



The Cultural Christian, Ai Fear Factor, and Business Divide

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Abstract— *Cultural Christianity functions as a type of common behavior that harmonizes the secular and the sacred, and often as a trend with influence for the growth of merging spirituality with business. Business mogul Elon Musk for example professes to practice religious integrity based on Christian principles but not religion itself. Musk believes that if a culture loses its religion it starts to “decline” (The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast, 2024, 35:35). Musk calls himself a cultural Christian as a result. Another example, Atheist/scientist Richard Dawkins holds the same philosophy and often publically states he’s a cultural Christian. He offers further explanation that Christianity can exist as the “decent” way of life but no one needs to adopt a belief in it to enjoy it (LBC, 2024, 1:53-1:55). Christian principles can work as a well-accepted framework for the endowed or business world, in regards to corporate responsibility (CSR). Business elites are safe to value them with developing scientific controversial innovations like AI. One inquiry looks at whether business integrates better with Christianity despite innovative disruption.*



Keywords— *culture, Christianity, AI, business, integration, Elon Musk*

I. INTRODUCTION

A development in contemporary business ethics today is the identity of the cultural Christian. Anyone from a nation founded on Christianity can live a culturally Christian life, without faith, and still enjoy the fruits of it as foundational, like working with your hands to gain respect (Holy Bible (NIV), 2011, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12), and seasonal business endeavors like Christmas trees and Easter baskets. Cultural Christianity functions like an “autonomous source of truth.” It exists in a system of thought, a divide that is both sacred and secular but endowed with Christianity (Kim et al., 2012, pg. 206). The controversy is minimal and non-problematic. Some scholars see this frame or model defined as “for how we ought to understand and categorize any and all human activities” (Epstein, 2024, pg. 8). Cultural Christianity works as a man-made frame, one that’s business-friendly, trendy, an AI bigot, and blends Christian perspectives and mores into secular areas of thought, and now with big business moguls.

Liu Xiao-feng of contemporary China may have been the first to label himself a “cultural Christian” who aspired to commit to a new type new world-thought (Green et al., 2020, p. 97). His influence on contemporary persons in a system of successful business persons or public figures who also labels themselves cultural Christians are Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and Space X, and famous evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins. An interesting inquiry to explore in this research focuses on content that surrounds their work to help to make sense of their cultural stance in support of Christianity rather than a spiritual belief in it.

Cultural Christian. Secular thinkers today confess that society can surely be better off with Christian principles. The content available for this research which includes two examples, Elon Musk and Richard Dawkins, suggests Christianity is the top contender. Wealth and profit is related and often times seen through the lens of Christ’s abundance (Holy Bible (NIV), 2011, John 10:10). There can exist in this scenario manufactured Biblical milieu “for the greater good” mentality (Barnhart and Turner, 2024, pg. 7). In fact, the “normative foundation for

business ethics” favors religious values, or “what is common across religions” (Kim et al., 2009, pg. 115-116). This normative can provide moral guidance or “guiding assumptions” within worldview (Kim et al., 2012, pg. 204). Elon Musk in a recent live interview on *Daily Wire* did exclaim he is a cultural Christian. In fact, with much kindness he believes that if a culture loses its religion it starts to “decline” (The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast, 2024, 35:35).

Positive Effect. News of Musk’s stance on Christianity hit the press like thunder, exciting articles from *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Christian Post*, and *The Freethinker*. It exasperated criticism and applause, and Mega Church Preachers like Greg Laurie encouraged Musk and all other cultural Christians to form a real relationship with Jesus (Pastor Greg Laurie, 2024, 0:45). Laurie added on his podcast “these men are acknowledging the positive effect that Christianity has had in the world, the positive effect Christianity has on a nation and on a person” (0:45). Over recent consumptions of fear regarding Musk’s AI technology, on March of 2023, guidelines to the dangers of the automated Tesla cybercab mirrored an ethical Christian determination (Barnhart and Turner, 2024, pg. 8). Elon Musk and “more than 1,000 scientists and professionals called for a minimum six-month pause on further development of advanced AI systems until a set of safety protocols can be developed” (pg. 8). AI technology can eliminate cultural Christianity for the sake of automation, and fear of AI can include a lack of it.

Biblical precept. This research indicates that cultural Christianity refutes purely scientific perspectives to social problems that can “plague contemporary organizations” who do business to amass wealth (Kim, et al., 2009, pg. 115). These “New Thought ideas” or autonomous ethical viewpoints open a door for prosperity preaching, or “prosperity theology” to argue that “a focus on poverty” or “lack” is “encouraged imbalance” and that when people learn to shift their thinking toward abundance, God can manifest wealth in their lives (Hutchinson, pg. 29).

All of this however pertains to a broad audience. Secular guidelines cannot fulfill moral standard but it can make life far more harmonious. In understanding prosperity thinking from a system that is predominantly cultural Christian, research shows acceptance for Biblical precepts without faith is occurring more often. AI technology works as a bigot in this sense because it cannot always work as a good steward of moral business practice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study works as a traditional inquiry that sifts through content regarding two public figures within the context of the research that comprises of academic journals, books, video interviews, audio podcasts, and a few secondary sources. One inquiry is whether business integrates better with cultural Christianity. Because Western views seem to prevail in the worldview paradigm this implies that it is a good choice. Where there is a divide that exists in the world market that “delegitimized the Biblical perspective in the public square” it can now be understood as “a matter of personal taste which we choose” (Pearcey, 2004, pg. 20-21). There is a need for Christian instruction. Moral relativism offers less satisfaction of “right verses wrong” and what the ethical basis is to enforce (Kim et al., 2012, pg. 206).

Prosperity Theology. The fact that prosperity theology exists in Christ’s teachings, interpreted as the “abundant life” tends to go well with anyone (ESV, 2001, John 10:10). Elon Musk accepts cultural Christianity because of the value and not the fact. Value is what we perceive as socially constructed meanings, whereas fact is what we perceive as publically verifiable truth (Pearcey, 2024, pg. 106). Biblical ideas regarding prosperity filters into worldview, or commodity “when comparing the secular and scriptural views of wealth and profit accumulation” (Barnhart and Turner, 2024, pg. 6). Abundant life is often applied to financial success (Hutchinson, 2014, pg. 31). The assumption here is that Christian doctrine can be viewed as financially reasoned rhetoric.

Dr. Jordan B. Peterson’s 2024 podcast interview with Elon Musk at the Gigafactory Texas revealed that atheists and scientists are willing to adopt the ethical standards directly derived from Christian doctrine. The interview expresses the social benefits and value. To Musk, who appeared very likeable in tone stated that he was “not a religious person” though the teachings of Jesus are “good and wise” (The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast, 2024, 1:12:30). And while Musk has spoken to Richard Dawkins on occasion, he confessed he preferred Christian principles. “I think they are very good” (1:14:10). And finally he exclaimed, “I’m probably a cultural Christian” (1:14:30). This change of heart with secularists brings to light that worldview cannot only comprise of secular thought. It needs moral reverence if we want to live and make money. “Our worldview forms the context within which we organize and build our understanding of reality. It is the presuppositions we have about the nature of reality, knowledge, morality, and life’s meaning and purpose” (Kim et al., 2009, pg. 116).

Presuppositions. Dawkins is outspoken with concerns about the growth of Islam in the United Kingdom. He persists that Christianity has higher value (LBC, 2024, 1:55). He believes Christianity is “fundamentally decent” (1:53). This amalgam is cultural Christianity. “There is this belief that this set of axiomatic presuppositions, it’s correct” (The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast, 2024:15:50). The presupposition is that an enriched life is equated with Christianity, one with deeper meaning. It can help build humanity. The religious conservative and the secular thinker can share the same values and cultural fair. But the true meaning of Christmas or Easter, in the Christian context, is left to the wayside. But making seasonal money works as a fruitful benefit to society.

Secularists may only understand that Christmas shoppers and Easter baskets are “attempts to integrate spirituality and religion into business practice” (Kim, et al., 2009, pg. 115). Spectacular religious holiday fair can be joyfully entertained without regard to celebrating the birth of Christ. Secularists can shop for gifts every year, spend money, over spend, and spend time with family, eat pumpkin pie, and prosper. Thus, due to public popularity there is just a lot of money to be made with the cultural milieu that surrounds Christmas. Holiday pleasure works for anyone.

Greater works. Some further exploration can be subjective but Biblical truth does have a legacy behind it. Biblical precept teaches one will do “greater works than these” (Holy Bible (NIV), 2011, John 14:12). Men and women have a lot of faith in attaining what is great or extraordinary; the rhetoric of “Make America Great Again” is one example of political reverence to cultural esteem. There is a sense of God-like possibilities in the stew of cultural excellence. Youth often see Musk as “extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional qualities” and all the while being a cultural Christian (Zelinsky, 2023, pg. 2).

III. ANALYSIS

Those who live out cultural Christianity do not hurt over the pressure to believe in something from the Bible. This may not be entirely clear, because the most popular faith can hold much interest if one were to take a leap forward. There are many sources that claim that “American Protestant churchgoers believe that financial prosperity is part of God's plan” (Kumar, 2023, para 1). So America can look great again with God’s special attention, especially on financial workmanship. Texas Preacher Joel Olsteen is open about practicing Prosperity Theology and

he has accumulated much wealth with his best-selling Christian books, which sells very well at all major airports as major retailers (Rudnycky and Osella, 2017, pg. 50). Money is involved in Christianity, but Christian guidelines can be of help to leadership that understands wealth as abundant living.

The common individual may not understand the relationship between Genesis and Evolution, but the possible reality of AI diminishing human abilities and “supplanting humans in the workplace” can eliminate interest in ethical concern to Christians or cultural Christianity, and this concern can affect anyone considering ethical issues (Barnhart and Turner, 2024, pg. 6). The implications of AI, of course is an illustration that without morality or religious value some decay can disrupt everything. Like an AI bigot, cultural Christianity has no loyalty to Jesus but AI develops no loyalty to anyone.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This inquiry engages from a qualitative perspective to work as an analysis of the subject of cultural Christianity. Content that was used comprises of academic journals, books, video interviews, audio podcasts, and a few secondary sources. One inquiry is if business integrates better with Christianity. This implies that it is a good perspective by default. Moral relativism on the other hand fails to satisfy a standard of “right verses wrong” because it lacks an ethical basis to enforce (Kim et al., 2012, pg. 206).

V. CONCLUSION

The video content with Elon Musk was the central focus and his statements about cultural Christianity on *The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast* inspired this article. Richard Dawkins adds good commentary to what a cultural Christian is as a result of public interest. For Dawkins, “Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist” (Pearcey, 2004, pg. 106). But he ultimately praises Christianity as a good peacemaker for happiness for any society. Dawkins reiterated during a TV interview on the UK show LBC, “If I had to choose Christianity over Islam, I would choose Christianity every single time” (LBC, 2024, 1:45). To Musk, cultural Christianity is most likely the one connection you need to religion because society has to consider “...the principles that lead to the most amount of happiness over time, not just present day” (The Jordan B. Peterson Podcast, 2024, 1:16:35). This research explores some fascinating thoughts from these two public figures, Elon Musk and Richard Dawkins. Hypothetically, AI bigotry can develop and

cause more harm than people as cultural Christianity is a hot topic and is anticipated to evoke discussion in the future.

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