FROM THE IMAGE OF GOD TO "WE ARE GOD": BABEL REVISITED

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Abstract

As was demonstrated at the Tower of Babel, God may choose to intervene in human affairs when humans treat their own knowledge and capabilities as a god, rather than choosing to give glory to the God who enables us. In this paper, we will see that the rise of human capabilities in the modern molecular economy creates the temptation for some to "marvel at an extraordinary participation in our own evolutionary futures." How do we protect ourselves from revisiting Babel – and its consequences – in light of modern and future human technological and scientific development?

Introduction

What an awesome thing it is to consider who we are in the light of our Creator God. How humbling it is to picture ourselves as image bearers of Christ. The greatest wonder of all is that such a God willed some of His earthly creatures to be created in His own image. As heirs of God's image, it seems only natural that we should accept God's First Commandment as an obvious reminder of our place in His family:

> *"And God spoke all these words: 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.'"* (Exodus 20: 1-3 *NIV*)

Yet we know that the human story includes continual attempts to elevate our own status to that which is rightly held only by God. This quest began with the first humans' attempt to claim knowledge that was reserved to God by decree (Gen. 3: 2-7), and continues to this day, as we shall see. Further, it seems that the particular temptation to usurp God's glory applies to some other created beings as well, as demonstrated by Lucifer's fall from grace (e.g. Ezekiel 28: 11-19; Isaiah 14: 12-15).

The temptation for the *created* to ignore the *Creator* and consider himself to be equal to God, or to BE God, has found a voice and a hope in all human generations. In the modern world, the worldview represented by Darwinian evolution and secular humanism has rejoiced in the technological and economic advances that have increasingly glorified human destiny.

This essay will explore briefly the historical struggle against adhering to the First Commandment, culminating in a discussion of the modern manifestation of that struggle. The essay first examines the meaning of the First Commandment. The discussion moves next to the meaning of the First Commandment in light of humans being created in the image of God. Next, historical examples of human self-glorification (self-worship) are discussed. Moving into the modern context, we will then look at the role that Darwinian evolutionary models might play in (falsely) elevating humans above God. Finally, we will discuss the modern economic developments that represent a culmination of humanistic thinking in terms of humanity's diminishing "need" for a god apart from themselves. All in all, in this paper I will explore the interesting evolution of human economic and business progress as it reflects a human quest toward godhood.

The First Commandment

As has been discussed by others in this issue, we recognize the seriousness of God's first commandment given to Moses as the foundation of God's intended relationship with His chosen people. It is, in fact, the foundation of understanding creation. This commandment applies to all people at all times, and upon deep reflection seems an unnecessary command, given the logic of the premise. *Of course* we shall have no other gods besides the one and only God. *Of course* we can place no one and nothing before the God Who has created us!

The reminder in the Commandment as spoken to Moses refers to a specific audience: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery" (Ex. 20:2). We know that, whether or not we are children of Israel, we are indeed children of Abraham (Gal. 3:29), and each of us, through Christ, has been delivered from our own Egypt, our own bondage and slavery to sin. We are to have no other gods besides Jehovah, our Deliverer.

And yet, the experience of humanity has been one of frequent and continuous forays into forgetfulness, laying aside our humility, seeking to be the masters of our own lives and destiny. It has been a rebellious journey, a headlong run toward establishing the godhood of created man. It has been a sad journey from having been created *imago dei* to falsely claiming "we are God". Let us look next at the importance of the *imago dei* in understanding the First Commandment.

Imago dei

Given the hierarchical relationship between humans and the God who created them, it is still very clear from Scripture that humans have been created in the image of God, or *imago dei.* This is especially important for understanding the impact of modern economic evolution on the human condition and, ultimately, on the human understanding of God's role in human affairs. Simply put, the creation account in the Book of Genesis indicates that:

> Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Genesis 1:26-7)

The image of God in man is a major theological premise of Christianity. While stated explicitly in Scripture only a very few times[1], the *imago dei* illustrates the fundamental parent-child relationship that exists between humans and their Creator. The *imago dei* provides a part of the rationale for a motive of redemption on God's part and an explanation for many of the characteristics observed in created man.[2] There are at least three different ways to view this aspect of revelation, including the substantive view, the relational view, and the functional view[3] (see box **Three Perspectives on *Imago dei***).

Three Perspectives on *Imago dei*

Relational view
Man created in the image of God is held by some to mean that *the special relational capabilities that humans possess are especially reflective of the nature of our Creator.* In this relational view, God imparted at the time of creation only to those who bear His image the unique ability to relate to him in presence (pre-fall), thought, prayer, and communion. The relational view of the imago dei thus helps us to understand that God created us to be relational creatures, just as He is relational. And yet our most selfish tendency is to treat our relationships with others as an avenue to self- glorification.

Functional view
A second perspective holds that *God's image is reflected in the things that created man does, especially insofar as man lives and acts according to the divine mandate* (i.e. rule over other creatures, exercise dominion over the earth). Man reflects God's image to the extent that he obeys the very commands of God and exercises dominion over the rest of creation.[4] Those who are called to marketplace ministries are especially attuned to this perspective as it gives meaning and purpose to their God-glorifying work. And yet, when our work becomes a means of self-glorification, or an idol in itself [5], we cease to be co-laborers with God in the ongoing work of creation, as we will see was the case for the builders of the Tower of Babel.

Substantive view
This third perspective of the *imago dei* is particularly helpful in analyzing human nature. From this perspective, *we consider the various attributes or characteristics of God the Creator that are reflected in the human creature*. While few would consider the *physical* make-up of humans to reflect God's own manifestation, humans are more likely to reflect the psychological and spiritual image of their creator.[6] Among these divinely-imparted attributes are a sense of morality, fairness or justice; creativity and innovativeness; reason, intelligence and rationality; efficiency, order, and stewardship; and even love.[7]

The great problem is that, having been created in the image of God, fallen, sinful humans corrupt this image every day. Our relationships – with God, with others, even with ourselves – do not reflect God's image and expectations. Our work and vocations are aimed more at our own glory than at God's glory. Our characteristics reflect more our own self-centeredness than God's image. It is this *imago dei* that God has set about to restore through the redemptive work of Christ. Along the way, however, the human assault on the image of God continues, as in the example of the Tower of Babel. The curious and critical biblical account of the Tower of Babel helps us to see the connection between human work, the image of God, and humans' continuing quest to set themselves up beside/before God, contrary to the First Commandment.

Tower of Babel[8]

Genesis 11 contains for us the postdiluvian account of the people in the Plain of Shinar. After the flood, this enterprising people employed technological innovations to build a city, and the great Tower:

> They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth." (Gen. 11:3-4).

This effort, in and of itself is not problematic, of course. In fact, such enterprise can be a great use of God's gifts and provision. Nonetheless, God judged their efforts to be sinful, and He thwarted their project through confusion of language and scattering of the people (Gen. 11:6-8). We do not know the specific mechanisms by which this confusion and scattering were accomplished, but we do know that the people "stopped building the city" (Gen. 11:8).

Why did God interfere with their work? Why was the building of this tower judged to be sinful? We are not provided with the entirety of this people's thinking, and motivations. We do know, however, that our efforts should always be aimed at declaring God's glory. In the case of Babel, God understood their hearts, and their motives. Their efforts were aimed at building a Tower that "reaches the heavens" and their purpose was to "make a name for ourselves." It is likely that the builders were seeking their own glory, at the expense of God's rightful claims to recognition for His provision. And this so soon after God's deliverance of their Noahic ancestors. Hodge suggests

that construction on the Tower began slightly more than 100 years (or four generations) after the flood[9], although it may have been later to allow for sufficient population and technology to build cities and towers.

Did the people who remained, and grew, after the Great Flood usurp God's glory? Did they intend to set themselves up before – or besides – God? Is this one of the first great acts of technology and enterprise leading humans to believe that they could reach the heavens (or heaven, or glory) by their own effort? As John T. Strong states,

> …when the humans state that their motive for building the city and the tall tower is "to make a name for ourselves" (Gen 11:4…), it would be clear to an ancient reader that the humans were defacing the image of God and were, in essence, scratching off the name of God and replacing it with their own name. This was not a neutral act, though this may be lost on modern readers; it was an act of h[u]bris. (p. 632)[10]

That is, Strong is suggesting that the act of building the city and the tower was born out of the peoples' hubris and self-glorifying aspirations. Because they were the embodiment of God's image, to set up a monument to themselves was to replace God's image with their own. God understood their motives, and worked to intervene in such a way that future efforts at idolatry would be hampered. Strong also suggests that there is a connection between God's expectations of those created in His image (on the one hand) and His intervention at the Tower of Babel (on the other hand):

> The story of the tower of Babel, then, narrates the tale of the humans in essence scratching the name of Yahweh off of his boundary stele [inscription-bearing monument] and writing their own name in its stead. God came down, saw what was going on, and shattered his own stele, that is to say, shattered his own image. It had been defiled. Indeed, God's image, humankind, acted with h[u]bris, seeking the place of God. Whether one wants to call it punishment or, more neutrally, a countermove on the part of God, in any case the scattering of humankind was the narrative equivalent of shattering the image of God.[11]

As we have seen, humans seek to create (and thus control) gods, cut God out of the picture, or become gods or god-like. But we will turn now to the modern era in which our own struggles with the First Commandment are more familiar, especially as technological and economic advances make building our own Tower of Babel more tempting.

Modern Economic Ages

Those who labor in the modern arena of business and economics do so in the context of three separate but overlapping "economies." In this case, any new economy refers to the business and marketplace opportunities that are made possible by a specific set of scientific and technological discoveries. History tells of many of these "ages," including (but not limited to):

> Stone Age – early humans up to approx. 3500 B.C.
> Bronze Age – approx. 3500 B.C. – 1200 B.C.
> Iron Age – approx. 1200 B.C. – 700 A.D.
> Agrarian Age – approx. 700 A.D. – 1750 A.D.
> **Industrial Age – approx. 1750 A.D. – present**
> **Information Age – approx. 1950 A.D. – present**
> **Molecular Age – approx. 1970s to present**

It is the last three overlapping economies with which we are concerned here. This approach is useful in allowing us to explore how the most recent, emerging economic age presents special temptations in terms of the First Commandment. We will call this new economic age, which beginning at approx. 1970, the Molecular Age, or Molecular Economy. As elaborated below, the Molecular Age is defined as "an economy based on the commercialization of scientific and technological breakthroughs at the molecular level."[12] Before exploring this new economic age and its implications for understanding the First Commandment, we note that Meyer and Davis also presented, more broadly, the essence of any economy to be the collection of institutions by which "resources are used to fulfill desires."[13]

Resources, Desires, and Idols

Businesses operate and succeed (or fail) in the context of how well they use available resources – and the means they create – to fulfill desires (meet demand). Naturally, economies change over time because resources change, and desires change. The ability humans have had to "fulfill desires" changed dramatically over time as scientific and technological discoveries allowed newly-accessible materials and resources to be employed in meeting human needs (see box **Materials and Resources in Successive Economic Ages**).

The "modern" resources in each of these various ages solved problems, met needs, and fulfilled desires in new ways. While most human needs are natural and universal – e.g. those represented by Maslow's hierarchy – human desires are (to some extent) subject to the whims of culture, social norms, fad, and fashion. Philosopher James K. A. Smith reminds us that, natural or not, there are right desires and wrong desires.[14] There are desires that represent the Kingdom of God, and desires that represent the kingdom of self. Some of our desires reflect God's image and mind, and some reflect our pursuit of self-glory, as was the case with the Tower of Babel. Smith notes that,

Materials and Resources in Successive Economic Ages

The evolution of human engineering as it relates to problem-solving through resource employment:

Stone Age	Stone, brick, wood
Bronze Age	Bronze, copper, tin
Iron Age	Iron, nickel
Agrarian Age	Agricultural techniques and tools
Industrial Age	Steam, electricity, oil, steel
Information Age	Silicon, semiconductors, software

"We are what we love, and our love is shaped, primed, and aimed at liturgical practices that take hold of our gut and aim our heart to certain ends."[15] In other words, humans are created in the image of God, and as such they are loving creatures. Humans desire what they love, and what they love is a reflection of what is in their hearts. Smith further makes the point that the human heart, and its attendant loves and desires, can change, for both better and for worse. It is these desires that are the great concern of the First Commandment.

The Molecular Economy and the Road to Babel

In the modern world, and the modern marketplace, our desires, loves, needs, are fulfilled by means of resources developed in the Industrial, Information, and Molecular economies. It is likely that most of us work or serve in some organization, vocation, or role that has been created through the advancements of industrial, information, and molecular technologies. We can better understand the evolutionary development of a specific "economy" according to the following sequence of events:

Scientific Discovery →
Technological Development →
Business Distribution →
Organizational Extension

That is, a new economic age can emerge from major scientific discoveries that are successfully developed into technological innovations. These innovations impact the lives of people through business and commercial distribution efforts, and the life cycle of the economy is extended through efficiency-inducing organizational efforts (e.g. consolidation, consulting, reorganization, etc.). In this context, three modern economies may be differentiated:

The Industrial Economy

The industrial economy arose in the late 18th century from the exciting discoveries spurred by Enlightenment thinkers, scientists, and explorers. The major catalyst for this economic explosion was the discovery of methods for storing, directing, and utilizing steam to power activities that previously required human or animal power. Steam power changed the world, including business and manufacturing opportunities and methods.[16] At the same time, discoveries in the electrical sciences led to the ability to capture, store, distribute, and generate power from electricity, further feeding the economic expansion from industrial resources. Add to these innovations the discovery of the potential of oil and steel, and we can see the amazing amount and level of resources that were added to the quest to meet humanity's needs and fulfill their desires.

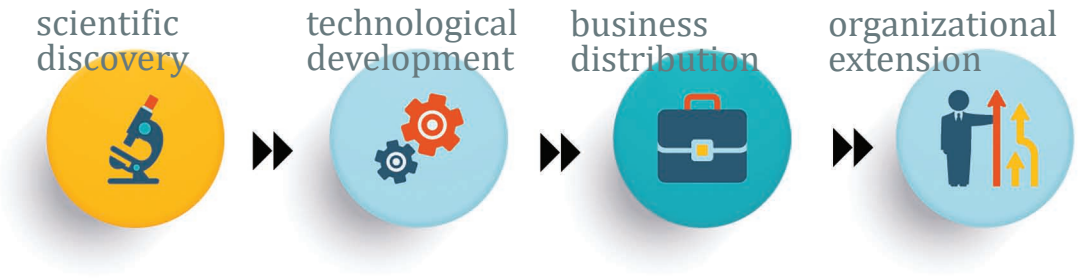
While much can be (and has been) written on the impact of the industrial age on human desires, relationships, and life[17], our focus in this paper is on the impact of the molecular economy, so we will reserve that analysis. However, we can note that the Industrial Economy has had an especially significant impact on one specific element of the human experience – physical work. Industrial Economy discoveries and innovations have created opportunities to exploit the power and strength of natural resources in ways rarely imagined.[18] The work necessary for humans to have their needs met and desires fulfilled was suddenly shifted from existing technologies – human labor, domesticated animals, rudimentary Agricultural Age tools and machinery – to extracted, directed, and concentrated natural resources. We cannot overestimate the importance of this shifting of physical work to natural resources. The human condition was made better in many ways, even if the costs have proven to be high.[19] Fulfillment of human desires and needs was suddenly possible in greater volume and at lower costs for most people, at least in the Western world.

It is easy to imagine the excitement felt by many at the marvel of human industrial capability.[20] Yet if humans began in this age of Darwin, invention, and discovery to elevate their self-estimation, they had not yet reached the point of building towers to heaven. And at maturity stage of the Industrial Economy, we encounter the advent of the Information Economy that would have an equally astounding impact on the human condition, but for a very different reason.

The Information Economy

The information economy arose in the mid-20th century from innovations and discoveries related to electronics, information theory, and silicon semiconductors.[21] These advances created a new ability to translate human ideas into storable, retrievable electrical and electronic signals.

ECONOMIC EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT



We are better acquainted with the machines with which we interact, manifest as hardware and software. The evolution of Information Economy resources has led to development of computers, supercomputers, personal computers, the World Wide Web (internet), smartphones, and every other tool and device that uses input from these technologies to communicate and distribute information.

With regard to the impact of Information Economy advances in general society, information resources are readily available to solve problems, meet needs, and fulfill desires. Modern societies have so much information available that it has been commoditized. Information resources and technologies have made it possible for all elements of society to be connected in ways previously unimagined. And just as we saw that Industrial Economy advances transferred physical work to machines and other resources, Information Economy advances have transferred much of human work to machines and information resources. But in this case, the work that has been transferred is mental and cognitive work. This is a significant advance in the human experience. Information Economy resources provide calculations and simulations, store data and other information sources, and facilitate research processes. Much of the mental and cognitive work that previously had to be performed by individuals, or facilitated through interaction with far-flung written sources, can now be transferred to Information Economy resources. The combined impact of Industrial and Information Economy technologies and discoveries has been to transfer human physical and mental work to machines and other resources. Human desires and needs are both easier to fulfill, and turned toward new horizons, now possible through human flourishing. And still, the greatest danger of revisiting Babel remains in the impact of the Molecular Economy, as we now discuss.

> If Industrial Economy advances impacted human physical work, and Information Economy advances impacted human cognitive work, the most profoundly hopeful outcome of Molecular Economy advances for secular humanists is the impact they will have on human evolutionary work.

The Molecular Economy

As we have noted earlier, the Molecular Economy has arisen from scientific and technological breakthroughs at the molecular level.[22] These breakthroughs were born in the 1950s, with the discovery and definition of the DNA molecule by Watson and Crick. But the real acceleration of the Molecular Economy occurred through advances in biotechnology, miniaturization, microscopy capabilities, and the application of these advances to nanotechnologies and genetics research. Much of this work was begun in the 1980s and 1990s, and the successful mapping of human genome through the efforts of the Human Genome Project in 2003 represents a defining moment in the growth stage of the Molecular Economy. The evolution from Science-to-Technology-to-Business-to-Organization finds us in the midst of amazing scientific discoveries, such as genetics and the biosciences, and promising technological developments related to those discoveries, such as genetic testing, nanotechnology, and bioengineering. What remains to be developed, then, are the business and commercial

distribution opportunities that take advantage of new Molecular Economy resources and capabilities.

Human problems can be solved, and human needs and desires are fulfilled in new ways through the resources and capabilities created in the Molecular Economy. This, of course, is a good thing. Recall, however, that we have said that new economies impact not only resources, but also desires. Human needs are fairly stable, but human *desires* are affected by what is possible. The Industrial Economy eliminated much of the physical work that humans and animals needed to perform, transferring this work to industrially-powered machines. This transference allowed humans to focus more of their efforts on high-value mental and cognitive work. Later, the Information Economy eliminated much of the mental and cognitive work required of humans, transferring this work to information-processing machines and systems. It is not yet entirely clear what this alleviation of time and effort promises for humans. It is possible that human effort may now turn to more existential and aesthetic desires. Human needs haven't changed, but it is a fact that daily life is easier in today's Industrial-Information-Molecular Age than it was 200 years ago. As the new Molecular Economy continues to increasingly impact available resources and capabilities, what will humans desire, and how will it affect the human experience as the image of God?

The real danger of the Molecular Economy is in the false hope that it provides to those who seek human glory. Even through the grind of daily life, humans are better able to meet physical and cognitive needs than at any point in human history. That being the case, human desires naturally turn to that which is made possible through the new Molecular Economy. There is a temptation to seek solutions to existential problems in these new capabilities. What do these discoveries offer for human life? Longevity? Beauty? Perfection?

Consider two dynamics related to the rise of Molecular Economy capabilities. First, note that the rise of the Industrial Age established businesses and corporations as the most significant, dominant social institutions in the Western world, especially with the evolution of the capitalist, consumeristic societies of the late 19th and 20th centuries. As a consequence, businesses and corporations have had a dominant role in establishing and influencing social values (typically for their own benefit) for over 100 years.

In the new Molecular Economy, however, there is evidence that there will be a shift in the dominant social institutions that significantly influence social values and rhetoric. Because of the possibilities that molecular science and technology seem to offer, humans may shift in their desires toward the new influence flowing from the healthcare field. It is possible, even likely, that healthcare organizations will become the dominant social institutions in the Molecular Economy. In the United States, healthcare expenditures represented 17.7% of GDP in 2014, up from 12% a decade earlier, and this number is expected to rise to 20% of GDP by 2025.[23] This is not simply a reflection of rising healthcare costs and a somewhat dysfunctional healthcare system. It is also a reflection of the buffet of health-related opportunities being created through Molecular Economy discoveries. Such a powerful presence (20% of GDP) is indicative of a likely dominant social institution.

> The intersection of Molecular Economy capabilities; shifting values and desires related to emerging Molecular Economy institutions; and social pressures toward Darwinian secular humanism – are leading to a new corruption and defilement of the imago dei that threatens the world as we know it, just as the world of the Babel Tower builders was shattered.

Genetic, biological, and medical resources/capabilities have increased human longevity, and have increased what is possible in terms of human health and well-being. In other words, it is not just the quantity (longevity) of life that is being affected, but also the quality of life. Molecular Economy-fueled healthcare organizations are not simply healing people from medical afflictions – that is, fixing what is broken – but they are also redefining what it means to be "healthy". While hospitals will always remain essential institutions (remember, needs don't change much), healthcare organizations will become "health and life care" organizations. They will move from sustaining life and health to re-defining the quality of life in terms of the new resources and possibilities created in the Molecular Economy. As the new dominant social institutions, Life-care organizations will be able to control the conversation surrounding the meaning and value of life. How will beauty be defined? What will be acceptable physical imperfections? What is a "quality" human life? How will

these changes influence human desires? How will they influence the image of God in humans?

The second dynamic is the excitement that Molecular Economy changes bring to the Darwinian, secular humanist camp. If Industrial Economy advances impacted human *physical* work, and Information Economy advances impacted human *cognitive* work, the most profoundly hopeful outcome of Molecular Economy advances for secular humanists is the impact they will have on human *evolutionary* work.[24] The Molecular Economy capacity to better understand, and even to manipulate, genetic and other biological materials raises obvious ethical challenges.[25] But for those whose worldview is centered around evolutionary forces of natural selection, the ability to have any influence over genetic processes represents an opportunity to influence the evolution of the species.[26] There is much work ahead as the Molecular Economy unfolds, and the genetic technologies that exist are limited. For example, there is no evidence that any successful human cloning has yet occurred. However, the ability to significantly influence human genetics at the embryonic level seems not far off. This trajectory is an especially exciting one for secular humanists who have understood the human experience to be one subject to random, uncaring evolutionary forces over which humans have no control.

Meyer and Davis, in their exuberance over the emergence of the Molecular Economy, celebrate the newfound control humans will have over evolution through genetic manipulation. They encourage us to "marvel at an extraordinary participation in our own evolutionary futures."[27] They wonder if, given Molecular Economy capabilities:

> …might not humans evolve forms more intelligent than themselves? We believe the apes did it. Aren't we at least as capable as they were of such creative, connective evolution? Of course, we may be more capable of stopping it but what would be the ethics of that?[28]

Molecular Economy businesses will have a significant role in guiding the conversations about the meaning and definition of modern life, and in shaping values and desires. Such conversations are not likely to focus on God as the center of life. Rather, the ability to impact "our own evolutionary futures" changes the narrative to one in which humans play the central role. On this trajectory, we move closer to building a foundation for a new Tower of Babel.

Since the age of Darwinian ideas began – in the midst of the Industrial Economy – followers of Darwin have had two major intellectual problems in building the new Tower of Babel. The first is on the front end of the evolutionary process – the origins of life. Noted Darwinian apologist Richard Dawkins states that, "Although atheism might have been logically tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist."[29] Noted evolutionary biologist Francisco Ayala claims that Darwin's greatest achievement was to show that "the directive organization of living beings can be explained as the result of a natural process, natural selection, without any need to resort to a Creator or other external agent."[30] Dembski and Wells respond to Ayala's claim, pointing out that, "…Darwin…left out the one thing that most needed to be explained, namely, how blind material forces could organize the first cell. An intellectually fulfilled atheist must answer this question satisfactorily."[31]

While debate remains over whether Darwinian theory can account for the origins of life, the problem on the back end of the evolutionary cycle seems more within reach, at least as far as secular humanists are concerned. As Molecular Economy capabilities advance, humans may indeed have more control over genetic and biological manipulations. Meyer and Davis point out that, "Living cells have been assembling the products and by-products of life, without external manipulation, for billions of years."[32] With the advent of Molecular Economy capabilities, however, humans have a better capacity to define and shape life according to intentional selection, as opposed to random natural selection. Again Meyer and Davis weigh in, "If we can see and touch molecules, the next step in extracting value is to assess whether manipulation – whether by man or molecule – has achieved a desired result."[33]

What is that desired result? That depends on how Molecular Economy institutions define the meaning and value of life. According to Meyer and Davis, "We are not trying to settle the definition of life, only to point out that it, like our other ethical concepts, [is] about to evolve."[34] But (from this perspective) the great glory, the great crowning achievement of humanity is the god-like capacity we have to influence these outcomes, these desired results. While "…it is evolution…that is in charge… we have a unique ability to consciously intervene in evolutionary processes."[35] "At the molecular level…the barriers between the born and the made are vanishing."[36] In other words, there is no small amount of excitement at the prospect that the Molecular Economy allows some to claim, finally, that "We are God."

Babel Revisited

The impact of Molecular Economy advances is valuable for all people, and there is legitimate reason to be excited about what God has allowed through these breakthroughs in human understanding. God's mercy and grace toward His image bearers is seen in the scientific and technological advances to which He leads us. But humans have a sad history of defiling God's image within us by usurping His glory for ourselves. Just as God punitively thwarted the self-glorifying efforts of the tower builders in the Plains of Shinar, so we must wonder whether the shifting human desires and actions in the midst of the Molecular Economy will bring catastrophic judgment. Will human efforts be

increasingly aimed at replacing the Creator God with genetic manipulations foolishly aimed at influencing human evolution? Has human progress in the Molecular Economy become the god we are warned to not place before/beside God in the First Commandment?

As noted earlier, humans created in the image of God are relationally, functionally, and characteristically like the God Who created them. It is the author's belief that the intersection of three forces discussed here – Molecular Economy capabilities; shifting values and desires related to emerging Molecular Economy institutions; and social pressures toward Darwinian secular humanism – are leading to a new corruption and defilement of the *imago dei* that threatens the world as we know it, just as the world of the Babel Tower builders was shattered. Most obviously, the functional, co-laboring element of the *imago dei* is threatened as Molecular Economy societies work against God's designs to create humans in their own image, according to their own devices. Have human desires changed irreversibly with the capabilities of the new economy?

Conclusion and Implications

This paper presents a cautionary tale about the First Commandment implications of emerging Molecular Economy resources and capabilities. The builders of the ill-fated Tower of Babel sought to replace God's glory and image with their own glory and image, in clear violation of the injunction against setting up anyone or anything before the Creator God. While human economic and social development has marched on since that time, we find ourselves at the advent of a new economic age – the Molecular Economy. In this age, scientific discovery and technological development are increasingly enabling humans to redefine and impact life at the genetic and molecular level. Many people see this as a glorious opportunity to, once and for all, eliminate the "need" for God in the human narrative. They also arrogantly see it as the first steps in the establishment of human control over biological evolutionary forces. Will such a perspective become the norm in culture, society, and business? Are we soon to see God's judgment, or is there yet time to rightly direct the path from science to technology to business to organization? Is there yet time to intervene in the emerging conversations related to the meaning and value of life?

Practical Implications – What shall we do now?

If we accept that technological and scientific discovery and advancement is a blessing from God, in and of itself, then business people should be committed to supporting and advancing this good work. However, in the case that such discovery tempts us to promote our own glory, certain precautions may be in order:

Become a part of the conversation

Molecular Economy advances create previously unimaginable opportunities. Christian perspectives must be part of the conversations that emerge related to these opportunities. There are already emerging debates over how genetic advancement should be pursued and employed.[37] Believers must maintain a seat at the table, delivering credible contributions and wisdom to the conversations about how best to incorporate new discoveries into society and the marketplace. We must be informed, relevant, and distinctive in our contributions. Christian, scientists, philosophers, theologians, manufacturers, financiers, doctors, teachers, marketers, and others must all be a part of these conversations.

Glory to God

As human innovation unlocks ever-deeper genetic knowledge, we must never miss an opportunity to point to the true Source of our discoveries and advancements. The temptation to declare ourselves (humans) as the true gods of science and nature will produce scientific and medical heroes. The participation of believers in the molecular marketplace provides the best opportunities to declare God's glory with each advancement.

Guard your hearts

If, in fact, advancements in molecular, genetic, and medical sciences lead an increasingly secular society to glorify human achievement, those of us in the Christian community must guard our hearts to avoid being swept along in the tide of adulation. There is no God but Yahweh, and He alone directs our paths. However powerful STEM advancements make us feel, we must guard against the temptation to ignore God's role in our discoveries. Whatever the molecular economy brings – good and bad, great and terrible – we must have no other gods besides Him.

About the Author

Richard J. Martinez is Professor of Management and MBA Program Director at Oklahoma Baptist University. He has written and published on strategic management, the integration of faith and learning, and Christian business education. His work has been published in *Journal of Management*, *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business*, *Christian Scholars Review*, *Christian Business Academy Review*, as well as other journals. Rick and his wife, Peggy, reside in Shawnee, Oklahoma.