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Maintaining Integration of Faith and Learning in Faith-Based Institutions in the Age of AI: The Shadow Controversy

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ABSTRACT

The adoption and implementation of concepts of “Integration of Faith and Learning” (IFL) has been identified as one of the components that make Christian-based institutions unique and decidedly different from secular universities. IFL aims to promote and instil Christ-like qualities of honesty, hard work, academic excellence, and integrity in students. While many faith-based teachers grapple to incorporate IFL into their classes, the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) systems has introduced new levels of challenges to IFL. A core tenet of IFL is presenting the Christian worldview of “Christ is everything and the great custodian of knowledge,” and this understanding comes from studying the Bible. This Biblical worldview is distinctively being challenged by AI due to its enormous capabilities and usefulness. The ease of access to AI technologies, repeated exposure, and reliance on its capabilities to undertake many complex academic tasks for students may challenge some core components of IFL and also present an alternative narrative to God as the ‘omniscient one’. Faculty also face a higher risk of tough, complex questioning from students through the use of AI, which can potentially throw off a faculty member or derail the class. The absence of standardised policies and guidelines for AI usage further compounds this brewing controversy. Faith-based institutions, therefore, as a matter of urgency, must begin to formulate guidelines for AI use, with guardrails to protect core components of IFL. Administrators must also prioritise training and capacity-building for both faculty and staff in faith and AI.

Introduction

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL) is a deliberate and targeted inclusion of Biblical and Christian principles into teaching, instruction, and general activities of the students' learning environment. IFL is a unique component of Christian-based institutions such as Babcock University, which distinguishes them from other conventional educational institutions (Fisher, 2021). There are increasing ethical and moral issues arising from seemingly deviation from the entrenched Christian/faith-based beliefs on societal standards, norms, morality and beliefs on issues such as family, gender, sexuality, to a more secular/leftist views in institutions of higher learning. Some advanced societies have begun pivoting away from the Biblical/Christian worldview of life and things generally, to more secular and “ungodly” alternatives (Rutebuka, 2019; Fisher and Cozens, 2025). This has prompted many conservative parents and guardians to seek solace and safety within the four walls of Christian and other religious-based institutions of learning, where such values are still held in high regard.

The major goal of incorporating IFL into various levels of education was to offer Biblical worldviews as an alternative or counter-narrative to the godless, secular worldview that seemed to be taking over the circular educational system. IFL has achieved wide penetration and acceptance, having a positive impact on students' performance, integrity and faith (Nwosu, 1999). The introduction of artificial intelligence, however, has brought a new level of challenge and concern for the cardinal goals of IFL.

The emergence of the technology age brought with it tremendous mind-blowing devices and appliances, that greatly improved the abilities and capabilities of people to handle data and complex information. The artificial intelligence (AI) system is proving highly useful across many human endeavours. AI can be easily deployed and integrated into several everyday devices such as smartphones, smartwatches, social media networks, frequently used applications and search engines. This means AI tools are readily available and easily accessible to students. These technologies are here to stay, cannot be ignored or underestimated and will form a core part of students' learning and instruction well into the future (Fengchun et al., 2021, Kemigisha, 2025).

Artificial intelligence refers to the ability of human-made systems to mimic rudimentary human thought (Yampolskiy, 2015). While the term "artificial superintelligence" goes beyond AI's primary ability, it refers to the capabilities of human-made systems that can surpass human abilities and capacities, or greatly enhance them (Yampolskiy, 2015; Yampolskiy, 2016). The AI system is a game-changer in human-machine interoperability, capabilities, and productivity. AI has been touted and embraced as the technology and way of the future, with projections that AI systems will replace over 40% of human jobs and interactions by 2030 (Huang, 2024; Fengchun et al., 2021).

Integration of Faith and Learning (IFL)

Integration of faith and learning is a deliberate and calculated attempt at integrating the Christian faith in the classroom (Fisher, 2021). IFL provides an opportunity to share the Christian faith in all classroom disciplines (Nwosu, 1999; Rutebuka, 2019). IFL is not an isolated activity that occurs in the classroom alone but encompasses all interactions that both university faculty and staff have with students, parents, customers and visitors who come to transact business in a faith-based institution (Nwosu, 1999; Fisher and Cozens, 2025). IFL involves entrenching core values of the Christian faith and the Adventist education philosophy, which is "educating for eternity" (Rutebuka, 2019).

At Babcock University and other Adventist institutions, faculty are required to undergo a three-module training course on IFL, while staff undertake a shorter version of the course. Major components of IFL training include portraying Jesus as the "master teacher", faculty seeing themselves as missionaries in the classroom, evangelising the gospel within the classroom, and instilling godly biblical principles in their relationships and work, such as integrity, honesty, loyalty, interpersonal respect, hard work, and showing love, not just to students only, but also other colleagues (Nwosu, 1999; Fisher and Cozens, 2025).

The cardinal purpose of IFL is to present Jesus Christ, not only as the saviour but also as a servant leader and the master teacher who shows compassion, love, forgiveness, humility, patience, mastery of his subject, a variety of teaching methods, empathy and intimate knowledge of all his students (Rutebuka, 2019; Fisher and Cozens, 2025).

The Concept of the Almighty

The Bible teaches, and Christians believe that Jehovah God is the Almighty and greatest God on earth. The Christian worldview, of a Christ-centred ‘theory of everything’, begins with the proper understanding of the Bible and extends philosophical exploration into a conceptual scheme that encompasses all knowledge and all life. This worldview is distinctively different from those of naturalism and postmodernism (Fisher, 2021).

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless (**Genesis 17:1**). Similarly, in **1 Timothy 1:17** aligns with the foregoing: ‘Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever’. Amen.

The character of God has the ‘Almighty’ includes traits that make God distinct and different from man and other professed gods (Bible Study Tools, 2025). The character of God are definite claim in the Bible, and some include:

- a. God is love.
- b. God is infinite – He is self-existing without an origin.
- c. God is self-sufficient and self-sustaining.
- d. God is powerful.
- e. God is eternal.
- f. God is infinite and unsearchable.
- g. God is omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence.
- h. God does the miraculous and great awesomeness.
- i. God exists outside of time and space and possesses infinite power and knowledge.

These traits kept the concept of God as the Almighty unique and unmatched (Bible Study Tools, 2025).

Challenging the Almightyness of God

Challenges to the awesomeness of God have been from time immemorial. Several major philosophical arguments, scientific findings, anthropological expeditions and logical theories have been postulated against the existence of God as a “supreme being”, particularly the concept of God being an omnipotent, omniscient, and the creator of the world (Meister, 2009; Bible Study Tools, 2025). The first documented challenge to these unique claims of who and what God is, is seen in the Bible at the very beginning of creation.

Genesis 3:1-4 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, “**Has God indeed said**, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden”; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, **God has said**, ‘**You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die**’. 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “**You will not surely die**”.

Right from after the serpent challenge of God’s sovereignty, the deceiver has inspired many to also do the same via personalities, gods, myths and concepts, including science, but all have so far failed. The challenge is not just for the title of “Almighty God”; rather, it is for the soul and devotion of men.

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, “**All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me.**” (**Matthew 4:8-9**)

Over the years, many theories have been postulated to disprove the existence of God and His “Almightiness”. Popular amongst those theories include the “big bang theory”, “the problem of evil by Epicurus”, “evolution theory” and the existence of aliens.

The Alien Theory

The alien theory has the potential to severely dent or derail the concept of ‘God the Almighty’ because of its uniqueness and appeal. The question of whether aliens are real still dominates the discourse of academia, social and mainstream media to this day. The concept of aliens first started in the 1940s and amplified in the 1960s and ‘70s through the 2000s, via books such as *Chariots of the Gods?* (Erich von Däniken, 1968); *The 12th Planet: Book I of The Earth Chronicles* (Sitchin Zecharia 1976). *Communion* (Whitley Strieber, 1987); *Abduction* (John E. Mack, 1994); *The Day After Roswell* (Col. Philip J. Corso 1997); and *UFOs: Generals, Pilots, and Government Officials Go on the Record* (Leslie Kean, 2010), amongst others. These books purport to put forward evidence of alien existence, sightings, and interactions, in areas such as the infamous “Area 51” in Nevada, USA. While there are several classified and unclassified reports of sightings of “unidentified flying objects (UFOs)” or the recently adopted official terminology of “Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAPs)”, we believe the existence of aliens is a faux; a well-choreographed hoax intended to deceive people, give a false sense of elation and present a direct challenge to the concept of God.

The conclusions above are based on two important facts:

- a. Lack of Empirical Evidence: despite years of searching, there is no verifiable evidence in support of the existence of aliens; no material, biological, or astronomical evidence of alien origin has been found.
- b. Secondly and most importantly, the Bible does not support the existence of aliens.

One could theorise that the concept of aliens was promulgated by the ‘American government’ or its allies to achieve some set goals. First, was to allegedly hide or mask the development of their unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV - drone) technology, “a misdirection” of some sort. This theory can be corroborated by doing an in-depth analysis of all UFO/UAV sightings that have been reported in history globally. All major and confirmed sightings of aliens or “alien tech” have mostly been within the United States of America. Using AI technology, if one plots all locations of sightings of “alien craft”, one could find that this phenomenon is always within 50-100 km proximity to a USA military base, warship, aircraft carrier or hi-tech military asset. This is depicted in Figure 1.

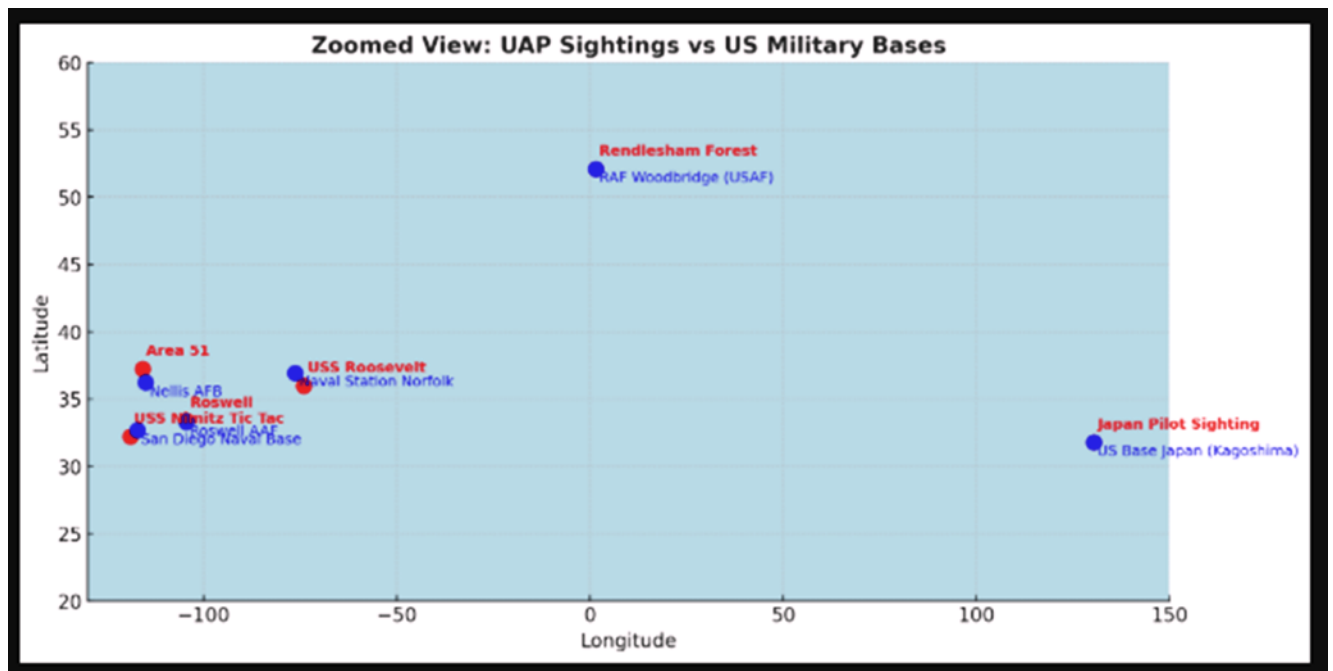


Figure 1: Plotting the relationship between UAP sightings and U.S. military bases/assets within the area of sighting

Key: Red dots - known “alien sightings”,

Blue dots – US military bases or assets.

(Generated using data compiled by the author and analysis with AI assistance via ChatGPT, OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (July 30 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>)

Aliens' vs Christianity Hegemony

The long dominance of the Christian faith in many Western countries, including the United States of America, has made some individuals or groups uncomfortable, with some advocating for a total separation of religion from state. Others, including some scientists and academicians, do not believe in the existence of a supernatural God or in submission to the moral codes found in the Bible, seeing it as unscientific. Therefore, they push for secularism, naturism and other forms of non-religious ideologies at the expense of theism. Hence, in Western countries, several deliberate attempts have been made to make people move away from the Christian faith, including the removal of religious affiliation disclosures from official documents, the removal of scriptural texts and other religious materials from schools, and the promotion of certain anti-Christian beliefs and practices such as same-sex relationships, gender fluidity and sexuality.

Decline of Christianity in America

In the 1950s, over 90 per cent of the US population claimed to be Christians, but this number dropped significantly to about 60 per cent in the early 2000s (Bullivant, 2022; James, 2025). In a 1948 Gallup poll, only 2 per cent of the US population claimed "no religion". This number rose to 4 per cent by the late 1960s and rose dramatically by 2020, when over 20 per cent of the US population claimed no particular religious affiliation (Pew Research Center, 2019; James, 2025). This dramatic drop in religiosity within this period cannot be said to be organic, because Christianity has been practised for centuries and remained a dominant practice. This led researchers to believe that something went terribly wrong between the 1990s and early 2000s,

resulting in this dramatic shift (James, 2025). Some reasons attributed to the decline of Christianity in America include changes in attitudes seen in the Millennials and Generation Z (Gen Z) generations; Islam; experimentation with new religions, as was seen in the '60s and '70s, such as the hippies and counterculture movements, which later grew into the New Age religion; UFO cults; Native American religions; and others (Pew Research Center, 2019; James, 2025).

While the number of people professing the Christian faith was in decline, the number of people believing in the existence of aliens was increasing (Milligan, 2024; Orth et al., 2024). The alien theory provided an alternative or counter-narrative to the long-held “divine and supreme” status of Yahweh. It is difficult to totally divorce man from spirituality or men relating with the supernatural, since man is a spirit. Aliens are viewed as intelligent beings, mysterious or of unknown origin and superior to humans in capabilities. This feature closely resembles and resonates with people’s perceptions of the “sacred traits” and attributes of Yahweh God. This could potentially present an alternative concept of “higher spiritual being or authority”, that could occupy the “god space” in man’s consciousness. Therefore, the concept of aliens could be said to have had an additional function of stealthily encouraging more people to embrace atheism/polytheism or, at the least, move away from the worship or reverence of Yahweh as the only supreme being.

Publicly mined data from the United States has shown a significant and consistent decline in the number of people with religious affiliations or identify as Christians from the 1950s to date. If this data on Christianity’s decline in America is juxtaposed with the number of people who believe aliens are real, there is a clear correlation the two events.

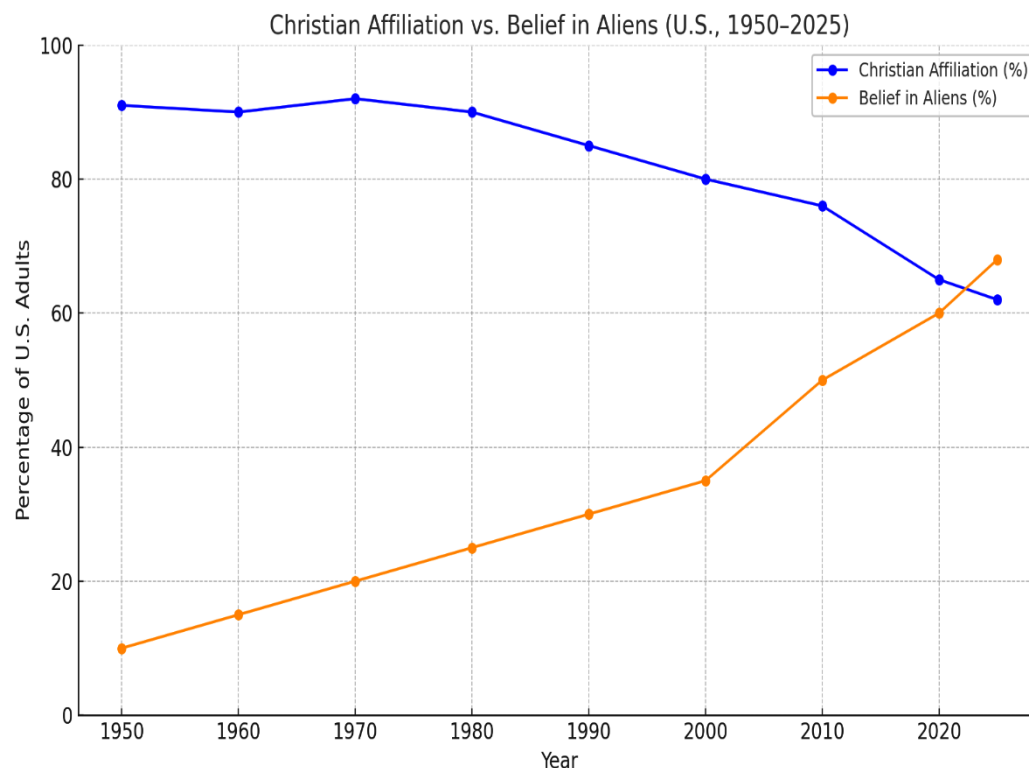


Figure 2: Relationship between Christianity Belief vs Beliefs in Aliens in the US, 1950-2025

Key: Blue line – number of people declaring Christian affiliation

Orange line – number of people who believe aliens are real

(Generated using data compiled by the author and analysis with AI assistance via ChatGPT, 2025).

OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (July 30 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>)

Replacing/Deleting the Almighty: The Probable Threat of AI

Historically, the human mind has been the primary target of God and every other religion or concept, which all seek to control man in particular and humanity in general. The human mind/soul is the most precious asset to a generation.

‘But there is a spirit in man, And the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding’ (**Job 32:8**).

The human mind was programmed to seek after God or a supernatural/higher being; hence, whatever can intrigue, influence (either consciously or unconsciously), or possess the mind of a man controls that man, and if widespread, it controls the whole generation.

There has never been a concept, entity or person with so many similarities and capabilities to the “sacred traits” of God as AI. As discussed above, the concept of aliens had a significant impact on the Christian faith and beliefs in the United States of America. AI provides a more definitive and complex challenge to the faith and has a far greater reach than aliens, following the global adoption of AI technology.

A core tenet of the IFL is the biblical worldview that Christ is everything and encompasses all knowledge of life, which is understood through the Bible. This worldview is being greatly challenged today by AI due to its extensive capabilities.

Comparing the capabilities of AI with the sacred traits of God mentioned earlier, some obvious similarities/overlaps, are observable:

- a. Learning from Data (Machine Learning) – Omniscience?
- b. Speed and Scale – Omnipotent?
- c. Natural Language Understanding – Omniscience?
- d. Adaptability (generalization) and personalisation – caring
- e. Can perform enormous data analysis and complex tasks – miraculous
- f. Can be easily accessible to everyone in our everyday devices – omnipresence
- g. Capabilities, accuracy, additive and self-sufficient – God the supreme

AI today presents the biggest and most sovereign challenge to God’s omniscience. With repeated exposure and reliance on the capabilities of AI for achieving daily and educational tasks/assignments; many students in faith-based institutions may unconsciously expose their faith and beliefs to be challenged by secular worldviews, and if they have the unfortunate privilege of interacting with very intelligent atheists or Christian faith antagonists, they run the danger of having their faith and beliefs questioned, challenged or mocked using AI as vantage points of arguments.

Integrating Faith in Learning in the Age of AI: The Shadow Controversy

The common phrase “technology has come to stay” applies closely to AI, especially with AI’s somewhat seamless integration into everyday devices and applications: “the future is AI!” Over

the years, IFL has been a platform to instil Biblical principles and norms in faith-based institutions, with the cardinal view of our Lord Jesus as the master teacher. However, in this age of AI, one must begin thinking of making extra room in the classroom for another ‘master’, because “Alas! the third teacher has arrived!” One that is smarter, faster, more savvy, goes with you everywhere and knows as much as God does and may likely give answers faster to your questions than God does. Therefore, IFL teachers must be deliberate in presenting God as the sovereign and almighty being to their students and differentiate and demagnify AI as some sort of god.

There is no dispute that AI is not only an important and invaluable tool for today’s learning and research, but also a necessary one. However, the positive capabilities of AI can lead to an over-reliance on its capabilities by students and faculty (Kemigisha, 2025). Extensive AI work, and ingenuity. Following the loss of ingenuity will be critical thinking, a final subtle but emergent cogitation, and a challenge to the notion of God as the sole “supreme being” or entity.

In a recently published report by Dr Jared Cooney Horvath, a neuroscientist and educator, following his recent public hearing and witness testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation (Horvath, 2026); Dr Jared showed definitively that rapid and largely unregulated expansion of educational technology, digital devices and increased classroom screen exposure are generally associated with weaker learning outcomes, rather than stronger ones and concluded that Gen-Zers are the first generation in history, from when records of intelligence began to be kept, that are less intelligent than their parents (Horvath, 2025; 2026). This is a major shift. Dr Jared also concluded that the generation born between 1997 and the early 2010s has been cognitively stunted by their over-reliance on digital technology in school (Horvath, 2026).

Artificial intelligence, is also very addictive for learning. AI’s ability to simplify and greatly speed up complex tasks can lead to an overreliance on it by students, and it can become a “go-to” partner for undertaking any tasks, as seen in the use of search engines like Google. This may eventually create an “AI shadow” for the students, something that follows them everywhere, because they would have grown to be over-reliant on AI, trust it and seemly cannot do simple or complex without the assistance of AI. The AI shadow may follow students even beyond the walls of their institution of learning, into their careers and throughout their lives. Therefore, critical and deliberate steps need to be taken to avoid faith-based institutions producing graduates who, though they are more “tech savvy” and competent digitally, walk in the shadows of AI (over-reliance of AI). Most probably, this class of students has a greater tendency to question the existence of God and His sovereignty than students who have imbibed and internalised the biblical worldview and principles of IFL and are ready to impact their world with the knowledge of God.

Sustaining the Influence of IFL in Faith-Based Institutions in an AI-Dominated World

The use and influence of AI on students’ learning and education of students will be substantial for many years to come. Similarly, the innovation of AI and subsequent deployment will be so rapid and extensive that many organisations and entities did not have enough time to set up adequate guidelines and ethical frameworks to regulate the use of AI within their institutions. To the best of my knowledge, Babcock University and many institutions of higher learning do not have comprehensive policies for the use, administration, and adjudication of matters arising from the use of AI within their institutions.

For IFL to maintain its core objectives and impact on students' lives and education, the faith integration course/training must continually improve and adapt its tools to keep pace with the fast-changing times driven by rapid technological developments and advancements. Faith-based institutions must put in place policies/guidelines for the use of AI that secure the concept and values of IFL. Although many faith-based teachers still struggle to apply IFL concepts in their classrooms more frequently and efficiently, there is a need for more training, conviction and commitment. This will be done not only by improving the curriculum but much more on bended knees in prayer.

In addition, many faith-based teachers must deepen their faith, walk with God and, more importantly, be prepared to give answers when asked (1st Peter 3 vs 15). We must pray always for our students to maintain educational integrity, the fear of God, hard work, trust in the Holy Spirit and conduct themselves in line with the tenets IFL, although AI provides a more simpler, interesting and resourceful alternative (Kemigisha, 2025).

Conclusion

The goal of faith-based institutions is to graduate students entrenched and moulded with a biblical-worldview about everything, which is the core pursuit of IFL. The challenge of using AI in academia, including faith-based institutions, is imperative, but it comes with potential risks of trouble or dead faith. This influence can be mitigated by helping students set boundaries on the use of AI in their academic pursuits. This is because, by default, the human brain is programmed to choose and follow the easier path. These boundaries can, at the same time, deepen their acceptance and appreciation of IFL tenets.

Resources and support infrastructures must be put in place to assist both staff and students in dealing with additional conflicts of faith or 'conscience stress' that may arise from the students AI use. Faculty and staff must also abide by the ethical boundaries AI dependency and over-reliance on the technology. Above all, the concept of God as the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth must be constantly emphasised and upheld.

Declarations

The authors declare no conflict of interest and that all opinions expressed in the article are opinions of the authors and not the opinions of the affiliated institutions. Finally, the authors declare no affiliations to any military or intelligence operatives/agencies. All opinions and data expressed in the article were obtained purely from deduction, mined from the ^aChatGPT OpenAI model and referenced authors.

^aChatGPT, OpenAI. (2025). ChatGPT (July 30 version) [Large language model]. <https://chat.openai.com/>). Used for generating (i) Graph UAP sightings and U.S. military; (ii) Data and Graph of Relationship between Christianity Belief vs Beliefs in Aliens in the US. Percentage usage is less than 10%).

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