

Morning Sermon, Sunday, 25 November 2012, Dave Gobbett

The Social Network

Thinking Christianly about new media

- Digital Luddites & Digital Natives
- Why this? Why now?

1. **Social Media, the Gospel & Identity**
2. **Social Media, the Gospel & Communication**
3. **Social Media, the Gospel & Community**

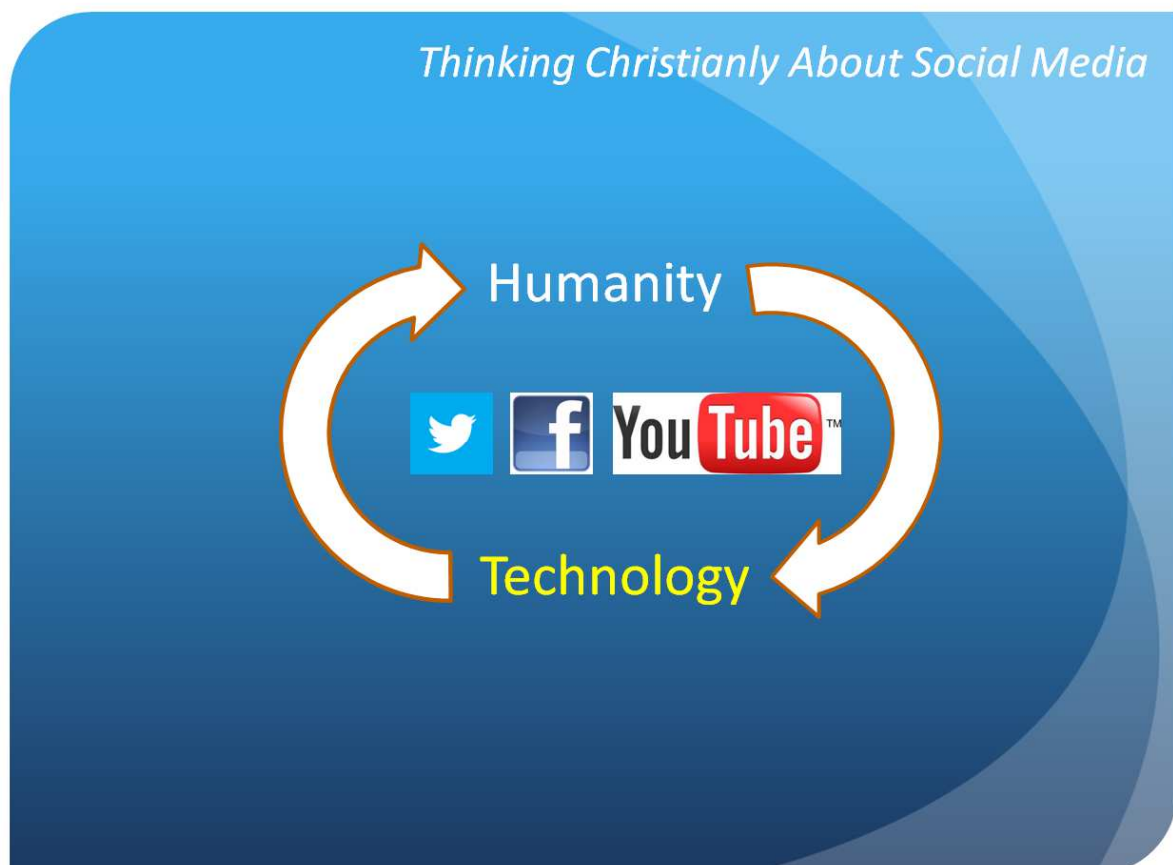
Recommended books for further study:

John Dyer, *From the Garden to the City*

Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows*

Susan Maushart, *The Winter of our Disconnect*

Zadie Smith, 'Generation Why?', (free online)



1. Identity

When a human being becomes a set of data on a website like Facebook, he or she is reduced. Everything shrinks. Individual character. Friendships. Language. Sensibility. In a way it's a transcendent experience, we lose our bodies, our messy feelings, our desires, our fears.'

Zadie Smith, 'Generation Why?'

How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes only from God?

John 5:44

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

The Gospel guarantees my identity, however I perform with Social Media

2. Communication

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.

James 1:19

I have much to write to you, but I do not want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to visit you and talk with you face to face, so that our joy may be complete.

2 John 12

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

John 1:14

The Gospel models to Social Media thoughtful, transparent communication

3. Community

'Facebook solved this problem of getting all your friends in one place, and created the problem of having all your friends in one place.'

Chris Cox, VP Product, Facebook

'The information paradox—the more data we have, the stupider we become—has a social corollary: the more frantically we connect, one to another, the more disconnected our relationships become.'

Susan Maushart, The Winter of Disconnect

'The quality of the connection, the quality of the information that passes through it, the quality of the relationship that connection permits—none of this is important.'

That a lot of social networking software explicitly encourages people to make weak, superficial connections with each other and that this might not be an entirely positive thing, seem to never have occurred to [Zuckerberg].'

Zadie Smith, 'Generation Why'

Gospel Communities show

- Transparency
Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body.
Ephesians 4:25
- Commitment
The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the hand cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!'
1 Corinthians 12:21
- Diversity
There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28
- Physicality
Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
Hebrews 10:25

Make sure your Social Media use extends true Gospel community

Be warned, my son, ... Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.
Ecclesiastes 12:12

'All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands for ever.'
Isaiah 40:6-8