

Pastors' Views on Artificial Intelligence

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

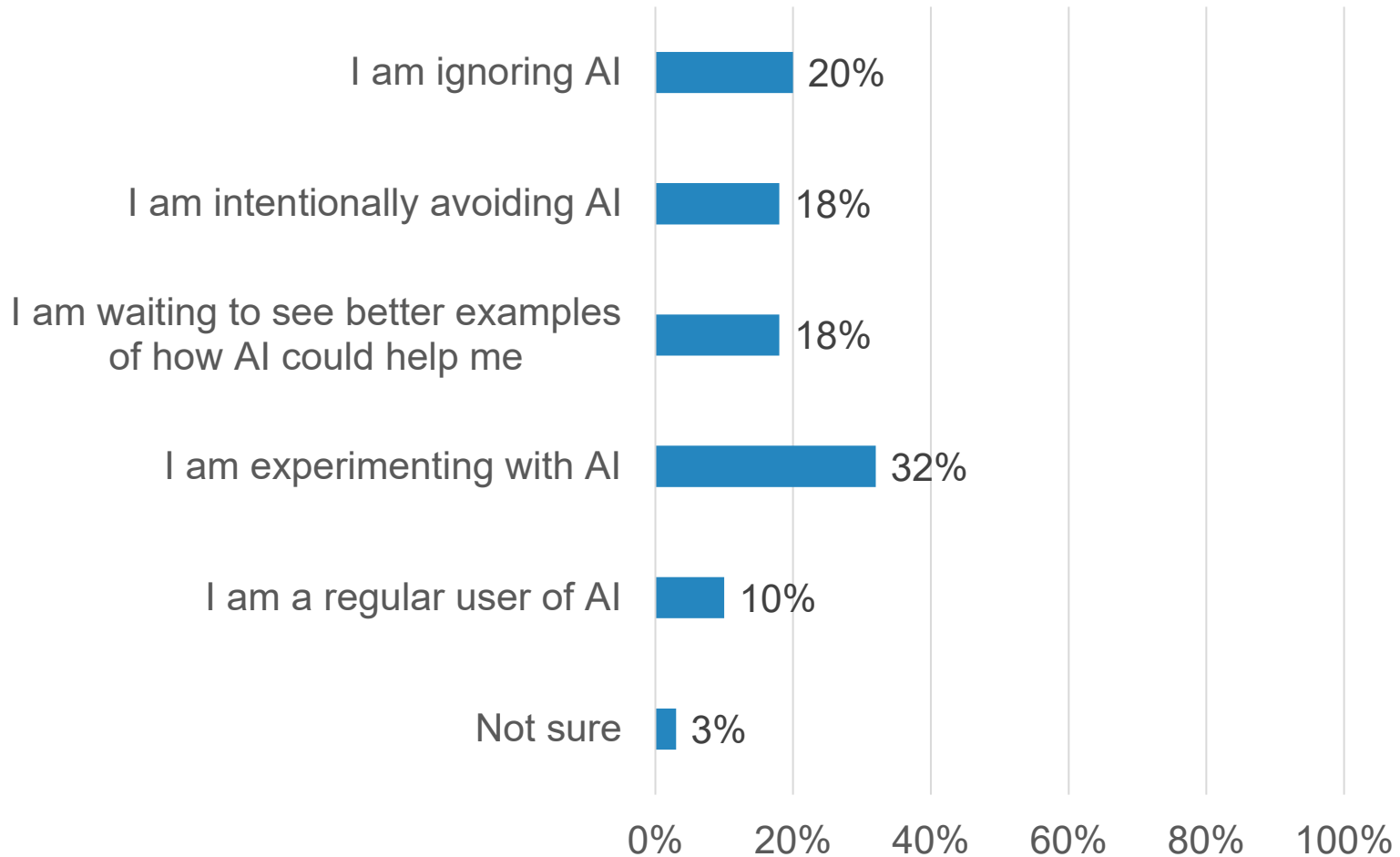
Lifeway research

Methodology

- The phone survey of 1,003 Protestant pastors was conducted September 2-24, 2025
- The calling list was a stratified random sample, drawn from a list of all Protestant churches. Quotas were used for church size
- Each interview was conducted with the senior pastor, minister or priest at the church
- Responses were weighted by region and church size to more accurately reflect the population
- The completed sample is 1,003 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed $\pm 3.3\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups

Currently 42% of pastors are using Artificial Intelligence for ministry and 56% are non-users

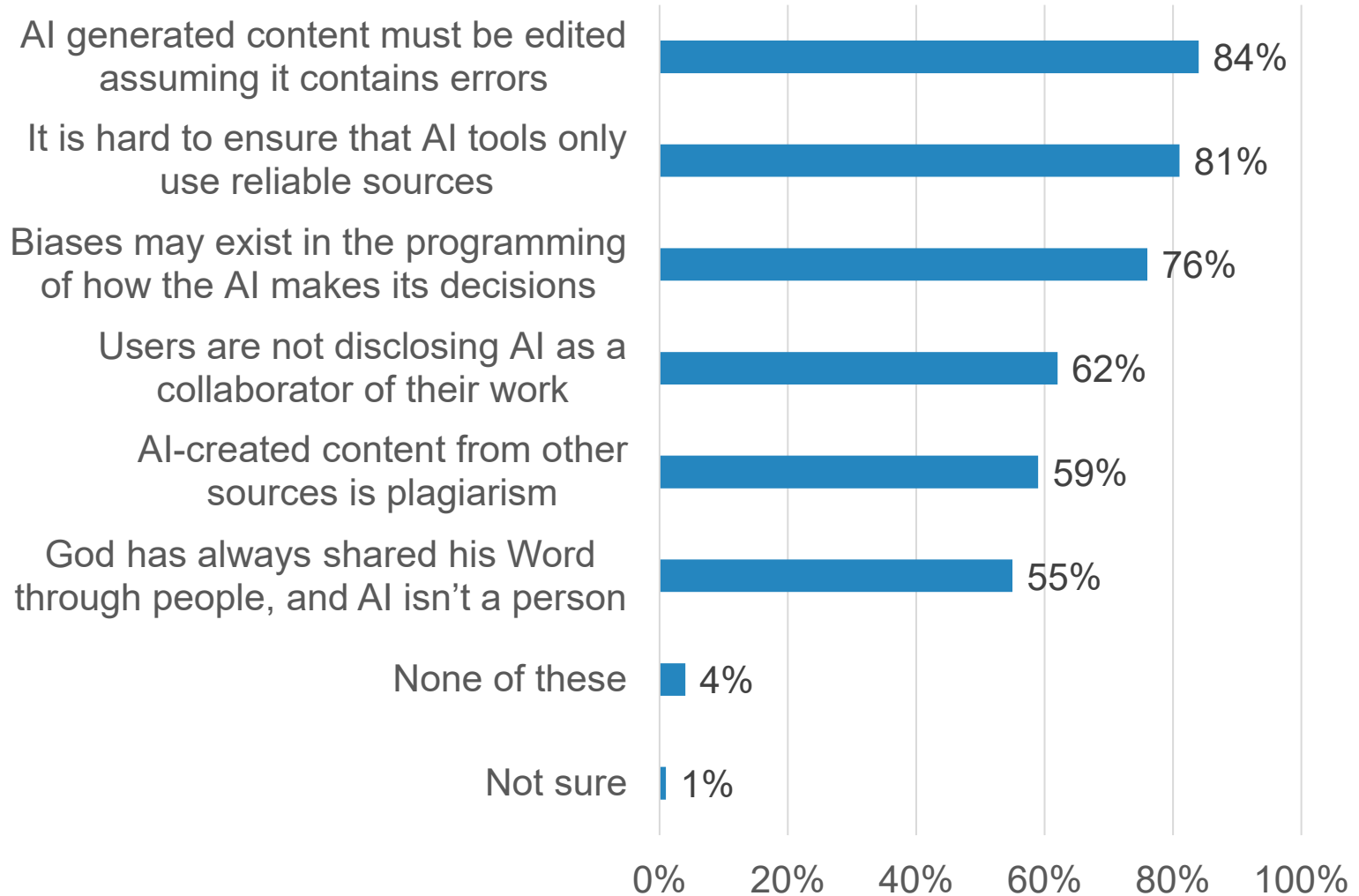
Among Protestant Pastors



Lifewayresearch

“Which, if any, of the following concerns do you have about using AI tools for ministry.”

Among Protestant Pastors



Lifeway research

Q: “Which, if any, of the following concerns do you have about using AI tools for ministry. (Select all that apply)” n=1,003

Significant Differences

Pastor

Ethnicity

Age

Gender

Education Level

Self-identified Evangelical/Mainline

Church

Region

Denomination

Average Attendance

Location

Lifeway research

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the pastor's ethnicity, age, gender, education, self-identified Evangelical or Mainline.

AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	EDUCATION	Self-Identified
18-44	Male	White	No College Degree	Evangelical
45-54	Female	African American	Bachelor's Degree	Mainline
55-64		Other Ethnicities	Master's Degree	
65+			Doctoral Degree	

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among the church's region, denomination, attendance, and location.

REGION	DENOMINATION GROUP	ATTENDANCE	LOCATION
Northeast	Baptist	0-49	Urban
South	Lutheran	50-99	Suburban
Midwest	Methodist	100-249	Rural
West	Pentecostal	250+	
	Presbyterian/Reformed		
	Holiness		
	Non-Denominational		

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

“Which of the following best describes your own current use of AI or Artificial Intelligence for ministry?”

- Pastors age 18-44 (40%) and 45-54 (37%) are more likely to select “I am experimenting with AI” than pastors age 65+ (23%)
- Pastors age 65+ are the least likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” (4%)
- Female pastors are more likely to select “I am ignoring AI” than males (24% v. 17%)
- Male pastors are more likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” than females (12% v. 4%)
- Pastor’s of Other Ethnicities are the least likely to select “I am experimenting with AI” (22%)
- White pastors (20%) and pastors of Other Ethnicities (26%) are more likely to select “I am ignoring AI” than African American pastors (6%)
- Pastors with no college degree (25%) are more likely to select “I am ignoring AI” than those with a Bachelor’s Degree (16%)
- Pastors with a Master’s Degree (10%) or a Doctoral Degree (14%) are more likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” than those with no college degree (5%)

“Which of the following best describes your own current use of AI or Artificial Intelligence for ministry?” *Continued*

- Pastors in the Northeast (25%) are more likely to select “I am intentionally avoiding AI” than those in the South (17%) and West (15%)
- Pastors in the South (36%) are more likely to select “I am experimenting with AI” than those in the Midwest (29%)
- Baptists (22%) and Lutherans (22%) are more likely to select “I am ignoring AI” than Holiness pastors (8%)
- Baptists (20%) and Lutherans (24%) are more likely to select “I am intentionally avoiding AI” than Holiness (8%) and Non-denominational pastors (11%)
- Holiness (43%) are more likely to select “I am experimenting with AI” than Baptists (29%) and Lutherans (28%)
- Holiness (18%) are more likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” than Baptists (6%) and Lutherans (8%)

“Which of the following best describes your own current use of AI or Artificial Intelligence for ministry?” *Continued*

- Pastors at churches with attendance 0-49 are the most likely to select “I am ignoring AI” (28%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 50-99 (21%) and 100-249 (21%) are more likely to select “I am waiting to see better examples of how AI could help me” than pastors of churches with attendance of 0-49 (12%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance 250+ are the most likely to select “I am experimenting with AI” (43%)
- Pastors at churches with attendance of 100-249 (11%) and 250+ (15%) are more likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” than pastors of churches with attendance of 50-99 (6%)
- Pastors at church in a rural area (27%) are more likely to select “I am ignoring AI” than those at churches in an urban area (18%)
- Pastors at church in an urban area (11%) are more likely to select “I am a regular user of AI” than those at churches in a rural area (5%)

“Which, if any, of the following concerns do you have about using AI tools for ministry.”

God has always shared his Word through people, and AI isn't a person

- White pastors (56%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (43%)
- Pastors with no college degree (64%) or a Bachelor's Degree (59%) are more likely to select than those with a Doctoral Degree (47%)
- Evangelical pastors are more likely to select than Mainline pastors (58% v. 51%)
- Baptists (66%) are more likely to select than and Lutherans (54%), Methodists (47%), Presbyterian/Reformed (53%), and Holiness (49%)

AI generated content must be edited assuming it contains errors

- Pastors at churches with attendance of 0-49 (89%) are more likely to select than those at churches with attendance of 50-99 (80%) and 250+ (82%)

“Which, if any, of the following concerns do you have about using AI tools for ministry.”

It is hard to ensure that AI tools only use reliable sources

- White pastors (82%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (67%)
- Pastors with a Bachelor’s Degree (85%) or a Master’s Degree (82%) are more likely to select than those with no college degree (75%)
- Baptists (84%) and Lutherans (86%) are more likely to select than Pentecostals (72%)

Biases may exist in the programming of how the AI makes its decisions

- No meaningful significant differences

“Which, if any, of the following concerns do you have about using AI tools for ministry.”

AI-created content from other sources is plagiarism

- Pastors age 18-44 (66%) and 55-64 (63%) are more likely to select than pastors age 45-54 (51%)
- Mainline pastors are more likely to select than Evangelical pastors (65% v. 56%)
- Presbyterian/Reformed (68%) are more likely to select than Holiness (49%) and Non-denominational (48%)

Users are not disclosing AI as a collaborator of their work

- White pastors (63%) are more likely to select than African American pastors (49%)
- Pastors with a Doctoral Degree are the most likely to select (73%)
- Baptists (67%), Methodists (65%), and Presbyterian/Reformed (66%) are more likely to select than Non-denominational (52%)

Pastors' Views on Artificial Intelligence

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN PROTESTANT PASTORS

Lifeway research