



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on March 29, 2025

## Christian Revival: Is (Once?) Woke Silicon Valley Coming to Jesus?

When it was alleged in 2023 that the message “Jesus died so you could live” was labeled “hate speech” by Facebook, it perhaps was [not surprising](#). Two years later, however, something else surely is.

Christian code has entered Silicon Valley, we hear, and may be supplanting its notoriously secular programming. Apparently, man does not live by bits and bytes alone.

Yet how sincere is this movement? And will it really eradicate the woke mind virus? Or will it reflect what Barna Group research company president David Kinnaman lamented a decade ago? To wit: “Americans’ dedication to Jesus is, in most cases,” he [said](#), “a mile wide and an inch deep.”



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### Is This the *Twilight Zone*? Or, Are We Emerging From It?

*Vanity Fair* introduces the story in its April issue. In an essay titled “Christianity Was ‘Borderline Illegal’ in Silicon Valley. Now It’s the New Religion,” its Zoë Bernard [writes](#):

[There] was a time not so very long ago, mostly in the 2010s, when Silicon Valley cultivated a stance of pointed hostility not only toward conservatism but to the Protestant doctrines that underpin much of American life. But no more. Christianity is now an object of fascination to the libertarian capitalists of the tech world.

Website Wired provided some details on this movement on March 14, [informing](#) that these tech titans are

promoting a new moral vision for the tech industry, in which job choices and other decisions are guided not by the pursuit of wealth, but according to Christian values and Western cultural frameworks.

At an event in San Francisco last week hosted in a former church, Trae Stephens, cofounder of the defense contractor Anduril and a partner at the Peter Thiel-led venture capital firm Founders Fund, characterized the idea as the pursuit of “good quests” or careers that make the future better, a concept that he said has theological underpinnings.

“I’m literally an arms dealer,” Stephens said at one point, prompting laughter from the crowd of roughly 200 people, which included Y Combinator CEO Garry Tan. “I don’t think all of you should be arms dealers, but that’s a pretty unique calling.”



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The hour-long discussion was part of a series of ticketed gatherings organized by ACTS 17 Collective, a nonprofit founded last year by Stephens' wife, health care startup executive Michelle Stephens. The group, whose name is an acronym that stands for "Acknowledging Christ in Technology and Society," is on a mission to "redefine success for those that define culture," she says.

## Meaning Over Mammon

Michelle believes she's responding to a need — if not a craving. Tech workers are typically ensconced in the worldly, defining success in terms of pocketbook and power. This often leaves them with a sense of meaninglessness, so Michelle renders a prescription. "[S]uccess can [instead] be defined as loving God, myself, and others," she says.

That certainly is an ethereal message. And since, as she correctly said, tech bigwigs "define culture," they can do much to re-popularize a faith wrongly impugned. Yet there is an issue: Are these "converts" sincere?

And what, *exactly*, are they sincere about?

As *The Atlantic* related Thursday, [citing](#) the *Vanity Fair* essay:

Bernard's article makes clear that some converts are cynical characters merely pretending at Christianity. "I guarantee you there are people that are leveraging Christianity to get closer to Peter Thiel," one entrepreneur told Bernard. But even if a significant proportion of the new believers are entirely sincere, that doesn't mean their theology is copacetic. Christianity, they ought to know, is not a life hack: It's a life-upending surrender to the fact of divine love.

## Designer Religion

*The Atlantic* then states that this Silicon Valley Christianity is infected with a certain virus: the "prosperity gospel." This essentially promises that "moral" rectitude will be rewarded with riches. And then there's also the following, from the *Wired* article again, quoting Michelle Stephens:

"Folks were coming up to us saying things like 'I didn't know Peter [Thiel] is a Christian,' 'How can you be gay and a billionaire and be Christian?,' 'I didn't know you could be smart and a Christian....'"

Of course, something jumps out in the above: No Christian denomination has ever defined being smart as sinful...

Joking aside, the problem with too many faith movements today is that they reflect what someone close to my heart once called "designer religion." To illustrate the point, note that *The Atlantic* and *Wired* articles enthusiastically mention the virtue "Love." But there's one word conspicuously absent from both: *Truth*.

Yet this is what religious exploration — and the Christian journey, of course — is all about. The goal is to find Truth and *conform your life to it*. The designer theist does the opposite: He says, essentially, "This is the lifestyle I want to live."



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“Let me find a ‘religion’ that accommodates it.”

The reason why is obvious. Conforming to Truth can be difficult. It requires relinquishing sins we may be attached to, so attached we may even call them “lifestyle choices.” This requirement is reflected in the Gospels, of course. In Matthew 19:21, Jesus told a young man, inordinately attached to his wealth, to give all his possessions away and follow Him. In John 8:3-11, Jesus showed mercy to a woman guilty of sexual transgressions. But He also instructed, “Go and sin no more.”

## Truth Is Not a Creature of Consensus

It is God, too, and God alone, who decides what sin is — not us. And God’s moderation is often man’s extremism. A virtue doesn’t cease to be a virtue because it loses a popular vote.

To this, the orthodox may hear, “Love is all that matters!” or “You’re a hater!” (Note: The pagan Romans called the early Christians “haters,” too — “of humanity.”) This brings to mind a story related by theologian Scott Hahn.

One day he was sitting down with a Muslim and debating the nature of God’s love. Illustrating his perspective, the Muslim said, “I love my dog. But if I move into a housing complex that does not allow dogs, I will kill my dog.”

Hahn said, after telling the anecdote, “With love like that, who needs hate!”

The point is that we all agree on the importance of love; that aspect of it is a settled issue. There are, after all, no protesters angrily demonstrating and waving placards stating, “Down with love!” But what constitutes truly loving behavior?

Ah, that’s the sticking point.

It’s also where Truth comes into play. We all have “feelings” about what’s loving. But Truth tells us when we’re actually being loving — as defined by God — and when we’re just fooling ourselves.

## Christianity *Light*

It should be a given that a Christian would be loving *and* Truth-oriented. Alas, this is not so. Just consider 2002 Barna Group [research showing](#) that only *nine percent* of “born again” teens believe in objective morality (Truth). This was better than the figure for “non-born again teens” — but only by five points.

So Silicon Valley’s Christians and others should note: Being born again isn’t a terminus. It’s a beginning. As a clergyman once put it to me years ago, “Everyone is in a different stage of conversion.” (“Conversion” meaning, “turning from oneself and to God.”) Making this turn certainly involves grasping Truth’s existence, too. And I delve into the arguments for it [here](#) and [here](#), among other places.

The irony is that, as I explained in [2010](#), moral relativism renders the sacrifice on the cross incomprehensible. After all, Jesus never said that His blood would be shed, for you and for many, “so that opinions may be forgiven.”



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