

would happen if even a fifth of the roughly half-million men who kneeled, held hands and embraced men of other races and classes took to heart the injunction to be their brother's keeper?

Today's Christian right is only one feature of the current great awakening; it may soon decline, as did such earlier episodes of moralist politics as the Prohibition crusade. But the sentiment that both the Promise Keepers and the Call to Renewal represent is with us to stay. American political culture was formed around a perfectionist dream; inside and outside churches, the intermingled desire for both virtuous citizens and a virtuous public sphere continues to motivate a good deal of political engagement. The only way that secular writers and activists can influence this debate is to acknowledge that a spiritual worldview can help bring about a better world. The "Cry for Renewal" puts it well: "The question is not whether religious faith should make a political contribution, but how.... At stake is not just politics, but the meaning of faith itself."

That might provide the basis on which humanists and believers on the left can speak and work together instead of struggling apart.

We really do share the same elementary values—the desire for a greater equality of results, tolerance for cultural diversity and a society based more on cooperation than competition. Fortunately, we are not divided, like our adversaries on the right, between worshipers of self-interest and exponents of coercive community. But all progressives could use a large dose of humility. None of us, secular or pious, have managed to present a coherent, stirring alternative to the Gingrichite right and the Clintonian center.

We might begin by embracing the self-evident truth: An overwhelming majority of Americans draw on both rational and spiritual modes of explanation. This is no less true of political activists. In one of the most moving speeches in American history, Martin Luther King Jr. quoted from the book of Isaiah to imagine a non-racist society ("I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted... and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together"). The bashing of religious faith serves neither our democratic principles nor the practical need to build a culturally inclusive mass movement. It is a habit from which secularists on the left should free themselves, at last. ■

GET REAL! A MANIFESTO FROM A NEW GENERATION OF CULTURAL CRITICS, TECHNOREALISM

The New York Times recently launched a new technology section with an ad campaign that asked: *Are you a technophile or a technophobe? As far as we can tell we're neither—or maybe both. And we're not alone. Although most commentary about the Internet and other innovations is replete with either breathless hype or doomsday talk, a silent majority finds such extremism inconsistent with its own experience and beliefs. At least, that's the claim made by those giving this perspective a name: technorealism.*

Technorealism is a more nuanced way to think about the changes occurring due to the rise of the microchip, the digital bit and interactive networks. Among other things, it seeks to puncture some of the prevailing myths of this so-called information age—like the canard that technology can solve all market problems (such as inequality and monopoly), or the reciprocal claim that markets can solve all technology problems (such as protecting privacy and insuring universal access). Technorealism rests on a collection of shared principles, as set forth below by a new generation of cultural critics. We admire their document's public-interest pragmatism and are especially fond of its claim that public debate about new technologies must be politicized. Maybe we've been technorealists all along. Maybe you're one, too. —The Editors

TECHNOREALISM: AN OVERVIEW

In this heady age of rapid technological change, we all struggle to maintain our bearings. The developments that unfold each day in communications and computing can be thrilling and disorienting. One understandable reaction is to wonder: Are these changes good or bad? Should we welcome or fear them?

The answer is both. Technology is making life more convenient

and enjoyable, and many of us healthier, wealthier and wiser. But it is also affecting work, family and the economy in unpredictable ways, introducing new forms of tension and distraction, and posing new threats to the cohesion of our physical communities.

Despite the complicated and often contradictory implications of technology, the conventional wisdom is woefully simplistic. Pundits, politicians and self-appointed visionaries do us a disservice when they try to reduce these complexities to breathless tales of either high-tech doom or cyber-elation. Such polarized thinking leads to dashed hopes and unnecessary anxiety, and prevents us from understanding our own culture.

Over the past few years, even as the debate over technology has been dominated by the louder voices at the extremes, a new, more balanced consensus has quietly taken shape. This document seeks to articulate some of the shared beliefs behind that consensus, which we have come to call technorealism.

Technorealism demands that we think critically about the role that tools and interfaces play in human evolution and everyday life. Integral to this perspective is our understanding that the current tide of technological transformation, while important and powerful, is actually a continuation of waves of change that have taken place throughout history. Looking, for example, at the history of the automobile, the television or the telephone—not just the devices but the institutions they became—we see profound benefits as well as substantial costs. Similarly, we anticipate mixed blessings from today's emerging technologies, and expect to forever be on guard for unexpected consequences—which must be addressed by thoughtful design and appropriate use.

As technorealists, we seek to expand the fertile middle ground between techno-utopianism and neo-Luddism. We are technology