

# WEEKLY SERMON

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## Is AI a threat to mankind's inherent creativity?

If you follow the news in any way at all you can't fail to have noticed all the stories in recent weeks about the rise of AI (artificial intelligence).

It's nothing new of course, at least in science fiction ... remember HAL 9000, the creepy sentient computer in '2001: A Space Odyssey'?

That's the fiction ... but down the years since then computer experts have been experimenting and refining until now, with the likes of 'ChatGPT' (an artificial intelligence chatbot) we have the dawn of a new age. An age where computers really can substitute human creativity with some considerable success.

Launched in November 2022, it's already clear ChatGPT presents many opportunities, but it is also being perceived as a threat by many, including educational establishments.

No wonder, when it can produce a passable (pardon the pun) essay that reads as 'new' not plagiarised.

That's because it uses its immense power to drag facts and figures from across the internet and re-expresses them in a fresh way; not just regurgitating passages of someone else's essay.

Then there are a number of AI art generators that can produce artwork based on a particular style that looks like the real thing. Don't believe me? Then check out [this recent article in The Guardian](#) where they asked art experts to tell the real painting from the AI fake. Several times they got it wrong!

It's a concern. What does it mean for our human creativity if a computer can produce better essays and more engaging artwork than you or I? Personally I would take a poorly drawn real artwork over some AI perfection any day.

So it concerns me that in the Guardian experiment, when presented with the fact he had chosen incorrectly, expert Bendor Grosvenor responded 'if you offered me the choice, I would actually go for the AI one'.

Really? The AI one?

Are we now actively preferring AI creativity to that of humanity in all its rich diversity? I hope not.

It may not feel like it to many, but we are at a pivotal moment in the history of mankind.

God made us all in His image. We are the pinnacle of His creation. In the Bible, in Ephesians 2, v10 it says: 'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.'

All of us have gifts from God to express ourselves. Some people sing - it may be for karaoke in the local pub or it could be for the King at the Coronation Concert in a few weeks. Both entertain in their own ways.

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Some people are craftsmen and women; others write; still more paint beautiful artworks or excel at sport or music. the list is endless. As humans we are filled 'with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills'. (Exodus 35 v31)

I'm not a Luddite and I will use these AI tools but that's all they are - tools to help us; and that's all they should ever be. Even tech giants like Elon Musk are [calling for caution](#) in how we move forward.

My prayer for our world right now is that with everything else going on right now, from the cost of living crisis to Ukraine, we don't take our eye off the AI ball.

In the famous verse in Jeremiah (29 v11) we hear God saying: "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

*But we have also been given free will by God*, so we must all guard our collective futures carefully. Let's pray those who continue to develop these technologies do so wisely, while the people who use them don't abuse the undoubted opportunities AI presents, to the detriment of the creativity inherent in all of humanity.

**Ronnie Semley, Communications Manager**