

**Sermon notes by Bp. David Walker, Episcopal Visitor
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I like to use these slots to offer some reflections on issues that seem to lie in the territory where we need both good science and good religion in order to make progress. And hence where we as a Society may have a particular contribution to make. It's also a chance for me to reflect on my own engagement in that overlap, so expect to hear a bit later about the Science, Faith and Fiction event at the Science Museum in London, which Lucas and I were both at last week.

So here are three morsels to chew on.

What is special about humans?

A few years ago, the BBC invited me to do a spoof piece for their Sunday programme, based on the conceit that robots were to be deployed to replace clergy.

[visit to MUSI, Lord's Prayer, perfect pastoral listeners - never get tired of hearing the same stories from parishioners, infinitely patient with recalcitrant church members, no danger of stealing funeral fees or running off with a member of the congregation] [ended with, asserting that bishops were safe from such replacement, as somebody had to oversee the robots, but that archdeacons had already been robotised some years earlier, and nobody had noticed]

With all the hype about AI this year, I'm wondering whether my proposals were far too modest. [Sue using ChatGPT to provide a first draft of intercessions - cut down time by half] Emma coding.

Don't intend to focus specially on that software, but to use it to ask the question:

What does it mean to be human? What can humans do that is not replicable or replaceable?

What is special about being physically present?

Some of the hype about virtual reality feels a little last year, Meta is still more a brand than an actuality (perhaps that itself is a metaphor) but I'm sure it will come back again as the tech experience improves.

Zoom etc over Covid. Involving people in our event virtually.

Note drop in attendance including NA. Note Ivan.

Keep coming back to this issue in various aspects of church life. Is this another area where the mission strategy and financial strategy pull in opposite directions?

What is special about the prophecies we tell?

Science fiction exhibition. Instant stories.

What is prophecy?

What prophecies link Science and faith?