Transhumanism

A. transhumanism: A belief that the human race can evolve beyond its current limitations, *esp*. by the use of science and technology.
   1. The term and concept is attributed to Sir Julian Huxley (circa 1957), grandson of Thomas Henry Huxley, who has been called, "Darwin's bulldog." Assumptions of naturalism, materialism and biological evolution should be expected.
   2. The prefix *trans* primarily has the sense, "across, through, over, to or on the other side of..." and, "in adjs. with the sense 'beyond, surpassing, transcending', as *transhuman, -material, -rational*."
   3. Given the evolutionary presuppositions associated with such notions, *trans* as used by advocates of *transhumanism* would be expected to consider modern humans as merely the present form of a long train of evolutionary development to be upgraded from its apparent static limitations to that of superhuman or beyond.
   4. Per the definition, transhumanism is *a belief*. There is an element of faith here, religion.
B. Transhumanism is part of a large set of concerns for the future of humanity relative to technology: artificial intelligence, computer networks, digital identity, robotics, etc. The potential loss of privacy, independent thought, personal liberty and self-determination are part of the bigger picture.
   1. The melding of man and machine has been the stuff of science fiction for a long time but it is becoming less fictional. We are edging closer to The Six Million Dollar Man who was "better, stronger, faster."
   2. We do not disparage technological developments like prosthetics which enable otherwise handicapped individuals to improve their lot.
   3. Some fear that technology will overtake and overpower humanity, making them slaves.
   4. Others hope that technology will be humanity's savior to deliver it from subjective and destructive forces, even from mortality by uploading consciousness to computer networks.
C. Presuppositional foundations direct thought and action.
   1. Bible-believers know that man was made by God in His own image, lost that image by sin which brought death/corruption/entropy, consciousness continues after the death of the body and that Jesus Christ is the only hope of immortality. Hence, they live by His code and example in anticipation of His promise. **2PE 1:5-11; 1TH 1:9-10.**
   2. Atheists are materialists who believe that personal existence ends when brain function ends. Hence, they live for the moment since there is no tomorrow, per **1CO 15:32.**
   3. Transhumanist atheists want to wrest immortality from mortality through technology: salvation from death without God. Death is a problem that genius can solve. Hence, the gospel is to them an enemy force which is restricting man from his fullest potential. NOTE:
       a. Making of melded superhumans in defiance of God is an old concept. **GEN 6:1-4.**
       b. High-minded schemes to frustrate death are old concepts also. **ISA 28:15.**
       c. Man at his fullest potential is an unhealthy condition. **GEN 11:6.**
       d. Jesus Christ is the enemy of this kind of "builders." **PSA 2:1-3; ACT 4:11.**
D. Transhumanism is deemed the intro to *posthumanism*, a perfected state of existence where the "upgrade" has removed all flaws from the present system.
   1. "Transhumanism constitutes a broadly defined intellectual and cultural movement that seeks to transform the present human condition through the use of science and technology. It plans to elevate humans to an exponentially greater step in evolutionary development called the 'post human' state---a utopia of our own making."
       (Fazale R. Rana with Kenneth R. Samples, *Humans 2.0: Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Perspectives on Transhumanism*, p. 18)

2. Yuval Noah Harari claims that death is a "technical problem" that can be overcome as humans (or some humans) graduate from *homo sapiens* (wise man) to *homo deus* (wise god) through technology. (Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow*)
    a. *Men becoming gods* is also an old concept. **GEN 3:5.**
    b. Mormons have their own version of this in their historic Adam-God doctrine.
3. Three areas of success in human betterment drive this movement: gene-editing, human-computer interface technology, and anti-aging technology. The assumption is that the sky is the limit, and if something can be conceived it can be done through:
    a. bodily enhancement (gene-editing, etc.)
    b. human-machine melding (the cyborg option).
    c. abandoning the body in favor of an "uploaded consciousness."

E. There are five basic principles of this system.
1. <u>Vast human potential for betterment</u>. Death should not be considered an inevitability in view of humanity's track record of scientific achievement and social progress. We just need a little more time to figure stuff out.
2. <u>Radical technological progress</u>. Quantum leaps in science and technology will master by genetic engineering the information flaws in nature. Molecular technology and artificial intelligence will play roles. The goals are advanced bodily functions, increased intelligence, increased lifespan.
3. <u>Secular transhumanists affirm human autonomy from God or any higher authority</u>. As mere intelligent, sentient animals at the top of the evolutionary scale, humans must find their own solutions to entropy and mortality. Nature is the only reality and we must harness it to save ourselves.
4. <u>Posthuman transformation</u>. Humanity transcends the current state unto vastly superior intellectual existence which may not even have a need for a body, rendering death a solved problem. This accords with the philosophical image of the separated capstone and truncated pyramid.
5. <u>Moral philosophy of a subjective, atheistic nature</u>. Biblical principles such as an objective moral law and truth, or virtues like faith, hope and love will not define the hive. Instead, the philosophy is egoism/self-interest, total libertarianism (freedom from all governmental restraint), utilitarianism (greatest good for the greatest number), relativism (subjective morality) and pragmatism (whatever makes for human betterment must be the truth).

F. Observations.
1. Transhumanism is a materialist philosophy in which identity and consciousness depend on material states which act to produce them. When the material fails, consciousness ends, so humanity needs to figure out a way to preserve consciousness beyond the body, perhaps by digitalizing thought, will, desire, etc.
    a. But our identity is not the product of material/biological stuff. The stuff was in place but needing God to make it a living soul. **GEN 2:7.**
    b. The immaterial part of man continues after the material body dies and exhibits conscious thought, desire and sensation (without technology!). **LUK 16:22-25; REV 6:9-10.**
    c. The answer to humanity's dilemma is the preservation of the conscious soul unto the resurrection of the body by the power of God. **1CO 15.**
2. Death is not simply a "technical problem" (Harari) that can be solved by genius and technology.
    a. Death is the wages of sin (**ROM 6:23**) which corrupts body, mind, feelings, will, desire, etc. Uploading consciousness without deleting the "sin files" is not going to solve anything. Disconnecting death from sin goes back to **GEN 3:4.**

        b.   There is a certain destination and judgment after death. **HEB 9:27.**

        c.   The death principle (entropy) is universal; it is not limited to biological man (**ROM 8:20-22**). Uploading consciousness digitally does not stop entropy or chaos from occurring in or to the electrons of the system at large. Neither silicon nor electron movement are guaranteed in perpetuity, especially if in an environment of absolute zero temperature.

3.   Spiritual reality is written into the creation and has always been an aspect of human experience. The regenerate have gifted insight and understanding of these things. **1CO 2:13-14.**

        a.   As such, those with biblical hope will not be willing participants in the transhumanist agenda and represent the standing opposition to such an agenda.

        b.   Will the opposition party be allowed to transfer their consciousness to the cloud?

        c.   Will transhumanism's morality demand that its opposition be silenced by whatever means necessary for the greater good of humanity?

4.   Being human is sufficient for God: He became one of us but without sin and solved humanity's problems. **ROM 8:3-4; 2CO 5:21; ROM 4:25.**

        a.   He solved the sin problem which causes death by His own death. **HEB 9:14.**

        b.   He conquered death by His resurrection and extended the victory to us. **1CO 15:20-23.**

        c.   He destroyed Satan by His resurrection to set men free. **HEB 2:14-15.**

        d.   The defects of the present consciousness will not be transferred to Jesus Christ's upload, neither after death nor at the resurrection. **HEB 12:23; REV 21:27.**

        e.   All this was accomplished by a human, not a transhuman or posthuman.

        f.   This Human will judge all humans (and pretended transhumans and posthumans). **ACT 17:31.**

        g.   The Biblical Jesus Christ would likely not be offered the digital upgrade by the transhumanists.

5.   The critical distinction between Transhumanism and Scripture is that man does not become God/gods but God became a man. **JOH 1:14.**

6.   Transhumanists are basically repeating Satan's sermon in **GEN 3:1-6.**

        a.   Death is to be denied, regardless of sin.

        b.   Man who sins will be as gods.

        c.   Immortality exists apart from God.

        d.   Man's fullness is hindered by God.

        e.   Man was not made in the image of God.

G.   Pursuing human betterness is not wrong as long as it doesn't subvert the gospel. Technology may be sought and applied within God's moral framework. **PRO 8:12.**

1.   Artificial limbs, pacemakers, painkillers, life support systems, etc. have their place.

2.   By contrast, aborting and harvesting babies for the benefit of others is wrong.

3.   Some have thought that painblockers for women in childbirth is wrong since it goes against the curse. **GEN 3:16.**

        a.   However, the same reasoning would apply to farmers who sit in air-conditioned tractor cabs pulling tillage implements to control weeds. **GEN 3:17-19.**

        b.   Disease and bodily trauma were also effects of the Fall but that didn't stop Jesus or the apostles from healing sinners.

4.   Because man is made in God's image, we should love neighbor as self and contribute where we can to human betterment of body, mind and soul. **GAL 6:9-10.**

H.   Jesus Christ's overcoming death guarantees the elect a death-free upload of body, soul, spirit. **1TH 5:23-24; 1CO 15:51-55; REV 21:3-4.**