



Reformation Society of Western New York

Thursday, November 11, 2021

#Theology

Social Media, Scripture, and the Local Church

Mitch Bedzyk

Elder, Emmanuel Community Church

237 E. Miller St., Elmira, NY, 14904

(607) 734-7516

eccelmira.org

INTRODUCTION

When considering the features and problems of our society, it is easy to overlook the significant role that the rise of social media has played. We typically view these virtual platforms as neutral tools to be used for either good or evil, for building up or for tearing down. Yet the correlation between these new technologies and the radical changes to our thinking, our discourse, and how we relate to one another is becoming harder to ignore. While Christians are correct to acknowledge our radical corruption and sinful rebellion at the heart of our social problems, we have often underestimated the (de)formative power of social media and their impact on our lives considerably. Summarizing these radical changes, Alastair Roberts writes:

It is not in [the] least bit accidental that our societies are increasingly polarized, our relations increasingly reactive, our discourse increasingly failing to exhibit moderation and balance, our focus increasingly fixated upon competing identity groups...our populations increasingly distrusting..., our media increasingly partisan and unreliable..., or our sense of self increasingly entangled in our political viewpoints. Along with numerous other features of the contemporary situation, these issues arise from or are exacerbated by the ever more powerful role that the Internet and social media play in shaping our discourse and society.¹

Of course, there are many ways in which Christians, churches, and parachurch ministries can benefit from social media. When used well, social media can enhance the fellowship of a local church by helping members stay connected, share news and encouragement, organize events for their communities, and support other like-minded ministries and churches. However, we often approach platforms like Facebook and Twitter with a bit too much confidence, forgetting our own disordered desires and feeling assured we cannot possibly be mastered by them. But James K. A. Smith points out that, "Signing up for Twitter or Facebook is not a neutral decision to simply employ a 'medium': it is to insert oneself in an environment of practice that inculcates in us certain

¹ Alastair Roberts, "The Deformation of Online Media and Our Current Social and Political Crises (A Retrospective)," Accessed November 1, 2021, <https://alastairadversaria.com/2017/01/31/the-deformation-of-online-media-and-our-current-social-and-political-crises-a-retrospective/>

habits that then shape our orientation to the world.”² In other words, social media is forming us and our society, whether we know it or like it or not.

This study will attempt to show that social media, by their very design, predispose us toward certain behaviors, forming us in ways that are predominantly unfitting for citizens of heaven and antithetical to the gospel. For Christians to use these tools in an edifying and Christ-honoring way, we must consider their unique features, their formative power, and what Scripture has to say about our use of them. As we devote our attention to Scriptural reflection and reprioritizing our commitments to our local churches and communities, perhaps the church can begin to develop a more effective response to the dysfunctions and (de)formative power of social media, rather than resorting to wholesale abandonment or periodic abstention.

THE FEATURES AND FORMATIVE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

One of the most important features of social media we must consider is that *they contribute to an unhealthy intake of knowledge*. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter simply inundate us with more information than we need to know or know what to do with. They can deceive us, not merely through false information, but through information that seems important. This deception is largely due to the click-driven nature of our media which incentivizes over-dramatization, urgency, and sensationalism. As senator Ben Sasse puts it, "Provocative social media is the only profitable social media."³ As a result, we become distracted and disoriented. We end up scrolling endlessly, unable to discern what actually needs our attention.

While the desire to obtain knowledge is a virtue, Bradford Littlejohn reminds us that, since our human faculties and desires have been disordered since the Fall, we can easily fall prey to the

² James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 144, emphasis original.

³ Ben Sasse, *Them: Why We Hate Each Other and How to Heal* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2019), 111

vice of curiosity: loving knowledge in the wrong way for the wrong ends.⁴ One sobering aspect of this vice is what Littlejohn calls *distracting curiosity*, which is “seeking to know things that are indeed ours to know, but not *now*, turning ourselves away from the tasks and people that God has put directly before us to pursue matters that he will call us to in due time.”⁵ This distracting curiosity has only been amplified because of social media. Since we are now aware of every tragedy, injustice, scandal, and natural disaster on our planet, we are prone to feel anxious, angry, hateful or helpless because most of this news is “inactionable” news we can do nothing about.⁶ And the result of attempting to carry burdens we were not created to bear is that we can easily fail to attend to what should actually matter to us: our families, our local churches, and our communities.

This unhealthy intake of knowledge fed to us by social media can also *promote cursory reading and discourage careful thought*. To use Brett McCracken’s helpful diet analogy, we not only eat too much but we eat too fast, and only eat what we think is good for us.⁷ We are being trained to skim articles and only read headlines which have been curated for us by opaque algorithms created to show us content we will like. One of the more harmful side effects of this kind of diet is that it can severely hinder our ability to read the Bible well. Christians who use these platforms as their exclusive source for news and media will increasingly find Bible reading more challenging, since it requires careful thought (2 Tim. 2:7), unhurried meditation (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2) and refuses to only tell us the things we want to hear.

Another feature that needs to be considered is how the social media ecosystem *fosters impulsiveness and self-promotion*. The combination of instant access to every conceivable piece of

⁴ W. Bradford Littlejohn, “Addicted to Novelty: The Vice of Curiosity in a Digital Age,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37, no. 1 (2017): 182, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44504870>,

⁵ *Ibid.*, 184

⁶ Dan Marotta, “News as Spiritual Deformation,” Accessed February 25, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/news-spiritual-deformation/>

⁷ Brett McCracken, *The Wisdom Pyramid: Feeding Your Soul in a Post-Truth World* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020), 17-22

knowledge and the constant accessibility of a platform with no pre-publishing accountability leads us to believe we are all experts. It trains us to feel like we have something to say, that we have to say something, and that we must make sure we are heard. Facebook and Twitter are *designed* to generate hasty, knee-jerk reactions to the latest breaking news, and the faster you respond, the better your chances of going viral. But this impulsive self-expression is typically not intended to contribute to a constructive discussion of ideas. Instead, our self-expression is for self-promotion, since these platforms have been “deliberately calibrated—using likes, retweets, and other reward mechanisms—to hijack our desire for attention and approval.”⁸ More often than not, we post, tweet, react, and comment, not to learn from others or further a conversation, but simply to be seen. Smith concludes that as we inhabit social media in this way, “we are slowly and covertly incorporated into a body politic with its own vision of human flourishing: shallow connections for instant self-gratification and self-congratulation.”⁹

Another unique feature of social media, which is as harmful as it is obvious, is that it *downplays embodied presence*. The decline of face-to-face human interaction has undoubtedly played a major role in how we relate to others. When we experience people simply as avatars with opinions it is easy to forget their humanity, which leads to an inability to treat these fellow image-bearers with dignity and respect. In his excellent essay, *The Analog City and the Digital City*, Michael Sacasas observes that the way we view an original piece of art compared to its many reproductions is similar to the way we view people and their digital reproductions online:

Digital reproductions of the self do not elicit the moral recognition that attends the embodied self in the here and now. I can tear a reproduction of a Rembrandt without repercussion and without much hesitation; I cannot do so with an original. So I might feel

⁸ L. M. Sacasas, “The Analog City and the Digital City,” *The New Atlantis*, Number 61, Winter 2020, <https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-analog-city-and-the-digital-city>

⁹ Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 148.

myself at liberty to tear into a digital reproduction of a person in a way that I would not if he or she were present before me.¹⁰

This downplaying of the embodied self also hinders authentic community, training us to think we have supreme control over all we experience and whom we encounter. If we don't like someone or something they've said, we can simply mute them, block them, unfollow them, or unfriend them, never to be seen or heard from again. Social media has made it easier to ensure we never have to interact with people that think differently from us or ever have to work at cultivating friendships with others if we find it too difficult or frustrating.

Similarly, social media also *distort our perception of the real world*. In his book, *Breaking the Social Media Prism*, sociologist Christopher Bail argues that since social media platforms are places we go primarily to curate and perform identities, they are not mirrors which accurately reflect our society but are “more like prisms that bend and refract our social environment—distorting our sense of ourselves, and each other.”¹¹ Through his extensive research he concludes that this prism actually “fuels status-seeking extremists” and “mutes moderates who think there is little to be gained by discussing politics on social media.”¹² Bail's conclusions line up with other recent studies, which provide statistical data to support the commonly held notion that moral outrage on social media is rewarded with high engagement, and thus leads to ever increasing moral outrage and extremism.¹³ In other words, the more time we spend on social media, the more prone we will be to develop profound misgivings about those who share different political, religious, or philosophical convictions, minimizing the substantial common ground we in fact share with others.

¹⁰ Sacasas, “The Analog City and the Digital City”

¹¹ Christopher A. Bail, *Breaking the Social Media Prism: How to Make Our Platforms Less Polarizing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 52-53.

¹² *Ibid.*, 10.

¹³ Chris Martin, “New Research: More Engagement Promotes More Outrage Online,” Accessed November 2, 2021, <https://www.termsofservice.social/p/new-research-shows-more-engagement>

When we consider all of these features of social media, it becomes evident that these platforms, by design, actually *discourage fruitful discourse*. As long as platforms like Facebook and Twitter continue to provide an unhealthy intake of knowledge, incentivize sensationalism, foster cursory reading, promote impulsive self-expression for self-promotion, and downplay embodied presence, they will continue to be unfit mediums for difficult and sensitive topics such as politics, race, and theology. Carl Trueman has persuasively argued that social media, specifically in forms like Twitter, is a modern-day parallel of the “pamphlet war” between both Protestants and Catholics during the Reformation. These pamphlets were “short, cheap, polemical publications” that were “not in general designed to seek and establish truth, but rather to discredit the opposition.”¹⁴ Today, platforms like Twitter, with its 280-character limit, are the perfect medium for such messages and fulfill the same function:

It does not seriously engage with the arguments of the perceived foe; it seeks to discredit those arguments—not by engaging them, but by indulging in the far lazier and far more effective strategy of discrediting the character of the person making the arguments. Thus when we mistake Twitter as a medium for truth, we are in trouble. Insults are seen as argument, slander as reality, superficiality as depth¹⁵

Facebook and Twitter may have legitimate uses, but the pursuit of truth through fruitful discourse—which requires deliberation, patience, and nuance—is certainly not one of them.

Having considered the design of social media and their formative power on our society, it would be foolish to think the church has been immune to their subtle yet powerful influence. In fact, it does not take much time on Facebook or Twitter to see the devastating affect these platforms can have on Christians. Instead of charity, patience, gentleness, kindness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23) they produce enmity, strife, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, and divisions (Gal. 5:19-21). Rather than discussing difficult issues of Christian faith and practice in community with humility, respect,

¹⁴ Carl Trueman, “Lessons from the Reformation’s Pamphlet War,” Accessed November 5, 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/11/lessons-from-the-reformations-pamphlet-war>

¹⁵ Ibid.,

and careful thought, we resort to “hashtag theology”—attempting theological discourse in 280 characters on Twitter or comments on Facebook, where civility, conviviality, and Christlikeness all go to die. We are trained to believe every issue is of first importance, and those who hold different opinions from us must be heretics, nationalists, or worse, “cultural Marxists.” Slandering, cancelling, and assuming the worst about others have become acceptable forms of righteous indignation and required for courageous Christian discipleship. We are busy attending to the latest breaking political and theological issues happening all over the world rather than the more pressing needs in our local churches. And these environments give the false impression that the church is not bearing fruit but is on the verge of collapse, since it only highlights the extremists and the moral failings of celebrity pastors, forgetting the millions of faithful shepherds and flocks not on social media, living quietly and minding their own affairs (1 Thess. 4:11).

SCRIPTURE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The first step to addressing the problems that have been amplified by social media is to recognize the features and formative power of these social networks. But the only way to ensure that we use social media in a wise, edifying, Christ-honoring way is if we are saturated with and shaped by Scripture. In this section we will consider what the Bible has to say about how we ought to use social media and the habits being inculcated in us through our inhabitation of these digital environments. We will briefly consider the Ten Commandments and the book of Proverbs, followed by a look at several of the New Testament epistles. What we will see is that our fruitfulness on social media is inextricably tied to our faithfulness to God’s word.

One simple way to summarize the problems with these social networks is that they have facilitated the breaking of God’s moral law rather than help us to love our neighbors as ourselves (Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:31). Consider how the Heidelberg Catechism explains the prohibitions of murder (Ex. 20:13) and bearing false witness against your neighbor (Ex. 20:16):

Q107. *Is it enough then that we do not murder our neighbor in any such way?*

A. God wants us to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be patient, peace-loving, gentle, merciful, and friendly toward them...

Q112. *What is the aim of the ninth commandment?*

A: That I never give false testimony against anyone, twist no one's words, not gossip or slander, nor join in condemning anyone rashly or without a hearing...

Since social media encourage harsh, hasty, and slanderous reactions to the latest soundbites, it is all too common for us to become guilty of murder and bearing false witness against those we are called to love. The church needs to realize that social media can easily be to the sixth and ninth commandments what the Internet has been to the lust and adultery prohibited in the seventh.

Arguably the wisest place to start when evaluating our behavior online is Proverbs, since the actions of speaking, listening, and reacting feature so prominently in the book. Proverbs tells us that those who respond impulsively, and find themselves quarreling with everyone about everything, are those who fail to heed their father's instruction and are seduced by Lady Folly. It is the fool who makes his vexation known at once (12:16), who "takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his own opinion" (18:2), who gives an answer before he hears (18:13) and gives full vent to his spirit (29:11).

For the fool who responds in outrage, we learn that their "rash words are like sword thrusts" (12:18), their "hasty temper exalts folly" (14:29), and their "harsh word stirs up anger" (15:1) and strife (15:18). But such wrathful speech "stems from pride, the opposite of both fear of the Lord and charity—the beginning and end of wisdom."¹⁶ In contrast, it is the wise who restrain their lips (10:19), who are slow to anger (14:29), who keep aloof from strife (20:3), whose sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness (16:21). If you have ever wondered why hardly any

¹⁶ Daniel J. Treier, *Proverbs & Ecclesiastes*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011), 95.

good comes from social media debates, it is because the harshness of speech that social media fosters by design only serves to increase resistance and strife.

As we come to the New Testament, we see the same themes emerge regarding our discourse and interactions with others online. In Ephesians, Paul tells us to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.” (Eph. 4:2; cf. Col. 3:12-15). In our own social media age, as in the Greco-Roman world, humility and gentleness are neither valued nor considered virtues. Yet Paul calls those who are being remade in the image Christ Jesus to display his same gentle and lowly character as they bear with one another in love. Similarly, in Philippians 4:5, Paul exhorts us to let our “*reasonableness* be known to everyone.” While everyone else on social media might be explosive and trigger-happy, the church is called to be yielding, gentle, kind, and courteous, having a disposition that seeks to defuse conflict and bring restoration.¹⁷ Our reasonableness must be a publicly obvious reality in person and online, in conversations on theology, race, politics, and economics, to both believers and unbelievers, Democrats and Republicans.

In the Pastoral Epistles we find several strong commands regarding the appropriate manner of discourse for the Lord’s servants and ministers. While these letters are more concerned with heresy than pandemics and public policy debates, the principles and posture of our discourse still apply. In his second letter to Timothy, Paul exhorts us to “have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies” that “breed quarrels;” we are to “not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil,” gently correcting our opponents (2 Tim. 2:23-25; cf. Tit. 3:9). Of course, Christians are to fight the good fight of faith and contend for the truth. But the way in which we do so must be, as John Stott puts it, “forbearing of people’s unkindness, patient towards their

¹⁷ Matthew S. Harmon, *Philippians: A Mentor Commentary*, Mentor Commentaries (Great Britain; Ross-shire: Mentor, 2015), 408.

foolishness and tolerant of their foibles.”¹⁸ Unfortunately, when social media is used for debate, it makes everyone look more like the false teachers of 1 Timothy 6, who have an “unhealthy craving for controversy and for quarrels about words, which produce envy, dissension, slander, evil suspicions, and constant friction among people who are depraved in mind and deprived of truth” (1 Tim. 6:4-5).

Finally, one of the most helpful passages for Christians using social media comes from the book of James: “Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God” (Jas. 1:20-21). As this brief study has shown, social media by their very design instead train us to be slow to hear, quick to speak, and quick to anger. The simple fact that social media shape us to be and to do the exact *opposite* of what God has clearly revealed to us in his word should be enough to prompt serious and sober reflection on our social media habits.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

This study has attempted to show that social media, by their very design, predispose us toward certain behaviors, forming us in ways that are predominantly unfitting for citizens of heaven and antithetical to the gospel. Since social media have primarily served to *amplify* our pre-existing problems in our nation that have been brewing for a while, abandoning these platforms will not automatically produce healthy communities and fruitful public discourse. Instead, a more effective response must include letting Scripture shape our use of social media and also discerning how to foster healthy communities outside of the digital public sphere. With this two-pronged approach in mind, here are three suggestions moving forward.

¹⁸ John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Gospel the Message of 2 Timothy*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 78.

First, we must *recognize the limitations of social media and adjust our expectations of what they can actually accomplish*. Despite what Lady Folly would have us think and the allure of self-expression, our posts and tweets are typically not on the verge of going viral and are virtually incapable of making any real, significant change in the hearts and lives of our audience. If we're honest with ourselves, our online discourse is more likely to change the weather than the current theological or political landscape. The desire to steward these tools faithfully and creatively for the cause of the gospel and social justice is indeed honorable. But since the medium itself is entirely unfit for fruitful discourse, at best, we will be wasting our time; at worst, we will be potentially stirring up strife and causing serious harm in the places where we *do* have influence.

Second, because of the inherent limitations of social media, we must *bring our focus and energy back to our local context*. Dan Marotta observes that our obsession with the “inactionable” news of our world only “gives us the *illusion* of engagement and thus inoculates [us] against actual engagement with real people.”¹⁹ As important as the latest, breaking news may be, it should never be cause for distraction from the immediate needs of the churches and communities to which we belong. And since we are not called to the Internet but to our local church, we need not feel pressured to address everyone and everything that comes across our news feeds. Our God-given responsibility, as pastors and church members, certainly includes addressing the issues of the day, but we address them as they pertain to our local churches, while also patiently admonishing the idle, encouraging the fainthearted, and helping the weak (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:14).

This prioritizing of our local context also implies the importance of time and physical presence, where we can take body language, facial expressions, even things like age and disabilities into consideration to our conversations (cf. Rom. 1:11-12; 1 Thess 2:17; 2 John 12). Jake Meador reminds us that “As human creatures, we were created for sharing our lives with one another,” and

¹⁹ Marotta, “News as Spiritual Deformation.”

that requires “time, physical presence, and affection.”²⁰ One can only imagine how the church councils would have turned out if they attempted to formulate the creeds in a Facebook group, or if the Westminster Assembly of Divines endeavored to compose their confession using Twitter! The only way that our theological, political, and cultural discussions can ever be fruitful is if those difficult and sensitive discussions are moved offline and in person, in community. In fact, this act of communal reading and discussion will make us more like the noble Bereans (Acts 17:10-11). Alastair Roberts points out that, as members of the Jewish synagogue, the Bereans would have likely been assembled regularly together to collectively discuss and examine the Scriptures taught by Paul and Silas.²¹ This common first-century practice would serve us in our isolated, privatized, hyper-individualized society.

Third, in addition to a renewed focus on our local context and face-to-face discussion we must *strive to cultivate Christian charity*. As we have seen, this idea of gentleness, kindness, and bearing with one another in love is foundational to the church and essential for our witness because it characterizes our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Paul writes to the Corinthians that “love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:7). Commenting on this passage, D. A. Carson writes that, Christian love “always trusts— which does not mean it is gullible, but that it prefers to be generous in its openness and acceptance rather than suspicious or cynical.”²² Rather than being characterized by a readiness to find fault and always assuming the worst about those outside of our tribe, we should be eager to establish as much common ground as possible, especially with believers. The only way forward in our theological,

²⁰ Jake Meador, *In Search of the Common Good: Christian Fidelity in a Fractured World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2019), 37

²¹ Alastair Roberts, “Reading Scripture ‘Like a Berean’ May Look Different Than You Think,” Accessed November 1, 2021, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/berean-different/>

²² D. A. Carson, *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987), 63.

political, and cultural debates, whether in person or online, is through a recovery of Christian charity. It is this kind of love that shows the world we belong to the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

In conclusion, as we recognize the dangers and limitations of social media, focus our time and energy on our local contexts, and recover the practice of Christian charity, we can begin to form an effective response to the dysfunction and deformative power of social media. Through constant reassessment of our habits and Scriptural reflection, perhaps we can learn to stigmatize social media and reprioritize our commitments to our families, local churches, and communities.²³

Writing about our use of social media and reading the news well, Jeffrey Bilbro concludes,

Our engagement in the public sphere can only be redemptive to the extent that it is predicated on prior commitments—most fundamentally commitments to loving God and our neighbors. If these are indeed our primary commitments, we may learn about and respond to current events from a posture characterized by loving attention to the needs of our places and by a profound sense of our participation in God's ongoing drama.²⁴

As we aspire to be faithful stewards of social media, we must let our love for Christ, his word, his church, and the places where we have been planted be the guiding factors for how we inhabit these digital environments.

²³ Samuel D. James, "Stigmatize Social Media," Accessed November 9, 2021, <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/10/stigmatize-social-media>

²⁴ Jeffrey Bilbro, *Reading the Times: A Literary and Theological Inquiry into the News* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2021), 142-143.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bail, Christopher A. *Breaking the Social Media Prism: How to Make Our Platforms Less Polarizing*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 2021.
- Bilbro, Bilbro. *Reading the Times: A Literary and Theological Inquiry into the News*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press. 2021.
- Carson, D. A. *Showing the Spirit: A Theological Exposition of 1 Corinthians 12–14*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. 1987.
- Harmon, Matthew S. *Philippians: A Mentor Commentary*. Mentor Commentaries. Great Britain; Ross-shire: Mentor. 2015.
- James, Samuel D. "Stigmatize Social Media." Accessed November 9, 2021.
<https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/10/stigmatize-social-media>.
- Littlejohn, W. Bradford. "Addicted to Novelty: The Vice of Curiosity in a Digital Age." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 37, no. 1 (2017): 179–96.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/44504870>.
- Marotta, Dan "News as Spiritual Deformation." Accessed February 25, 2021.
<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/news-spiritual-deformation>.
- Martin, Chris. "New Research: More Engagement Promotes More Outrage Online." Accessed November 2, 2021. <https://www.termsofservice.social/p/new-research-shows-more-engagement>.
- McCracken, Brett. *The Wisdom Pyramid: Feeding Your Soul in a Post-Truth World*. Wheaton: Crossway. 2020.
- Meador, Jake. *In Search of the Common Good: Christian Fidelity in a Fractured World*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press. 2019.
- Roberts, Alastair. "The Deformation of Online Media and Our Current Social and Political Crises (A Retrospective)." Accessed November 1, 2021.
<https://alastairadversaria.com/2017/01/31/the-deformation-of-online-media-and-our-current-social-and-political-crises-a-retrospective>.
- . "Reading Scripture 'Like a Berean' May Look Different Than You Think." Accessed November 1, 2021. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/berean-different/>.
- Sacasas, L. M. "The Analog City and the Digital City." *The New Atlantis*. Number 61. Winter 2020.
<https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-analog-city-and-the-digital-city>
- Sasse, Ben. *Them: Why We Hate Each Other and How to Heal*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin. 2019. 111.
- Smith, James K. A. *Imagining the Kingdom: How Worship Works*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic. 2013.

Stott, John R. W. *Guard the Gospel the Message of 2 Timothy*. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press. 1973.

Treier, Daniel J. *Proverbs & Ecclesiastes*. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011.

Trueman, Carl. "Lessons from the Reformation's Pamphlet War." Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2021/11/lessons-from-the-reformations-pamphlet-war>.

FOR FURTHER READING

12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You, Tony Reinke (Crossway).

Competing Spectacles: Treasuring Christ in the Media Age, Tony Reinke (Crossway)

God, Technology, and the Christian Life, Tony Reinke (Crossway)

Disruptive Witness: Speaking Truth in a Distracted Age, Alan Noble (InterVarsity Press)

Terms of Service: The Real Cost of Social Media, Chris Martin (B&H Books)

How to Think: A Survival Guide for a World at Odds, Alan Jacobs (Currency)

A Gentle Answer: Our 'Secret Weapon' in an Age of Us Against Them, Scott Sauls (Thomas Nelson)

The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in its Proper Place, Andy Crouch (Baker).

When Doctrine Divides the People of God: An Evangelical Approach to Theological Diversity, Rhyne R. Putman (Crossway)