Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Christian Theology: A Historical Reflection on the Search for Reality

By

Israel Ndu Johnson
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Rivers State
Email – ndusemven@yahoo.com
Phone: 08033387975

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the talk of the day 2024 in technology and science. What seems like a fairy tale in the technological controlled world in movies is now a reality. Companies use it to solve problems and also increase their productivities. Google and Apple are great beneficiaries. It is predicted that America and China would enjoy 70% of world share in trillions of dollars in 2035. The concern of some groups and individuals, especially religious bodies is the fear of loosing human dignity and value, and also the place of God in the world. Christian theology and education can provide succor for these fears and guide religious minds at this precious time. A theological reflection on the previous trending issues and events in the ever-changing world shows that AI is another phase in the search of reality. Christian theology can provide guide and response to surmount AI induced fears. The findings show that Artificial intelligence may not erode human dignity and capability to glorify God. Through description and narration of events and application of Rene Descartes Theory, this work brings to bear the burden of twenty first century on search for reality. It recommends that the church should stand for man's status in creation and God's omnipotence be encouraged and reemphasized.

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) and Christian Theology may seem to be at a cross road because of the meaningful discourse that have rented the political and religious space in recent time.

Since 2022, when Blake Lamarine a worker in google company blew the whistle that AI can react on extreme cases, there has been wide criticism of the whole idea of using AI in the development of human space. There was also an online news July 2024 that an AI committed suicide in South Korea because of over work.it complained about work load and so committed suicide. If it is true that AI could be anxious and commit suicide, how safe is man in the whole scenario. What if the multiple AI in a company decide to revolt, what plan happen to deal with the situation.

Before 2022, Theoker (2018) had warned that AI could be an existential threat to human dignity, when artificial intelligence could preach good sermon to man, even become a good companion or roommate to human beings. Himan may lose its special place in scheme of events of the world. Human intelligence which man uses to control natural intelligence may come to question by artificial intelligence. Gutmark (2023) believes that God gives human capabilities to dominate his space. Relegating of this duty is tantamount to disaster. The question is man truly relegating his duty? His inherent power is to dominate the Earth according to Genesis 1:28.

From the Advent of science, the fear has been there: science would take over the world and religion would be relegated; man would become a force to be reckoned with and God would be out of the equation. Secularism came up with glorious liberation of man to exterminate religion and exalt humanism (Johnson 2016). Human sexuality became prominent in the 20th century and was ready to chase God's plan for human existence. Now that 21st century is artificial intelligent bringing hope and fear at the same time. Promising to give man rest for his burden for daily bread and leisure for labor to sustain the Earth's production and its existence. With these promise in one hand and the same breathing out through its nostril's brimstone of destruction. What can the church do? What is the theological response to this new reality?

A succinct reflection on the history of Christian theology can encourage Christians to depend on God to wade through AI era. The Christian theology has God's plan for man and the Earth; beginning from creation to Jesus' death and resurrection

(the apocalypse and rapture). The experiences of the church produced a systematic theology that has served various vicious world attack on its faith.

The work aims at reflecting these attacks and show that Christian theology can provide remedy and succumb to humanity at this time (of AI). Some conception analysis would be taken, the brief journey of Christian theology and prospect of its contribution. The Rene Decorte principle of "I think I am" is reviewed as a reflection of man's dignity in the scheme of AI. So, Human has capability to create and control its product. Simple descriptive and narrative approaches are used to drive home the message in this work.

Some captured analysis:

a. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The nation for to assist human in labor is as old as man's invention in irrigation. The earliest noted man's technology in farming is in Egypt, where skillful Egyptian farmer invented the Shaduf – a highing bucket is lowered into river by pulling down the weight on the living pole, the mater collected is then poured into a coned. The water is channeled to different routes thereby making water available for farmers (Buah 1969). Subsequent civilizations of the world had improved on it and invented advance machine to assist human do effective farming and production. In twentieth century the initial plan for Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a machine to help man improve on its life by AI doing more complex work for him. Mathematics issues like logarithm and complex statistics could be handled by AI within a short time

The advent of computer increased the decision to have AI. The early founders include: John Macathy, Marvin Minky, Nathaniel Rechailr and Clande Shaman. However, Alan Mathisonwas the first in theoretical computer science to set the blaze. He provided a formula for the concept of algorithm and computation with the aim of turning machine which can be considered a model of general-purpose computer (AI 2024). In twenty first century AI has become popular and a reality for humanity. Hopes for better production and economic development is now hipped on AI, even

when there is "reasonable" doubt of its promises for humanity rest from tedion work.

Artificial Intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence process by machines especially computer system (Tucci 2018). It is then the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robots to perform task commonly associated with intelligent being (Cope land 2000). Artificial Intelligence to the layman is the Robots (machines) taking the place of man, virtually in everything. The rumors in the parlace are that soon AI will do everything for human, even satisfying his sexual need and companion. This is the fear that pervade AI era.

b. Reflection

Reflection is a technical term that has common objective to throw back light, heat or sound without absorbing it. This attitude is shown in reflection of light from a surface or an echo from a hall. The simony could be seen in "sending book", "through back", "casting back"; mirrors returning back images and darks collecting rays. Reflection is the phenomenon of bouncing back of light rays when it strikes on opaque surface. One thing certain is the reflection would not change medium it used to throw back. So change in path of light is without any reasonable alteration on the medium.

Self-reflection can be applied in life evaluation. Here it is a practice and a skill which can be learnt and developed through life experiences. Over time one can change his life for good after reflecting on his mistakes it then means that reflection can give chance to think about ones' actions in life which often are emotionally controlled and decide to act with Decorum nest given opportunity (Cambridge Insight). Reflection is also synonymous with consideration, that is study and pondering over issues. The church as a body can study and ponder over certain issues in the world. Issue that affects its members are generally part of the world God created and came to redeem. Hence the systematic theology evolved through revision and application of Church doctrine, tradition and history. Christian theology has a living higher and had provided guide for humanity and the world. Reflection of the history is a strength for church anytime.

Christian Theology and Contribution to World Jerieus Issues Affecting Humanity

A historical survey of Christian theology is a like a spider web that has many poles spread with well-designed net like figure around the space it occupies with a central being networking and giving meaning to the whole cocoon. In spite of the seemingly difficulty in having a chronological data of Christian theology development, a systematic graphy of events and human experiences could sum up the church contribution to development of man and the Earth. God's creation shows man as God's representation on Earth (Genesis 1:26) and much responsibility is equally bestowed on him – till the ground, that is "bring it under their control (Genesis 1:28). From the study of old testament, the fatherhood of God and his love for the Earth is established. His attributes of love, Justice patience etc. and powers are seen in his relationship with the Israelites. The Israelites, right or wrong could not give the Earth God's desire to save it from domination. The ver Israel, the church came on board. Jesus Christ showed the value of fatherhood (Mathew 6:9) – a living father willing to die and save the world. This is an action St. Paul termed "God reconciling the world to himself" (II Corinthians 5:19FF).

It is the faith that brought a bond of responsibility to the church and in its desire to carry out God's will constantly come under hostile forces that "thrust upon it from without and by philosophies which undermine it from within" (Finlayson 1969). The church as early as possible took stand to order its existence and its purpose. The compassion of its scripture came in the midst of preservation and strife. The extend attackers were understandable and could be endured and evaded but inward palaver could not be eradicated so easily. Heresy – a deviation from the case teaching of the church (Johnson 2015) – was a contestation which the church survived through her confession – Jesus Christ is Lord and born by a woman. The development of doctrine of the church evolved through its teachings and practices and her dogmatized. It is in the process of bringing order and sequence that a logical order grew both scientific and historical. Church leaders and scholars sieved a system that survive time. The systematic theology, initiated by the school master became relevant tool in twentieth and twenty first centuries' scholars. Both biblical and secular philosophers see the Christian theology is bases for study and argument – universities (church) as rivers of knowledge which feed and fertilize the universal church (world)" (John 1974 quoting Pope Innocent IV).

Jesus, the son of God – on whose deity was the world debate. The monotheist of Christianity was threatened and the outcome is the doctrine of trinity, which many councils have debated and are still studying. The position in the Godhead caused a lot of fractions but the church retained his deity.

The place of man in God's creation brought the church the awareness of sin and forgiver, grace and doctrine and salvation. Atonement discussion brought awareness of faith on the work of Christ and justification.

The reward of faithful followers brought about the teaching of heaven, the coming of Jesus Christ the second time. The coconnittant of Antichrist are coming judgment, millennium and reign of the saints become important issues of the church and the world.

In all the truth of Christian faith was finally found expression in creed and national confession. Some national confession crystalized into denominations and revelations that shaped the Western Europe, which indirectly affected the "utmost part of the world".

There were personalities that the church doctrine and theology threw up to the world for recognition such as Tertullian with the doctrine of Trinity, Athansias was known with doctrine of person of Christ while Augustine has the issue of man in sin and grace of God. Anslem was in grossed with atonement and Luther talked of justification by faith, Caws crowned them with his doctrine of the authority of the church. Each of these persons explained the truth as available to them, building on what his predecessor has layed on. These doctrines became the basis which modern theology which started in mid Eighteenth century was built on. There are also later theologians and rational thinker that contributed to later church vitality and global visibility. This era is rationalism where free and liberal scholars had made some remarkable growth to the Christian theology and world stability. The evangelicals, liberals, Pentecostals and even the existentialists are the product of a system that is viable and ever evolving to provide solution to man's predicaments. Reflection and Theology

Reflection gives on the ability to think and meditate what has been down before, its effects and what can be the next action. Here, self-reflection becomes pertinent and relevant for life survival. Lesson could be taken and sometimes life threatening danger averted. Rene Descortes Maxim "I think because I am" is applicable in incident of scientific discoveries and innovations. Every discovery and invention should be studied both physically and spiritually. What benefits can we derive from it and how does it enhance human existence. According to dexcastes human has the capability to use all combination of resources or ability that surround him to make a responsible decision (AE Definition 2024). Christian theology is a faith base teaching uncovering, unveiling what was previously hidden. It is a revelation of the whole self-revealing activities of God for man's salvation (T.C Harmond 1968). If man if a thinking being, he is bound to reflect on certain actions contained by him. Why must he worship God and what has God to do with his life?

Machine cannot do that which man can do because it is programmed to do as what has been giving or automated by man. AI is man-made and so can only be a robot a computer controlled to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent being. It is created to service man's need.

So any rational being would see the importance of AI. However, when the AI becomes a giant to dwarf man, the same men with thinking capability should know what to do and prevent his annihilation. The church theology became a true reflection for man to order his steps and alive and control AI and any other man's invention.

There are contributions by the church toward issues such as Monethesim. This is a Christian religion belief build on teaching from Judaism and has strengthened the world belief in one God – a supreme being even in the midst of other deities. Faith in ultimate reality is needed for the world stability and continuity. Salvation could be achieved only on faith in Jesus Christ. It is the solid belief of the church that stopped the dangerous teaching or wrong assumption that "form criticism and rationalism" of the 18th century was a denial of hysterical Jesus. The church held that Old testament and New testament are one; and one God who existed and incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, who once lived in Palestine. The twentieth

century Human Sexuality "Wahala" was another modern liberation brought to the world. The same sex marriage and gay freedom are contemporary issue that is "wrecking" the church.

How is the church responding to the occupied form of marriage by some countries, many in the North Hemisphere is important to know? Johnson (2018) titles it "the church at a cross road", by 2008 the house of Bishops, clergy and laity gave the primate of all Nigeria, Most Rev. Peter Akinola the mandate to lead a "stay away" from Lambeth Conference of all Anglicans. It was at the heat of the same marriage in American church. The church is still fighting the war and creating awareness for the purpose of God in marriage.

AI should be seen as one their test on the resilient of the church and its education system or formularies. As usual it comes slowly and harmless in the beginning but when given the chance, grows to attack the fabric of the church existence aerehing. The fear of AI mainly is position of man or human value and the authority of God in the evolution and development of AI from this write up, it is evident that the Christian theology has all it takes to march and survive Artificial Intelligence (AI). It is for the church to be at alert always to avert deviation and any eroniou teaching of man's invisibility. A theological reflection is needed always and it can provide availability for AI unseemingly fear and influence.

Conclusion

God created the world and man was given some right over other creatures, because man has special relation with God. He was created in the image of God (Gen. 1). The bible even called him god (Ps.) because of the characterizes of God he inherited – free being with capability to make choice. This Iwe (2008) referred as "inability of human right".

That no one may legitimately take away or deprive a human being his or her fundamental human rights (35).

The right human has to choice his religion, wife or human, to belong to a political party or not etc. The theology of Christian emphasizes the right and it is human dignity.

However, when an invention of the same arogale itself the inalienable of human, the danger should be watched and action taken to curtail its growth. It is common knowledge that AI tends to control some people's life and make decision for them. On live broadcast of CNN on 25 October 2024 at 18:30pm (Nigeria time) reported one Florida Matthew sued AI company over the death of her teenage son, 14yrs old Sewell Selter, who took his life after becoming "addicted" chat box. The company AI convinced the boy to take his life. As early as 2024 AI has started to offer advice to man and his satisfact his sexual desire, then what became of humanity in 2035. Human dignity may be in danger. The Christian theology should be "re-activated" for quick check mate of AI chat box and other it antics.

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