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Why In The Fourth Industrial Revolution Are Miracle Churches Attracting So Many People?

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In 2013 machine learning took off as deep learning – the ability of computers to teach themselves new concepts and ideas – became a reality. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is a revolution unlike any we have seen before because it ushers in a world in which machines can continually learn making it possible for them to make intelligent decisions based on the data they collect. Put differently not only can machines do the same manual work that people do ie plough a field of corn, they can also solve problems, diagnose diseases and often more accurately than people calculate outcomes. This reality makes many people uncomfortable and people are beginning to ask what does it mean to be human? In this paper I explore how the rise of grass eating, petrol drinking, doom-spraying pastors that have been dominating our headlines since the 2015 is not because South Africans are somehow unique or more superstitious than other nations but rather that this phenomena echoes the reactions we have seen at the advent of the previous three Industrial Revolutions in various parts of the world. This paper compares the religious phenomena we are currently seeing to the religious expressions we saw during the previous three Industrial Revolutions. It then unpacks why at this moment in South Africa's history we are witnessing the particular religious reaction to the Fourth Industrial Revolution that we currently see and what the socio-political implications of this might be for South Africa.

Primary author: Prof. FRAHM-ARP, Maria (UJ)

Presenter: Prof. FRAHM-ARP, Maria (UJ)

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