

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



AI, humanity, concerns and constraints

Dear Friends,

There has been a lot of speculation recently about Artificial Intelligence. In terms of industry it could be the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution! So there are massive rewards in developing and using it, but there is concern – even among the developers - to consider the ethical questions. Already when you use a website there are cookies which enable a response and which offer possibilities linked to your browsing, auto-systems on phone lines and in lifts and automated responses at train stations (too often apologising for late trains) but AI can think for itself and create new possibilities.

We have also had warnings about AI. In science fiction, Isaac Asimov wrote about the Laws of Robotics which were necessary to pre-programme into robots; in the Terminator films a future is predicted where machines have taken over violently from humans. More recently the TV series Humans looked at the near future where an almost human robot could work within the home and the consequences as the family relationships are affected. Soon it emerges that some of the robots were designed (by humans, of course) for other reasons and are not subject to the same constraints.....

Perhaps the most worrying aspect is that human error or folly could affect our development of a new form of "life". It is all too easy, it seems, for something which is intended to be good to have unforeseen side-effects. In the story of Genesis we see the goodness of creation marred by human ambition and selfishness. Being

human, we can aspire to greatness but so often let ourselves down.

The creativity of the human race is a great gift, but it is a gift to use wisely. When we see machines and procedures being used to bring healing we can be proud of that, and our ability to bring power to homes and communities, to communicate widely, to provide reliable food sources is all laudable. However, it is clear that not everyone shares in the good things – if you are born in the "wrong place" where there is a lack of resources, conflict, natural catastrophe you will find it hard to find opportunities to share in what others have. This is a big challenge today as significant numbers of people try to move to find a better and safer life. Pictures of a little boy's body being pulled from a beach remind us of our shared humanity. We must work and pray to find a better way than this.

Our shared humanity has led – on this occasion – to some changes in attitude, but we must all be aware that the need is truly exceptional. Christianity teaches us to Love God and Love our neighbour as ourselves: and Jesus clarifies this in the parable of the Good Samaritan showing us that the neighbour could be anyone. We cannot see others as de-personalised groups to be ill-treated and ignored.

We live in a world of contradiction, where we can put massive effort into projects such as developing AI for reasons which are rather unclear, while still allowing injustice, poverty, hunger and disease to continue in many parts of the world despite there being resources around to sort out many of these problems. It is our human

capacity for error or sinfulness which takes us this way. Maybe one day if we do develop AI and give it Laws of Governance which dictate that logical and intelligent decisions are made, we might find our unwillingness to change is forced to address these issues. Maybe. However, a Christlike care and vision of sacrificial love seems to me a greater way to take, not from cold logic but from the warmth of God's love at work in our lives.

Love, Jo

Harvest

There are so many wonderful foods, fruits and vegetables and often we don't know a great deal about them. So to get us into the Harvest Supper Quiz mood here are some facts about the humble apple. Yes, it has even been scientifically proven that an apple a day keeps us healthy but did you know that:

1. There are more than 2,500 varieties of apples
2. Apples contain no fat, sodium or cholesterol and are a good source of fibre.
3. Apple varieties range in size from a little larger than a cherry to as large as a grapefruit. The largest apple ever picked weighed 3 pounds.
4. Apples are a member of the rose family.
5. The top apple producers around the world are China, United States, Turkey, Poland and Italy. Apples account for 50 percent of international deciduous fruit tree production.
6. It takes about 36 apples to create one gallon of juice.

Fiona and John Earle will be able to tell you many more facts about the delicious varieties that they grow!

How marvelous it is to have such a great variety of food and it's great to give thanks and praise to God for all that we have received at our Harvest Festival and whilst acknowledging and giving thanks for how much we ourselves have to think about those who do not have enough.

This year we will be collecting food for the Foodbank, for those who live in Hertford who have not got enough to feed themselves or their family and also giving cash donations to the Bishop's Harvest Appeal. (See list opposite)

The Bishop's Appeal is all about building Hope, hope for the disabled children in Rukungri, Uganda, by building schools, who may otherwise not be educated and thus live in utter poverty and destitution. (See page 4).

Jo

All Saints Church • Hertford

HARVEST QUIZ AND SUPPER

SATURDAY 3 OCTOBER 2015
In St John's Hall
7.00pm
 Please Sign Up at the Back of the Church

SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 2015
HARVEST FESTIVAL
Family Service
10.00am
 Choral Communion - 6.30pm

ALL SAINTS CHURCH
 Queens Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG13 8AE
 For All Services Please Visit www.allsaintshertford.org