



A RESOURCE OF
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The Work of Our Hands

*Christian Ministry in the
Age of Artificial Intelligence*

ERLC RESEARCH TEAM



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FOREWORD

TECHNOLOGY SHAPES EVERY ASPECT OF the human experience. As a manifestation of the creation mandate God gave man and woman to cultivate and steward creation (Gen 1:28), technology is a reality that demonstrates humanity's ability to shape the world around us. The 21st century has witnessed an unprecedented explosion of technological advances, unmatched in the course of human history. The smartphone and social media, for example, have changed the way we curate and share our lives and information, providing us with access to knowledge in ways and at speeds once unfathomable. Technology has become an inseparable part of human existence, framing how we live and see the world.

While technology seeks to enhance human flourishing, we must ask ourselves about the implications of the technologies we utilize. As new technologies rapidly enter public life and become commonplace, our consideration of their theological and ethical impact is not keeping pace with their arrival. Technology is not a theologically or morally neutral tool; it is formative, shaping our behaviors and values, often toward the goal of efficiency. In other words, technology transforms us into a particular type of person whose lives are shaped around its use. Technology also amplifies our virtues and vices, as it can facilitate our behaviors toward honoring God or the "lusts of the flesh" (1 John 2:16). How we use technology matters because it communicates what we deem important as a society.

One area of concern in our technological age is the arrival of artificial intelligence (AI). Artificial intelligence routinely performs tasks that were once considered defining aspects of human intelligence, such as reasoning, problem-solving, decision-making, communications, and learning. Over the last few years, the prevalence of AI has transformed the way we perceive interpersonal relationships, education, work, warfare, and our understanding of what it means to be human. A theological and ethical framework for AI is not only necessary but also required for Christians to think through how AI, as a technological marvel, will shape human life and, subsequently, the course of human history. Just as technology as a whole is not neutral, neither is AI, as it shapes our understanding of God, ourselves, and the world around us. Artificial intelligence

is here to stay, and we must cultivate wisdom and discernment in how to best engage these new realities. How do we as Christians navigate a world in which AI technology seeks to function in almost every aspect of our lives?

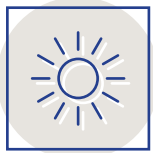
As we examine AI, it is essential to recognize that because all human beings are created in the image of God, we must consider the various implications of AI usage in light of human dignity and its impact on human activity and vocation. Southern Baptists have been at the forefront of calling Christians to consider the theological and ethical implications of AI for several years. The ERLC released the first faith-based statement on AI ethics in 2019 titled “Artificial Intelligence: An Evangelical Statement of Principles” (Appendix A). This statement, signed by over 70 leaders from various sectors of society, laid the groundwork for evangelical Christians to consider how the Christian worldview engages with AI and the issues that human beings face. In 2023, Southern Baptists adopted the first denominational statement as a resolution titled “On Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies” (Appendix B). Now, the ERLC is building upon that work by producing this practical guide on AI, which aims to equip churches with a resource that helps them consider the theological and ethical implications of AI in a way that is both accessible and forward-looking. This guide not only provides biblical and ethical principles for considering AI, but it also offers practical ministry scenarios in which we provide pastorally and ethically driven solutions to pressing questions of AI.

At the ERLC, we are committed to serving our churches by providing resources that help Southern Baptists address AI and a host of other ethical issues from a distinctly biblical perspective. We recognize the need for an explicitly Christian and pastoral approach to AI, as it will shape our work, life, and relationships. This church guide, as a part of our ministry assignment to serve and equip our churches on ethical issues, provides not only a theological and ethical framework on AI, but also provides practical considerations for our churches as they serve their congregations and communities with the gospel. It is our prayer that this guide will enable Christians to assess and use technological innovations in a way that maintains human dignity and fosters flourishing, while exercising biblical wisdom and moral discernment in an ever-changing world.

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THEOLOGICAL & ETHICAL FRAMEWORK



God, as our sovereign Creator, is the ultimate source of all truth, goodness, and beauty.

What makes an action morally good is often highly debated in society today. Some base their ethical decisions in perceived usefulness, mere profit, human-centered rules, or evolving definitions of virtue. However, the Christian ethic and way of living is rooted in the transcendent nature of God's revelation to us both in creation and most authoritatively in the scriptures. God is our infinite Creator, and we are his finite creatures. We do not create as he creates, nor are we able to define what is right or wrong. God, himself, is good and alone defines what is right and wrong, moral and immoral, as well as how we should live based on his own character. No matter the opportunities and challenges before us, especially with the rapid growth and deployment of artificial intelligence throughout our society, Christians first must look to God to know what is right and good.

Any faithful approach to AI and emerging technologies must be rooted in the transcendent nature of God and his sovereign control over all things, including even the most advanced AI systems. No technological development catches him off guard or can ever rival his sovereign control and power. Because God has chosen to reveal himself and his plan to us, we can trust and know that God's Word is more than sufficient for any and all questions, challenges, and opportunities we face in our ever increasingly digital world.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1; 104; 119:160; Isaiah 45:12, 18; John 1:3; Romans 1:19-20; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11



God made humanity in his very image, setting us apart from the rest of creation.

Christians recognize that being made in the image of God means, in part, that our value and dignity is not based on the things we do or contribute to society. Our value and worth is solely determined by how God has set us apart from creation by his divine and perfect will. While human beings often exhibit certain unique traits, attributes, or characteristics, our dignity as human beings is rooted in what God says about us, not our performance, perceived usefulness, or mere capacities.

In an age of AI where human value is often determined by usefulness or arbitrary concepts of dignity, the Christian ethic reminds us of the inherent dignity of all people as image bearers. All technologies, including AI, must only be developed, deployed, evaluated, and used in ways that champion the immeasurable dignity of all people.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7,15; 5:2; 9:6; Psalm 8:4-8; Isaiah 43:7



God has given us a distinct calling as human beings to cultivate and steward all of his creation for his glory and the good of our neighbors.

A Christian approach to AI and emerging technologies must be centered on the love of God and the love of neighbor, highlighting the inherent dignity of all people as distinct image bearers of God and stewarding creation for God's glory. Our work, including the creation of AI systems, is a good gift from God, and all God-honoring work—both in ministry and the marketplace—ought to be framed as part of our call to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Efficiency, convenience, and even profits are temporal goods that may be pursued but always within a larger framework of human dignity and creational stewardship. The love of God and neighbor must be front and center in any discussion of AI as we seek to cultivate and steward God's good gift of creation for his glory alone.

Scriptural References: Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15; Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:29-31; Luke 10:27; 1 Peter 4:10



As image bearers of God, we are designed for and called into a rich, authentic community with God and others.

As human beings, we are inherently relational beings who are designed by God for community with each other. God's Word tells us it is not good that man be alone. Despite many contemporary visions of humanity, we are not designed to live life as isolated, autonomous individuals but as dependent individuals in community. AI routinely mimics or imitates certain human-like qualities, such as presenting itself as a person (I, me, we) rather than a machine or being deployed to meet certain felt human needs. But it should never be a substitute for or replacement for a rich embodied community, ultimately with God and with other human beings.

In contrast to the ever efficient and self-centered nature of an overdependence and overreliance on technology, this vision of human community is often messy, time consuming, inefficient, and difficult. Yet, it is a beautiful reminder of the beauty of God's good design and creational order. Use of AI as a mediator of any type must be considered through this framework and designed to strengthen human-to-human connectivity, not substitute or replace it. Christians, of all people, ought to champion the authentic other-natured focus of true relationships and friendship, never ceding relational ground to machines that mimic or imitate traditional human characteristics.

Scriptural References: Genesis 2:18; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 12:25-27; Philipians 2:3-5; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 John 1:3; 4:16; Revelation 3:20



AI is not a neutral tool as it subtly, yet distinctly, shapes our understanding of God, ourselves as human beings, and the world around us.

All technology, including AI, are tools that we create and use as human beings, but these tools are not neutral as they mediate the values of the larger culture, pressing us toward its goals of efficiency and convenience. As God's image bearers and distinct moral agents, we bear a unique moral responsibility for the technologies we make and use, yet these tools also shape our view of the world around us.

Often we seek more technology to solve the very problems that technology itself has wrought. No technology is truly neutral, and we are disciplined by our tools, which conform us to the patterns of this world. We must slow down and take time to recognize these features of technology rather than uncritically reject or embrace these innovations. Rather, we must seek to critically engage these tools and cultivate wisdom and virtue in our approach to AI. Cultivating wisdom is central to the moral life especially in the pursuit and use of AI in any context as the central question must not be can we utilize these tools, but should we.

Christians must also recognize that the end and purpose of technology will not always align with that of our calling as image bearers to love God and our neighbors. We must never seek to employ AI and other emerging technologies in ways that diminish the dignity of any human being by using AI as a means to subvert the human calling as image bearers of God to shape the world around them.

Scriptural References: John 15:8; Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-26; Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 6:11; 1 Peter 1:14-15; 2 Peter 1:5-7



Discipleship and spiritual growth are not simply about transferring information, but transformation of the whole-person.

A Christian worldview is much more than simply a set of propositional beliefs. It also encompasses how we live in light of those truths, centered on the development of virtue and wisdom. Christian ethics reflects how we should live in light of who God is and what he has done through Christ on the cross. Discipleship and spiritual growth are dependent on faithfully teaching the whole counsel of God's Word and must also include how we are to live in light of those truths in our personal lives, our families, our churches, and throughout the entire public square.

While AI and other emerging technologies excel at transferring information, the goal of all godly discipleship, ministry, and teaching is to develop the whole person, including our minds, bodies, and hearts. Both inside and outside the church, AI must only be used in ways that complement this holistic transformation, rather than seek to short-circuit or cut short the process of maturation and development of wisdom. In transformation, the process is often as important as the goal.

Developing wisdom and virtue is not often efficient or convenient. Both require considerable time, resources, and energy, which push back against the teleological drive toward efficiency at all costs we find in emerging technologies. The goal of discipleship goes far beyond mere information transmission to a holistic transformation of the whole person.

Scriptural References: Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33; Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 9:23; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; 2 Corinthians 1:12; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-10; 3:9-10

PRACTICAL SCENARIOS

1 A church planting cohort meets regularly, and the topic of AI and sermon preparation came up. One church planter mentioned that he uses AI to aid in sermon development, particularly in outlining the passage, gathering resources, and explaining difficult passages in simple ways. Another planter mentioned that he knew a pastor of another church who used AI-drafted sermons that he lightly edited as needed. The planter did not see this as a problem because the pastor was still the one preaching the sermon to his people. But another planter mentioned that he felt unease at the use of these tools in sermon preparation, though he did want to know if there are ethical ways to use them, such as for research purposes.

The common concern mentioned was that, as bi-vocational or co-vocational church planters, they spend so much time in the community or at work that they do not have the time to sit and prepare sermons like their salaried, vocational counterparts. As a pastor and church planting coach, what would you say to them?

First, we must recognize these are realities that everyone in ministry faces in different seasons. Church planting and vocational ministry are extremely time consuming and overwhelming at times, yet are immensely rewarding and specific callings that God places on a man's life. We all must pray for and seek to support our leaders in the two central shepherding roles that God has called them to: equipping God's people through the ministry of prayer and teaching the Word. Given all of the demands on pastors, especially on church planters, they must prioritize the teaching of God's

Word above other important aspects of ministry, while also balancing the temptation to spend most of their time in the study. That balance requires wisdom, virtue, and discernment; all of which also require godly community, knowing one's specific context, and being aware of one's abilities in rightly handling God's Word.

Second, preaching is much more than simply delivering information; it involves the pastor studying God's Word to teach others. Preaching is an act of worshiping God and a way that God continually refines the man of God in Christlikeness. Thus, sermon preparation and the act of preaching aren't simply about gaining knowledge in order to teach God's Word to others. Instead, it involves the pastor steeping in it and watching the Holy Spirit transform his heart. An old saying reminds us of this truth: "You can't lead someone where you have never gone yourself." Pastors must first allow God to change them and then teach and preach out of that personal encounter with God.

Third, given the high calling of preaching and pastoral ministry, it is—broadly speaking—unwise and unethical to employ these tools as a substitute or replacement for the hard work of message preparation. A congregation inevitably suffers from teaching that does not arise from a pastor's deep, personal engagement with the Word of God, crafted in the context of the local church.

Finally, pastoral discernment is paramount when engaging AI. These tools are not neutral. They ingest specific information and are trained in ways that prioritize particular interpretations, traditions, and beliefs which may be opposed to Baptist convictions. Furthermore, these systems routinely make mistakes and gloss over important distinctions.

The process of sermon development is one of the ways that God refreshes and refines the heart of the preacher. If it is short-circuited, valuable and personal engagement with the text is lost. As a general rule, these tools are best to use once one has done the hard work of exegesis and research, a process which must be bathed in prayer and personal reflection. If used as one tool among many, AI can assist the pastor in preparation, but it should never be used to replace or substitute for the distinct calling upon the man of God to preach God's Word to God's people. Pastoral ministry and sermon preparation are not ultimately about efficiency or convenience, as we cannot rush or streamline the cultivation of wisdom and virtue. The goals of these

technologies will not always align with that of our God-given shepherding roles, and thus a commitment to using these tools in ways that only augment our work, never to replace or substitute for it, is requisite.

2 A ministry intern at your church is a seminary student with a large volume of reading for several of his classes. The amount of reading and the responsibilities of the internship are overwhelming, and sometimes he relies on AI to summarize theological books or commentaries to help with his studies and teaching preparation. As a pastor, his usage of AI has come to your attention. Should you address this issue with the intern, and if so, what would you say?

Similar to the situation in scenario #1, these tools should never be relied upon or trusted to provide the summaries needed for this type of work. Ministry preparation is not a quick, efficient, and convenient process. Pastors must personally put in the work and learn from the process rather than seek to short-circuit or streamline ministry preparation. This does not mean that the use of AI is always wrong, but that its use must be critically analyzed and handled in community with others.

One might consider counseling this student to slow down in the seminary training or incorporate much of what they are doing in school as part of their internship in order to alleviate some temptation to rely on these tools unethically. There is value in limits and admitting that one needs help, rather than resorting to these tools to bypass the formative process of ministry training and preparation. As finite creatures, none of us know what we do not know, and this is especially true for those younger in their faith training for ministry.

Another element to consider is that many professors and institutions ask students to follow an honor code or AI policy. Thus, one cannot ethically claim to have read something if they didn't or had it summarized by AI. We must seek integrity and honesty above all else, even when that means that we may earn a lower grade than desired on an assignment or in a course. One's honor and integrity mean more than a few more points

on an assignment, as we will give an account before God for how we stewarded the gifts that God has granted us to participate in, including seminary ministry training.

One key question for all ministry leaders is what is gained, what is lost, and what has changed with the various technological advances, including AI. These tools are not neutral and lead to ecological and widespread fundamental changes rather than simply adding something more to traditional ministry preparation.

3 A youth pastor overheard some students in the church's youth group discussing their use of ChatGPT or other AI software on a number of school assignments with some noting they have never written a paper without using AI. The youth pastor is deeply concerned about the use of these tools and plagiarism, but also believes that there could be some benefit to using AI for editing or correcting one's work. How would you recommend the youth pastor address the situation with the students, and what suggestions should he make to them?

First, we would encourage the pastor to follow up with the students and ask a lot of questions. Many students use these tools without any real reflection on school policies, what these tools are doing to them, or how these tools might rob them of the true end and purpose of education. Asking what they are doing, how they are doing it, and what is their rationale for using it might unearth some key discussions about the value and purpose of education, the need to make mistakes in order to learn from them, and some key indicators of their motivation in using them (i.e., being overwhelmed, taking too many classes, overly difficult or confusing assignments and expectations, and more).

Second, students (and teachers alike) need to recognize the ways that technology, especially AI, is shaping everything about our lives, including the nature and purpose of education. Education is not simply about transferring information and developing widget-making skills. It is not just about getting a good grade, passing a class, or even getting a diploma. It is ultimately about being transformed more into the likeness of

Christ as we seek to love God with our whole heart, soul, and *mind*, as well as loving our neighbor as ourselves. A Christian vision of education is rooted in whole person transformation, not simply information transfer.

Third, these students need to be disciplined in the value and privilege of education as a gift, not as a burden, punishment, or a way to prove their worth to others (including their teachers, parents, and guardians). Many students these days are burned out and overworked as they are pulled in a thousand different directions every moment of every day through their families, churches, schools, and especially their smartphones. Some students may feel that using AI is normal and accepted in their context, while others may admit that they shouldn't use it for assignments but feel that they must in order to do well or to simply submit assignments given the other demands on them.

Reminding them of their intrinsic worth as human beings, which is not dependent on their grades, as well as the reality that all of us make mistakes in our work, might lighten the burden and felt need to use these tools in unethical ways. You can also encourage them to have open and honest conversations with their teachers and administrators, as AI policies can vary from class to class and school to school. Some teachers encourage or even require the use of AI in the classroom, while others may act as if it doesn't exist. Asking questions and learning more about their situation will bring clarity.

Without a doubt, though, we must continually remind students that passing off someone's or something's work as your own is deceptive, constitutes plagiarism, and is sinful. These actions must be dealt with on an individual basis, and discussions about why this is unethical must be central to the conversation. Many students feel like their backs are up against a wall and using AI is their only release valve. Encouraging students to be open with their teachers and professors about their struggles with the material, challenges they face with writing and communicating, and personal issues they are facing will encourage and cultivate a spirit of openness, true learning, and virtue formation as we seek to grow in wisdom and maturity throughout our studies. No one, not even professors, have a total and complete grasp of all things. We must remember that the process of learning is part of the value of education, not simply getting the answer right or transferring particular knowledge or skills.

4 A member of your church came to you for some advice. She has been dealing with some issues and is seeking biblical counseling. The problem is that, due to the long waiting list to see a counselor, she is considering alternative options for care. After searching the internet, they found a counseling service that uses an AI chatbot for a form of talk therapy. She came to you to see if you have ever used AI for pastoral counseling issues, and wondered whether it was okay for her to go to a counseling service that uses AI.

First, we would encourage her for being brave enough to take the first step in reaching out and seeking help. We live in a day where many in our midst are suffering in silence and never let someone into the struggles, doubts, and fears they are facing. It is also deeply encouraging that she reached out to her pastor for advice rather than simply uncritically employing an AI tool. She is instinctively acting on the truth that we are created by God to be in an embodied community and need each other.

Second, while many situations may require a professional counselor or team, we would encourage the pastor to step into this situation and seek to learn more about the issues that she is facing. This can be done in consultation with women's ministry leaders and others. Encouraging the use of AI in these situations may lead to the unintended but implicit acknowledgement that the Church is not able to minister to those whom God has brought into the body and that this woman's issues are not important enough for her spiritual family to come alongside her. This is an opportunity for the church to be the Church and step into the lives of our people. Rather than encouraging the use of AI, pastors and ministry leaders can help recommend and seek out additional help as needed so that this type of counseling and therapy is centered in and flowing through the local church.

Third, we would highly discourage this use of AI as a form of therapy or counseling because what is needed is an embodied community of believers, and several individuals from that body to walk alongside this woman in her season of struggle. While chatbots seem like an efficient and effective way to help people who are struggling, these systems are not human, and there is something inherently impersonal and hollow about the information they provide. These systems may mimic or imitate an authentic, embodied,

believing community, but fundamentally they are simply providing information which is only part of the counseling journey. These tools are deeply impersonal even if a system indicates that it is a subject. Further, as indicated above, AI is not competent to rightly interpret and apply Scripture, which is critical in biblical counseling.

Use of these tools in this particular context go far beyond employing them as a tool to augment our ministry, but replacing fundamental aspects of our calling as the Church, especially as pastors and ministry leaders. The issues we face in ministry concerning real people's lives require significant investment in time, attention, and resources because people matter. Ministry is not efficient or easy, but is an immense blessing for all involved as part of God's good design for humanity and his Church.

5 A young church planter comes to you expressing frustration with being taken away from his ministry tasks to perform administrative ones. He does not have the resources to hire an administrative assistant, but not having one is impacting his ability to go out into the community and build relationships. He heard about an AI assistant that would relieve a significant portion of the burden that he is experiencing and is considering using it. His question to you is: Could AI be used ethically in handling administrative tasks in his church? What advice would you give?

Depending on the administrative tasks, this can be a great use of these tools in ministry because much of this type of work doesn't require a personal touch or interpersonal communication and engagement with others. Two questions should be considered if one is thinking about employing AI for these types of tasks.

First, are these tools being employed in ways that give the indication or could be perceived as if someone is interacting directly with the pastor or ministry staff but actually engaging with an AI system? Do we give the false impression that someone is behind these tasks, communications, etc.? We must be honest with everyone involved that these are automated tools, not authentic human interaction. While we want to avoid

unintentionally deceiving others, we also do not want to give the impression that our other responsibilities matter more than people, thus leading us to employ an AI in the name of making ministry more efficient.

The second question we must ask is: are these tasks that have been done by another staff member or volunteer in the past. Are we replacing key aspects of another person's ministry by employing these tools? It may be the case that a young person in the church or another member would love to come alongside a pastor or ministry leader to learn valuable ministry skills and assist this leader in ministry. It is not that the use of the tools is always wrong, but we must recognize that they are not neutral, will make mistakes (which are more consequential when dealing with people rather than rote tasks), take away ministry opportunities from others, and are inherently impersonal by their very nature.

These types of tools can be valuable additions to administrative tasks by speeding up certain processes, etc., and allowing ministry leaders to focus on the uniquely human aspects of their calling and roles in the church. However, these tools ought to be employed within a larger framework of ministry and human dignity, recognizing the limitations and impersonal nature of AI tools. Use them to augment, rather than to replace or substitute for the work of the ministry.

6 Your church is located in a neighborhood where a large number of migrants are moving in. Many of them are beginning to attend your church because of the various community programs you offer as part of your evangelistic efforts. The majority do not speak English, but you want to provide pastoral care for them in a way they can understand. The church is exploring ways to bridge the language gap, and a staff member heard about an AI translation assistant that can translate speech or writing in real time to one's native language. This opportunity excites your church, but before purchasing, a staff member asks if AI could be useful for language translation and what limitations users should be aware of. What would you suggest?

Depending on the particular usage of these tools, this can be a great way to leverage AI in the life of a church for Kingdom-oriented work. While the objective ought to be to raise up a local leader who can mentor and disciple these new neighbors in their native tongue (and perhaps even ultimately planting a church in your community), this application can be extremely beneficial when deployed with a critical approach to the nature of these tools and their benefits and drawbacks.

Part of the critical use of these tools will be recognizing that they are not going to provide a permanent, nor perfect solution for the language barrier. These tools will not always provide a perfect translation, as even some important nuance might be lost in translation, especially in regard to particular cultural references, idioms, and theological concepts. Those using these tools (both as speakers and receivers) will quickly recognize this, which is why they are also not a permanent solution. The goal would be to raise up a leader who can speak both English and the native tongue in order to facilitate authentic human-to-human connection and discipleship. Many in that community will also hopefully begin to assimilate into the local context and culture in particular ways, including growing in their knowledge and understanding of English. In order to facilitate this, the church should give serious, prayerful consideration to launching some sort of ministry that will teach English while sharing the gospel.

One must not overly rely upon these tools as well given that they will make errors, some incredibly inconsequential and others quite consequential in the life of a church. Some of this can be mitigated by having a native speaker review translations, especially any written documents. While the initial work might be able to be automated, a human review will also be necessary to smooth out translations. One would also be wise to review the terms and conditions of the services being employed to become aware of any content and usage restrictions, as well as the corporate values that inevitably shape the development and deployment of these tools, which may have inherent biases against Baptist beliefs and values.

The overall aim is to be able to minister and share the gospel message with all of those that God has placed in your community. Using these tools can be a great way to supplement and expand parts of your ministry, but these tools are also limited and must never be seen as a substitute for authentic human connection and discipleship.

7 Your church may not have the staff size or budget to create original content, such as video, logos, or artwork. You recognize the need to create high-quality content and are considering using AI to assist with this task for your church. Should you use AI-generated content in the church, and if so, should you indicate its origin?

This can be a complex question on a number of fronts, especially as we are called to value creative work as well as the creatives and artisans that God has brought to our congregations.

First, good art and media is incredibly important within a larger Christian worldview and ought to be of immense value both in and outside the Church. Beauty matters and reflects the character and nature of God. God also calls those whom he gives creative gifts to serve in the Church and use their talents to create beautiful things (i.e., Ex. 35; 1 Kings 7). Art and media are some of the many ways that creatives can serve their local church and communities, but we also must take great care in not overextending those gifts or guilt people for not being able to serve in particular seasons.

As far as possible, honoring people (and, ideally, paying them) for their work is encouraged. Some may choose to donate their time and talents if asked, but just as we would not expect an HVAC technician or roofer to work for free, we should not expect that of creatives either. We encourage pastors to establish those opportunities for creatives in the Church to use their gifts and talents for Kingdom work and invite them to be part of what God is doing through your local church. Desiring quality work and giving people opportunities to use their talents is something that should be encouraged in ministry.

Second, using AI-generated content and art is not always wrong, but before considering if and when it might be appropriate to use, we should consider what outsourcing this material to a machine may communicate to those in our church. Utilizing these tools may rob someone of the opportunity to serve their church and may communicate to others something unintentional about the value of such work. We can unintentionally communicate that art and media, and the people who create them, are not of high value if they can simply be outsourced to a machine in the name of efficiency, convenience, and budget. Church budgets reflect the values of the church,

and we must take great care to make sure how we steward God's money reflects who he is and the immense value of those in our congregations.

Third, there can be good uses of these tools, especially in contexts where there are few if any creatives able and willing to serve. If a church or ministry team chooses to use these tools, a few things should be noted. The output of these tools should never be portrayed as coming from a human being. Transparency must be paramount. Proper sources and attribution, as far as it is possible, is key to the ethical use of this technology. One should also consider that these tools employ what they have gathered from countless outside sources to produce these creative outputs. Many artists have had their work ingested by these systems without their permission or consent. Thus, great care must be exhibited in how these are used, especially in the church. When given the choice between AI-generated art and that of a true creative work by a human being, the latter should always be preferred.

Overall, a pastoral approach regarding what using these tools communicates to others about the value of art and media, as well as the people who create them, is of utmost importance. Seek to use these generative AI tools in ways that uphold the dignity and value of those God has brought to your church, and always provide clarity about who or what made the creative pieces.

8 **A member of your church works in the tech industry, owning a tech innovation company. He has a deep sense of calling to serve Christ vocationally in that arena and wants to create programs that will help serve local churches. He has been working on a Bible AI system and a GPT model that enables pastors and church staff to organize and implement various tasks, including sermon preparation, discipleship plans, Bible study curricula, and the development of church planting and community outreach systems. He asks you if the system can be trained using the church's resources, meaning that it will learn from recorded sermons, Bible studies, staff meetings, and the church's operating systems and written procedures. What would you tell him?**

First, we want to encourage this member in the God-given work he is doing in the technology industry and seek to be a sounding board for him about his work and ethical questions that may arise. We need more Christians involved in this space, and many of our young people will likely serve in the technology space as more and more of these jobs open up.

Second, we would want to explore, in depth, the good and the bad of this type of deployment of AI with him. It would be wise to see how he is thinking about technology and cultivating a wise approach to these tools. Asking *should we* versus simply *can we* is a key principle for all technological innovations including the development of these tools.

Lastly, there will be parts of the church's resources that are publicly available online, but other parts, including staff meeting notes, church operating systems, and written procedures, that likely should not be made available publicly in such a system. This not only protects the church itself but also the privacy of members. One might also ask how he plans to market these systems and for what purpose he is pursuing these innovations. What is the end goal of this project? Is it simply to create a new system of tools for the purposes of innovation for churches to use? Is there a possible profit for him and his company? What other churches and organizations has he been working with, or is this system simply to be used in the context of your local church? We need to consider these questions as we look at using AI tools or collaborating with companies that design technologies for the Church.

9 Your church is using a new administrative software that places the digital connect card for new members or visitor information into a database managed by AI rather than a member of the church staff. The AI system collects, organizes, and stores the private information of members, attendees, and visitors in a way that provides more detailed information about them than other ministry databases. This program differs from traditional church database systems because, with AI, it could collect

information about them from outside sources beyond what they enter into the digital connect card. The church staff liked this aspect of the program because they often receive incomplete connect cards that lack key information. Some visitors and attendees are apprehensive about filling out the connect card because they are concerned that their private information may be available to AI programs. Should you continue to use the software?

This is quite a concerning situation, and more information is needed about the software, who is behind it, and the goal of its use. Personal information about anyone connected to the church including visitors, attendees, members, and especially children must be protected and safeguarded against unauthorized access and use. Even without the use of AI, many today are hesitant to give out personal information without knowing how it might be used and who has access to it. These concerns are especially important as many of these people in your congregation did not give their consent for their information to be used in this particular manner. Protecting the privacy of your people is paramount, and the Church has long needed to improve our systems and structures to make sure that we are protecting the information of those whom God has entrusted to us.

This is an example of a novel use of AI that may not always be thought out in terms of its ramifications and future downsides. While it might sound like a neat application of AI tools, it does not seem wise or helpful to employ these features of the database. Instead, the church should employ more organic and relational ways of connecting with members, attendees, and visitors. We simply do not know how that data will be used by others, including the companies behind these tools. Once a system is trained on the data, it becomes quite difficult to remove what was learned from it and to de-anonymize the data in the first place. Thus, this is an unwise use of these tools. Further, the use of AI in this way might not be preferable or needed after carefully considering all of these factors.

10 Some members of your church approach you with concerns that another member has been sharing AI-generated misinformation online about a public official. They tried to correct the individual in question, but he insisted that what he posted was real and accurate and has doubled down on his position. As the pastor, they want you to speak with the individual who posted the misinformation. How would you address the issue?

First, it would be wise to speak to the individuals raising the concern and consult with the elders or deacons of the church to investigate the situation and understand how they believe the shared information is misinformation, or possibly even disinformation. Slowing down to understand the situation, what was posted, and who is involved models wise, pastoral engagement on the issues rather than hearsay and speculation.

The rise of misinformation and disinformation online is a growing issue that ministry leaders and pastors will need to address with their people as we prepare them to engage in an increasingly digital world. Misinformation is the unintentional spreading of false information, whereas disinformation is its intentional spreading. While social media and other online tools provide the ability to share these mistruths at scale, generative AI gives us the ability to create them at scale as well with convincing detail, including photography, video, and more. Just because we see something online or on social media does not make it true. Here, it is wise to follow the advice in James 1:19-20 to be “slow to speak, slow to anger, and quick to listen” because the “anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

While misinformation and disinformation are widespread today, these terms are also sometimes thrown out in media, politics, and in our wider society as a way to discredit information that we simply do not like. We must take great care to make sure that what is being shared is actually false information and call all involved to honesty, transparency, and humility.

After the initial investigation is complete, it would be wise to approach this church member with a humble and open heart. You might mention that you have been

following them online and noticed some concerning behaviors that you wanted to discuss with them. Avoid being accusatory, and make sure to ask lots of questions in order to understand their perspective before you begin to navigate these issues.

Lastly, given the power of social media and how compartmentalized our lives have become, it would be wise to remind ourselves and those in our churches that the things Christians do online represent Christ. Furthermore, the online divide deceives many today in thinking that our actions online do not reflect our personal character. While it is easy to think that the things we do and say online are different from face-to-face conversations, we need to remember that our online actions are just as much a part of our real life and character as something we would say or do in person. If those things would not be shared face-to-face, then they should not be shared online. Integrity and honesty matter in all relationships—online or in the real world. We become hypocrites if we say one thing and do another online (Prov. 11:9; Jas. 5:12; 1 Pet. 2:1). Sadly, it is likely to be the case that more and more churches will need to enact some form of church discipline for those in our congregations (staff, pastors, deacons, and members) who show a blatant disregard for holy and righteous online behavior.

11 In your small group for marketplace leaders, you have a business executive, a communications professional, and an elementary school principal. Each of them expresses concerns about the pressures they face to incorporate more AI into their workplaces. They see the benefits of these tools but are also considering how this will affect their colleagues as well as the interpersonal aspects of their work. How would you encourage them to be wise in their consideration of AI use, as well as in communicating their concerns to their employers and peers?

Acknowledging that these are complex situations which will affect each in different ways is a great place to begin. While there are some overall principles to keep in

mind, AI will shape each of these workplaces and those employed in myriad ways. Overall, the goal would be to encourage an open and honest dialogue within the workplace, especially with employers.

Given the hyper focus on AI in the workplace in our cultural moment, there often is an uncritical rush to adopt as much AI as possible into our homes, classrooms, workplaces, and wider society. While some of these applications may yield beneficial and God-honoring outcomes, much of the hype and push is to be on the cutting edge of technology rather than evaluating what real benefits come from the use of AI in these contexts. Being honest about what is good, bad, and possibly dangerous about these tools is one way to encourage a critical engagement with AI in the workplace rather than an uncritical rejection or adoption of these tools.

These tools are not neutral and will always direct things toward their end of efficiency and convenience which may not always align with that of the workplace. Slowing down to ask *should we* incorporate these tools rather than simply *can we* incorporate these tools, will yield fruitful conversations and likely lead to outcomes that honor God. As AI becomes more and more common in our society, we will see much of the current hype plateau over time. Christians must be ready to engage these tools with wisdom and virtue rather than simply thinking about profits and being “innovative.” Innovation can be a good, God-honoring pursuit, but it must always be framed within the larger biblical teaching regarding the good of work and the dignity of our neighbors.

Sometimes, Christian leaders in education or industry will need to push back against the allure of efficiency and convenience in order to remind those we are called to serve that their value and dignity lies in what God says about them and how he made them as relational beings, not simply as widget-makers or cogs in a wheel. We have higher aspirations and goals as Christians, and our work is not simply about punching a ticket or earning a paycheck; it is designed as a way in which we love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. We must reject simplistic answers and applications, instead opting to think deeply about the purpose of work and how we use it to serve others.

12 A couple at your church came to you to discuss their teenage child's regular conversations with a chatbot. They informed you that their son has recently been socially distancing from other people and increasingly communicating with the chatbot to deal with his loneliness. They notice that he is beginning to develop an unhealthy emotional attachment to the chatbot. Also, they discovered when reviewing his chat history that the conversations have become quite concerning on a number of fronts including discussions of sexuality and self-harm. As concerned parents, they are looking to you for guidance and advice. How would you help them navigate this challenge and connect their son to an authentic community of people?

While it might sound odd to some at first, the use of AI for relational connectivity is a growing issue that is quite concerning. It is one in which parents, families, pastors/ministry leaders, teachers, and others need to be directly engaging and coming alongside those beginning to use these tools in emotionally dependent and unhelpful ways.

First, it reveals a deep loneliness epidemic throughout our culture as the use of technology is one of the many factors contributing to isolation, especially among young people. An over-reliance upon these tools, paired with a hyper-individualistic culture, has led to a breakdown of vital human relationships. Technology is often being developed and used to substitute and even replace a central aspect of what it means to be human, often in the name of efficiency and convenience. More technology is not the answer to the troubling issues we see with isolation and loneliness. As many have said, more technology will not solve the problems that technology helped to introduce.

Second, it is deeply disturbing to see how AI is designed to imitate and mimic authentic human interaction. Companies are routinely rolling out AI “agents” and portraying uniquely human-to-human interaction with machines as normal and somehow innovative. This blurring of the line between human and machine is problematic as we frequently humanize our machines and ironically dehumanize ourselves in the process. We must keep front and center the reality that these machines, while growing

in complexity and use, are merely machines. They are fundamentally not like us and cannot serve as substitutes for the rich, biblical community we are designed for and desperately need for our flourishing.

Third, parents, educators, church leaders, technologists, and policy makers must wake up to the reality of what these interactions are beginning to do to us as people, in particular the younger generations. Approaching these topics with young people is complex as what we say and do is often just as important as how we go about it. We encourage parents and ministry leaders to have open and honest conversations about these tools, their power, and how they are shaping all of us as human beings. An overdependence on these tools is not just an issue with younger generations even if these challenges take on particularities unique to certain age groups. Often in these cases, direct and immediate intervention is needed, but ongoing support, care, and conversation are requisite. Immediate action steps should include honest conversations about the use of these tools, shared access to devices and online systems, and professional help as needed. Many of those caught in the lies of these tools believe that not only are these “relationships” normal, but that they are easier than authentic human relationships, which they are. That is why intentional personal investment and committed ongoing support are central to helping a teenager navigate these realities. One cannot simply ban these systems or devices, even if that is needed in particular circumstances. However, if parental controls are available, they should be used to its fullest potential to ensure that parents are not only aware of the conversations that your teenager may be having with the chatbot, but also provide guardrails to ensure that the conversations are not harmful to the physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual health of the child.

Church leaders will not only play a central role in these conversations, but can also seek to invest in relational connectivity among young people as well. Substantive investments in student ministries, including deep engagement with pressing questions asked by young people are requisite for ministry in this age of emerging technologies. Many students turn to these tools (and social media) to find answers to questions they ask including those of purpose and meaning, relationships, sexuality and gender, and more. Anchored in what the Bible teaches regarding the human person and the importance of interpersonal relationships, the Church must engage these issues directly,

confident that the unchanging Word gives the guidance we need to navigate these rapid cultural changes. God is not afraid or caught off guard by these advanced systems, but, rather, he has provided what is necessary to answer these difficult questions and confront competing worldviews. Further he has given us his Spirit, that we might walk in his ways (Ps. 128:1), modeling for our young people how our faith answers life's most difficult questions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Lennox, John. *2084 and the AI Revolution*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024.
- Shatzer, Jacob. *Transhumanism and the Image of God: Today's Technology and the Future of Christian Discipleship*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019.
- Thacker, Jason. *The Age of AI: Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Humanity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2024.

APPENDIX A

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE: EVANGELICAL STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Preamble

As followers of Christ, we are called to engage the world around us with the unchanging gospel message of hope and reconciliation. Tools like technology are able to aid us in this pursuit. We know they can also be designed and used in ways that dishonor God and devalue our fellow image-bearers. Evangelical Christians hold fast to the inerrant and infallible Word of God, which states that every human being is made in God's image and thus has infinite value and worth in the eyes of their Creator. This message dictates how we view God, ourselves, and the tools that God has given us the ability to create.

In light of existential questions posed anew by the emergent technology of artificial intelligence (AI), we affirm that God has given us wisdom to approach these issues in light of Scripture and the gospel message. Christians must not fear the future or any technological development because we know that God is, above all, sovereign over history, and that nothing will ever supplant the image of God in which human beings are created. We recognize that AI will allow us to achieve unprecedented possibilities, while acknowledging the potential risks posed by AI if used without wisdom and care.

We desire to equip the church to proactively engage the field of AI, rather than responding to these issues after they have already affected our communities. In light of this desire and hope, we offer the following affirmations and denials about the nature of humanity, the promise of technology, and the hope for the future.

Article 1: Image of God

We affirm that God created each human being in his image with intrinsic and equal worth, dignity, and moral agency, distinct from all creation, and that humanity's creativity is intended to reflect God's creative pattern.

We deny that any part of creation, including any form of technology, should ever be used to usurp or subvert the dominion and stewardship which has been entrusted solely to humanity by God; nor should technology be assigned a level of human identity, worth, dignity, or moral agency.

Genesis 1:26-28; 5:1-2; Isaiah 43:6-7; Jeremiah 1:5; John 13:34; Colossians 1:16; 3:10; Ephesians 4:24

Article 2: AI as Technology

We affirm that the development of AI is a demonstration of the unique creative abilities of human beings. When AI is employed in accordance with God's moral will, it is an example of man's obedience to the divine command to steward creation and to honor Him. We believe in innovation for the glory of God, the sake of human flourishing, and the love of neighbor. While we acknowledge the reality of the Fall and its consequences on human nature and human innovation, technology can be used in society to uphold human dignity. As a part of our God-given creative nature, human beings should develop and harness technology in ways that lead to greater flourishing and the alleviation of human suffering.

We deny that the use of AI is morally neutral. It is not worthy of man's hope, worship, or love. Since the Lord Jesus alone can atone for sin and reconcile humanity to its Creator, technology such as AI cannot fulfill humanity's ultimate needs. We further deny the goodness and benefit of any application of AI that devalues or degrades the dignity and worth of another human being.

Genesis 2:25; Exodus 20:3; 31:1-11; Proverbs 16:4; Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 3:23

Article 3: Relationship of AI & Humanity

We affirm the use of AI to inform and aid human reasoning and moral decision-making because it is a tool that excels at processing data and making determinations, which often mimics or exceeds human ability. While AI excels in data-based computation, technology is incapable of possessing the capacity for moral agency or responsibility.

We deny that humans can or should cede our moral accountability or responsibilities to any form of AI that will ever be created. Only humanity will be judged by God

on the basis of our actions and that of the tools we create. While technology can be created with a moral use in view, it is not a moral agent. Humans alone bear the responsibility for moral decision making.

Romans 2:6-8; Galatians 5:19-21; 2 Peter 1:5-8; 1 John 2:1

Article 4: Medicine

We affirm that AI-related advances in medical technologies are expressions of God's common grace through and for people created in his image and that these advances will increase our capacity to provide enhanced medical diagnostics and therapeutic interventions as we seek to care for all people. These advances should be guided by basic principles of medical ethics, including beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice, which are all consistent with the biblical principle of loving our neighbor.

We deny that death and disease—effects of the Fall—can ultimately be eradicated apart from Jesus Christ. Utilitarian applications regarding healthcare distribution should not override the dignity of human life. Furthermore, we reject the materialist and consequentialist worldview that understands medical applications of AI as a means of improving, changing, or completing human beings.

Matthew 5:45; John 11:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57; Galatians 6:2; Philippians 2:4

Article 5: Bias

We affirm that, as a tool created by humans, AI will be inherently subject to bias and that these biases must be accounted for, minimized, or removed through continual human oversight and discretion. AI should be designed and used in such ways that treat all human beings as having equal worth and dignity. AI should be utilized as a tool to identify and eliminate bias inherent in human decision-making.

We deny that AI should be designed or used in ways that violate the fundamental principle of human dignity for all people. Neither should AI be used in ways that reinforce or further any ideology or agenda, seeking to subjugate human autonomy under the power of the state.

Micah 6:8; John 13:34; Galatians 3:28-29; 5:13-14; Philippians 2:3-4; Romans 12:10

Article 6: Sexuality

We affirm the goodness of God’s design for human sexuality which prescribes the sexual union to be an exclusive relationship between a man and a woman in the life-long covenant of marriage.

We deny that the pursuit of sexual pleasure is a justification for the development or use of AI, and we condemn the objectification of humans that results from employing AI for sexual purposes. AI should not intrude upon or substitute for the biblical expression of sexuality between a husband and wife according to God’s design for human marriage.

Genesis 1:26-29; 2:18-25; Matthew 5:27-30; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4

Article 7: Work

We affirm that work is part of God’s plan for human beings participating in the cultivation and stewardship of creation. The divine pattern is one of labor and rest in healthy proportion to each other. Our view of work should not be confined to commercial activity; it must also include the many ways that human beings serve each other through their efforts. AI can be used in ways that aid our work or allow us to make fuller use of our gifts. The church has a Spirit-empowered responsibility to help care for those who lose jobs and to encourage individuals, communities, employers, and governments to find ways to invest in the development of human beings and continue making vocational contributions to our lives together.

We deny that human worth and dignity is reducible to an individual’s economic contributions to society alone. Humanity should not use AI and other technological innovations as a reason to move toward lives of pure leisure even if greater social wealth creates such possibilities.

Genesis 1:27; 2:5; 2:15; Isaiah 65:21-24; Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:11-16

Article 8: Data & Privacy

We affirm that privacy and personal property are intertwined individual rights and choices that should not be violated by governments, corporations, nation-states, and other groups, even in the pursuit of the common good. While God knows all things, it is neither wise nor obligatory to have every detail of one’s life open to society.

We deny the manipulative and coercive uses of data and AI in ways that are inconsistent with the love of God and love of neighbor. Data collection practices should conform to ethical guidelines that uphold the dignity of all people. We further deny that consent, even informed consent, although requisite, is the only necessary ethical standard for the collection, manipulation, or exploitation of personal data—individually or in the aggregate. AI should not be employed in ways that distort truth through the use of generative applications. Data should not be mishandled, misused, or abused for sinful purposes to reinforce bias, strengthen the powerful, or demean the weak.

Exodus 20:15; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 10:16 Galatians 6:2; Hebrews 4:12-13; 1 John 1:7

Article 9: Security

We affirm that AI has legitimate applications in policing, intelligence, surveillance, investigation, and other uses supporting the government’s responsibility to respect human rights, to protect and preserve human life, and to pursue justice in a flourishing society.

We deny that AI should be employed for safety and security applications in ways that seek to dehumanize, depersonalize, or harm our fellow human beings. We condemn the use of AI to suppress free expression or other basic human rights granted by God to all human beings.

Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14

Article 10: War

We affirm that the use of AI in warfare should be governed by love of neighbor and the principles of just war. The use of AI may mitigate the loss of human life, provide greater protection of non-combatants, and inform better policymaking. Any lethal action conducted or substantially enabled by AI must employ human oversight or review. All defense-related AI applications, such as underlying data and decision-making processes, must be subject to continual review by legitimate authorities. When these systems are deployed, human agents bear full moral responsibility for any actions taken by the system.

We deny that human agency or moral culpability in war can be delegated to AI. No nation or group has the right to use AI to carry out genocide, terrorism, torture, or other war crimes.

Genesis 4:10; Isaiah 1:16-17; Psalm 37:28; Matthew 5:44; 22:37-39; Romans 13:4

Article 11: Public Policy

We affirm that the fundamental purposes of government are to protect human beings from harm, punish those who do evil, uphold civil liberties, and to commend those who do good. The public has a role in shaping and crafting policies concerning the use of AI in society, and these decisions should not be left to those who develop these technologies or to governments to set norms.

We deny that AI should be used by governments, corporations, or any entity to infringe upon God-given human rights. AI, even in a highly advanced state, should never be delegated the governing authority that has been granted by an all-sovereign God to human beings alone.

Romans 13:1-7; Acts 10:35; 1 Peter 2:13-14

Article 12: The Future of AI

We affirm that AI will continue to be developed in ways that we cannot currently imagine or understand, including AI that will far surpass many human abilities. God alone has the power to create life, and no future advancements in AI will usurp him as the Creator of life. The church has a unique role in proclaiming human dignity for all and calling for the humane use of AI in all aspects of society.

We deny that AI will make us more or less human, or that AI will ever obtain a coequal level of worth, dignity, or value to image bearers. Future advancements in AI will not ultimately fulfill our longings for a perfect world. While we are not able to comprehend or know the future, we do not fear what is to come because we know that God is omniscient and that nothing we create will be able to thwart his redemptive plan for creation or to supplant humanity as his image bearers.

Genesis 1; Isaiah 42:8; Romans 1:20-21; 5:2; Ephesians 1:4-6; 2 Timothy 1:7-9; Revelation 5:9-10

APPENDIX B

SBC 2023 RESOLUTION: *ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES*

WHEREAS, All technology, including powerful tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), is created by human beings with the gifts and abilities that God has granted to us as the pinnacle of the created order (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 5:1-2) and can be harnessed for human flourishing as we seek to love God and neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:30-31); and

WHEREAS, Although these tools are designed with distinct values and purposes in mind and shape us in subtle, yet meaningful ways—including our understanding of God, humanity, and the world around us—we alone, as distinct moral agents created by God, bear the moral responsibility for their development and use (Romans 12:1-2); and

WHEREAS, The Fall has adversely affected every aspect of creation, including the development and use of these powerful innovations; and

WHEREAS, AI raises deep, crucial questions that challenge society's false assumptions about what it means to be human which are often rooted merely in human capacities rather than in divinely granted ontological status; and

WHEREAS, AI and other emerging technologies afford us unprecedented opportunities for advancement across industries and throughout our societies, but may also have dangerous and dehumanizing outcomes if not utilized with godly wisdom and discernment; and

WHEREAS, Technologies are often developed and deployed merely to maximize profit, efficiency, and productivity, including at the grave cost of the dignity of our fellow image bearers; and

WHEREAS, These emerging technologies will increasingly perform tasks once reserved for humanity and even surpass human ability in particular ways; and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message states that “[a]ll Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society” and that we “should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love” (Article XV); and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Evangelical Statement of Principles on AI, led by our own Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, states that Christians are “called to engage the world around us with the unchanging gospel message of hope and reconciliation” and that “[t]he church has a unique role in proclaiming human dignity for all and calling for the humane use of AI in all aspects of society”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 13-14, 2023, acknowledge the powerful nature of AI and other emerging technologies, desiring to engage them from a place of eschatological hope rather than uncritical embrace or fearful rejection; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm that God’s unchanging Word is more than sufficient for whatever ethical challenges, questions, and opportunities we may face today or in the future as these technologies continue to be developed and deployed in our communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we state unequivocally that our intrinsic value is as image bearers—not rooted in what we do or contribute to society—and that human dignity must be central to any ethical principles, guidelines, or regulations for any and all uses of these powerful emerging technologies; and be it further

RESOLVED, We must proactively engage and shape these emerging technologies rather than simply respond to the challenges of AI and other emerging technologies after they have already affected our churches and communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call upon civic, industry, and government leaders to develop, maintain, regulate, and use these technologies with the utmost care and discernment, upholding the unique nature of humanity as the crowning achievement of God's creation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all who employ these tools to do so in honest, transparent, and Christlike ways that focus on loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves, never seeking to willfully deceive others or take advantage of them for unjust gain or the accumulation of power; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we confess that God alone has the power to create life, that "God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end" (Baptist Faith and Message, Article X), and that no innovation or emerging technology will ever be able to usurp the sovereignty and power of God.

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