

Are We (and Should We Be) Embracing Robots in the Pulpit?

I grew up watching *The Jetsons*.

It was a Sunday night television show (before being moved to Saturday mornings) we were allowed to watch. The robots did everything and seemed to have all the answers to life in Orbit City.

I think I remember more about Astro the dog than George or Judy or their robot maid, Rosie. The show's writing closely paralleled "The Flintstones," so evidently problems in the Stone Age survived into the Space Age. Don't ask me why, but I wondered if the Jetsons had a robot pastor.

Thankfully, robots are not led by the Holy Spirit.

Advancements in technology have certainly changed delivery of various modalities of preaching and teaching material. I wonder how D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones and a host of other preachers would feel about preaching with a smart phone or iPad in hand?

This Sunday, thousands of people will receive their weekly message via video. Hundreds of services will be viewed in real time online or through mobile delivery. I do not suggest that any particular delivery system is bad. We've come a long way from Spurgeon's stump or Jesus' preaching from the mountainside.

Today, I'm simply attempting to consider what the impact of technology will be upon the church in the next 25-50 years? What will the angels see as they gather in our congregations in a few decades? Did any of us envision video preaching even

20 years ago? What will the offspring of millennials bring onto our platforms?

Not surprisingly, research has provided evidence that children preferred robot teachers to humanoids.

An infographic summary of the research indicates that with robots, "learning becomes fun and play becomes knowledge." Robots apparently are able to encourage more creativity and exploration. Machines apparently can create more inquiry than someone with a heartbeat. "Students feel more comfortable and tend to better project their real self" with robot instructors. I suppose we could conclude that robots enable.

I want my grandchildren to be taught by someone with a spirit and soul. I want to be led by men and women who hear from God and respond with human reasoning and instinct. I want pastors and ministers who feel and love.

I pray our platform of the future remains dependent upon high touch.

"Jesus departed from there, and passed by the Sea of Galilee, and went up on a mountain and sat down there. Great crowds came to Him, having with them those who were lame, blind, mute, maimed, and many others, and placed them down at Jesus' feet, and He healed them" (Matt. 15:29-30).