The Church and Artificial Intelligence: Fear, Opportunity, and Authenticity

It feels like the last thing I want to read—let alone write—is one more article about AI. AI Information, and AI misinformation, seems to be everywhere. And that's part of the problem, isn't it? Telling what is real and what isn't.

Technology has always developed, but the pace of its acceleration today feels almost impossible to grasp (I really do wish I had paid more attention in physics class to describe it better!). Just as with the arrival of Facebook and social media, artificial intelligence will bring opportunities to enhance the efficacy of our churches' communications, and maybe even expand our ministries—while at the same time introducing an entirely new set of risks, dilemmas, and challenges.

Throughout human history (how's that for a lead-in), we tend to begin using tools long before we fully understand them. And so it is with AI. But bigger this time. The question before us isn't just how we might use AI, but whether we should use it at all, or whether we will need to resist, manage, or simply coexist with these tools in a world that is already adopting them rapidly.

The risks are real: copyright infringement, the temptation to sacrifice accuracy for speed, and—perhaps most concerning—a loss of authenticity in a world where "what's really real" is already harder to know.

So I am wondering:

- How should churches discern when and where to use AI tools?
- What boundaries should we draw to ensure our ministries remain grounded in authenticity?
- Where might these tools truly support our calling to proclaim the gospel and build community, and where might they distract or even harm?
- What have you already seen, or even experimented with, in your own context?

Here's where my hope lies: not in the promises of AI itself, but in the witness of the Church. As the world becomes more automated, more robotic, and less personal, the Church can be what it has always been uniquely equipped to be—a safe place, an empowering place, and an intentional space for authentic human connection. That, I believe, is our greatest opportunity in this moment.

This is not a conversation for one person to have alone. It is for all of us, as a Florida Conference, to explore together. I am hopeful that you will join me in some intentional conversations in the months ahead. In the meantime, I would love to hear your thoughts, questions, experiences, and even concerns. Together, let's discern faithfully, creatively, and authentically.

See You Soon,
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