Review

Todd Korpi, *AI Goes to Church: Pastoral Wisdom for Artificial Intelligence*, IVP, 2025. ISBN 1514011247

By Murray Stiller, DPhil

Artificial intelligence has moved from novelty to ubiquity with remarkable speed. Within a few year, generative tools are foundations of classrooms, studios, and pastors 'studies, leaving churches to have to catch-up with a response to technology that arrived before most Christians had the opportunity to reflect. Todd Korpi writes that the moment does not require quick answers but needs to "develop a foundation of how to think" in the face of technological proliferation (pg.10). This is the goal of *AI Goes to Church; Pastor Wisdom for Artificial Intelligence*. Korpi, a pastor, missiologist, and church consultant, approaches the subject not as a technology expert but as a pastor asking what faithfulness looks like in world generated by artificial intelligence.

Korpi begins with a basic question: Why should Christians care about AI? Given AI's impact, Korpi's response is grounded in principles of stewardship because followers of Christ carry a responsibility for other human beings and for the planet. AI technology raises genuine theological challenges and how the church responds will help determine how AI shapes human life. Korpi calls for wisdom rooted in biblical perspectives that express care for communities. The book moves from a primer on the nature of AI and discussion of Scripture's engagement with technology, the image of God, theology, ethics, the mission of the church, and social justice to the the future of work, pastoral care, the prospect of 'artificial clergy, 'and Christian education. The closing chapter outlines principles and practices for ministry and AI. Every chapter is directed from his central question; 'What does it mean to be uniquely human in this era of AI?'

The book's significant contribution is reframing the question of humanness, artificial intelligence, and Creation. Much of the popular discussion, including a good deal of the church's response, treats AI as a tool or "resource" to be adopted or rejected according to its usefulness. While the purpose of *AI Goes to Church* is not to explore philosophical roots about technology to understand AI, thinking about AI as a tool or resource restricts our understanding of Creation. Rather,

responsible stewardship needs to *partner* with technology to care for the planet, particularly those who are most vulnerable. While 'resource 'and 'partner 'may sound like a matter of semantics, it is important to understand how technology is an extension of who we are. Still, Korpi's conclusion, reframing 'What AI can do for the church? 'to 'What kind of stewards the church will be using AI? 'is critical. For ministry leaders accustomed to evaluating new technology by its efficiency, this question changes Church thinking and response to technology.

Korpi's method is Socratic. Rather than rushing to a verdict, he steps back to examine the implication of living alongside artificial agents designed to mimic human behaviour. He is candid about the physical and existential pitfalls of AI, yet remains optimistic about its potential benefits. As a resource, AI has much to offer the church, such as administrative efficiency. Korpi is also clear about the need to consider AI's limits as it is not equipped to ask certain thoughtful questions, such as topics related to postural discernment. This tension between openness and caution gives the book creditability as Korpi is neither an enthusiast nor an alarmist.

As a survey, *AI Goes to Church* opens more conversations than it can resolve. Readers looking for sustained technical or philosophical depth may not be satisfied with where Korpi's ends the book. However, Korpi mitigates this by establishing his reflection on biblical principles rather than technological platforms. This thirty-thousand foot perspective give the book a framework that will outlast products as we consider AI in the decades to come. Korpi invites us to ask questions as AI continues to usher us into new technological revolution.

AI Goes to Church is written for students in ministry, pastors, students of theology, and people involved with using AI in media and church life. The book is an accessible, nontechnical starting-point into theological and ethical questions about the use of AI. Christians already using AI will discover insights to help evaluate their daily work. Pastors and ministry leaders wrestling with the ethical implication of AI for preaching, pastoral care, and congregational administration will find the book both a reassurance and challenge. For ministry education, the chapter on Christians education and the closing principles for ministry practice make the book a natural fit for courses in practical theology, ministry, and ethics.

Todd Korpi's bird's eye missiological journey through artificial intelligence is an excellent and easy to read survey of the church's relationship with digital technology and AI. *AI Goes to Church* strength is not a set of rules but a thoughtful,

hopeful reflection and conviction that wisdom rather than technical capability will be the church's distinctive contribution in the revolution of artificial intelligence.

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