When Tech Comes to Town 📉 Future Curve 📈

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Are you a Christian leader who has received an invitation from (a) a large tech company, (b) a tech ethics organization, or (c) datacenter asking you to attend a private or public meeting about AI, morality, and religion? You know that other religious leaders who attend such things have received public exposure through quotes in international media, appearances at Davos, and opportunities to circulate among philanthropic donors and program officers.

You feel an obligation to speak to current trends, want to learn about changes that affect your community, and meet others who care about the future. You rightly want to be in the rooms where decisions are made. But you also have questions about the people organizing the event and how your presence at such a gathering might be used. **How do you decide?**

Tech's Track Record Engaging with Religious Leaders

Large tech firms have a history of building relationships with religious leaders at moments when their brands need the reputational boost.

- In 2021 as Meta faced pressure over its role in online violence, Facebook started an "Interfaith Advisory Council." After a glowing New York Times article about the group's aspirations and NDAs ("Facebook is shaping the future of religious experience"), the group was never heard from again.
- In 2020, technology companies like Microsoft, Salesforce, and Cisco signed an agreement at the Vatican committing to uphold a series of "principles" for AI development - including inclusion, accountability, and impartiality. Yet the principles involved no binding accountability measures, and the same companies continued to fund and deploy models that fail to fulfill the stated goals.
- In 2026, Anthropic held private meetings with faith leaders and philosophers on Claude's moral status. But Anthropic controls decisions on who to include in the consultation and whose conclusions to follow. Despite the PR, that's very different from the idea of a constitution, which would bind them to independent oversight.

Questions Christian Leaders Should Ask Before Accepting An Invitation:

- **Ask who else is invited and who will be presenting**. In 2026, Christian leaders have found themselves invited to make public statements on AI ethics with eugenicists and convicted fraudsters. Also pay attention to whether minoritized communities and faith traditions are being given respect, or just the best-known groups.
- **Ask about the output or outcomes of the meeting**. Are they investing resources toward the concrete needs of your community? If the company is merely asking for

"input," understand they are likely to use it to 'faith-wash' their public messaging or extract insights that they can use for other purposes.

- **Ask why they are interested in *your* community and why now**. Tech employees may have genuine good will. They may also have other motivations. To be wise as serpents and as innocent as doves, look them up in the news and ask:
    - Are there high stakes scandals, investment rounds, lobbying actions like datacenters, or upcoming laws, where they need good PR?
    - Do they want access to your community's data, and if so, why?
- **Ask where in the company they sit and if there is a plan for a follow up**. Is this meeting just a PR photo op or have they committed resources to a continued relationship? Tech firms hold a lot of power But you as clergy hold more moral and communal power. If you do engage, we encourage you to develop a collective plan for ongoing engagement on your own terms.
- Ask **if/why the company is requesting a Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA) or "Chatham House Rule."** These tools may be framed as devices for transparency and honesty from the company's side, but often make it harder for *you* to be transparent with others in your community afterwards. NDAs in particular have made it difficult to bring conversations of significant social and political concern back to the local populations who are most seriously impacted by those conversations.
- Consider **asking for a no-photo meeting** to avoid being included in a photo op on terms other than your own.

The Magi Rule: How To Keep Your Head When Playing in Herod's Court

For leaders who choose to meet with tech groups , we suggest the "Magi Rule," where you spend 2 hours with those affected by AI for every hour spent with luminaries at the top of the field. For every story about gatherings of the wise and powerful you are part of, you also commit to "go home by a different way' (Matthew 2:12) by amplifying stories of those who are not considered conventionally powerful.

Technology makers do play a role in the direction of their creations. But the future of AI has also been shaped by the poor in spirit, the persecuted, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. If you need help identifying groups in your community who may have experienced harms and who are advocating for change, look to these people. We encourage you to read about mothers demanding answers about their children's deaths, people wrongfully arrested, multifaith communities advocating for a "fair share" of their local data center buildout, artists and authors of AI-stolen work, parents separated from their children, and nurses who see their work as care and not just a bundle of tasks. We encourage you to learn from communities who use AI to grow community access to knowledge and resources. The Magi rule will help you avoid missing out on these important leaders.

Behold, I am Doing a New Thing, Do You Not Perceive It?: A Word about Inevitability

We recognize that the enormity of tech firms and the scale of changes afoot can make technology conversations feel overwhelming. Companies hold disproportionate power, money, and political influence. But the first theft of Empire is taking the ability to dream and imagine new futures. This is why the narrative of inevitability is so powerful in the push for technologies to move into communities. And yet, we who follow Jesus Christ, the lineage of the Prophets and the Author of Revelation have the legacy of asking questions, hard and thoughtful questions on our side. We want to remind you that you are not alone as you ask and imagine a future where all are fed, all have enough water, enough support, enough work and enough dignity. The God who makes all things new goes before you as the founder and perfecter of our futures.

Contributors

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About 📉Future Curve📈

Future Curve supports the body of Christ to prophetically re-imagine technology and power from the bottom up. Technologists often imagine the future as a line ascending to a world they want others to live with. Yet Christianity also seeks to shape the future with (a) the inverse parabola of Jesus who humbled himself in Philippians 2 and (b) the call in Acts 26 for powerful leaders to follow a different path. Future Curve works to change the path of technology toward these counter-intuitive futures.

Future Curve is an early-stage project by Dr. J. Nathan Matias, a computer scientist and social scientist at Cornell University who has been convening Christian leaders in conversations about technology for twenty years. The project is incubated at the Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology, and the Law at Duquesne University and the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University.