

Church Hosts 'AI Takeover' with Sermon Written Entirely by AI

Is the new trend for churches to utilize upcoming technology to demonstrate they have no fear of adapting to cultural and societal changes?

In some cases this appears to be true, as Pastor Jay Cooper, of Methodist church Violet Crown City Church in North Austin, Texas, developed an AI-generated worship service for his congregation.

This is not the first time, nor will it be the last, that the pastor of a church utilizes AI to create a time-saving and attention-getting sermon.

"The idea to create an AI-generated worship service came from my belief that the church should not only be aware of the most pressing issues of our world, but also to actively engage in them," Cooper said.

"AI is definitely one of those issues, so I wanted to incorporate it into our community life in such a way that it would make an impact.

"The initial reason we offered this, admittedly unorthodox, service was to inform our congregation about AI and to understand its potential and its limitations.

"The purpose is to invite us to consider the nature of truth and challenge our assumptions about what God can make sacred and inspired.

"What it actually became was a meaningful conversation about how we as followers of Jesus are to seek the sacred in every person, place, and situation in our life, for scripture

reminds us that when we seek God, we will find God” he adds.

So is this the direction the Christian church is heading? Will it become impossible for pastors to resist the allure of saving time, energy and resources when creating sermons and use AI to get their desired results?

But believers must be watchful for the elevation of AI over the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Take for example the opening line from The Mirror about the story of Pastor Cooper and his utilization of AI:

“The Word of God has now been officially taken over by AI as proved by this robot-generated sermon which included humans worshipping.”

That is one of the many falsehoods many a pastor and ministry leader has warned about with the introduction of AI into society.

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The Word of God will never be taken over by any entity. There are already attempts to re-write the inerrant Scriptures with a new, more socially acceptable that placates people’s sensitivities without being controversial.

Spoiler alert: Jesus was always controversial because He challenged the world and won.

Cooper shared that the AI sermon lacked that human and Spirit interaction, but that it was the discussion afterwards that drew his congregation closer together.

“I was surprised to hear several members of the church say they were able to worship during the service but I suppose it shouldn’t have surprised me, especially since I opened the service with an invitation to seek to experience God in a time

when we may assume we won't," Cooper said.

"What ultimately brought us closer to God as a community was the discussion after the service. We were able to share what was most important to us in worship and how much we treasure the human element in a community of faith, something that was clearly lacking in the AI-generated service.

"Although many were impressed by AI's ability to create prayers, a sermon, and an original song based on the sermon, along with being glad we have a much better understanding of AI now, many in our church expressed that the service felt shallow and generic and that it was missing the most important component of worship, which is heart and the human spirit of joy and authenticity.

"Never say never, I suppose, since it's possible AI may yet be of use for us in some way in the church, but for now we won't be using it again to generate any components of Sunday morning worship services" he adds.

Cooper makes one particular, excellent point. Introducing his congregation to AI and having an open discussion about it will help alleviate fears concerning it.

AI can absolutely be used in nefarious and deceptive ways, and sadly this is most likely to increase in the coming days. However, providing information, knowledge and guidance on new and developing technologies will help the church move forward in wisdom and biblical discernment. {eoa}

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