

GraceNotes

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GROWING IN GRACE

"Smile for the Camera"

As technology capabilities continue to advance, issues related to the same continue to multiply. While some efforts have been made to slow down the pace of advancement for the court of public scrutiny to weigh in, it seems evident that there is great reluctance on behalf of the technology power brokers to put meaningful guardrails in place to protect public interests. Of course, technocrats insist that all the advancement is in the public's interest, especially regarding security. The public-at-large begs to differ. According to a YouGov.com survey, 83% of Americans are worried about the intrusion of technological surveillance in their personal lives.

There are multiple developments on the technoscape that have recently ramped up the national discourse and amped up passions about the current state of affairs. AI data retention and the compilation of meta-databases are two such developments. A third is the prospect of public access to facial recognition technology. Such technology is already widely used in the government sector. For the good and/or for the ill, it is apparently here to stay. How do we respond, especially as Christians?

Just a thought....What if "facial recognition" for Christians meant the world seeing Jesus in them? When the Jewish Council prosecuted the Apostles Peter and John for preaching, Acts 4:13 says, *"They observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, yet they were amazed and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus."* In II Corinthians 5:16-17, Paul declares that in the church, *"No one is recognized according to the flesh, but [according to the spirit/Spirit] by which in Christ one is a new creature."* It's called "Christoformity" – that is, being conformed to the image of Christ. Paul identifies the eternal will of God as our *"being conformed to the image of His Son"* (Rom. 8:29).

Wow! What if Christians were so faithful and committed that the world's "facial recognition" of them only revealed Jesus? What if Jesus just showed up over and over on the ID reports from recognition technology? It would make the intrusion a blessing in disguise. A fanciful dream? Perhaps. But the point is that in Christ there is always a way to "seize the moment," "redeem the time," "turn the tide," and "save the day."

As we continue GROWING IN GRACE together in this age of great and often unsettling change, let us hear the words of Jesus: *"Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves"* (Mt. 10:16). Perhaps that can mean our best and highest response to mass surveillance is to simply but

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