

## Friends

Genesis 1:26 tells us: Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our own image, in our likeness..." What image exactly does he mean? One thought is that we are made in the image of God in our spirit and this is the reason that we all look so different and have different gifts, skills, behaviours and so on. Another attribute is our ability to create and be creative. What then does this mean in the context of the generative ability of AI?

In the news this morning there was an article that tells us that more than 1,000 musicians released a silent album on Tuesday in protest at the UK government's planned change to copyright law. The concern is that AI can be trained by listening to examples of their music and create "new" music that will eventually mean that the artists themselves are out of work. You will remember that similar fears were behind the 2023 scriptwriters' strike. Preachers of course, will also have the same issues and already people in the field assure me that it is possible to have AI write a perfectly good sermon. I have not asked it to, but what does it mean for our God-given creativity and can the Holy Spirit work through AI as well as through the preacher in the creation of a sermon?

I have no answers to these questions. However, in the development of the education system in this country, we have seen a decrease in rote learning, and an increased premium placed on knowing what to do with information, how to play with it if you will. At the moment, AI cannot do this, and neither does it have a moral structure: it simply crunches data and learns from what it accesses.

Should we then be concerned? If the ability to use it to write songs, books, sermons makes us lazy, and causes us to cease to use our creative muscles, then yes, that would be pulling us away from one of the ways in which we are made in God's image. If however, we

use it as an investigative tool to lay foundations for still more creative thinking and understanding, then it can only be good. Ever since Adam and Eve ate the apple in the Garden of Eden we have been offered these same choices. Knowing the potential for the good and the evil, can we make the wise decision?

God bless, Vicci