

Faith and AI Social

NeurIPS 2024



A **space** for people of all faiths
to come together and discuss
the *increasingly important issues*
and opportunities in Faith + AI

Agenda

7:30pm	AI & Faith Video by Mark Graves, director of AI & Faith (pre-recorded)
7:40pm	Welcome and Survey by Richard Zhang
7:50pm	AI & Faith Overview by Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad
8:00pm	Faith & AI Panel: Muhammad A Ahmad, Nathan Gaw, David O'Hara, Dirk Padfield and Correna Panagiotou (moderator)
8:45pm	Fun / Break Out Sessions - <i>Would you Rather?</i>
9:30pm	Social Ends

Welcoming Remarks





Richard Zhang

qiuyiz.github.io

Richard is currently at Google Deepmind on the Vizier team, working on prompt/hyperparameter optimization, Bayesian methods, and theoretical machine learning. He also dabbles a bit in AI alignment, counterfactuals/fairness and the intersection of Faith and AI.

He stewards the Global Christians in AI (CHAI) community, where AI practitioners, academics, theologians, and entrepreneurs come together monthly to discuss relevant topics in the intersection of Christianity and AI.

Manpreet Singh's spiritual art

You can find more inspirational
messages at this [link to the
photo album](#) containing all the
drawings!

Churning of Elevated Knowledge

It is our responsibility to translate every
piece of spiritual knowledge into experience.

After reading spiritual text, we need to reflect,
churn and contemplate over it repeatedly until it
takes a permanent groove within consciousness.

Spiritual Knowledge is like
plain bricks.

It is the reader who has to
CEMENT

it with understanding, application,
experience and feelings
to build the house of wisdom.



Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad

maahmad@uw.edu

Current: Research Scientist at University of Washington Harborview Medical Center and an Affiliate Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at University of Washington Bothell.

Background: PhD in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota. Spent a year in a Master program in Christian Theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Research: Algorithmic nudging at scale, pluralistic alignment, modeling resilience in ICU patients, Responsible AI, and personality emulation.

Academic Appointments: University of Washington, Center for Cognitive Science at University of Minnesota, Minnesota Population Center, and the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur.

Fun Facts: Runs the *Islam and Science Fiction* Project. Humanities Washington Speaker



[faculty.washington.edu/
maahmad/](https://faculty.washington.edu/maahmad/)

AI and Faith

- ▶ Interested in joining AI and Faith's work on AI Ethics for Human Flourishing? Please go to aiandfaith.org or admin@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Learn more about becoming an Expert or Member by emailing people@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Give us an idea for a feature or news at editor@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Tell us about conferences, podcasts, and your own speaking activity by contacting programs@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Have an idea for a research project? Reach out to research@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Listen to our podcasts, <https://aiandfaith.org/aif-podcast/>



[Subscribe](#) to our mailing list.

Christians in AI

Christians in AI (bit.ly/chai-global) is a global collective united by their interest in the intersection of AI and Christianity.



AI @ ASA: American Scientific Affiliation Annual Meeting July 18-21, 2025 Lakewood, Colorado

ASA: Scholarly/Professional Society for Christians in Sciences & Tech

July 18-21, 2025: In Person Annual Meeting with Sherol Chen as a Keynote

- Submit abstracts on Christianity & AI
- Apply for Student & Early Career Scholarships

<https://network.asa3.org/mpage/ASA2025>

Or email Hannah Eagleson at hannah@asa3.org

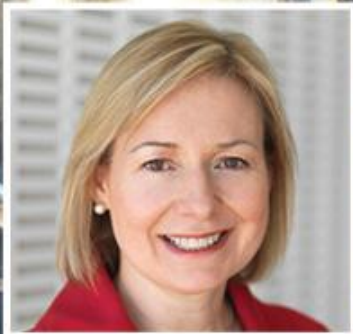


JOANNA NG

AI Technologist Founder & CEO

Devarim Design

Markham, Ontario



ROSALIND PICARD

Director of Affective Computing Research

MIT Media Lab

Cambridge, MA

WINTER SYMPOSIUM

“AI & Christianity”

ONLINE EVENT

Saturday

January 25, 2025

1 pm EST / 10 am PST



network.asa3.org/ws-25





Overview

AI and Faith: Mission

- AI and Faith brings the wisdom of the world's great religions to the discussion around the moral and ethical challenges of artificial intelligence.
- Convene and facilitate dialogue between AI technology creators and religious leaders to increase religious literacy and awareness of ethical issues
- Deepen our understanding of the influence and impact AI has on faith and the relevance of faith-oriented values and wisdom on AI
Engage with ethicists and policy makers to educate civil leaders and the public on the mutual influences of AI, faith, and ethics

AI and Faith: Community

Expert Community *(190 people currently)*

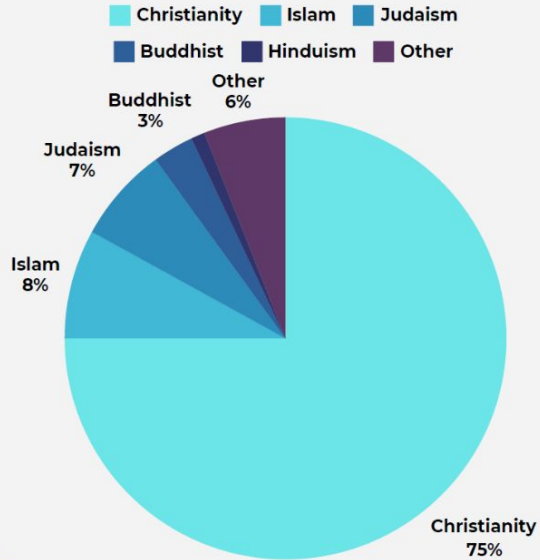
- Advisors bring knowledge and expertise from their disciplines to discussions, provide content and fill speaking roles, and may participate in projects and other activities *(136 people)*
- Contributing Fellows volunteer in four operational teams to provide our content and programs and support our community *(37 people)*
- Research Fellows deepen conversations among AIF and other experts, undertake research projects, and serve as resource to operational teams *(17 people)*

Additional Partner Liaisons and Professional and Supporting Members

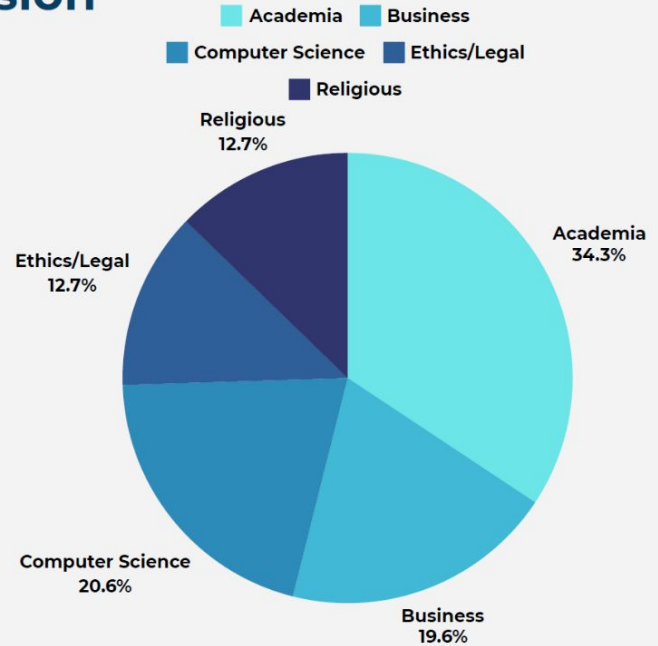
- Partner Organizations *(21 organizations)*
- Supporting Members *(24 people)*

AI and Faith: Demographics

Religion

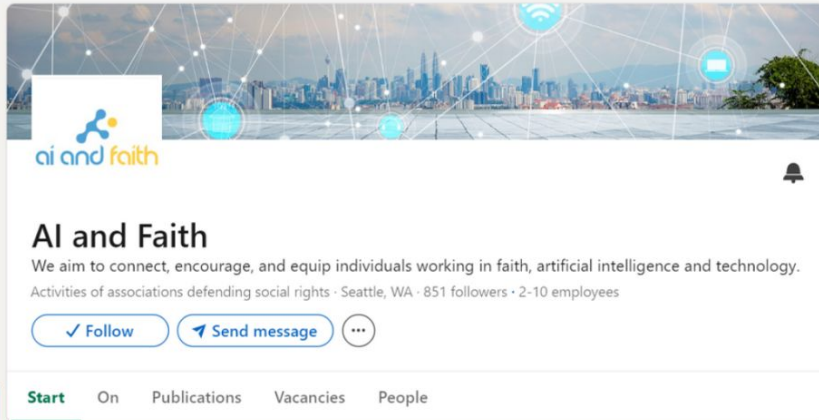


Profession



AI and Faith: External Activities

Social media posts (LinkedIn, Facebook and X)



Website news, features, interviews, book reviews



AI and Faith: External Activities

Podcasts



Apple Podcasts



Spotify



Amazon Music



Youtube music

1,200+ plays
20+ episodes

Monthly Newsletters



April 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to the April 2024 issue of the AI and Faith Newsletter! William Barylko starts us off with a thought-provoking podcast review of a Freakonomics interview with Fei-Fei Li. Next, Marcus Schwarting reflects on the recent Missional AI Conference from AIF where he was a key presenter. Check out also a partner article from [Smartacus](#) discussing how the challenge of AI-driven misinformation presents an opportunity to reform our media ecosystem.

Articles of note dive into the growing problem of falsified academic papers, AI-driven discrimination, and the dangers of uncensored LLMs. We also point you to the newly released Newsguard's automated tool to track election-related misinformation. This is one example of resources that will be featured in our upcoming misinformation hub. Stay tuned!



AI and Faith: External Activities

Programs



- Conferences and other convenings
- Educational material (courses)
- Partner events

Highlights from the Conference: Generating Wisdom: Artificial Intelligence and the Bible

 By Marcus Schwartzing  August 16, 2024

On July 25-26 2024, the Museum of the Bible and AI and Faith held a conference titled "Generating Wisdom: Artificial Intelligence and the Bible." Speakers came from both humanities and technical backgrounds to address the opportunities and challenges posed by using AI in biblical translation and interpretation, as well as the application of biblical wisdom to AI as a technological and cultural phenomenon. AI and Faith was well represented at the conference, with members attending and speaking. Below are summaries of the talks.

Conference Takeaways: 78th Annual Meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA)

 By AI and Faith  September 30, 2024

The theme of diversity in a challenging time

The American Scientific Affiliation (ASA) is a long-standing network of scientists, educators, and professionals dedicated to their Christian faith and scientific integrity. Gathering at the end of July in the heat of



AI and Faith: Interval Activities

Virtual Events

- Town Halls – Topical meeting open to all experts and members (*3-4 events/year*)
- Salons – Interview of an AIF or other expert, with discussion (*6-8 events/year*)
- Research Seminar – Monthly academic research seminar
- Brown Bag/Agora – Directed conversation among a group of experts on a specific theme

AI and Faith: Interval Activities

Community Building

- Mighty Networks – Private social media platform for information and conversation
- Affinity Groups – Regularly meeting groups around a shared interest
 - Catholic, Hispanic, Buddhism, Faith & Work, Stories & Gaming
- In-person Meetings – Occasional in-person meetings in specific geographic areas
 - Boston, Seattle, Southern California (LA area)

AI and Faith: Partners



AI and Faith: How to get involved?

1) Attend Salons,
Town Halls,
Research
Seminars

2) Engage in
discussion on
Mighty Networks
and LinkedIn

3) Write an
article for the
Editorial team
for the
newsletter

4) Join a Team
or Project

**How do you want to contribute to
the organization?**

GENERATIVE AI

HYPOTESIS

Can ai be creative like humans

BACKG ROUND

What is Nature?

Things that are found in nature

What is artificial?

Things that are made by humans



INTELLIGENCE

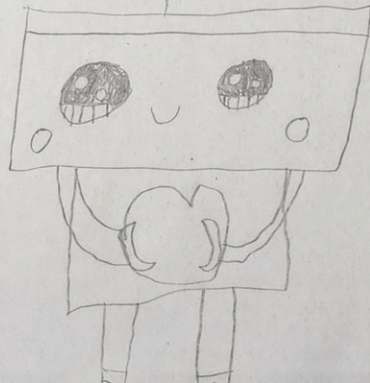
Being smart

What is natural intelligence?

Animals that are intelligent

What is artificial intelligence?

Smart machines.



EXPERIMENTS

Ask AI to make

creative pictures

CONCLUSION

AI can be creative like humans but it

can also make mistakes



Faith and AI Social

*Meet your neighbors
@NeurIPS 2024*



Panelists



Muhammad Aurangzeb Ahmad

maahmad@uw.edu

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Background: PhD in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota. Spent a year in a Master program in Christian Theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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Fun Facts: Runs the *Islam and Science Fiction* Project. Humanities Washington Speaker



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maahmad/](https://faculty.washington.edu/maahmad/)

Educational and Professional Background

He received his B.S.E. (2013) and M.S. (2014) in biomedical engineering and a Ph.D. (2019) in industrial engineering from Arizona State University (ASU).

Research Interests

Developing statistical machine learning models for **fusing high-dimensional, heterogeneous, and multi-modal data**. Work supports decision-making in military, remote sensing and healthcare, with a focus on **Federated Learning/Distributed Computing** (e.g., heterogeneous clients, fairness), **Spatio-temporal neural networks** (e.g., ConvLSTMs, attention-based models), and **Image registration/fusion** (e.g., CNNs)

He has also served as Chair of the INFORMS Data Mining Society (~500 members) and Standing President of IISE Data Analytics and Information Systems Division (~2000 members).



Nathan Gaw

Assistant Professor of
Data Science, Air Force
Institute of Technology,
Wright-Patterson AFB,
Ohio

David O'Hara

david.ohara@augie.edu

David O'Hara is Professor of Philosophy, Religion, and Environmental Studies, Director of Sustainability; and Clara Lea Olsen Professor of Christian Values at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA.

His teaching focuses on the history of ideas, interreligious studies, semiotics, animal cognition, sustainability, and environmental law.

His research interests include designing robots for environmental care, and the ethics of robots for human medical and spiritual care. He works with IBM Developer to create Call For Code challenges for #TechForGood.



Dirk Padfield

padfield@google.com



Professional: Research Engineer at Google Deepmind (6 years), previously at Amazon (4 years), GE Global Research (12 years), and adjunct professor at RPI for several courses.

Research Interests: Long-context multimodal memory for LLMs, Machine Translation, NLP, ASR, and image analysis (segmentation, tracking, registration, classification).

Education: Ph.D. in Computer Science from RPI, MS in EE from PSU, and BS in EE and International Studies from PSU. Two semesters of study abroad at AUC in Cairo, Egypt.

Spiritual journey: Member of the Baha'i Faith. "Pioneered" with family as a child to Norway for 12 years. Volunteered for a year of religious service at the Baha'i World Center in Israel. Studied Arabic and Islamic studies in Egypt. Fascinated by the relationship between science and religion. Actively study the interconnectedness of different faiths.

Professional: Senior Program Manager Google (11 years). Prior to joining Google, she spent 15 years as a Senior Program Manager at SAIC leading programs for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Defense (DoD), British Petroleum (BP) and Athens 2004 Olympics. She served as a Signal Corps Officer in the US Army and trained over 1400 US Army officers.

Education: BS in Electrical Engineering from the United States Military Academy, West Point, NY.

Correna is a Greek Orthodox Christian actively supporting the ministries of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta, including religious education and the initial development of the Metropolis' website. She currently serves on the advisory board of St. John Catholic School in North Charleston, SC. She served 10 years as lead for Google Serve and Giving Week fundraiser for My Sister's House, a shelter for women/children escaping domestic abuse.



Correna Panagiotou

correnapanagiotou@gmail.com

Breakout Session *Would You Rather?*

Nathan Gaw

Results



AI and Faith

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- ▶ Tell us about conferences, podcasts, and your own speaking activity by contacting programs@aiandfaith.org
- ▶ Have an idea for a research project? Reach out to research@aiandfaith.org
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