

Are These Experts Prophetic or Predictive When it Comes to Christians and AI?

There are always mountains of questions, concerns, theories and comments when a new era of technology dawns.

The internet took the world by the hand and drew everyone who could gain access into a time of instant and global communication the likes of which had never been seen before.

Christians utilized it efficiently to help spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, yet too many remain hesitant to this very day and do not interact with it out of fear and disgust of the content that the internet can hold.

Emerging from the technological shadows is the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). Thus far, few people are sufficiently aware of its capabilities. Yet this technology was discussed hundreds of years ago by one of the world's foremost scientists of the time: Nikola Tesla.

Tesla predicted machines would become automated with their "own mind" and will not need the direction of a human intelligence to complete their tasks:

"I purpose to show that, however impossible it may now seem, an automaton may be contrived which will have its 'own mind,'" Tesla wrote in June 1900, "and by this, I mean that it will be able, independent of any operator, left entirely to itself, to perform, in response to external influences affecting its sensitive organs, a great variety of acts and operations as if it had intelligence."

Robots already fill manufacturing plants around the world on assembly lines, yet they need frequent maintenance and

programming to achieve the task they are assigned to fulfill.

With the introduction of AI, this may no longer be the same scenario in the near future.

Developing a machine that can think, diagnose and solve potential malfunctions or errors removes the need for human intelligence to be involved, because it has its own version to work from:

“The time is not distant when I shall show an automaton which, left to itself, will act as though possessed of reason and without any willful control from the outside. Whatever be the practical possibilities of such an achievement, it will mark the beginning of a new epoch in mechanics,” Tesla wrote.

Humanity is at the very beginning of that new epoch which Tesla wrote about.

As AI technology is taking astronomically large steps forward, experts are warning, either prophetically or predictively, that things need to slow down before a mistake is made from which there may be no return:

“I have suddenly switched my views on whether these things are going to be more intelligent than us,” Geoffrey Hinton, known as the ‘godfather of AI’ told MIT Technology Review. “I think they’re very close to it now and they will be much more intelligent than us in the future... How do we survive that?”

Christian leaders are also speaking up about AI being abused and put to use oppressing and silencing Christians and the gospel message. Putting it bluntly, Media Research Center and Free Speech America vice president Dan Schneider believes that the political left will use AI to silence Christians and censor speech that challenges their narratives:

“The [political] left controls AI, and the left is going to what the left wants to do,” Schneider told Fox News Digital.

“The left despises the whole idea of a higher being that sets standards of right and wrong,” and he believes “the left sees religion as the engine that has destroyed different societies and peoples throughout history.

“They blame religion for that—when it is religion that is responsible for most of the good that has taken place in the world” he continues.

Schneider then likened AI to politics, stating, “What we do know is that people of faith today are less interested in politics than they were 10 years ago. It’s like we’ve returned to that 1950s [or] 1960s era, where people of faith think that maybe politics is just for other people to engage in.

“There are a lot of potential upsides to AI, but [believers] need to wake up. The left controls the tools of AI, and the left wants to bring that to war against people of faith in the future,” Schneider adds.

Others, such as chair of research in technology ethics and director of the research institute at The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention Jason Thacker, approached the topic of AI from a more philosophical standpoint and addressed the core question of what being a human really means:

“This question is especially prevalent in an age of advanced technologies like AI,” says Thacker. “Humanity is fundamentally different than AI, as we are *someone* versus *something*.

“At its core, the Christian witness and gospel is not about information transfer or simply acquiring more knowledge, but rather a personal encounter with the living God being shared with other image bearers,” Thacker says.

“Thus, while an AI may be able to present information or perform complex human-like tasks, it cannot truly witness or

even preach, as it isn't able to experience true grace or the redemption of sin which is at the core of the gospel message," he adds.

These questions, the warnings of AI overshadowing the intelligence of humanity, or even the unscrupulous ways AI could be used against the Word of God are still yet to be answered. But one thing Christians can do in the meantime is ensure that they are educated and aware of what is happening in the world around them.

The world will not be without a remnant church, that much is said in the Bible. But Christians must do everything in their power that the unaltered Word of God is continuously spread during this new era of technology. It brings with it great challenges, but also offers a great opportunity for the church not to shy away from new discoveries and inventions, but embrace them and utilize them to further the kingdom of God.

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