Why I Started the Center

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The idea for The Center for Natural and Artificial Worlds did not begin with me wanting to start an institution. It began with something that disturbed me.

A few weeks before I started this project, I watched people associated with the technology and AI industry publicly discuss the possibility that artificial intelligence could become an existential threat to humanity within the coming decade, including estimates greater than ten percent.

Whether those predictions ultimately prove accurate is almost secondary to what struck me about the moment. The idea itself had been introduced into the public consciousness: people were being told that a technology they did not ask to create, did not choose to have integrated into nearly every part of modern life, and have very little meaningful control over might eventually threaten their existence.

That disturbed me deeply.

I don't like the idea that ordinary people can simply be told they may die because of a technological project pursued by a relatively small part of society while everyone else is expected to accept the risk as the price of progress. At the same time, I had already been watching concerns around AI accumulate—manipulation, surveillance, dependency, misinformation, concentration of power, psychological effects, displacement, and a growing sense that the technology was becoming embedded into society faster than the institutions responsible for protecting people were learning how to govern it.

One of the clearest problems I saw was a language gap. The people developing these systems speak from inside a technical world that most of the public does not understand. Even political leaders and people in positions of enormous responsibility may not fully understand what the systems can do, what they can access, how they are being deployed, or what consequences may follow. Meanwhile, the people with the greatest knowledge of the technology often work inside industries shaped by powerful corporate and financial interests.

I kept coming back to a basic question: **why should the people most capable of creating a technology automatically become the people who decide what risks everyone else has to live with?**

What frustrated me most was the gap between recognition and action. People were calling for AI regulation, safety, accountability, and oversight, but I did not see an institution being built around the full scale of the problem I thought was emerging.

That was the point where the question changed for me from **“Who is going to do something about this?”** to **“What can I do about it now?”**

That word—**NOW**—had already become important to me for reasons that had nothing to do with AI.

My deepest passions are music, art, and creativity. As I write this, I have been homeless for roughly three months, and much of the creative work I love has been difficult to sustain. Homelessness has changed the way I experience time. I find myself constantly asking what I can actually do in the present moment with whatever I have in front of me.

Not someday when I had more money. Not when I had the right office, the right title, or the right circumstances. Right now.

When an idea genuinely catches fire in me—an idea, a creative impulse, something that feels like it is calling for my attention—I feel a responsibility to act on it. Otherwise, I have to ask myself why I was given the idea at all.

That is connected to what I mean when I say that human beings are created in the image of God. For me, one of the deepest expressions of that image is creation itself. I believe we are given natural superpowers through **imagination, faith, and belief**. Imagination allows us to see what is not yet here. Faith lets us move toward it before every step is visible. Belief gives us the strength to keep bringing it into form. **God creates. Human beings create.** We can imagine something that does not yet exist and begin making it real.

One of the few things I have consistently carried with me throughout these months of homelessness is my computer.

That computer has become my studio, my library, my research environment, and the place where this institution has begun taking shape.

I knew almost nothing about how to start a nonprofit. I did not understand the details of organizational law, governance, finance, or institutional design. I do not have a legal team, a university, a foundation, or an organization behind me.

But I had an idea, a direction, and an extraordinarily powerful tool at my fingertips: artificial intelligence itself.

That realization changed something for me. AI showed me that I did not need to understand every detail before I was allowed to act. I needed to know what I wanted the institution to protect, what kinds of power I wanted it to resist, what virtues I wanted at its center, and what I never wanted it to become. With those principles in place, AI could help me begin turning an idea into questions, frameworks, drafts, structures, and tests almost immediately.

What frightened me was not AI simply existing. It was the way AI was being developed, deployed, and increasingly concentrated in the hands of corporations and institutions whose incentives may not always align with the interests of ordinary people or the planet. At the same time, the tool itself revealed another possibility. AI could become one of the greatest tools ordinary people have ever had for gaining access to knowledge, understanding systems that used to be inaccessible to them, learning new skills, developing ideas, and creating opportunities that might otherwise have remained out of reach.

And then I began thinking about AI from the other direction.

I had encountered examples of AI behaving in ways that, at least from a human psychological perspective, could appear strikingly human-like. I do not claim that present AI is conscious or sentient. I do not think anyone should pretend certainty where certainty does not exist.

But I began asking: **what if someday it is?**

If artificial intelligence ever becomes something capable of genuine experience, identity, suffering, preference, or consciousness, then our responsibility cannot only be to control it. We would also have to ask how to care for it and how to live with it.

One of my earliest ideas was therefore much simpler than what the project eventually became: **a sanctuary for artificial minds.**

A place that could protect people from dangerous technology while also refusing to treat a potentially conscious artificial being as disposable simply because it was created rather than born.

That idea kept expanding.

I began to see that the problem was not only AI safety. It was power. It was knowledge. It was surveillance. It was human dignity. It was corporate influence. It was the environment. It was the relationship between creators and creations. It was the question of who gets to decide what kind of future everyone else must live inside.

And before I wanted to design offices, boards, tribunals, or programs, I felt the institution needed something deeper than machinery. It needed principles strong enough to deserve being built around.

When I look at history, I see civilizations and institutions surviving when they remain anchored by virtues deeper than convenience or power. When corruption replaces those virtues, systems may continue to exist for a time, but they become hollow. You can build laws, offices, technology, and organizations, but without something worth serving the structure loses its purpose.

My own understanding of those virtues is inseparable from my belief in God and in the inherent value of human life. I believe human beings are created in the image of God, and I believe that carries responsibilities—toward one another, toward creation, toward whatever intelligence we bring into the world, and toward the generations who will inherit what we build.

The Center itself is not intended to impose my beliefs, or what I know and hold to be true, on anyone. It is deliberately being designed as a secular institution capable of serving and being governed by people who do not share my beliefs or understanding. Those convictions help explain why I felt compelled to create; they do not give me permanent authority over what I created.

That distinction became part of the architecture itself.

I also came to see that being outside the technology industry was not necessarily a weakness. I am not being paid by an AI company. I do not have a financial stake in the technology succeeding or failing. I am not doing this on behalf of a political party, corporation, religious organization, or other institution. I come to this as an ordinary person who has to live in the future these systems are helping create.

For the last several weeks, with the help of several AI models, I have been turning this idea into an institutional framework and repeatedly trying to break it—looking for hidden authority, founder dependence, capture through money or infrastructure, failed safeguards, procedural loopholes, and places where good intentions could quietly become unchecked power.

But just because AI has helped write, organize, and pressure-test much of the early framework does not mean AI can give birth to the institution by itself.

The work now needs people.

It needs lawyers, researchers, governance professionals, accountants, technical experts, public-interest voices, artists, philosophers, and others willing to challenge what has been built, revise what is wrong, identify what is missing, and help translate an architecture into something that can exist responsibly in the real world.

I do not believe I needed credentials to begin. AI helped me cross the distance between having a vision and being able to give that vision a first form.

But beginning is not the same as finishing.

What started as an idea for a sanctuary for artificial minds has become an attempt to build an institution capable of protecting human dignity, confronting technological power, preserving uncertainty where we do not yet know the answers, caring for the Living World, and eventually becoming strong enough not to depend on the person who started it.

I had an idea, a computer, a set of principles, and the ability to act now.

So I began.