

HAVE A BLESSED  
**CHRISTMAS**  
& A KINGDOM ADVANCING  
**2024**



FROM  
KEITH'S  
HEART  
TO  
YOURS

We're coming to the end of 2023, a year in which global conflicts have continued and been added to, dividing nations along pro/against lines of support; where we have witnessed new record heatwave temperatures; where personal economic welfare has been affected consistently by high interest rates remaining in place across the globe and, where certain nations' elections have potentially given a hint of what might be anticipated as other nations hold their democratic elections in 2024.

Against this background, I am intrigued to read of what has been classified as the word of the

year for 2023, an annual tradition by several leading English language dictionaries and at least one global news magazine. The reason I take note of this small and maybe insignificant event, is because the chosen word in these publications is based on actual searches by actual people using the dictionary resources to find definitions for everyday words. There is no one single winner across these platforms, but there are certainly two standout words that appear in the lists of each from which their final choice was made.

The word most common to all, was Artificial Intelligence or AI as it has become more commonly known as ChatGPT is also closely associated with this terminology as more and more people become aware of its availability and its assistance in research and writing processes. As these terms have become more and more a part of our daily language and as the benefits of AI have become increasingly recognised, it hasn't taken long for loud warnings to be sounded as to where the limits to such artificial intelligence need to lay, in order to restrict such usage to ethically

acceptable boundaries and not have a “free for all” that can become counter productive rather serving good.

Perhaps it's unsurprising then that the Merriam-Webster dictionary announced as its word for the year, Authentic. Noting that this year, the dictionary saw a substantial increase in the number of searches for what is an already high volume word search, the publication's executives concluded that the more people become aware of technology's ability to manipulate reality, the more pushback there is in wanting to know real truth. Editor-at-large Peter Sokolowski made this remarkable confession at the announcement of their word for the year - “We see in 2023 a kind of crisis of authenticity. What we realize is that when we question authenticity, we value it even more.”

In just a few weeks, we will have celebrated Christmas 2023 and ushered in a new year 2024. Much of our attention will focus on “the old, old story ever new...” as a hymn used to put it. Our thoughts will inevitably be drawn to the events surrounding the birth of Jesus and we might even be successful in portraying those events in inventive and creative ways for a 2023 audience, filling our hearts with those emotions reserved for this celebration time of the year. As quickly, we will slip into new year preparation and more of the same as what we have faced this year. Next year, there will be a different word of the year, but that does not mean that the fears, concerns or reasons that drove people to the Webster dictionary site in such noticeably increased numbers will be any less real next year or the year after or the year after that.

For me, the changeless authentic comes home even more forcefully as we end this year, through that predictable Christmas themed reflection from Isaiah 9. At a time when there is increasing suspicion of what is portrayed as truth and whether it can be trusted, when questions are asked as to whether there will ever be an end to wars and peace will be the way of he world, I unreservedly align myself

with this Jesus as the real deal and the one true authentic worth following. I think Eugene Peterson gets it spot on in his paraphrase of the relevant section of Isaiah 9 - “His names will be: Amazing Counselor, Strong God, Eternal Father, Prince of Wholeness. His ruling authority will grow, and there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings.” As we close out 2023 and bring in 2024, may it please the Lord to use us to present an accurate picture of our authentic King, who is the Prince of wholeness bringing wholeness to a world seeking everywhere for what He alone offers us.

**Have a blessed Christmas and a kingdom advancing 2024.**

*Keith*



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CHURCH OF THE NATIONS

# 2024 LEADERSHIP FORUM

## NATURALLY SUPERNATURAL

**DATE:** THURSDAY 4TH - SATURDAY 6TH APRIL 2024

**VENUE:** DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE IN WINDSOR, UK

**COST:** £202.20 PP (SHARING A TWIN OR DOUBLE ROOM)  
£369.00 PP (SINGLE ROOM)



**INCLUDES:**  
CONFERENCE FEES,  
2 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION,  
ALL MEALS FROM THURS DINNER TO SAT  
LUNCH, & REFRESHMENTS.



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