



Only 5% of Pastors Think AI Should Avoid Contested Scripture Despite Widespread Concern About Misinterpretation

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94% of Pastors Fear AI Misinterpreting Scripture - But Only 5% Say It Should Avoid Contested Passages

BOULDER, Colo.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug. 26, 2026-- New [research](#) from [Barna Group](#), in partnership with [Gloo](#), released today finds that while pastors and Christians alike express concern about AI getting Scripture wrong, there may be value in leveraging AI to better understand it. Part of the [2026 State of the Church](#) series on Faith & AI, the findings may give Christians the guidance on AI they've been looking for. Other [Barna research](#) from July 2026 found that one in three practicing Christians want their pastor's guidance on AI.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20260826106650/en/>



How US Christians and Pastors want AI to explain contested Scripture passages

The concern is clear: people are worried about AI interpreting Scripture incorrectly. This concern is shared across nearly three-quarters of U.S. adults (74%), practicing

Christians (83%), and especially pastors (94%).

Yet, the data also reveals that few pastors think AI has no place in theological conversations. Only one in twenty (5%) pastors think AI should entirely avoid answering questions about contested passages of Scripture, and fewer than one in ten (9%) hold that AI should entirely avoid interpreting theology where theologians disagree.

Rather, pastors want AI to present multiple Scriptural interpretations when questions are uncertain. They emphasize the importance of AI disclosing uncertainty by showing multiple interpretations side-by-side (42%) and by citing scholarly disagreement (32%).

"Their approach points to using AI as a tool to aid their learning, not tell them what to think," says Daniel Copeland, Barna's vice president of research.

When asked if AI should show all major interpretations, explain the differences and tell which is best, only 10% of pastors agreed. In comparison, a much larger portion (26%) of practicing Christians agreed. One in five practicing Christians (20%) think AI should only show the most widely agreed upon interpretation.

While Christians are more inclined than pastors to want AI to resolve theological uncertainty on their behalf, the researchers say pastors see an opportunity for AI to do the opposite: surface the disagreement, its citation, and then leave the interpretation up to the person asking.

"What we're seeing in the pastors we serve is not a fear toward technology and AI itself. Only when AI has the potential to replace human connection does it become a threat. But, there's power in using it to instigate critical thinking that then leads them back into community to resolve theological conflict," said Brianne Shaw, the church-facing Director of Marketing at Gloo.

This month's [research release](#) is the latest installment in a yearlong Faith & AI series produced by Barna in partnership with Gloo, as part of the State of the Church initiative. Learn more about the 2026 State of the Church initiative at gloo.com/stateofthechurch.

About the Research

Data referenced in this report are from two surveys conducted by Barna Group. The U.S. adults survey (n=1,514) was conducted online in November 2025, relying on representative quotas for age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, education, and income. The U.S. Protestant pastors survey (n=442) was conducted online in December 2025, using representative quotas for church size, denomination, and region. The margin of error for the U.S. adult sample is +/- 2.0%. For the pastor sample, the margin of error is +/- 2.8%.

[Gloo](#) (Nasdaq: GLOO) is a leading technology platform serving the faith and flourishing ecosystem. Gloo helps missional organizations amplify their impact by powering their technology and expanding their reach, so that people flourish and organizations thrive. The company's values-aligned AI platform modernizes systems, workflows and data, while its marketing and donor solutions expand reach, awareness and long-term giving for mission-based organizations. Based in Boulder, Colorado, Gloo serves over 140,000 faith, ministry, and nonprofit leaders.

[Barna Group](#) is a leading research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture. Since 1984, Barna has conducted more than two million interviews over the course of thousands of studies and has become a go-to source for insights about religion, leadership, vocation and generations. Barna is an independent, nonpartisan organization based in Dallas–Fort Worth, Texas.

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