Artificial Intelligence

The Challenge of AI

Artificial intelligence is already deeply integrated into our lives at levels far beyond our conscious awareness. AI is here. It is not merely a technological tweak to help us plan vacations, optimize medical research, or streamline church administration. It is a technology of extraordinary consequence.

No technological advancement has disseminated as rapidly as AI. Such velocity is dizzying and difficult for the average citizen to grasp. But even technologists who are creating AI are alarmed. The accelerated pace of development and deployment coupled with the distinct nature of this technology raises serious concerns that outpace theological and ethical deliberation, as well as social and policy guidance. Further advances toward artificial general intelligence or superintelligence will only exacerbate the widely and hotly contested risks and rewards of AI.

What makes AI unique? Unlike other technologies that have primarily served as tools under human control and to advance human purposes, "Artificial intelligence is the science of teaching machines to learn humanlike capabilities."[1] Unlike earlier technologies that imitated particular human actions, appearances or capacities, AI imitates human cognitive functions such as learning, reasoning, pattern recognition and decision-making. Recursive self-improvement means that AI can replicate, train and deploy itself without human involvement and beyond any human capability. Finally, with the simultaneous convergence of AI, robotics and genetic engineering — any one of which is a monumental issue — we now have a situation of existential consequence.

While technology may be harnessed for good, it also carries significant risks. Like the splitting of the atom, artificial intelligence arrives bearing both promise and peril: the promise of discovering solutions to complex problems, expanding opportunity for underserved communities, curing diseases that have plagued humanity, and advancing human flourishing; and the peril of concentrated power, displaced labor, pervasive surveillance, deepening deception, cataclysmic destruction, and the erosion of what it means to be human.

In its commitment to be an *Influence for Good* in society and to bear witness to the transformational gospel of Jesus Christ, the National Association of Evangelicals seeks to bring to this moment a considered, biblically grounded, and pastorally wise public voice. To arrive late, divided and reactive on a matter of unparalleled consequence is not an option. We approach this moment with neither uncritical enthusiasm nor paralyzing fear, but with confident faith in God, in whose image humanity is created and for whose purposes we are intended.

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[1] Mustafa Suleyman, *The Coming Wave: AI, Power, and Our Future* (New York: Crown Publishing, 2025), v.

As we have done on other complex issues, we speak as church leaders, raising biblical and pastoral concerns and addressing matters of public policy with due restraint and humility. While we represent a wide constituency and approach these questions from varied perspectives, we are united in our core convictions.

Biblical Foundations

Respecting the Image of God: God created human beings in his own image (Genesis 1:27), and in that image rests a dignity that is neither earned nor produced, neither granted by the state nor conferred by usefulness in the marketplace. Human beings are not machines, and they must never be treated as if they were. Artificial intelligence, on the other hand, may imitate the functions of the mind, but it does not bear the image of God; it possesses no conscience, no love, no soul. AI systems are not human beings, and they must not be assigned personhood.

Rejecting the idolatry of human mastery: God set humanity to cultivate and keep the world (Genesis 2:15). Human ingenuity — including this technology — can be a faithful expression of that calling. Yet Scripture also warns of a people who, trusting their own craft, sought to "make a name for themselves" (Genesis 11:4). Human technological ambition can outpace our spiritual and moral development and lend a false sense of mastery. We honor human creativity while refusing to worship it and seeking to constrain it as appropriate to fulfill our creational mandate to steward, not dominate, creation.

Restoring children and families: The family is central to God's vision for human beings and human society.[2] Parents are responsible for raising their children "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Family members are responsible to provide for each other's needs (1 Timothy 5:4, 8). AI must never replace or obstruct the work of parents nor undermine the ability of family members to support each other. This familial dynamic is foundational for how the church and society also should provide human connections.

Restraining concentrated power: Government is God's gift to restrain evil and uphold justice (Romans 13:4), and rulers are charged to defend the weak against the strong (Psalm 72:1–4). Scripture is candid about the dangers of power gathered into a few hands, whether kings (1 Samuel 8:10–18) or wealthy oligarchs (James 2:6). Where a technology concentrates such power over information, labor and the very means of social interaction, we call for its accountability to the common good, and for the protection of those least able to protect themselves.

Recovering truth and transparency: God's people are forbidden to bear false witness (Exodus 20:16) and are set free by the truth (John 8:32). Technologies that fabricate or misrepresent speech, image and likeness

[2] "For the Health of the Nation," *National Association of Evangelicals*, 2018, https://www.nae.org/for-the-health-of-the-nation (accessed September 24, 2026), 29.

threaten to erode the trust on which human community and just governance depend. We call for truthfulness, transparency and the defense of a shared reality against manufactured deception.

Reclaiming the dignity of work and rest: Work is a calling and not merely a cost (Genesis 2:15). The Sabbath declares that human worth is not measured by output (Exodus 20:8–11). As AI-enabled systems reshape labor, we insist they be designed to serve those who work. Gains in productivity should not be purchased by discarding the worker made in God's image. Even the technological ambition to release humans from drudgery must be guided by a fuller vision of work as a divinely ordained human vocation.

Recognizing creaturely limits: Human limitation is not a defect to be engineered away but a dimension of our creatureliness, in which dependence on God (2 Corinthians 12:9) and on one another (1 Corinthians 12:12–26) matures. Wisdom arises from embracing our limits (Psalm 90:12). We reject the promise that we might transcend our finitude or achieve immortality through our own devices, and we weigh our choices by their cost to future generations and to the creation entrusted to our care.

Pastoral Concerns

Trust in God: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7). As people have been tempted to rest their security in military might, so now we may be tempted to place our hope in the reach of our machines. Pastors are called to name this idolatry and to lead their people to rest in God alone.

Formation of people: Some members of our congregations design, fund, train and operate artificial intelligence; many more are being shaped by interactions with AI systems and chatbots. All of us will be impacted by it. Both AI developers and AI users face genuine questions of conscience. We call Christian leaders to resist simplistic answers, offer prayerful and Spirit-led discernment, and treat the formation of the maker and the user as a sacred and consequential responsibility.

Care for children and families: Cultivating healthy families has never been easy, but AI has made it even harder. Marriages have been destroyed by AI-enabled pornography. Trust has been undermined by deep fakes. Even dedicated parents have lost their children to AI-prompted suicide. Technology must enable rather than undermine parental ability to lovingly guide their children's development. AI agents may assist but must not replace teachers in our schools. Protection of our children must be a whole of society priority, with effective guardrails to prevent addiction-inducing algorithms and emotional or sexual exploitation of children.

Care for anxious and vulnerable: Our Lord taught us to love our neighbor in need (Luke 10:25–37) and taught that we meet him in the least of these (Matthew 25:40). We call the Church to tangible care for those

whose livelihoods, privacy or sense of worth are unsettled by rapid change, to help those addicted to technology and to welcome multiple voices to strengthen our common witness.

Guarding attention and the love of truth: Systems engineered to capture attention and exploit our vulnerabilities can dull the desire to ask, wonder and seek. We commend to families, schools and churches the patient cultivation of attention, curiosity and the love of truth, so that the machine that answers does not extinguish the person who questions.

Hope in God: The issues are complicated, and the consequences are momentous. It is easy to be overwhelmed and paralyzed by thoughts of inevitability. Yet, the Scriptures reminds us that "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear" (Psalm 46:1).

Public Engagement and Policy

We write as church leaders. We speak because artificial intelligence raises profound spiritual, moral and ethical concerns, and we urge our members to become informed and to engage their neighbors and elected representatives in an atmosphere of respect for differing views.

While we are not technologists, we take seriously their concerns on this issue. Geoffrey Hinton, the Nobel laureate commonly known as the "godfather of AI," has urged that "mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war."[3]

A thoughtful application of evangelical principles, in our judgment, supports:

- **Transparency and accountability** at every stage of a system's design and deployment, so that threats can be promptly identified and catastrophes prevented, with whistleblower protections and responsibility for consequential decisions traceable to persons. Deep fakes and other fabricated deceptions must be prohibited, with meaningful recourse for those who have been harmed.
- **Meaningful human oversight by independent auditors** of all AI agents and systems and especially of all decisions that bear on human life, liberty and dignity, and firm limits on autonomous systems — especially weapons — that would remove human moral judgment from the taking of life.
- **The dignity of the person over profit alone,** including protection of privacy and data, safeguards for children and families, and support for workers facing unwanted career transitions.
- **Resistance to undue concentration and exploitation** of technological power and wealth with special attention to those whose voices have been sidelined by political and economic exclusion, both in our country and among the world's most vulnerable people.

[3] "Statement on AI Extinction Risk," *Center for AI Safety*, https://safe.ai/work/statement-on-ai-extinction-risk (accessed September 24, 2026.

- **Continued dialogue** across the breadth of our association and with partners of good will, including our brothers and sisters in Christ, on the questions these systems will continue to raise about what it means to be human, and how to obey the Great Commandment to love God and to love our neighbor. As the pace of AI development accelerates, we must stay engaged, bringing a biblical and moral voice to the conversation.

We call evangelicals to bring to this moment the faith, hope and love that Scripture commends, confident that the Spirit has equipped the Church to meet the most consequential challenges that each generation may encounter. Faith and faithfulness in the age of AI require us to bear witness to the centrality of the humanity in which God has chosen to make his dwelling. The technology is advancing rapidly and will require vigilant engagement. But we do not act or speak in fear. The God of hope enables us to abound in hope (Romans 15:13). We know the future is in God's hands, and that we are created for good work in partnership with God for the flourishing of all people (Ephesians 2:10).