

I Love My Church A Vision Sermon

[INTRODUCTION]



Go with me, if you will, to the year 2054.

Imagine yourself traveling through the great city of Los Angeles. What do you see? What kind of vehicle are you in? Do we finally have flying cars? Is your flying taxi driven by a life-like robot or a genetically-enhanced human?

What sort of city infrastructure do you see below? What's the food and water situation like? Do you see the beautiful Southern California sunshine or a densely polluted grey sky? Is the future one of blissful balance or disorderly chaos? Or has California fallen into the ocean altogether?

In 1982, 37 years ago now, director Ridley Scott portrayed his own imagination of what the Los Angeles of the future would look like in the year 2019, in his all-time Sci-fi classic *Blade Runner*. He and other science fiction visionaries of the time clearly imagined the future as a sort of functional dystopia. Harrison Ford's character is a contract killer hired to track down bioengineered beings and kill them under the auspices of the survival of the planet.

But *Blade Runner* got it wrong. The year 2019 is here. Los Angeles and the Western world as we know them are certainly no dystopia. We live in a veritable *utopia*. Certainly there are problems, but we live as though we have an unlimited supply of resources—an abundance the world has never known. Fresh fruit, vegetables, and groceries of any kind are a short drive or click away.

Infinity is in our pockets. In the 90s we had this thing called "boredom." Some of you remember those days. Today we don't have to wait for anything. Instant gratification and mindless distraction are always on tap. We've lost wonder and stopped wondering. Siri, Alexa, and Google are here to answer our every whim. We can hardly remember a time when all of knowledge was not literally within our grasp.

Pew Research Center says as many as one-third of millennials are walking away from the Church. Yet they're not walking away. They're hailing an Uber to an exquisite brunch. The biggest threat to Church in the Western world is not dystopia. It's utopia. It's Fortnite and Instagram. It's craft beer and grass-fed beef burgers. It's quick-and-easy everywhere and enjoyment on demand. Yet, these are cheap substitutes for authentic connection and moving mirages of satisfaction.

And this is exactly why I love my church.

Let me give you three reasons I think the local church offers an unparalleled resource of real hope to our hopelessly distracted modern world.

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