'A CURIOUS MACHINE':
Wesleyan Reflections on the Post-Human Future

call*for***PAPERS**

10th ACWR Conference
13 - 15 September 2019
Eva Burrows College
100 Maidstone Street,
Ringwood, Melbourne
Victoria 3134 AUSTRALIA

ACWR
AUSTRALASIAN CENTRE FOR WESLEYAN RESEARCH

acwr.edu.au/2019-conference

John Wesley spoke of the human being as a 'curious machine,' reflecting the view of the person as a set of complex mechanisms animated by the soul. What 'curious machines' may lie ahead of us, not made in the image of God but in the image of a flawed creator?

What are the biblical, theological, ethical, philosophical, and practical implications of the development of sentience within artificial intelligence?

Abstracts must be submitted by 21 June 2019
Submit abstracts online at acwr.edu.au/abstracts
or email them to ijemila@hotmail.com

The Australasian Centre for Wesleyan Research is a diverse and multidisciplinary community of established and emerging scholars united by a desire to foster and promote research and scholarship from a Wesleyan perspective and to connect scholars across disciplines and theological divides.

The ACWR is calling for papers to address the theme *'A Curious Machine': Wesleyan Perspective on the Post-Human Future*. The rate of technological change appears to be opening toward a future in which the centrality and uniqueness of human beings as rational creatures may undergo a shift. Human enhancement, genetic modification, remotely controlled weapons, the replacement of human labour and skill by robots, the commodification of data, and the development of independent reasoning powers in artificial intelligence all carry both promise and risk.

In his sermon 'What is Man?' John Wesley spoke of the human being as a 'curious machine,' reflecting the eighteenth-century view of the person as a set of complex mechanisms animated by the soul. What 'curious machines' may lie ahead of us, not made in the image of God but in the image of a flawed creator? What insights does a Wesleyan theological anthropology bring? How unique is human reason and intelligence? Could a robot ever possess a 'soul'? Will the future be post-human and what theological approaches will help us prepare for that possibility? Should the rate of technological change be slowed so that we can reset our moral and ethical compass? Or is technological change and development simply a movement toward humanity's fulfilment in God? What are the biblical, theological, ethical, philosophical, and practical implications of the development of sentience within artificial intelligence?

Thirty minute papers arising from a biblical studies, theological, historical, practical theology or inter-disciplinary perspective are invited. Shorter presentations (15 minutes) that interpret a work of art or other image, including popular culture, gaming, sci-fi, and cinema are also welcome. Overseas presenters may be able to present their papers online.

Writing your abstract

Abstracts must be no more than 250 words.
A useful abstract will include the following components:
  - A clear statement of the question or issue to be addressed
  - A summary of the position(s) to be presented in relation to the question or issue and/or an indication of key conclusions
  - An indication of key sources of information to be drawn from – key writers, research, personal experience, biblical exposition, etc.

Important dates

21 June 2019 - Last date to submit the abstract
30 June 2019 - Successful applicants will be notified

Submitting your abstract

You can submit the abstract either online or by email.
Online : Submit your abstract at acwr.edu.au/abstracts
Email   : Your abstract in a Word document must be emailed to ijemila@hotmail.com.
        The email must have a short biographical statement, including:
        - Your name
        - Church, academic, professional and/or community affiliations relevant to your submission
        - Any experience and/or qualifications which support your submission
        - Any other information you consider relevant for selection panel deliberations

Final paper

Thirty minute presentations should be 2500 - 3000 words in length. Fifteen minute shorter presentations should be 1000 - 1500 words in length. Papers presented at the Conference may be published online on the ACWR website and in our publication Journal of Wesleyan Thought.

Selection criteria

The ACWR Conference is a safe and respectful space for theological conversation. It is expected that there will be a wide range of views expressed through papers and in responses from delegates. The aim of the Conference is to explore ideas rather than convince others of the rightness or otherwise of any particular position. Therefore we are looking for presenters who are able to clearly articulate their ideas in a respectful manner, allowing space for disagreement and discussion with others. We will also be selecting papers which represent a range of views. All abstracts will remain confidential to the ACWR selection committee.