

## AI can't replace human interactions

By Jennifer Boutwell

I recently attended a memorial, the flower arrangements were lovely, the environment was comfortable, the family surrounding me were sharing tears and memories. All in all, it was set up to be a lovely time honoring and remembering my husband's father.

We sat down for the service, the pastor stands at the podium, and as soon as he begins sharing about the life of James Porter, he uses facts and statements that don't seem to be quite right. It felt very hollow and not caring like their website suggests, and by the end of the highly repetitive although reworded speech, it wasn't written by the man sharing it.

The family was left feeling frustrated and confused. I looked up some of the facts shared and indeed, the Copilot result was what was shared during the speech, which happened to be wrong. This left me questioning whether pastors regularly use AI in sermons now.

AI is becoming more commonplace in society, and I am sure that it's useful in certain scenarios, but when it comes to leading, comforting, memorializing, and inspiring people I think it needs a personal touch.

I read an [article](#) sharing ways that a pastor can use ai "responsibly" to help prepare for different areas of ministry. It's a well thought out compilation of pros and cons of how AI can support work for researching and planning sermons, but at the end of the day, when I'm sitting in a church on Sunday, I'm there wanting to hear what the Lord says about scripture through my pastor. I want to hear the connections that God made in your life through scripture. I want to know what you researched, I'm not looking to hear what AI thinks about anything, I'm not looking for a story generated by AI as an example of the Lord moving.

The emotional and spiritual aspect comes from the Lord moving and reaching out through a person, a human. Not a machine. We think that no one will notice the parts that AI has replaced, but we notice. We think it looks good on paper, and often times it does, but the hollowness from sharing something that you didn't do on your own sets in. It's noticeable, when someone decides that something spoke to them through a sermon that AI wrote, that becomes a disappointment, because the connection is fake.

Nearly ["61% of pastors say they use AI weekly or daily"](#) according to the article from The Christian Post. The article says they use it to polish emails and communications but doesn't that chip away at the humanity in the writing. Humans aren't perfect, the mistakes show that. Sometimes AI changes the wording of our writing to what is "correct" structurally from what it has learned, but it's not always correct for what a person is trying to convey.

At the end of the day, each person decides how much AI is used in their professional life. Pastor is in fact a profession. AI might be a wonderful tool, but I would exercise caution when using it in a profession that deals with matters of the heart, spiritual, or that can possibly impact the mental health of others.

Humans long for connection and to be understood. That is done through human interactions, not AI, or AI inspired or assisted interactions.