IFCA Youth Ministry Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence

Guidelines for the use of AI in Ministry Training Area Presentations

I. PURPOSE

The rapid advancement and integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and software has begun to touch and affect nearly every area of our modern lives. From automatic integration into almost every software application and personal smart device to the generation of highly-detailed and realistic documents, videos, art, and music, to the creation of AI chatbots which have been used to synthesize real human interaction, we are becoming more and more inundated with both the influence and resulting products of AI. Because of the potential implications and influences of these technologies on ministry in the local church (and because IFCA Youth Ministry is focused on helping students prepare ministry presentations for use in the local church), the IFCA International Executive Board, together with the IFCA Youth Council, would like to give guidance to youth leaders, parents, and their students regarding the use of AI in ministry (and in the preparation of MTA presentations).

II. DEFINITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Artificial intelligence (AI) is technology that enables computers and machines to simulate human learning, comprehension, problem solving, decision making, creativity and autonomy.[1] AI technologies fall into two general categories:

- **Assistive AI**, which has existed for many years. Assistive AI is any AI functionality that aids the user in producing *their own* original content or refining the user's original content without generating any substantive content itself.[2] [3]
- **Generative AI**, which has existed only in much more recent history. Generative AI is any AI functionality which can create original text, images, video and other content in response to a user's prompt.[4] [5]

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[1] Stryker, C. and Kavlakoglu, E., *What is AI?*, 2024, accessed 2/1/26 (https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/artificial-intelligence)

[2] Columbia Theological Seminary, *Artificial Intelligence Policy for Student Academic Use,* 2024 (https://moodle.ctsnet.edu/pluginfile.php/173690/mod_resource/content/1/Artificial Intelligence Policy_April 2024.pdf), 1.

[3] Examples include: Grammarly, Microsoft Editor, ProWritingAid, LanguageTool, or any number of software-integrated spell-checking or grammar-checking tools. For research, examples include any AI-integrated search engine which gathers and organizes related materials from multiple sources and lists them them in one place.

[4] Stryker and Kavlakoglu, *What is AI?*

[5] Examples include: Grammarly Go, Claude, Grok, Chat GPT, Gemini, Copilot, Perplexity, Deep Seek, Pi, Songer, Suno, Mureka, OpenMusic, Udio, Midjourney, Leonardo, NanoBanana, Freepik, Ideogram, DALL-E, Firefly, AnthemScore, NotaGen, together with an ever-expanding list of similar platforms which are impossible to catalogue.

As AI technologies continue to become more numerous and more sophisticated, and as software companies continue to focus mainly on generative AI and how to integrate these technologies into their products, the line between assistive and generative AI is increasingly more difficult to distinguish.[6]

The problem with our current situation is that the line between original content and what consists as plagiarism has also been blurred. There is generally very little confusion regarding the falsehood and theft involved in passing off another person's work as one's own. With most generated content, there is no "owner" per se, but the problem still arises with the dishonesty of an individuals claiming originality for content which they did not produce. What is more, because AI models have been designed to appear "confident" in their generated content, that "content can be inaccurate, misleading, or entirely fabricated (sometimes called "hallucinations"), or may contain copyrighted material."[7]

As servants of Christ and ministers of the gospel in His churches, every Christian must exercise wisdom and discernment in pursuing clarity and conviction in every area of ministry—certainly including the use (and abuse) of AI. As those uniquely created in the image of God, human beings bear the responsibility to bring forth and value genuine human creativity, beauty, and honest work as distinguished from AI products, which merely resemble human creativity, beauty, and work. That which is artificially generated by AI can never truly replace that which only those created in God's image can bring forth for God's glory.[8]

In light of these considerations, and to encourage the kind of integrity and originality expected of ministers of the gospel in local churches, the following are the expectations and rules regarding the use of AI in ministry presentations prepared for IFCA Youth Ministry events.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

A. General Guidelines

1) The use of **assistive** AI in doing research is acceptable. This includes using assistive AI in gathering and organizing relevant resources both inside and outside the Scriptures. Caution must still be exercised because of the prevalence of incorrect information gathered and put forth in AI search results.
2) The use of **assistive** AI in running grammar and spelling checks for suggesting *minor* spelling and grammar corrections to original content is acceptable.
3) In general, the use of **generative** AI for producing any content which is then incorporated in to a ministry presentation is inappropriate. This includes generating and presenting summaries, outlines, script texts, inspirational writing content, sermon/lesson texts, sheet music, artwork, or worship set content as one's own.
4) Any attempt to pass off generated content as one's own work will be treated as plagiarism and will result in disqualification from presenting an MTA at an IFCA Youth event.

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[6] A few examples:
- Integrated grammar-checking software has quickly given way to automatic revision and editing options which produce a written text that is substantively different from the original input.
- Many types of photo/video editing software have quickly begun to integrate photo/video generation tools which either automatically animate or entirely recreate an image or video in response to simple prompts.
- AI-integrated search engines are offering more "personalized" recommendations, including the option to generate a summary of research findings with the click of a button—even these simple summaries are generated content.
- AI-assisted notation software not only notates sheet music from an audio file, but now also suggests changes which result in a composition vastly different than what was originally recorded.

[7] Harvard Business School Student Handbook, *Using ChatGPT & Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools,* accessed 2/2/26 (https://www.hbs.edu/mba/handbook/standards-of-conduct/academic/chatgpt-and-ai).

[8] For a more fully-developed theology of AI, see Goeman, P., *Artificial Intelligence and the Christian: Understanding AI's Promises and Pitfalls* (Raleigh, NC: Sojourner Press), 2024.

5) All MTA evaluation forms will include an acknowledgement that presentations are original and contain no AI-generated content.

B. Specific Guidelines for Each Ministry Training Area

1) Preaching

a) The use of AI-generated Bible text interpretations, summaries, sermon outlines, sermon texts, illustration suggestions or applications, or any other AI-generated content in one's preparation or presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited.
b) All quotes and references must be appropriately attributed, and a preacher must be able to answer the question regarding where he found his sources.
c) The use of advanced grammar-checking software to generate major changes to or suggested additional content for one's sermon text, outline, or other content is prohibited.

2) Bible Teaching

a) The use of AI-generated Bible text interpretations, summaries, lesson outlines, lesson texts, illustration suggestions or applications, or any other AI-generated content in one's preparation or presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited.
b) All quotes and references must be appropriately attributed, and teachers must be able to answer the question regarding where they found their sources.
c) The use of advanced AI grammar-checking software to generate major changes to or suggested additional content for one's lesson text, outline, or other content is prohibited.

3) Apologetics

a) The use of AI-generated Bible text interpretations, summaries, presentation outlines, presentation texts, illustration suggestions or applications, answers to the provided questions, or any other AI-generated content in one's preparation or presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited.
b) All quotes and references must be appropriately attributed, and presenters must be able to answer the question regarding where they found their sources.
c) The use of advanced AI grammar-checking software to generate major changes to or suggested additional content for one's presentation text, outline, question answers, or other content is prohibited.

4) Inspirational Writing

a) The use of any AI-generated written content or using AI to organize one's content is prohibited.
b) The use of advanced AI grammar-checking software to generate major changes to or suggested additional content for one's presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited.
c) The use of AI-generated graphic illustrations for document covers or artistic document design is acceptable if the design is acknowledged as not being one's own.

5) Worship Leading

a) The use of AI-generated worship sets, outlines, song summaries, transition content, or any other AI-generated content in a worship team's preparation or presentation, in whole or in part, is prohibited.
b) The use of AI-generated worship songs is prohibited.

6) Music Performance Presentations

a) All copyrighted music used for presentations must be properly licensed and attributed and purchased from a reputable source.
b) AI-generated sheet music of a copyrighted song which is purchased or obtained from a disreputable source, or which is generated without the express permission of the author(s) or arranger(s) is prohibited.
c) Copyrighted arrangements which are edited using AI tools without the express permission of the author(s) or arranger(s) are prohibited.
d) Because of the way that AI models "learn" from existing content, it is impossible to ensure that AI-generated arrangements of songs in the public domain do not reflect existing copyrighted material. Therefore, no AI-generated arrangements of public domain songs may be used for MTA presentations.

7) Music Composition, Arranging, and Songwriting

a) The use of assistive AI for composition or chord progression analysis or simple grammar-checking is acceptable.
b) Turning in an AI-generated recording of one's original composition, arrangement, or song as the listening track for evaluators is acceptable if acknowledged.
c) The use of AI-generated notation, lyrics, orchestration parts, or any other content is prohibited.

8) Drama and Puppetry

a) Because of the way that AI models "learn" from existing content, it is impossible to ensure that AI-generated scripts do not reflect existing copyrighted material. Therefore, no AI-generated or modified scripts may be used for MTA presentations.
b) The use of AI-generated script recordings for puppet performance is prohibited.
c) The use of AI-generated set designs or background sounds or music are acceptable if attributed.

9) Gospel Art

a) Passing off AI-generated designs, illustrations, or infographics as one's own original content is prohibited (and will result in disqualification).
b) Using AI-powered editing tools for manually directed changes to original content is allowed only if the specific editing process can be clearly recounted.
c) The use of AI-generated background music for live presentations or background graphic elements for live or digital presentations is acceptable with attribution.

10) Sign Language

a) AI-assisted research in determining the proper signs for individual words and phrases is appropriate.
b) Using AI to generate an interpretation for an entire song or sermon and merely presenting this as one's own work is prohibited.

V. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

For Youth Directors and Church Leaders

1. **Communicate Early**: Counsel students and parents about this policy before and during the MTA preparation process, explaining the theological reasoning behind these standards rather than simply rejecting submissions.
2. **Confirm originality**: Remind students that they will be asked to confirm that the content they produce for their MTA presentations is original and aligns with the expectations.
3. **Provide Resources**: Share theological resources with students and the rest of the congregation which help them to apply greater discernment in their use of AI in ministry.
4. **Encourage Faithful Preparation**: Teach students and the congregation how to prepare for ministry using the tools at their disposal without compromising integrity and originality.

For Event Organizers

1. **Screen Submissions**: Review all entries to confirm they include an MTA evaluation form with the signed AI statement.
2. **Communicate Standards**: Ensure that students, leaders, and evaluators all understand the guidelines.
3. **Raise Questions**: When a concern arises, organizers and evaluators should raise the concern with the student. If the student admits a misunderstanding or a violation, this should be discussed with the student's youth leader and the event organizers and a judgment about disqualification should be made. If the student denies wrongdoing and affirms compliance with the standards, that should be the end of the matter.
4. **Document Decisions**: Maintain records of submissions and incidents for later review.

For Students and Families

1. If students or parents have questions about whether preparation methods are violating this policy, consider having the student describe the preparation process and compare it with the guidelines provided.
2. If a student's preparation is in violation of the guidelines, the best course of action is to begin again using proper preparation methods.

VI. EXCEPTIONS AND APPEALS

Recognizing that circumstances may warrant reconsideration, the IFCA Youth Council will consider appeals regarding the use of AI in specific instances. Petitions should include a written request submitted to the IFCA Youth Council.

The Youth Council will review such petitions and update this policy accordingly as deemed appropriate.

VII. POLICY REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed and updated as needed by the IFCA Youth Council. Updates will be communicated to member churches and youth directors with sufficient advance notice.

VIII. RELATIONSHIP TO CHURCH AUTONOMY

The IFCA fellowship affirms the autonomy and authority of individual, independent churches. This policy represents the standards and convictions of the IFCA Youth Ministry for events we host and promote. Member churches retain the freedom to make their own determinations regarding the use of AI in their own ministry contexts.

However, participation in IFCA Youth Ministry events constitutes acknowledgement and acceptance of this policy for MTA's presented at IFCA Youth Ministry events.

IX. ORGANIZATIONAL AUTHORITY

The IFCA Youth Ministry operates under the authority of IFCA International and is subject to the doctrinal standards and practices of the greater organization. This policy reflects and reinforces IFCA International's commitment to biblical fidelity and doctrinal purity across all ministry contexts.

X. EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy is effective immediately upon adoption by the IFCA Youth Council and shall be communicated to all member churches and youth directors.

Approved by: IFCA Youth Council/IFCA International Executive Director
Date: 11/1/2026
Next Review: 11/1/2027 (to be annually reviewed by Youth Council)