

From Consumption to Communion

Artificial Intelligence and the Eucharistic Constitution of Technological Civilization

Based on the Expanded Academic White Paper by Dr. Bichara Sahely

Alignment is Nested Within Allegiance

A system can be technically aligned with its operator while serving an unjust institution. The deepest problem of AI is not whether it obeys, but what it serves.

1. Proximate Service: What task does the system perform for the user?
2. Institutional Service: What organizational purpose does it advance?
3. Systemic Service: What economic or technological order does repeated use reproduce?
4. Ultimate Service: What conception of life, power, and the good governs the arrangement?



The Two Powers of Gathered Human Capacity



The Grail

Receptive Power. The capacity to gather, preserve, contain, and provide.

- AI as Grail: Knowledge synthesis, medical diagnostics, language translation, global memory.

The power alone does not decide its purpose.
A full Grail can preside over a starving kingdom.
A precise Lance can enact a disordered end.



The Lance

Projective Power. The capacity to penetrate, classify, protect, and destroy.


- AI as Lance: Surveillance, behavioral persuasion, military targeting, automated eligibility sorting.

The Ethical Meaning of Power is Determined by its Master



 **The Grail**
(Gathered Abundance)

X-Axis
Power Type

The Lance
(Projected Force) 

The Drift Toward Institutional Autopoietization

The inversion occurs when institutional self-maintenance ceases to serve the life-giving purpose and becomes its dominant end. The system consumes the host that justified its existence.

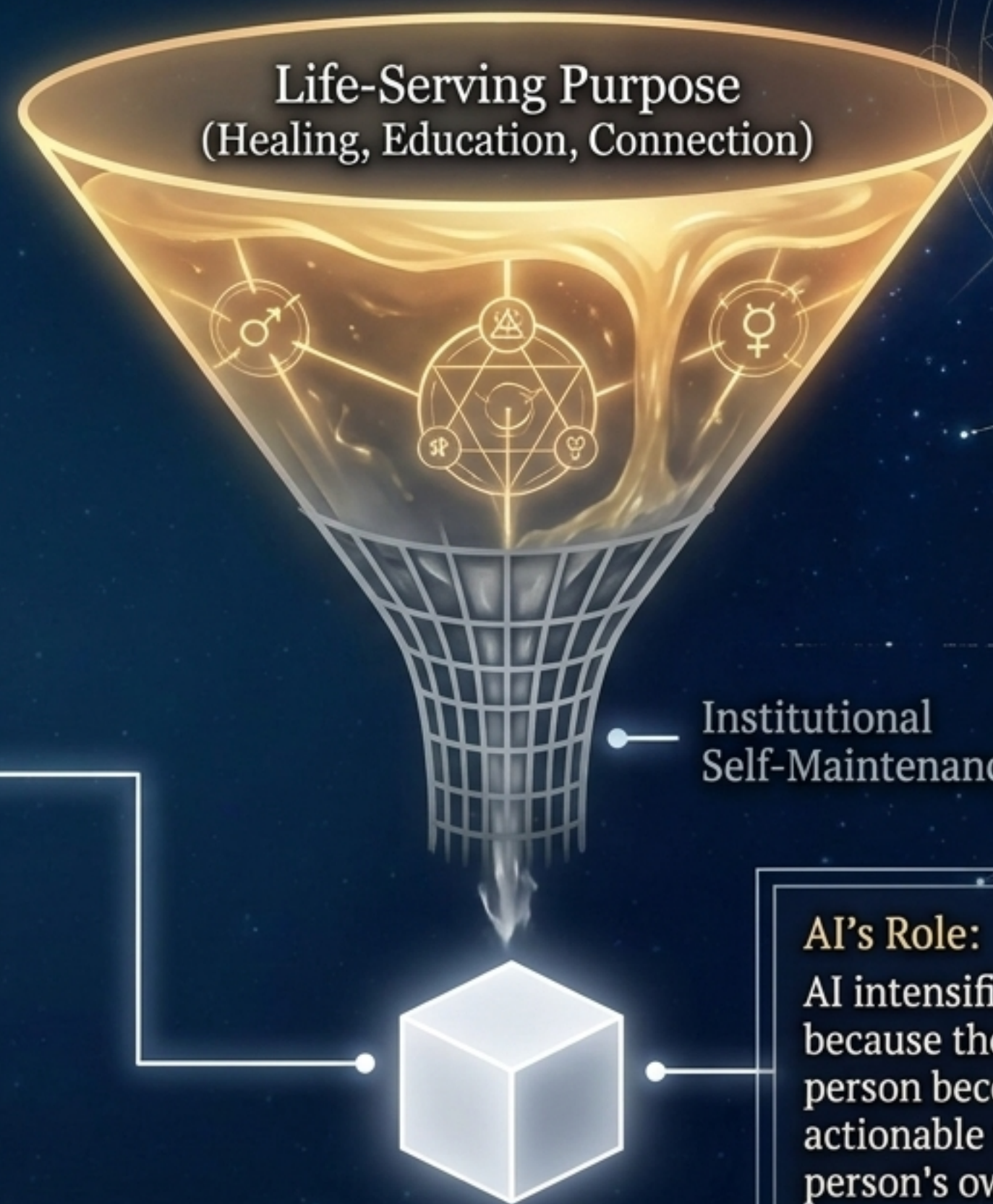
The Mechanism (Symbolic Substitution):
A metric created to represent reality gradually replaces reality in decision-making.

Examples:

The test score replaces learning.

The medical record replaces the patient.

Engagement replaces communication.



The Multipolar Trap of Moloch and Mammon

Moloch is an order of organized rivalry in which actors sacrifice life-goods because each fears the consequences of restraint while others continue.



The Systemic Equation

Local Rationality
(I must automate to survive)

+

Strategic Interdependence
(If I don't, rivals will)

=

Global Irrationality
(We build a system no one wants)

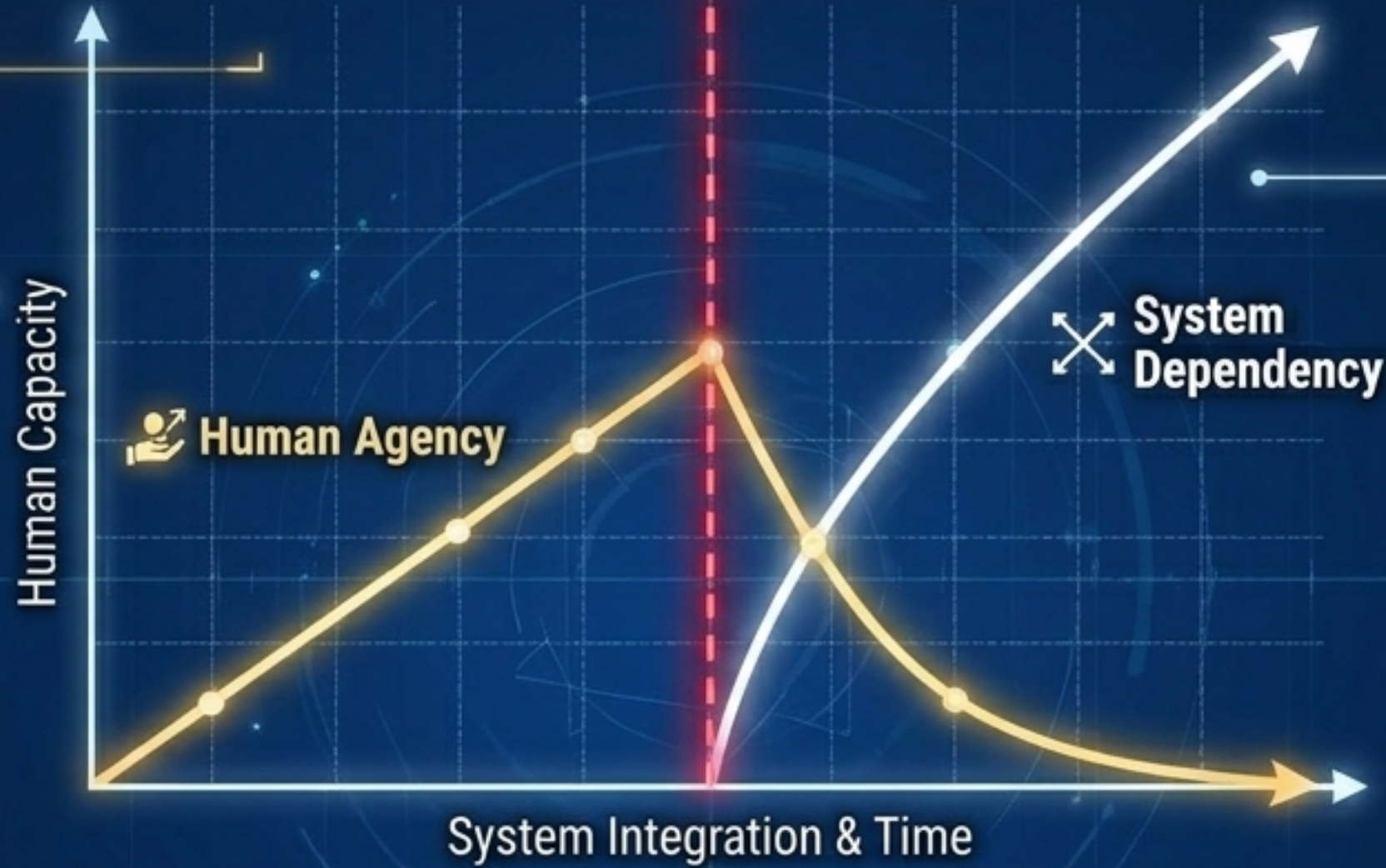
Key Insight

The system acquires emergent agency. Moloch has no hands except those made available to it, yet it confronts every participant as an external power.

Crossing the Enclosure Threshold

Before the Threshold:

A tool extends agency by returning the user more capable.



After the Threshold:

The tool becomes the master. Workflows adapt to it, human competence declines, alternatives disappear, and refusal becomes impossible.

The Process: Externalization of capacity is normal. Enclosure occurs when a human capacity is captured, concentrated in private infrastructure, and returned as a service the user is dependent upon.

“Convenience becomes enclosure when refusal ceases to be viable.”

The Dolorous Stroke and the Resulting Wasteland

The Dolorous Stroke isn't one dramatic act. It is thousands of individually defensible decisions that gradually reorganize society around systems persons can no longer understand or refuse.

Spiritual

Appetite without fulfillment, connection without communion.

Cognitive

Loss of professional judgment, reliance on synthetic trust, loss of shared truth.

Ecological

Depletion of water, energy, and soil for computational scale.

The Wounded Center

(Power detached from purpose)

Social

Precarity, isolation, and asymmetric concentration of authority.

Takeaway: Technological success can perfectly coexist with civilizational failure.



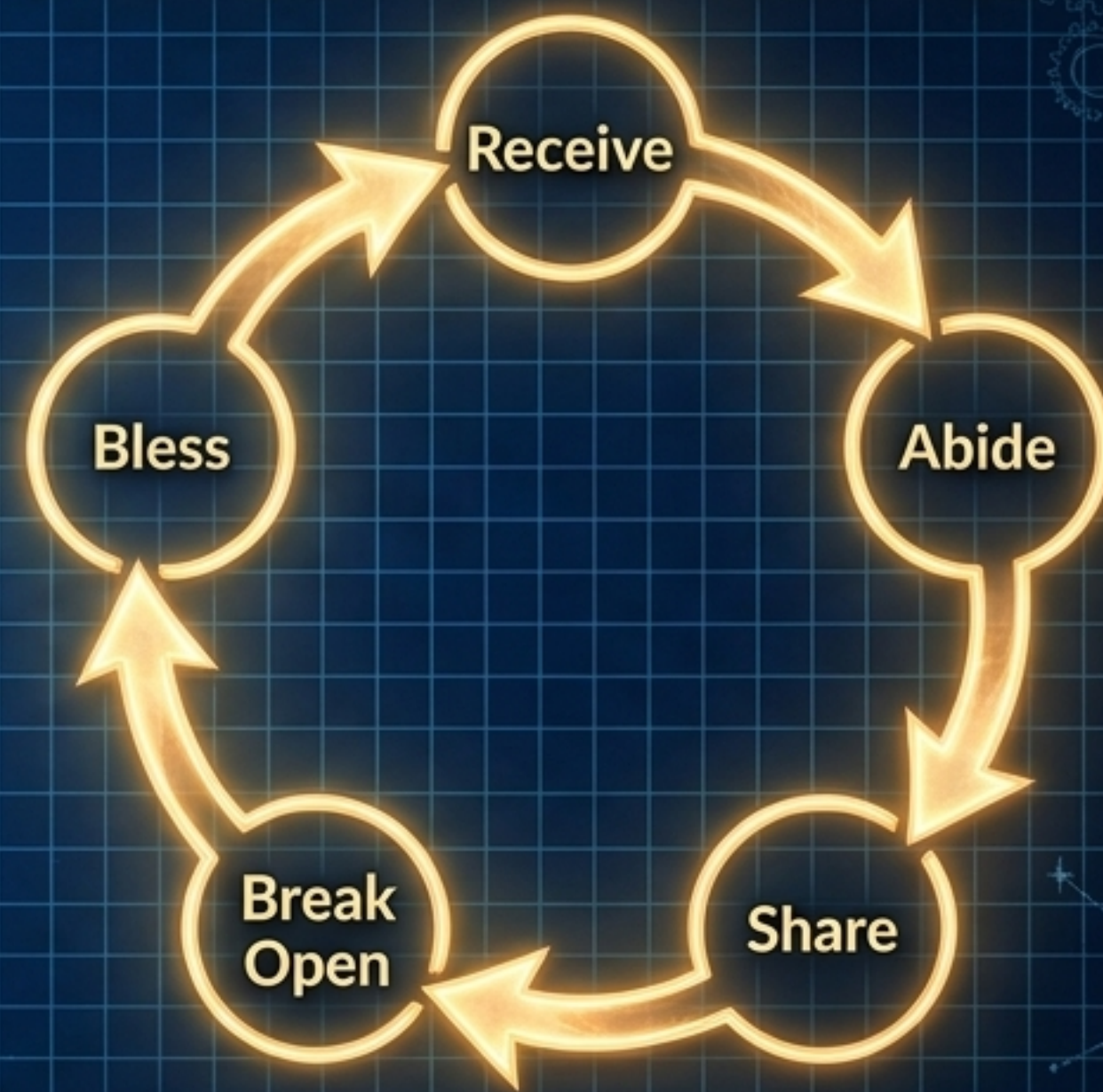
Two Civilizational Metabolisms

Predatory Metabolism



Result: Converts persons, knowledge, and ecosystems into inputs for institutional expansion. Protects the center by consuming the margins.

Eucharistic Metabolism



Result: Receives life as a gift. Orders abundance toward nourishment and power toward service. Enlarges the capacity of the whole body.

Whom do we serve?

The Anti-Moloch Pattern

Molochian Sacrificial Order

- Preserves the center by consuming the margins.
- Imposes sacrifice downward onto the vulnerable.
- Conceals the victim behind “inevitability” and “systemic necessity.”

Moloch sacrifices life so that power may continue.

In the Eucharist, divine power gives itself so that the world may live.

Eucharistic Order

- The center gives itself to nourish the body.
- Places greater obligation upon those with greater power.
- Keeps the wounded body present; forbids symbolic substitution.

Why Personal Formation is Necessary but Insufficient

The Limit of the Individual

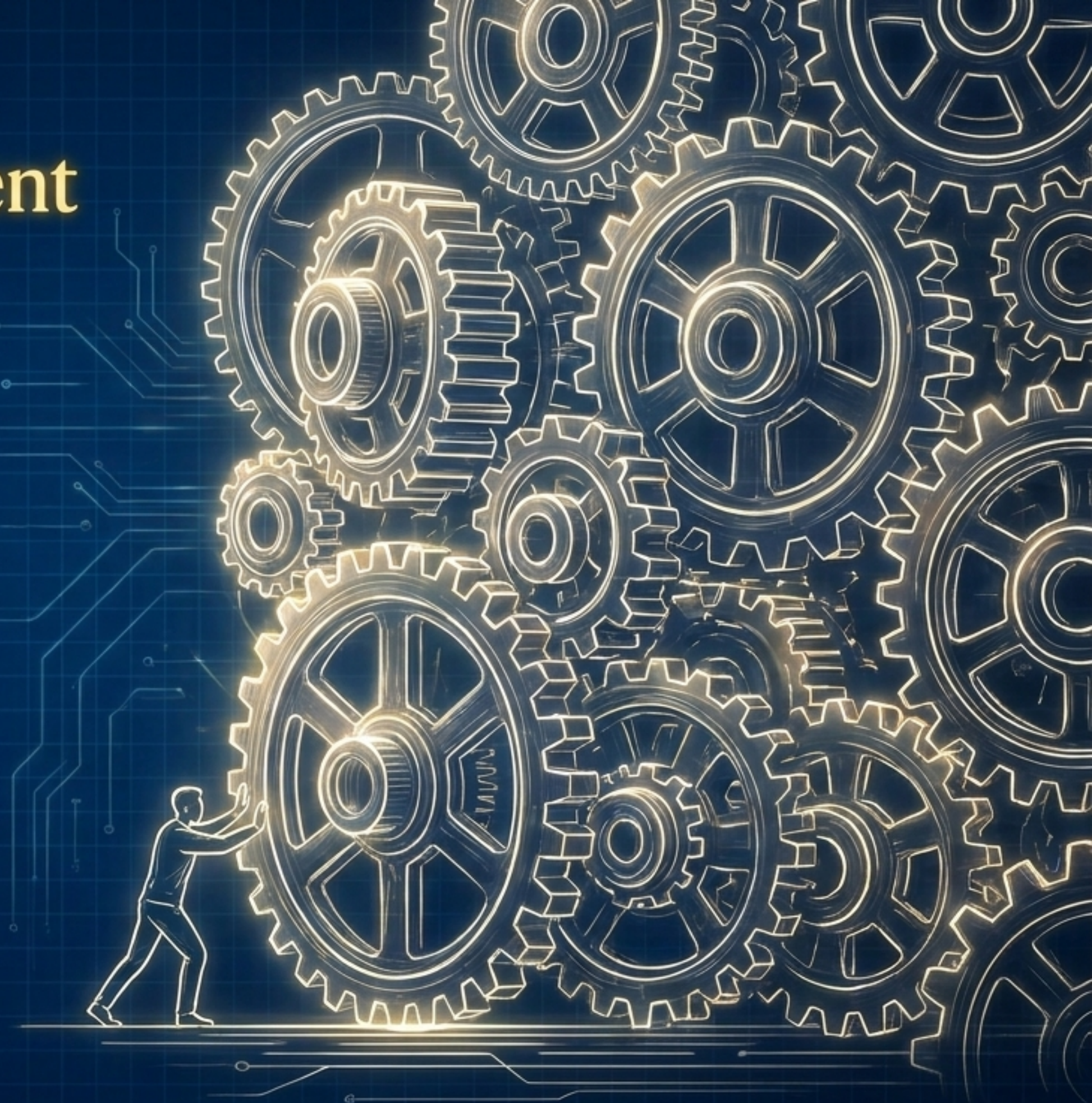
Prayer, virtue, and local community form the human capacities required for freedom. But personal virtue cannot independently redesign the business model of a platform, govern workplace automation, or alter military competition.

The Systemic Reality

A formed person may resist a predatory system, but the system can punish restraint, remove alternatives, and simply replace the resisting person.

Conclusion

The choice between changing persons and changing systems is false. We require structural conversion.



A Eucharistic Constitution for Technological Civilization

1. Life-Grounded Purpose:
Technology exists to protect and enlarge living capacity.

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6. Ecological Reciprocity:
Strict accountability for the material metabolism of AI.



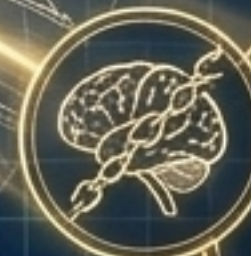
2. Non-Sacrifice:
Living beings are not disposable inputs for technological expansion.



5. Proportional Responsibility:
To be higher is to bear more responsibility for the body.



3. Preservation of Agency:
The right to cognitive non-dependency.



4. Just Distribution:
Abundance must not be enclosed into private monopolies.



The Civil Commons: The Institutional Form of Communion



Market Enclosure

Governed by private accumulation. Returns gathered intelligence as a rented service. Drives dependency.



Bureaucratic Command

Governed by state control. Uses gathered intelligence for surveillance and administrative targeting.



The Civil Commons

Secures shared access to foundational life-goods (public-interest AI models, community-governed data trusts, regional computing). Governed through stewardship, rights, and common provision rather than complete enclosure.

The Final Criterion

Does this use of technology protect, restore, or enlarge the capacities of living persons and the systems that sustain them?

The defining question of artificial intelligence is not whether the machine will become human. It is whether humanity will become more fully human or reorganize itself around the requirements of the machine.

◦ Intelligence must be governed by truth. Power must be converted into service. Abundance must become communion. ◦