

THE DIGITAL AGE OF FAITH: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract

The 21st century has witnessed unprecedented technological advancements, transforming Christian spirituality. This study explores the complex relationship between technology and Christian spirituality, examining both positive and negative impacts. The research discovered that technology has positively influenced Christian spirituality by enhancing connectivity, increasing access to spiritual resources, and providing new opportunities for evangelism. However, it also has negative influences, including distractions, isolation, and the potential for technology to become an idol. This paper explores the implications of technology on Christian spirituality, including its role in shaping spiritual identity and community, and the tension between technology-driven connectivity and meaningful relationships. The researcher argues that technology is a neutral tool, and its impact on Christian spirituality depends on how it is utilized. By acknowledging both

the benefits and drawbacks, Christians can harness technology to enhance their spiritual lives while maintaining a balanced and authentic relationship with God. The study employed a secondary method of data collection, providing a comprehensive understanding of technology's influence on Christian spirituality and equipping believers to navigate the digital age with discernment and wisdom.

Keywords: Digital Age, Faith, Investigating, Impact, Technology, Christian spirituality, 21st Century

Introduction

Technology has become an integral part of modern society, profoundly shaping the way we live, work, and interact. This research article delves into the multifaceted impact of technology, exploring its influence on communication, economy, education, healthcare, and social dynamics. Drawing on a diverse range of sources, we analyze both the positive and negative effects of technology to gain a comprehensive understanding of its role in shaping our world today. According to Kurzweil (2005), in recent decades, technology has witnessed exponential growth, bringing about transformative changes in various aspects of human life (p.45). Bostrom (2014) in the same vein said, From the rise of the internet and smart phones to artificial intelligence and biotechnology, the rapid evolution of technology has both empowered and challenged society (p 56). This research article aims to shed light on the profound impact of technology and its implications for the future

with regard to development of technology in 21st century and its influences on Christian spirituality. The advent of technology has revolutionized communication, transcending geographical barriers and facilitating instantaneous global connectivity. Social media platforms, messaging apps, and video conferencing tools have transformed the way we interact and share information. This section explores how technology has facilitated the dissemination of knowledge, empowered social movements, and affected interpersonal relationships. Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2014) said that technology has redefined economic landscapes, creating new industries, disrupting traditional markets, and transforming the nature of work (p. 12). Also, Ford (2015) opined, the rise of automation, robotics, and AI has implications for job markets and income distribution (p. 102). We examine the positive and negative effects of technology on employment, productivity, and economic growth. In the realm of education, technology has unlocked a wealth of possibilities, enabling personalized learning experiences, remote education, and lifelong learning opportunities. We investigate the role of technology in classrooms, its impact on pedagogy, and the challenges associated with digital learning environments. Advancements in technology have led to groundbreaking discoveries and innovations in the healthcare sector. From telemedicine and wearable health devices to AI-driven diagnostics and gene editing tools, technology is revolutionizing healthcare delivery, disease prevention, and patient outcomes. We assess the potential benefits and ethical considerations associated with these advancements.

The digital revolution has altered social dynamics, shaping identity, social interactions, and cultural norms. Social media, online communities, and virtual reality have created new spaces for socialization while also raising concerns about privacy, misinformation, and online harassment. We analyze the impact of technology on social behaviours and the challenges posed by the digital age. While technology offers immense opportunities, it also raises ethical dilemmas and societal challenges. From data privacy and cyber security concerns to the digital divide and technology addiction, we explore the ethical considerations that arise in the wake of technological advancements. This section provides an outlook on emerging technologies and their potential impact on society. We offer recommendations for policymakers, businesses, and individuals to harness technology's transformative power responsibly, ensuring its benefits are maximized while mitigating potential risks. In conclusion, technology has become an indispensable part of modern life, influencing every aspect of society. Its impact spans from communication and economy to education, healthcare, and social dynamics. As we navigate the complexities of the technological era, it is essential to embrace innovation responsibly and proactively address the ethical and societal implications for a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Conceptual Clarification

For better comprehension of the topic under discussion it is necessary explain and elucidate the following concepts as they are contained in the topic. According to Okeke

(2007), "Without initial approach, we shall be engulfed in the risk of false and pretentious appendages" (p.13). Therefore some key words in the research paper topic were defined for a better understanding of their usage in the body of the work. The key words include; Digital Age, Faith, Investigating, Impact, Technology, Christian spirituality, 21st Century

Digital Age

The Digital Age, spanning from the late 20th century to present, is marked by pervasive digital technology adoption, transforming global communication, commerce, and culture. Key features include: Ubiquitous internet access, mobile devices, social media, big data analytics and cloud computing, Reshaping modern society, work, and spirituality.

Information Technology Scholars

According to Castells (2001), "The Digital Age refers to the period characterized by the widespread use of digital technologies" (p. 12). Also Negroponte (1995) said: "The Digital Age is marked by the convergence of computing, communication and content" (p. 5).

Communication Scholars

According to McLuhan (1964), "The Digital Age is an extension of the electronic age, where technology shapes human experience" (p.23). Bolter (2001) opined: "The Digital Age redefines the relationship between technology and human communication" (p.15).

Sociological Scholars

According to Wellman (2001), "The Digital Age transforms social relationships, work, and community" (p. 2). While Poster (1990) said: "The Digital Age reconfigures identity, power, and culture" (p. 10).

Business Scholars

According to Tapscott (1996), "The Digital Age enables new business models, innovation, and collaboration" (p.20). According to Brynjolfsson (2000), "The Digital Age drives economic growth, productivity, and competitiveness" (p.15). The Digital Age fuels economic expansion, productivity, and competitiveness through: e-commerce and digital marketplaces, innovation and entrepreneurship, data-driven decision-making, automation and efficiency gains and global connectivity and collaboration. Digital age unlocks opportunities, enhancing business resilience, and fostering sustainable growth.

Faith

Faith is a profound trust or confidence in something greater than oneself, often transcending rational understanding. It involves surrender, commitment, and loyalty, guiding thoughts, feelings, and actions. Faith can be directed towards a higher power, religious doctrine, personal values, or spiritual principles. This conviction provides meaning, purpose, and comfort, shaping one's worldview and influencing decisions. According to Tillich (1957), "Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned" (p. 1). Also in the words of Niebuhr (1940): "Faith is the venture of the self beyond the limits of

reason" (p. 15). Faith transcends rational boundaries, venturing into the unknown, embracing mystery and uncertainty. It is a courageous leap of the human spirit, trusting beyond evidence, and discovering meaning, purpose, and connection. This bold venture enriches life, fosters resilience, and inspires growth.

Investigating

Investigating involves systematic inquiry and data collection to answer research questions, resolve problems, or clarify situations. It requires critical thinking, curiosity, and analytical skills. Effective investigation: identifies research questions or objectives, gathers relevant information through observation, interviews, or documentation, analyzes data to identify patterns or connections, draws conclusions based on evidence and verifies findings through validation or testing. Yin (2014) defined investigating as involving systematic inquiry and data collection to answer research questions (p. 5). While, Patton (2002) described investigating as an empirical process of exploration and discovery (p. 20).

Impact

Impact refers to the significant or lasting effect, consequence, or influence resulting from an action, event, policy, or decision. It can be positive (beneficial) or negative (adverse), and its scope may vary from local to global. According to Oxford English Dictionary (2020): "Impact refers to a significant or lasting effect" (p. 744) and Bickman & Rog (1998): "Impact is the

degree to which a program or intervention achieves its intended outcomes" (p. 12).

Technology

Technology can be defined in a number of different ways. Most often people think of technology as synonymous with electronics. Yet electronic devices are only a part of the family of technology. A number of thoughts and definitions need to be examined. Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary defines technology as 1: technical language, 2 a: applied science b: a scientific method of achieving a practical purpose, 3: the totality of the means employed to provide objects necessary for human sustenance and comfort (p. 1211). Ferre (1849) believes that technology stands for all practical implementations of intelligence (p.199). He talks about technology as matter and activities, beliefs, and attitudes. In other words, technology can be discussed in terms of tangible things as well as intangible belief systems, attitudes and ways of thinking. According to Ellul(1964) who makes a distinction between technology and technique. Technology is the mechanical inventions of man to better his lot in life. Technique refers to the various phenomena of advertising, propaganda, psychological coercion, and the design of organizational structures which intend efficiency, economic and social control (p.32). In the words of Funk (1999), he uses the term "technology" in five different senses as follow:

First, technology is the rational process of creating means to order and transform matter, energy, and information to realize certain valued ends. Second,

technology is the objects (devices, systems, and methods) resulting from this process. Third, technology is the knowledge that is created by and drives the technological process. Fourth, a technology is a subset of related technological objects and knowledge (for example, computer technology). Fifth, technology is all of the above plus the developers and users of technological objects and the worldview that has emerged from and drives the technological process (p. 19). Borgmann, Rapids and Brazos (2003) said,

I believe that almost all technologies can be placed in one of three categories: Ideas/writing, examples would be patents, copyrights, movies, and publications. Mechanical/physical - examples would be construction, travel, and communication. Chemical/biological – examples would be medicine, synthetic materials, and genetics (p.36).

While Brazos (2003), states that most people consider the terms “technology” and “science” as synonymous and science is one of the major defining factors in our culture (p.220). Borgmann, Rapids and Brazos (2003) on trying to explain technology furthered to inform the following: The pervasiveness of high technology as the defining characteristic of our culture. It is invisible and opaque and is cleanly integrated into every aspect of life in industrialized nations. He states that “nearly everything that surrounds a citizen of such a society rests on sophisticated and unintelligible machinery”. They also describe the goals or aims of technology as safety, convenience, efficiency, prosperity, liberty, productivity, and control. Modern society uses technology to attack

the basic problems of life – food, shelter, clothing, public health, education, and information. Technology tries to discover what scientific laws govern a phenomenon and then tries to control it by varying some of the lawfully governed conditions. (p.220).Technology is typically viewed through one of three lenses: optimistically, pessimistically, and a more central location between the two. The optimistic view embraces technology and sees great hope and promise in it. The pessimistic view rejects technology and brings about a sense of hopeless despair toward it. The central view is somewhere between these views and advocates the proper and cautious use of technology. Obviously, the definition of technology is just as complex as the thing itself. Technology refers to the application of scientific knowledge, skills, and tools to create, design, and innovation of products, processes, and services. It encompasses hardware, software, and infrastructure to enhance human capabilities, improve efficiency, and solve problems. In the words of McLuhan (1964): "Technology is an extension of human senses and capabilities" (p. 23). Also, according to Feenberg (1999): "Technology is a social and cultural phenomenon shaping human experience" (p. 10).

Christian Spirituality

A popular notion about spirituality, widely held among members of the general public, as well as by some spiritual practitioners themselves, is that being “spiritual” is all about the ability to tune into the unseen world, the metaphysical or esoteric dimension of reality. However, spirituality is not essentially about being

sensitive to subtle or esoteric levels of energy. This is a misunderstanding about the nature of spirituality. This false idea continues to cause a great deal of confusion and misdirected effort. This popular misconception therefore, stands in need of correction. According to McGrath (2017), "Christian spirituality is the pursuit of a transformative relationship with God" (p. 15). Merton (1967) opined as follow: "Christian spirituality involves the integration of faith, prayer, and action" (p. 20). In order to establish a solid foundation for the coming articles, I will begin first by defining Christian spirituality: what it is not and, then, what it is. In writing and speaking, I have learned the importance of beginning with definitions. Christian spirituality is no different. There seem to be as many individual people as there are individual opinions about the meaning of Christian spirituality, making it difficult for us to speak to one another about our relationship with the divine. In this paper I hope to anchor our thinking in the shared experience of holy men and women of the Biblical and Christian Tradition. Let us begin with the following reflections of question on what Christian spirituality is not. Moses (2020) has pointed out what authentic Christian spirituality is not as follow?

Faith, but without works of mercy, is a spirituality that remains in the realm of thought.
2. Spiritual, but not religious is a spirituality that remains without commitment or community.
3. Mysticism, without a grounding in the history and Tradition of the Church is a spirituality like a ship without a rudder; susceptible and subject to delusion and pride. (p.9). Many people in many

ways as earlier on said have misinterpreted and misrepresented Christian spirituality and thereby causing confusion. Griffiths (2019) furthered to inform some misconceptions and misrepresentations of Christian spirituality as follow:

The popular misconception that esoteric experiences are the hallmark of spirituality misdirects many seekers of truth, and can lead to self-delusion. When the ego is in charge, esoteric experiences are claimed by the ego as it is property, and used to build an edifice of self-importance at the object-pole of attention. This is pseudo-spirituality, because the ego is still running the show (p.2).

When we are born again, we receive the Holy Spirit who seals us for the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would lead us “into all truth” (John 16:13). Part of that truth is taking the things of God and applying them to our lives. When that application is made, the believer then makes a choice to allow the Holy Spirit to control him/her. True Christian spirituality is based upon the extent to which a born-again believer allows the Holy Spirit to lead and control his or her life. According to Alister (1999):

A Working Definition of Christian Spirituality" Spirituality" is derived from Hebrew ‘*ruach*’, which had a range of meanings as follow; spirit, breath, wind, that which gives life and animation

to something. Spirituality then is: that which animates a person's life of faith, that which moves a person's faith to greater depths and perfection. To further flesh out a definition of Christian Spirituality, we may consider the elements that make up Christianity: i. A set of beliefs, found in the Creeds and doctrines of the Church, ii, A set of values, based on: hope and promise of redemption, love of others, denial of self. iii. A way of life, the real, human life in which our beliefs and values are embodied and expressed (p.1).

Peck & Peck (2013) throw more light on the definition of Christian spirituality thus:

To begin with, of the many definitions of spirituality, Sandra Schneiders provides one of the most encompassing: spirituality is "... the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but of self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives." For Christians, the ultimate concern is God revealed in Jesus Christ, and experienced through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Self-transcendence moves one out of compulsive, addictive, obsessive patterns of behaviour toward more healthy relationships with oneself, other persons, and God. In short, Christian spirituality is the conscious human response to God that is both personal and ecclesial – it is life in the Spirit (p.1).

Therefore, Christian spirituality involves a choice we make to “know and grow” in our daily relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ by submitting to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our lives. This means that, as believers, we make a choice to keep our communication with the Spirit clear through confession (1 John 1:9). When we grieve the Spirit by sin (Ephesians 4:30; 1 John 1:5-8), we erect a barrier between ourselves and God. When we submit to the Spirit’s ministry, our relationship is not interrupted (1 Thessalonians 5:19). Christian spirituality is a consciousness of fellowship with the Spirit of Christ, uninterrupted by carnality and sin. Christian spirituality develops when a born-again believer makes a consistent and ongoing choice to surrender to the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

21st Century

The 21st Century, spanning 2001-2100, is characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and shifting societal values. Friedman (2005) said: "The 21st century is characterized by globalization, technological advancements, and shifting societal values" (p. 10). According to Florida (2002), "The 21st century is marked by the rise of the creative class and knowledge-based economies" (p. 20).

Defining key terms, including "Digital Age", "Faith", "Christian Spirituality", and "Technology", provides a framework for understanding their contextual usage. This clarification guides readers through the research, ensuring a shared comprehension of the concepts and their interconnectedness in the 21st century.

Theoretical Framework

In this segment, the researcher adopted theory of Spiritualization of Technology. The concept of "Spiritualization of Technology" was developed by Erik Davis, an American author, and scholar. He explored this idea in his book "Technosis: Myth, Magic, and Mysticism in the Age of Information" (2012). This refers to the phenomenon where technology becomes a means for spiritual expression, connection, and exploration. This concept suggests that technology can be used to facilitate spiritual growth, community building, and divine connection. Erik Davis argues that technology can be a means for spiritual expression, connection, and exploration, and that it has the potential to transform our understanding of spirituality and consciousness. Davis' work builds on the ideas of various scholars, including: Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980): Known for his work on media theory and the impact of technology on society, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), A German philosopher who explored the relationship between technology and human existence and N. Katherine Hayles (1943-present): An American scholar who has written extensively on the intersection of technology and human culture. Davis (2012) argues in his book, *Technosis: Myth, magic, and mysticism in the age of information* that the spiritualization of technology has the potential to:

Facilitate spiritual growth: Technology can provide access to spiritual resources, communities, and practices that facilitate spiritual growth and self-reflection. Enable global spiritual connections:

Technology can connect individuals across the globe, creating a sense of community and shared spiritual experience. Provide access to spiritual resources: Technology can provide access to spiritual texts, teachings, and practices that may be otherwise inaccessible (pp. 17-19).

However, Davis (2012) also acknowledges the potential risks and challenges associated with the spiritualization of technology, including:

Authenticity: The potential for online spiritual experiences to lack authenticity and depth.
Distractions: The potential for technology to distract from meaningful spiritual engagement and practice.
Equity: The potential for unequal access to technology and digital literacy to create spiritual inequality (pp.20-22).

Impacts of Technology on Christian Spirituality

Development is a progress, positive change or the addition of physical, economic, environmental, social and demographic components. The purpose of development is to rise in the level and quality of life of the population, and the creation. Development is visible and useful, not necessarily immediately, and includes an aspect of quality change and the creation of condition for a continuation of that change.

The term "developments" refers to the progress, growth, or evolution of something over time. In the context of technology and Christian spirituality, developments

signify the advancements, innovations, and changes that have occurred in the way people experience, practice, and understand their faith. According to Kelsey (2018), developments in technology have led to new opportunities for spiritual growth, community building, and evangelism (p. 12). Castells (2010) notes that developments in social media have enabled global connectivity, transforming the way people interact and form communities (p. 45). Turkle (2015) highlights the developments in digital media, which have changed the way people consume and process information, including spiritual content (p. 123). Barna (2020) emphasizes the importance of understanding developments in technology to effectively navigate the digital age and maintain a strong spiritual foundation (p. 20).

Technology has given Christianity a voice to reach a world-wide audience. Historically, there have been advances for Christianity when there has been an advance in technology. In many cases, the Church has been one of the first entities to adopt or profit from technologies. The PaxRomana that existed at the time of Christ played a large role in the spread of the gospel. According to Castells (2001), "The internet enables global connectivity, facilitating spiritual community and exchange" (p. 12). In the words of Bolter (2001): "Digital technology enhances spiritual growth through accessibility and interactivity" (p.150). Wellman (2001) said: "The internet supports networked spirituality, fostering connections and community" (p. 100). Technology that created good roads for transportation, that bolstered the strongest army in the world to enforce relatively peaceful times, and stabilized governments for

common laws, common language, and common culture allowed a small group of Christians to become a large following in a single generation. In the mid 1400's Gutenberg set up the printing press and published the first mechanically printed Bible. This was, to a large part, a factor in the start of the Reformation. The printing press enabled ideas to flow rapidly and in large quantities to very large audiences. William Tyndale translated the Bible into English and had it printed and distributed in the early 1500's. During the same time period Martin Luther was printing pamphlet after pamphlet in order to explain his views to an interested Europeans. He also translated and had printed the Bible into German. It remains the standard German work to this day. Even 600 years ago the effect of technology on Christianity was a topic for discussion and debate! Blaise Pascal, Isaac Newton, and Samuel Morse were scientists who held Christianity and the Bible in the highest regard.

Furthermore, around 1957 Billy Graham started World Wide Pictures as a complement to his Billy Graham Crusade organization. The Billy Graham Crusades, reaching millions of people via television, would not have been possible without the aid of technology. Earlier evangelists (think Billy Sunday and Dwight L. Moody) were more restricted in their outreach during their crusades because of the lack of technology in their time. In Britain two men, Simon Jenkins and Steve Goddard have started an online church called the "Church of Fools". It is sponsored by Britain's Methodist Church. Both men were concerned about friends who were physically disabled and found it difficult to attend church services. Visitors create avatars to represent

themselves. They enter a virtual church in which they can walk around, pray, socialize, and listen to sermons or just sit and watch.

Positive Impacts of Technology on Christian Spirituality

According to Dele (2014), Technology has been good for Christianity and Christian spirituality in a number of ways.

- i.** It has greatly magnified the voice of those preaching the gospel. Instead of reaching hundreds or even thousands when preaching a sermon, a pastor now has a possible audience in the millions.
- ii.** It has enriched the message of the Cross by providing more information to more people in a shorter amount of time.
- iii.** It has increased the number of channels of distribution of the gospel.
- iv.** It has provided helps for the encouragement, the strengthening, and edification of the saints through technology tools and discipleship material.
- v.** It allows Christians to administer grace to a world that is distracted and burdened, by using tools that people are familiar with and expect to see in everyday contexts.

Further ways technology development through social media influences positively Christian spirituality includes the following suggested ways:

- i. Social Media is about relationships and as people connect, relationships are strengthened which then opens people up to the influence of their network of friends. As Christians share their stories about their spiritual journey, this can be a key influencer for people who do not yet know Christ. This is in contrast to Blast media such as TV and Radio that blast out their message without relationship.
- ii. People in millions received help with major life issues through their online social networks. This means that people are looking to those in their Social Media networks for advice. This sets the foundation for Christian's within the network to share Christ where appropriate.
- iii. Social Media can be a powerful tool for social change. The potential for Christians to use Social Media as part of the reformation away from home to places in quick strategic means is significant. In fact Social Media is a great medium for Christians to increase their evangelistic engagements to far places in the hinder land.
- iv. Blogs can be a great source of information for a Christian and can give them access to some of the great thinkers of the church world today. I personally feed myself spiritually on other Pastors Blogs regularly.
- v. Youtube can also be a source of spiritual teaching for the discerning disciple. Whilst there is certainly a lot of rubbish on the website, there is also some fantastic deep teaching by Pastors and Professors, that a normal every day Christian may not have access to and certainly not for free. There

- are also plenty of resources for the searching Christian.
- vi. Blogging can also be used by preachers who blog their sermon notes helping to increase the effectiveness of the preaching.
 - vii. Churches can use Social Media to Pastor People in their homes. One of the unusual aspects of Millennial is their tendency to over share on Social Media. This allows the Pastoral Team of any Church to walk with that person who is going through a hard time.
 - viii. Social Media does present an opportunity to Churches to advertise their services and events free of charge. With a lot of Churches, particularly in Nigeria, this can be a great way for Churches to advertise.
 - ix. Social Media can bring ministry groups, study groups, and those with like interests together for discussion, debate and events. Sometimes a group can't meet face-to-face, but could connect via a social networking site.
 - x. A church, a Pastor or a Christian can have a significantly larger audience to the message his life preaches: - through social media. For example, TD Jakes recently tweeted to his 485,000 followers thus: "Your words will tell others what you think. Your actions will tell them what you believe"

Negative Impacts of Technology on Christian Spirituality

A renowned British physicist, Hawking (2020) once said:

That advances in Science and Technology could lead to the end of the world. His predictions for the nightmarish scenarios were based on human aggression combined with technological advances in nuclear weaponry. His predictions for the nightmarish scenarios were based on human aggression combined with technological advances in nuclear weaponry. A new factor has been added to this equation, information. Today, the natural world is being transformed not only by using matter and energy, but also by information, leading to a new explosion of productivity. In one way, virtualization is the increased substitution of matter by information (p.1).

According to Turkle (2015), "Excessive digital engagement can lead to spiritual isolation and decreased empathy" (p. 200). Feenberg (1999) also said: "Technology can commodify spirituality, reducing faith to consumerism" (p. 50). While Niebuhr (1940) said: "Technology must be critically evaluated to ensure it serves, rather than controls, human spirituality" (p.150). Ellul (1964) who was mentioned earlier in this paper, claims that technology always has bad as well as good effects. He also asserts that technology develops a dynamic of its own. Neil postman observes that technology has displaced traditional culture, to our great

harm. It is quite possible to see how technology has displaced the traditional culture of Christianity, especially in the way that worship and church work is conducted. Corts (1999) writing in an article in the most recent Southern Baptist Educator Journal of 2005 said:

I had hoped that the billions we have spent on Sunday Schools, day schools, and Vacation Bible Schools would produce a generation that has its values correct. I would have thought the vast sums spent on television preaching might have turned the tide. I wish all the church buildings and church going had made a consistent and measurable difference. But we are left to admit: the divorce rate is about the same among those who attend church, and those who do not. The 70 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 34, who visit a pornography web site at least once a month, includes believers and church goers. The ranks of the high-and-mighty, white collar elite who have bilked us for billions include those Bible-carrying, church-going, (p.5).

Further ways technology development through social media negatively influence Christian spirituality include the following suggested ways:

- i. The digital disciple age may lead to eye mirage Christianity. A version of Christianity where people think they are growing as a disciple but are not. This is where head knowledge of Christ dominates through spiritual influence of Christ likeness.

- ii. Social Media Addiction is becoming an increasing problem that like any addiction has negative social and spiritual consequences. The impact this addiction has on a person's spiritual journey is unknown at this stage, but logic dictates we can draw some conclusions that it is not going to be a healthy thing, particularly if there is a tendency toward addictive behaviour. I asked on my Facebook wall, whether people thought that Social Media helped their walk with God or not and multiple people said that it takes them away from reading the bible and prayer.

Contextualization of Faith

Christian spirituality must evolve to navigate the digital landscape, thoughtfully integrating technology to enhance faith formation, community engagement, and spiritual growth. This requires critical evaluation of digital tools, mindful of online presence, and intentional discipleship strategies. By embracing this adaptive approach, Christians can harness technology's potential for:

- i. Amplified outreach and evangelism
- ii. Virtual community building
- iii. Accessible spiritual resources
- iv. Personalized faith development

Effective adaptation ensures a relevant, vibrant, and transformative Christian spirituality in the digital age. To the concept of contextualization of faith with adaptation of technology, the following scholars offered these ideas; McGrath (2017): "Christian spirituality must

adapt to the digital age, integrating technology critically" (p.120). Merton (1967): "Contemplative spirituality requires intentional engagement with technology" (p.50). Tillich (1957): "Faith must be contextualized in the modern world, including technological advancements" (p.100). Faith requires contextualization in today's technologically-advanced society, integrating timeless truths with modern realities. Christians must thoughtfully engage digital culture, leveraging innovations for:

- i. Enhanced community
- ii. Accessible resources
- iii. Personalized discipleship

Effective contextualization ensures faith remains relevant, vibrant, and transformative.

Future Directions

The digital age demands adaptive, tech-savvy strategies for spiritual development, integrating online resources with traditional practices to foster authentic growth, depth, and community in Christian discipleship. To this, Brynjolfsson (2000) said: "The digital economy requires innovative, technologically informed approaches to spiritual growth" (p.10). Creative leaders must leverage technology to drive transformative social and spiritual change, fostering community, compassion, and faith-based initiatives. By integrating innovation and values, they can amplify positive impact, inspire meaningful connections, and propel spiritual growth in the digital age. According to Florida (2002), "The creative class must harness technology for positive social and spiritual

impact" (p.150). To Negroponte (1995), "Being digital demands responsible stewardship and intentional technology use" (p.100). Embracing digital spirituality requires being mindful of stewardship, intentional tech use, and discerning engagement to harness benefits while avoiding distractions, ensuring a balanced and transformative faith experience.

Theological Reflections

The digital information landscape necessitates critical theological evaluation to safeguard genuine spiritual expression. As Christians navigate online platforms, they must discern the interplay between technology and faith, ensuring that digital engagement enriches, rather than diminishes, their spiritual journey. This requires intentional reflection on the theological implications of digital culture, including issues of community, authority, and identity. By doing so, believers can harness technology's potential for spiritual growth while avoiding its pitfalls, cultivating an authentic and transformative digital spirituality. Poster (1990): "The mode of information requires theological critique to ensure authentic spiritual expression" (The Mode of Information, p. 100). Hutton & Giddens (2000): "Globalization and technology necessitate rethinking traditional spiritual categories" (p. 10). Globalization and digital advancements compel a re-evaluation of traditional spiritual frameworks, fostering innovative expressions of faith and community. Christians must adapt and contextualize their spirituality, integrating timeless truths with modern realities, to authentically engage a rapidly changing world.

Conclusion

The digital age has profoundly impacted Christian spirituality in the 21st century. Technology has transformed the way Christians practice, interact, and disseminate their faith. This investigation has revealed both opportunities and challenges. Digital platforms have increased accessibility and connectivity for Christian communities worldwide. Social media has enabled Christians to share their faith, engage in online evangelism, and build global networks. Online resources have democratized access to spiritual content, enabling Christians to explore diverse perspectives. According to Turkle (2015), Technology's impact on Christian spirituality is multifaceted. While it offers opportunities for spiritual growth, it also poses risks, such as addiction, isolation, and decreased attention span (p.23). In the words of McGrath, 2017 Christian leaders must critically engage with technology to harness its potential (p. 145). Key considerations include according to the following scholars: Bolter, 2001 Digital literacy and responsible technology use (, p. 78). Wellman (2001) also said, Intentional facilitation of online communities for meaningful connections (, p. 212). Lastly, Castells (2001) opined, Adaptive and contextualized approaches to Christian spirituality (p.187).The digital age presents a paradoxical landscape for Christian spirituality, offering both opportunities for growth and risks of distraction. By embracing technology critically and intentionally, Christians can navigate this complex terrain, fostering a deeper, more connected, and globally conscious faith community. As Christians navigate the digital age, they

must balance the benefits of technology with the importance of embodied, relational, and contemplative spiritual practices. By doing so, they can harness the potential of technology to revitalize and transform Christian spirituality in the 21st century.

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