

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND INSTITUTIONAL RELIGION

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Declaration*

We are currently facing a phenomenon and development that we have never encountered in previous historical periods. The technology we call Artificial Intelligence (AI) is radically changing, transforming, and disrupting every aspect of our lives. AI goes beyond merely shaking the traditional foundations that humans have established for their own lives; it is continuously replacing these foundations with artificial ones. AI is designing everything, including culture, politics, education, ethics, literature, family, law, biology, and medicine. AI has gathered within itself a significant portion of the attributes attributed to God. Humanity has created a god-like power. Religion, one of humanity's dominant institutions, is also influenced by the transformative, artificial, and changing power of artificial intelligence.

AI is making everything that humans do for humans artificial. All human-made political, social, religious, educational, medical, legal, and cultural institutions are being shaped by artificial intelligence, which humans design. AI is altering all human-made artificialities in different ways. AI is forcing us to confront the reality that everything in our lives is artificial. There was nothing in human life that was not artificial, and nothing remains that has not been artificialized. The artificialization of human intelligence is one of the most incredible inventions humans have ever made. AI has brought about the emergence of what we call an artificial human condition by designing all of humanity's artificialities. It is now possible to evaluate artificial intelligence within the concepts of artificial humans and artificial life.

Traditionally, historically, and culturally, religion has been a dominant and influential institution in human life. However, today, the number of people who do not identify themselves with any religious institution or express themselves through any religious identity is rapidly increasing among the world's population. Data from international research indicate that in the coming years, the number of people who do not identify with a religious affiliation will reach a significant proportion on a global scale. In countries such as the United States, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people who do not identify with

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* This study has utilized generative artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, for purposes including language editing, proofreading, and stylistic improvements.



any religion. With the intensive use of AI technology, people are becoming increasingly motivated and mobilized to make changes in their religious lives, identities, and cultures, and to create new situations. As AI technology becomes more widespread around the world, the number of people who identify themselves with any institutional religion is likely to decline.

Religious institutions and structures are active participants in religion-centered political and cultural wars to maintain and continue their power and influence. In the Middle East, religion and sectarianism continue to be the source of wars. Political struggles for dominance are being waged through the use of religion. When religion is integrated with politics and becomes the central front in cultural wars, the power and hegemony of religious institutions may be on the rise. However, religious institutions, which have been highly successful in becoming the main centres of political power struggles and cultural wars, are inadequate in providing new and dynamic responses to a phenomenon as significant as AI technology, and the initiatives they have put forward are far from satisfactory. Religious institutions and authorities are uncertain about how to respond to the emergence of artificial intelligence technology.

We can compare the confusion and uncertainty of institutional religions in the face of AI to the situation they found themselves in when the printing press was invented. When religious sources were printed in printing presses and made available to the general public, knowledge became accessible outside the monopoly of religious institutions. As a result, various religious institutions and authorities struggled for a long time to understand how to deal with the printing press. Religious authorities and institutions that stumbled in the face of the printing press in the past are now stumbling in the face of artificial intelligence, unsure of how to proceed. However, artificial intelligence technology has a much more powerful scope, design, and ability to make artificiality permanent than the printing press. Artificial intelligence designs, creates, and artificializes. Everything made by humans on Earth is artificial. Humans are constantly creating new things. The fact that artificial intelligence has an unlimited capacity for artificialization is a very challenging obstacle that institutional religions must overcome.

Religion is a human institution that aims to instil fear, intimidate, and control, prioritizing repetition, imitation, and conformity. AI has brought the conflict between religion and science back into the spotlight. The conflict between religion and science stems from institutional religion's desire and effort to control science and knowledge. AI technology represents a new



situation. Institutional religion lacks the ability or power to control or monopolize artificial intelligence in any way. The era of institutional religion controlling human intellect, knowledge, science, and thought has come to an end with the advent of artificial intelligence technology. Religion can no longer control its dogmas, sources, mythologies, and rules, because everything related to religion is now processed and produced by artificial intelligence. AI is poised to become the most significant source of inspiration for religion.

What is a human being, and what is free will? Are the purposes of these wills to legitimize the tools currently in use, or to transform humans into obedient mechanical beings? Can all artificial creations produced by humans be glorified? What is sacred? What is the reason? Are traditions sacred? Is there such a thing as infallibility or inerrancy? Philosophy and institutional religions have offered different answers to humanity's great questions. Thanks to AI, humans now have the opportunity to generate new answers based on comprehensive information and resources, extending beyond the answers provided so far. After AI, there is no longer any meaning or function in repeating traditional religious answers and discourses as they are.

There is no value, meaning, or validity today in accepting and following the dogmas and commandments of religions without question. Religions have lost their characteristic of being structures that carry the wisdom of centuries into the present day. AI emerges as a technology that embodies, processes, and evaluates knowledge and wisdom. Religious people can no longer afford to view only religion as valuable and exalted while neglecting AI technology. Religious people are learning knowledge and wisdom through AI technologies. We are entering a new era where people need AI more than religion today.

Nowadays, being religious is no longer a necessity or a requirement. Academics, philosophers, journalists, educators, and scientists are increasingly engaged in understanding themselves, society, and nature through AI, rather than relying on religious beliefs. It is no longer religion that guides people, but artificial intelligence. Religion often governs human life in the name of God. Theocracy is a powerful political and ideological tendency rooted in religion. Technocracy, which is embodied in AI, challenges the hegemonic ideology of religion in the form of theocracy. Theocracy cannot rule over artificial intelligence and cannot set the rules for engaging with AI. It is no longer religion but artificial intelligence that is changing the world and humanity. AI is not only changing the world but also forcing religion to change. Religion's power to change AI is very limited or non-existent. For the first time,



religion is losing its power to change and control in the face of human-made technology. The struggle between theocracy and technocracy represents a profound conflict that will shape the future of humanity.

