builders, like the Cainites, pretend religious profession. They will build a new Edenic mountain. They would win heaven by their reach instead of their righteousness. They will substitute achievement in height for attainments in holiness. In so doing they lay the foundations of the religious hypocrisy known as mystery Babylon, the mother of abominations (Rev. 18:5) (Gage, p. 140).

The Third Wave civilization is a city without walls, a domain that exists at the speed of light which becomes more divine with each accumulated megabyte. Gage also tells us, "Their evil genius is evident in their seeking out a broad valley in which to dwell, for thus would they avoid any geographical hindrances to their concerted activity" (p. 139). The Third Wave Babel rests on a new kind of plain that exists in cyberspace, the digital geography. Only those initiated into Third Wave skill can locate this valley and join the latest reach to heaven which does not rely upon righteousness.

4) Truth and wisdom are built on the foundation of God's truth, and our most explicit knowledge of this truth is His revelation to man. Our epistemology depends upon God. Epistemology in the Third Wave depends upon the accumulation of information. The Tofflers inadvertently express their lack of an epistemological base by their vacillation about what it is we know to be true.

Life may indeed be absurd in some large, cosmic sense. But this hardly probes that there is no pattern in today's events. In fact, there is a distinct, hidden order that becomes detectable as soon as we learn to distinguish Third Wave changes from those associated with a diminishing Second Wave (p. 25).

Here they argue for a distinct order that becomes uncod-

ed by Third Wave principles. Perhaps this is our new base of knowledge.

What is behind all this change? Is it a new kind of evolution, not governed by natural selection, but rather an almost omnipotent new creature springing spontaneously from a mother board? The one who knows how to tame the beast can ride into the new eschaton. The only answer appears to be man's imagination. He has built the super tool of Enoch. This tool will determine everything in society from music to industry. Where this tool is used anything can be rebuilt, and everything there is can be modified and improved. Religion does not need God because man will recreate religion in his image.

5) Who will rule over this new kingdom? Will there be a new regent who will take control? Will the new mechanized military become our leader? Or will Western-styled representative democracies shed their bureaucratic encumbrances and step in to the leadership position? The Tofflers do not supply a direct answer, but they suggest power should be localized within the minority communities.

Of course, this has enormous moral consequence because every person will be able to do what is right in his own eyes. There will not be any need for a moral consensus to hold a society together. "Not only is majority rule therefore no longer adequate as a legitimating principle, it is no longer necessarily humanizing or democratic in societies moving into the Third Wave" (p. 93). This far exceeds the moral relativism of the past decades. Most relativists recognized the need for a moral consensus, it just did not matter how this consensus was derived. Third Wavers do not need a consensus at all, for a consensus is no longer a "legitimizing principle," it is not "necessarily humanizing."

6) Lamech, the ruler of the city of Enoch, displayed his disdain for the marriage-and-family pattern established by God in Genesis 2. The one wife, a suitable helper for Adam,

was replaced with two wives. The pattern is established—the citizen of the City of Man will arrange his family to suit his system and to suit his needs regardless of the biblical norm.

The family philosophy of the Tofflers is much the same as that of the Cainite inhabitants of Enoch. The family, to be relevant, must serve the needs of man's latest innovation, the Third Wave. In the preface of their work they admit the family is in crisis (p. 7), but this crisis is not caused by the actions of the three successive "waves" that have washed away the need for the traditional nuclear family. Quoting from page 86:

The decline of the family as a powerful institution did not begin with Dr. Spock or *Playboy* magazine. It began when the industrial revolution stripped most of these functions out of the family. Work shifted to the factory or office. The sick went off to hospitals, kids to schools, couples to movie theaters. The elderly went into nursing homes. What remained when all these tasks were exteriorized was the "nuclear family," held together less by the functions its members performed as a unit than by fragile psychological bonds that are all too easily snapped.

The Tofflers' assessment is not completely wrong. We need only to look at the history of the family and we can verify for ourselves that the family decline has followed the sociological, cultural, and economic upheavals of history, but this is only to say that the influences of Cain have persisted throughout this history. The Tofflers inform us that man is not able to maintain the family on the tenuous basis of psychological bonding. This is what we expect to find because the psychological patterns of fallen man are a distortion of the biblical pattern. The Cainite line is unrestrained in its abilities to reinvent the family in its desire for

self-gratification.

It is also questionable that we should see the nuclear family as solely the outworking of agricultural necessities. We can agree that larger families may better serve an agriculturally based society than an urban family, but if family size were controlled by agricultural necessities alone we should have expected Western society to have developed large tribal units, and perhaps returned to polygamy. But the Bible was also a restraint to imaginations of men, and much of the biblical norm was left intact because of Christian influences.

The Tofflers suggest that the Third Wave will actually help the family. "It restores many of the lost functions that once made the home so central to society" (p. 86). We must understand that their vision for a new family is not a recommendation to return to the biblical family, because a few paragraphs later they say:

The irony is that many "family values" advocates, without knowing it, are not pushing toward a stronger family when they urge a return to the nuclear household: they are trying to restore the standardized model of the Second Wave. If we really want to strengthen family and make the home a central institution again, we must forget peripheral issues, accept diversity, and return important tasks to the household—oh, yes, and make sure the parent keeps control of the remote (p. 87).

This is a very odd and inconsistent statement. First, they say the Second Wave destroyed the nuclear family by rendering it obsolete, and in this last quote they say nuclear family advocates want to return to Second Wave families. It may have made a little more sense if they would have accused "family value" advocates of wanting to return to First Wave patterns. The Tofflers fail to understand that

"family value" advocates are, for the most part, people who want to uphold the Bible's instruction for family life, or, at least, are in agreement with biblical norms, even if they live on "borrowed capital."

Next, they suggest that the Third Wave family will return to the household. It is difficult to understand why this should happen at all. Third Wave people are more free from location constraints than any previous generation. The computer terminal does not need to be plugged in at one's home. We can understand that Third Wave technologies could assist the family's refocus on the home, but the impetus to do this does not come from those technologies. When men depart from the Bible they will remake their families according to their invented schemes. The other thing we should notice in the above quotation is their definition of the family. The Third Wave family is now defined as whatever diversity can create. When the Tofflers suggest the benefits of the Third Wave to the family, they are really saying the Third Wave will assist people to create any kind of family they choose. It is strangely curious that they finish their thought with an admonition to control the remote! Apparently diversity is wonderful as long as the television is monitored. We wonder what would be screened from the children. They would probably begin by making sure that Christian television was blocked out, while shows on the new frontiers of amorality were encouraged to stretch one's thinking to new vistas of innovation.

If there is any doubt that the Tofflers' views are anti-Christian, page 77 should make their position clear:

The religion-based wing of the Republican Party, seeking a return to "traditional" verities, blames liberals, humanists and Democrats for the "collapse of morality." It fails to grasp that this crisis in our value system reflects the more general crisis of Second Wave civilization as a whole, and

that this upheaval is not limited to America. Rather than asking how to bring about a decent, moral and democratic Third Wave America, most of its leaders merely urge a return to an idealized past. Instead of asking how to make a de-massified society moral and fair, many give the impression that they really want to re-massify America.

We cannot deny that many perceive the past to be a better reflection of biblical norms than the standards of the present, but the desire is not to return to the past; the desire is to return to the biblical standards that were more generalized through society in the past. Christians everywhere understand that the past was not utopia any more than the future shall be a paradise on earth. Christians everywhere also appreciate the benefits of modern technologies that have been a benefit to mankind, but these technologies can be used to glorify God or they can be used to glorify man. The Tofflers actually begin to raise technology above man. In the Third Wave man will glorify technology and bow down before it. The technology will determine the limits of possibility and man should follow this tech-god where it leads, and eat freely of its fruit.

The Tofflers accuse the "religion-based wing" of ignoring what can be done to make America decent, moral, and fair. It is almost tiring to have to continue to say that there is no standard for decency, morality, and fairness without some absolute standard of what these actually are. When one reads the entirety of *Creating a New Civilization* it is apparent that the mood of the book is decidedly against any suggestion that the Third Wave should be tempered with biblical standards. Apparently, decency, morality, and fairness are to be defined by each diverse unit. There simply will be no moral consensus in the Third Wave society when diversity reigns supreme. Of course, the question that remains is: What is to prevent any person from using this enormous

power, unrestrained by societal convention? The entire picture is one of relativism run wild coupled with the power to potentially impose its ideals. He who controls the binary switch can rule the world, and he who rules can establish the definition of morality.

Conclusion

Gage reminds us that the cities of man are "ultimately cities of destruction" (p. 59). The Tofflers suggest a new age of Eden on earth, but we must remember, "These cities of men often have the appearance of paradise, but never the reality" (Gage, p. 60). We do not deny that the Third Wave is coming, and we do not expect that the Third Wave will become the servant of God, but those who believe the Bible and strive to build the City of God must make every attempt to restrain the evil side of man's imagination. We know that Babylon must eventually fall (Rev. 18:19-24) and the heavenly city of Zion will come as promised (Rev. 21:1-2). The Tofflers tell us to continue to build Babylon. Believers must be aware that Third Wave ideas may be the underlying philosophy of Republicans like Gingrich, and we must be careful to understand that we do not become builders of Babylon instead of workers for the City of God.

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