Leading Second Podcast - Season 8 Episode 198

AI & Church Leadership ft. Michael Whittle

In our rapidly changing world, we're faced with an exciting yet challenging technological revolution: artificial intelligence. As people of faith, we're called to navigate this new landscape with wisdom and discernment. This week Brandon, along with Dillion and Leydanis Ritchie from CoastLife Church in Venice FL, sit down with Michael Whittle, the founder of Pulpit AI to discuss AI's positive and negative impacts on the church.

WHAT IN THE WORLD IS GOING ON WITH AI IN THE CHURCH?

• This is the most transformational technology since the mobile phone.
• The Church seems to be stepping into using this technology early.
  - Looking to create technology that aligns with our values in the best way possible.

HOW MICHAEL DECIDED TO CREATE THIS TECHNOLOGY FOR THE CHURCH.

• He started out of personal frustration to help people in their local church interact with their church's content more easily.

HOW DO YOU SEE CHURCHES NOW STARTING TO USE AI TOOLS WELL?

• The church should start by asking:
  - How am I communicating on social media/with our staff?
  - How can I create content using some sort of base informational data set that's been created?
  - How can we use AI to amplify our pastor's voice?
• Now churches can utilize this AI to reach more people more easily and quickly.

HOW NOT TO USE AI.

- To replace person-to-person ministry.
- Replacing pastoral care and discipleship.
- Using it to write complete sermons for a pastor.

WHAT'S THE CONVERSATION LIKE AROUND ETHICS WITH AI RIGHT NOW?

- The best way is for local leadership teams to discuss the different ways their team can use AI, where the lines are, and how they are collectively committing and being held accountable to one another to use it wisely.
  - There should be guidelines for staff using it.
  - This will also help to aid in not having this technology be a crutch in how churches facilitate their ministry.
- At the end of the day, Jesus has an opinion about His Church.
  - He is going to hold pastors and leaders responsible for the proper stewardship of what the Bible calls "the mysteries of God."

WHAT IS THE "WHY" BEHIND USING THIS TECHNOLOGY?

- This should not be used to just make our jobs easier.
  - It should be utilized so that we can steward our time better so that we can care for the people that we've been entrusted with.
  - How do we use AI to do something we haven't been able to do yet?
    - What more can we accomplish?

WHAT IS YOUR HEART FOR SECOND CHAIR LEADERS TODAY?

- Ten years from now, we're going to live our lives to be digital first before it is physical.
  - How are we pastoring and leading our people through the changes in the world that this technology is going to bring?
  - We have to start preparing our people.

Dig Deeper

1. How can we ensure that the use of AI in ministry aligns with our church's core values and biblical principles?

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2. In what ways can we prepare our congregation for the potential societal impacts of AI, such as job displacement or digital dependence?

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3. How can we use AI to amplify the local church pastor's voice without diminishing the importance of personal discipleship and community?

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Additional Resources

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Pulpit AI:

Pulpit AI helps pastors and church teams communicate with and reach their congregation and local community. To learn more about utilizing their resources, visit Pulpit AI.