



E-Read



The General Conference of the New Church **Articles and Letters**

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Using AI for New Church Teachings

Revd David Gaffney writes:

As for many of us, I have recently begun using AI [artificial intelligence] search engines to help write articles etc. They're amazing things, and save an enormous amount of time searching through reference books.

I usually find that as I read through them, I do a lot of tweaking and altering to my preferred words or phrasing. After I've finished writing a piece, it somehow doesn't seem to sound so alien to my own personal style.

Some say they are a bit of a cheat. But I might perhaps compare the use of AI Search Engines with a craftsman of old, say a carpenter who has used hand tools all his life and then, power tools came along. The work, identifying the problem, design, having knowledge and experience of timbers and skills to work with them are still more or less the same, but with a few adjustments and additions to his techniques he can produce much more without getting fatigued.

However, AI search engines are not infallible! Quite often you will intuit that something is not right; nuances, fine distinctions and shades of meaning, often, are not picked up by AI. No doubt, that as time goes on they will become more sophisticated and will learn, and we will learn with them.

I recently had a problem with AI mixing up 'conjunction' and 'union' which although they can have similar meanings, getting them the wrong way around in the context of New Church Theology will have significant implications in correctly understanding the New Church.

So, personally, I experiment with the use of AI for articles and save myself and my eyesight a lot of fatigue. But, I would say, be careful of their shortcomings and grow with them as time progresses.

Rev. D Gaffney, April 2025