

Resolutions by Keith Myer, Harvest Baptist Church, Salisbury, Md.

On Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

WHEREAS, All technology, including powerful tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), is created by human beings with the gifts and abilities that God has granted to us as the pinnacle of the created order (Genesis 1:26-28, 2:7, 5:1-2) and can be harnessed for human flourishing as we seek to love God and neighbor (Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-39; Mark 12:30-31); and

WHEREAS, Although these tools are designed with distinct values and purposes in mind and shape us in subtle, yet meaningful ways—including our understanding of God, humanity, and the world around us—we alone, as distinct moral agents created by God, bear the moral responsibility for their development and use (Romans 12:1-2); and

WHEREAS, The Fall has adversely affected every aspect of creation, including the development and use of these powerful innovations; and

WHEREAS, AI raises deep, crucial questions that challenge society's false assumptions about what it means to be human which are often rooted merely in human capacities rather than in divinely granted ontological status; and

WHEREAS, AI and other emerging technologies afford us unprecedented opportunities for advancement across industries and throughout our societies, but may also have dangerous and dehumanizing outcomes if not utilized with godly wisdom and discernment; and

WHEREAS, Technologies are often developed and deployed merely to maximize profit, efficiency, and productivity, including at the grave cost of the dignity of our fellow image bearers; and

WHEREAS, These emerging technologies will increasingly perform tasks once reserved for humanity and even surpass human ability in particular ways; and

WHEREAS, The Baptist Faith and Message states that “[a]ll Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society” and that we “should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love” (Article XV); and

WHEREAS, The 2019 Evangelical Statement of Principles on AI, led by our own Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, states that Christians are “called to engage the world around us with the unchanging gospel message of hope and reconciliation” and that “[t]he church has a unique role in proclaiming human dignity for all and calling for the humane use of AI in all aspects of society”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana, June 13-14, 2023, acknowledge the powerful nature of AI and other emerging technologies, desiring to engage them from a place of eschatological hope rather than uncritical embrace or fearful rejection; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we affirm that God's unchanging Word is more than sufficient for whatever ethical challenges, questions, and opportunities we may face today or in the future as these technologies continue to be developed and deployed in our communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we state unequivocally that our intrinsic value is as image bearers—not rooted in what we do or contribute to society—and that human dignity must be central to any ethical principles, guidelines, or regulations for any and all uses of these powerful emerging technologies; and be it further

RESOLVED, We must proactively engage and shape these emerging technologies rather than simply respond to the challenges of AI and other emerging technologies after they have already affected our churches and communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we call upon civic, industry, and government leaders to develop, maintain, regulate, and use these technologies with the utmost care and discernment, upholding the unique nature of humanity as the crowning achievement of God's creation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we encourage all who employ these tools to do so in honest, transparent, and Christlike ways that focus on loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves, never seeking to willfully deceive others or take advantage of them for unjust gain or the accumulation of power; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That we confess that God alone has the power to create life, that “God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end” (Baptist Faith and Message, Article X), and that no innovation or emerging technology will ever be able to usurp the sovereignty and power of God.

Additionally, Myer made a motion to amend the SBC organizational manual so ERLC assists churches and entities in responding to abuse. This motion was referred to the ERLC.