

Fourth Quarter Strategies – Saturday, February 10, 2018

Over the past thirty-plus years, my younger brother Dr. Pat Langley has collaborated in publishing over 300 articles and papers and has also authored and co-authored eight books on the topic of Artificial Intelligence (AI). He chose the career path in the early days of the discipline going back to his studies at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where he received his Ph.D. in Cognitive Psychology in 1979. That's when he started his work in the brand new discipline as a research associate. Certainly his expertise in this area does not qualify me to write on the subject in any depth, but I do have some thoughts I've been wanting to convey for quite some time.

Recently I came across a short article in the renowned London periodical *THE ECONOMIST* which has been in publication since 1843. I found the article entitled *Human Obsolescence – How quickly will machines sweep man aside?* quite intriguing. The writer's research was limited to simply polling hundreds of attendees at two AI conferences. Certainly the opinions and hopes of the attendees are obviously biased. In summary, the study indicates that machine learning is making positive strides, but humans will not be obsolete for quite some time. The most optimistic attendees feel that could happen by mid-21st century while the most pessimistic believe we're possibly 200 years or more away from that event. Now it's time to get to the heart of the matter.

Just as we experienced the Industrial Revolution, we will one day experience the Artificial Intelligence Revolution. Machines will continue to do more and more tasks presently performed by humans, but there will still need to be a human element involved in many tasks. What we're really dealing with is storing and disseminating knowledge at an extremely fast pace in an efficient manner. Certainly man has his and her limitations in processing data in making decisions, but we also need to include the heart in those decisions. That's why I feel man will always need to be an integral part of the solution in all critical disciplines.

The field of medicine is now utilizing data through the power of machine learning along with the greatness of the human mind to make huge strides in how critical diagnoses are made regarding medical treatment. Doctors make mistakes and machines make mistakes, but when the two work together there's an opportunity for fewer errors. Perhaps we can even apply the biblical principle from Ecclesiastes 4:9 where we're instructed *"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work."* Together we can experience what's known in business as synergy where two agents can produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects. Cooperative interaction and combined effort can often improve results.

All this appears to be good, but I believe there's an underlying agenda in all this energy to harness knowledge and learning. Since the beginning of time man has wanted to be like God. In fact, many desire to be gods. Well, I can't change what appears to be natural in man and woman, but I can point out a flaw when I see one. In Isaiah 29:16 the prophet instructs Israel *"You turn things upside down, as if the potter were to be like the clay! Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'He did not make me'? Can the pot say to the potter, 'He knows nothing'?"*

I'm sure we'll continue to make great strides in blending machine function with human function for the good of mankind. I just hope we don't lose sight of Who is really in control and think we are more than we are. In 1 Corinthians 1:25 Paul tells us *"For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."* If anyone loses track of this critical precept, perhaps they have already taken a step toward their own obsolescence.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are instructed *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."* We'd all be wise to heed these salient words penned by King Solomon 3000 years ago. God can certainly take care of Himself, but don't let yourself become obsolete!

Passages to Ponder: Job 21:22; Ecclesiastes 8:7-8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-2; Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Peter 1:3-4

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Job 21:22 New International Version (NIV)

²²“Can anyone teach knowledge to God,
since he judges even the highest?”

Ecclesiastes 8:7-8 New International Version (NIV)

⁷Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to come?

⁸As no one has power over the wind to contain it,
so no one has power over the time of their death.

As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

¹³If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Philippians 1:9-11 New International Version (NIV)

⁹And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

1 Timothy 6:20-21 New International Version (NIV)

²⁰Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, ²¹which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.

Grace be with you all.

2 Peter 1:3-4 New International Version (NIV)

Confirming One’s Calling and Election

³His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.