

After Meeting a Robot, the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church Says He Has Some Concerns

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Sergei Pyatakov / RIA Novosti

Moscow hosted the Orthodox Student Forum on Oct. 13, marking a new trend in the Russian Orthodox Church's youth outreach, which presents the institution's spiritual values as intrinsic to scientific progress. Patriarch Kirill made an appearance at this year's forum, sharing an awkward moment with a robot designed to operate aboard the International Space Station.

The machine extended its hand to Kirill, who did not reciprocate the gesture.

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"We need to be creating robotics using our human intelligence, with designs for the right purposes," the patriarch said. "I don't know how right it would be for robots to be doing

education ... They can transmit information, of course, but I'm certain that a robot cannot mentor a person into maturity.”

According to Kirill, Russian schools manage to provide students with plenty of knowledge, but they shape and mature children, he says. “God is with them, with the robots. Let them do their thing, but our teachers need to be responsible for mentoring.”

Earlier this month, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin met with the same robot, a machine named Fedor (“Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research”) now being designed to function in orbit above the Earth. The robot mirrors a user’s movements and is capable of driving a vehicle, operating a drill, and even performing basic gymnastics.

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