

‘Raise the Alarm’: How Artificial Intelligence Could Further Terrorize Persecuted Christians Across the Globe

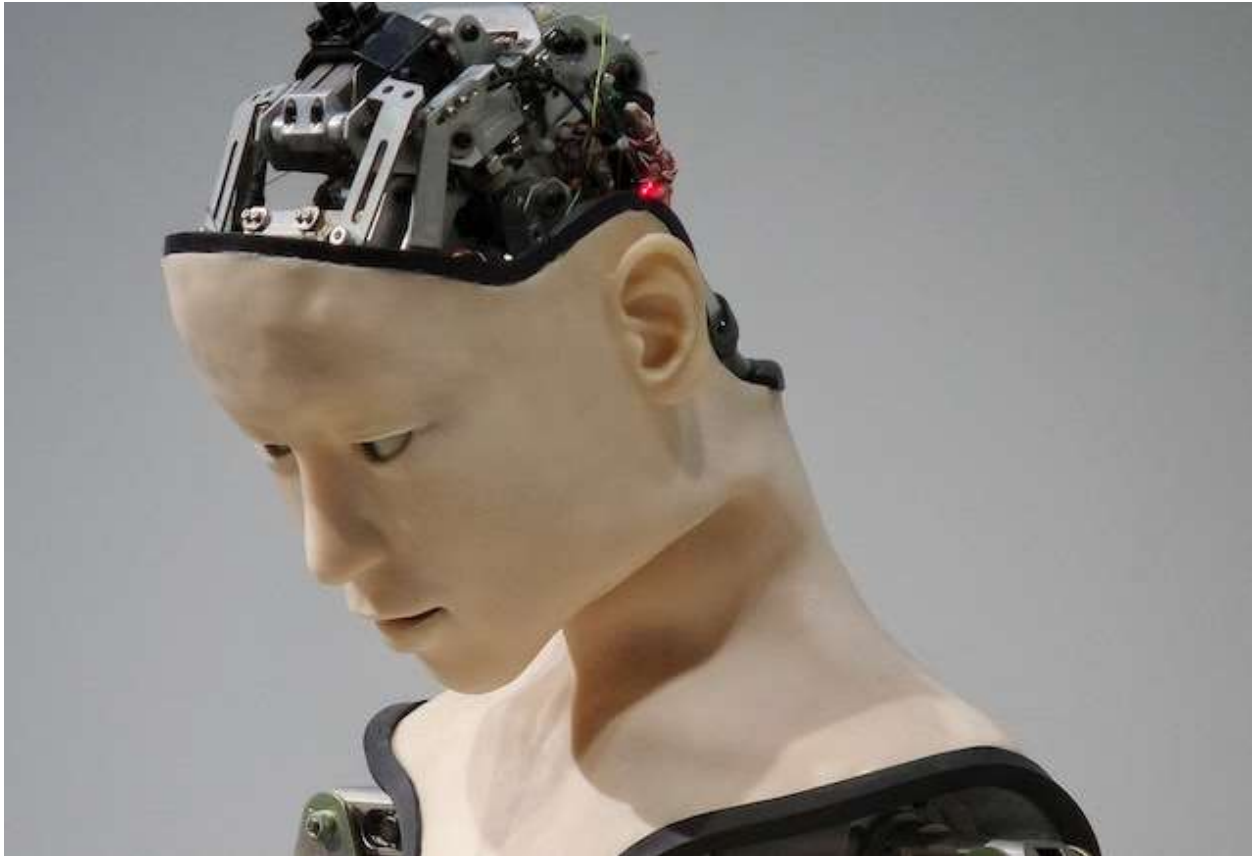


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By [Billy Hallowell](#)

As calls to take a cautionary approach to artificial intelligence (AI) continue to percolate, a persecution watchdog is sounding the alarm on how the emerging technology could harm oppressed Christians.

David Curry, president and CEO of [Global Christian Relief](#), an organization devoted to uncovering Christian persecution and advocating for believers across the globe, spoke with CBN’s Faithwire about the concerning ways repressive regimes, terrorists, and others might utilize the technology.

“The example that pops out that is a clear and present danger is China and their use of artificial intelligence to monitor the movement of their population,” Curry said. “They have a social

scoring system which tracks church attendance and can prohibit children under the age of 18 from going to church or, if it can't prohibit it, it will certainly punish you in your social score.”

He said this dynamic is already underway inside China, though he also worries about what could come next as technological manipulations evolve.

“What we’re trying to raise the alarm on is the effects that will grow as more and more of these artificial intelligence technologies come online — the way in which the biases and assumptions that are built into this predictive modeling could affect religious faith,” Curry said. “We’re focused right now on the persecution of Christians, the monitoring of Christian activity, the censorship of worship services, pastors posting of videos — all the various implications of artificial intelligence.”

Watch Curry explain his AI fears for the persecuted church:

Among Curry’s concerns are the use of “deep fakes,” or videos that purport to show actions or infractions that never actually unfolded. He said he’s nervous such videos — increasingly made to look believable with AI — could create unique threats for the persecuted church.

Christians in many areas worldwide already face retribution for mere claims; deep fakes could up the ante on their suffering and the associated threats underpinning such charges.

“Blasphemy accusations or mob violence by extremists against Christians is not based on an actual event that happened, but on word of mouth,” Curry said. “Somebody said that they slandered Mohammed, a mob comes, attacks, kills, burns the church down — and it’s done before the facts can catch up.”

He continued, “There are some really pernicious and difficult angles on this as we look forward to what could be done with deep fakes.”

Another AI fear centers on autonomous weapon systems he said are “made to identify threats, and the weapon makes a decision on its own.”

Curry already sees a level of sophistication among terror groups in Nigeria who use technology to target Christians, cut them off from cell phones and technology, and then attack.

“It’s a short leap from that to using autonomous weapons, which already exist, to make decisions to ... attack churches on Sunday morning,” he said. “We’re just beginning to scratch the surface of how AI will be involved in that.”

All of this comes amid debate, too, over how social media handles those expressing biblical values. Curry voiced broader and associated concerns about censorship and “outright banning” that could unfold on various platforms, exacerbating the other issues he discussed with AI and technology.

“Obviously, there’s a role for government in passing laws which protect religious experience from these kinds of attacks of artificial intelligence,” he said, noting he worries some repressive countries like China are already ahead on blocking and circumventing such protections. “There needs to be a wave of pressure from people of faith about raising this flag with your representatives.”

But Curry also called on Christians to ponder the creation of platforms from which believers “cannot be banned” and where they can “speak openly” and practice faith “peacefully.”

“We have to be clear that the basic biblical story is a challenge to the culture now,” he said. “And I think that’s going to be banned on public platforms in the not-too-distant future.”

As AI continues to metastasize and evolve, Curry wants to see efforts to pass protective laws to help religious minorities around the globe — and he warned of the dire nature of the situation, especially in nations where the ruling class or terror groups want to “snuff out the expression of Christian faith.”

“They’ll use all of the censorship, all of the programming assumptions of artificial intelligence, and even predictive policing and weaponry that will make these decisions in the near future,” Curry said. “We’re not looking at a far horizon. I think in the next five to 10 years, you’re going to see this escalate to be maybe the issue of our time.”

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