The Pastoral Counsellors: Journal of Nigerian Association of Pastoral Counsellors
(ISSN: Print 2971-5199; Online 2971-5202) Volume 5 January 2026
(In collaboration with the Department of Religious and Intercultural Studies and Department of Guidance and Counselling, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria)

Christian Theological and Ethical Perspectives on Digital Technology and Spiritual Well-Being

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Abstract
The rapid advancement and pervasive integration of digital technology into contemporary life have generated significant implications for spiritual well-being, necessitating rigorous theological and ethical reflection. This paper explores the theological and ethical implications of technology through a Christian lens, investigating how digital culture intersects with faith, formation, and the lived experience of the sacred. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that combines theological ethics, digital theology, and cultural analysis, using qualitative document analysis of relevant scholarly literature and theological sources. Findings suggest that digital technologies can deepen access to spiritual resources and strengthen global Christian fellowship, but they also contribute to distraction and fragmented attention that weaken sustained prayer and reflection. The study also finds that online religious life can encourage consumer habits and performative expressions of faith that may reduce discipleship to content and metrics. In addition, constant connectivity can erode sacred time and make embodied community life harder to sustain, especially when digital worship begins to replace local accountability. The paper concludes that Christian engagement with digital technology must be guided by ethical discernment and disciplined practices that protect spiritual integrity while using technology for genuine formation and community.

Keywords: Ethics, Theology, Technology, *Imago-Dei,* Well-Being

Introduction
The twenty-first century is marked by rapid technological change that has transformed how human beings relate, communicate, and express their spirituality. From smartphones and artificial intelligence (AI) to virtual church services and mobile Bible applications, technology has become a part of everyday life and has inevitably entered the sacred spaces of religion. In Christian communities and other faith traditions, digital tools now influence how people worship, learn, and relate with God and one another (Campbell, & Dyer, 2021; Jackelén, 2021). While these developments bring many benefits, such as access to worship resources and global fellowship, they also raise important questions about authenticity, attention, and the meaning of spiritual well-being. Religious leaders and scholars have begun to realize that the relationship between technology and faith is not just about using new tools but about how these tools reshape our beliefs, experiences, and relationships (Chanda, 2025). The presence of digital media and AI in church life can enhance outreach, improve communication, and strengthen teaching methods. Yet, it can also introduce distractions, commercialization of spirituality, and a loss of physical connection among believers. These realities make it necessary for theology to reflect deeply on what it means to live faithfully in a digital world (Ty, 2023). Theologians argue that every generation of Christians must interpret the gospel within the realities of its time. For early Christians, the challenge was persecution and cultural opposition. In the modern era, the challenge includes technology's growing influence on moral reasoning, human identity, and the way spiritual truth is expressed (Hutchings, 2017). As people spend more hours online, often forming digital habits that shape their thinking, prayer, and relationships, questions arise: Does constant connectivity bring believers closer to God or pull them away from spiritual depth? How can faith remain embodied and relational in an age where presence is often virtual? The digital age has also blurred the line between sacred and secular spaces. Social media platforms now host Bible studies, worship sessions, and religious discussions, but they also expose believers to consumerism, vanity, and information overload (Turkle, 2015). Churches that once met physically now operate hybrid or fully online, creating what Campbell and Tsuria (2021) describe as "networked religion." This new form of community allows for wider participation but also challenges traditional understandings of fellowship, embodiment, and worship. According to Jackelén (2021), technology is not neutral, it shapes how people think, feel, and behave. It affects spiritual life by

changing how humans experience time, presence, and community. Artificial intelligence and algorithmic personalization, for example, can influence how people consume sermons or devotional content, guiding their spiritual growth in unseen ways (Chanda, 2025). When algorithms decide what kind of religious messages individuals see, it raises ethical questions about manipulation, privacy, and authenticity of faith expression. Furthermore, scholars such as Tchamba (2025) warn that the integration of technology in church administration and discipleship brings ethical challenges related to privacy, data protection, and spiritual integrity. Many churches now collect personal data through online registrations, offering systems, or virtual counseling platforms. Without clear ethical guidelines, these practices risk eroding congregational trust and compromising the sacred responsibility of pastoral care. Theologically, technology challenges the Christian understanding of the imago Dei, that humans are created in the image of God and called to reflect divine creativity, relationship, and stewardship (Grenz, 2001). When technology begins to define human worth through digital performance or social visibility, it can distort this image. Likewise, ethical concerns arise when faith becomes mediated through commercial platforms that value engagement metrics over spiritual transformation (McFarland Taylor &Einstein, 2022).

The background to this study therefore rests on the growing tension between faith and technology: on one hand, digital tools create opportunities for evangelism, learning, and fellowship; on the other hand, they risk reducing faith to mere content consumption and believers to data profiles. As Ty (2023) observes, religious institutions must not simply adopt technology but must reflect ethically on its implications, ensuring that innovation serves spiritual growth rather than undermines it. In light of these developments, this study explores the theological and ethical implications of technology on spiritual well-being. It examines how digital culture affects faith, formation, and the lived experience of the sacred. It also investigates how Christian theology and ethics can guide believers to use technology responsibly and meaningfully in ways that promote authentic spiritual health. This reflection is urgent, especially in an era of artificial intelligence, data surveillance, and digital saturation. The aim is to propose a framework for digital discernment and stewardship that allows believers to embrace the benefits of technology while guarding against its spiritual and ethical dangers. Accordingly, the paper develops a Christian framework of discernment that helps believers and churches evaluate digital tools by their effects on attention, embodiment, community, and dignity.

This study adopts a qualitative and interpretive theological-ethical approach, focusing on reflection, analysis, and synthesis rather than empirical measurement. The goal is to understand how technology, particularly digital media and artificial intelligence, influences spiritual well-being, and how Christian theology and ethics can respond meaningfully to these developments. The research design is conceptual and interdisciplinary, combining insights from theology, ethics, and digital culture studies. It draws primarily on scholarly writings, scriptural interpretation, and existing academic discussions about faith and technology. The study relies on document analysis and theoretical interpretation of published sources such as journal articles, theological works, and ethical commentaries.

The primary framework guiding this study is Christian theological ethics, which emphasizes human responsibility before God and the moral implications of human action in a technological world. The imago Dei (image of God) serves as the theological foundation for understanding how technology reflects both human creativity and moral accountability (Grenz, 2001). Ethically, the study uses the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy, as proposed in Chanda's (2025) adaptation of Principlism theory, to evaluate technology's role in faith and spirituality.

The research follows three main stages of analysis:

1. Theological Reflection: Exploring biblical and doctrinal perspectives on creation, stewardship, embodiment, and community in relation to technology.
2. Ethical Evaluation: Assessing moral and social implications of digitalization, including privacy, digital addiction, data surveillance, and the commodification of faith.
3. Practical Interpretation: Synthesizing insights to propose how Christians can responsibly engage digital tools in ways that nurture spiritual well-being and maintain theological integrity.

This approach ensures that the study remains both analytical and constructive, seeking not only to critique but also to offer theological and ethical pathways for faithful living in a digital age. Through reflective analysis, the study contributes to the growing body of work on digital theology and provides a moral compass for believers and church leaders navigating the complexities of technology in spiritual life.

Theologically, this paper examines how digital life places pressure on key Christian convictions about the imago Dei, embodiment, and sacred community. Ethically, it evaluates the moral challenges raised by technological mediation, including distraction, commodification of faith, digital addiction, and the

erosion of sacred time and space. The discussion also recognizes that digital tools can support spiritual growth through access to worship resources, global fellowship, and new forms of spiritual expression, but insists that these benefits require discipline and discernment.

Imago Dei, Human Agency, and Digital Mediation

Christian theology teaches that humankind is created in the image of God (Latin imago Dei), a foundational doctrine rooted in Genesis 1:26-27 (New Revised Standard Version). This means that all human beings carry intrinsic dignity, relational capacity, moral responsibility, and creative potential (Kilner, 2015). In this sense, the technological impulse (human creativity) can be viewed as part of what it means to image God (Grenz, 2001).

However, theology also warns that technology is not neutral. For example, Dorobantu argues that emerging artificial intelligence (AI) disrupts some traditional models of the imago Dei by blurring human distinctiveness, reducing persons to data and metrics (Dorobantu, 2022). From this perspective, we can consider three interconnected theological dimensions: (1) human creativity and technology as reflection of imago Dei, (2) the incarnation/embodiment of Christian faith in physical human life, and (3) the communal and sacramental character of the church in relation to digital mediation (Jackelén, 2021).

Human Creativity, Technology and the *Imago Dei*

The technological capacity of humans may be seen as a locus where our creative agency overlaps with the divine mandate to steward creation. The view of humans as created co-creators (in relation to God) provides a theological basis for responsible technology use: as humans make tools, they exercise God-given agency (Borgmann, 1984; Cloete, 2015). Yet this co-creative role carries moral weight: if human beings make technological systems that de-humanize or commodify persons, then they risk distorting the imago Dei (Postman, 1993; Jackelén, 2021).

In this vein, technology can either uphold human dignity or undermine it. Thus, theology invites reflection: when we design algorithms, social networks, and AI assistants, are we affirming the image-bearing humanity of users, or subtly reducing them to data-points and interaction metrics? (Zuboff, 2019; Ty, 2023).

Embodiment and Virtual Disembodiment

Christian theology emphasizes the incarnation, God becoming flesh in Christ (John 1:14, NRSV), and thus upholds embodiment as essential to spiritual reality. Worship, sacraments, and fellowship are practices that involve bodies, shared space, and time. In turn, Christian anthropology reveals that human beings are embodied, relational, and physical, not merely disembodied minds. This has implications for how technology is engaged. If digital life sidesteps embodiment, it risks disconnecting from one of faith's core emphases (Hutchings, 2017; Campbell & Dyer, 2021). Some authors caution that digital life may diminish attention, presence, and shared embodied worship, concerns widely documented in research on mediated communication (Turkle, 2015; Baym, 2015). In the digital context, theological reflection must ask: how do we preserve the sacramental, embodied nature of faith (body, space, community) when many interactions become mediated through screens? Theology must engage digital culture because living in a digital culture affects how community is formed and sustained (Cloete, 2015; Jackelén, 2021).

Sacred Community, Worship and Digital Mediation

The church is not merely a gathering of scattered individuals, but the bodily assembly of believers, the "body of Christ." Technology challenges this by enabling virtual presence, asynchronous interaction, and remote participation. While these are beneficial, they also raise questions about the nature of sacred space, presence, and communal worship (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021; Hutchings, 2017). Jackelén (2021) highlights that digitalization and AI alter how religion is experienced, the interplay of personal, social, political, and global dimensions of relational life is shifting. This can help inclusion, learning, and mission, especially for those who are isolated, but it also changes how authority, belonging, and discipleship are formed. Churches that move online must ask how digital spaces preserve accountability, pastoral care, and sacramental life, and how data, platforms, and algorithms shape what believers see and value (Ty, 2023; Tchamba, 2025). Furthermore, in such a world, theology must ask: What becomes of liturgy, pilgrimage, communal confession, and embodied ritual when mediated by machines, algorithms, and screens? How does the imago Dei manifest in virtual fellowship as opposed to face-to-face gathering?

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Ethical Dimensions of Technology and Spiritual Life

In examining how technology influences spiritual life, Christian ethical reflection must engage with interrelated concerns such as distraction and fragmented attention, commodification of faith, privacy and surveillance, algorithmic influence, justice and access, and embodiment versus disembodiment. These are not only "issues" Christians react to; they are also formations that slowly shape what people love, how they attend, and how they practice faith. Digital platforms are often designed to maximise engagement through persuasion and habit-forming patterns, so constant notifications can train impatience, content overload can weaken sustained prayer, and online visibility can tempt performative religiosity rather than hidden discipleship (Fogg, 2003; Turkle, 2015; Newport, 2019). For this reason, ethical evaluation in this paper focuses on formation and character, asking whether digital practices nurture attentiveness to God and neighbour, or whether they fragment the self and weaken the practices that sustain spiritual maturity. In addition, many platforms depend on data extraction and behavioural prediction, ethical reflection must also ask how power, manipulation, consent, and vulnerability operate in digital life, especially for users with limited digital literacy or few alternatives (Zuboff, 2019). A Christian ethical response therefore requires both personal discipline (boundaries, Sabbath practices, simplicity) and communal accountability (teaching, pastoral guidance, and shared norms of healthy digital use), so that technology serves love of God and neighbour rather than quietly reshaping faith into attention, consumption, and metrics (Schneiders, 2003; Hutchings, 2017).

Distraction, Fragmented Attention, and the Loss of Sacred Time

One of the principal ethical challenges in digital life is how constant connectivity and the stimuli of mobile devices erode attention, interrupt reflection, and diminish the capacity to enter "sacred time", moments set apart for prayer, contemplation and communal worship. Scholars note that "digital life invites acceleration, multitasking, and the fragmentation of attention" (Turkle, 2015). From a Christian perspective, this threatens one of the basic practices of faith: stillness, listening, and sustained focus on God (Schneiders, 2003).

When attention is repeatedly pulled away by notifications, social media feeds, and algorithmic prompts, the spiritual formation of the believer may become shallow, rushing from one stimulus to the next rather than resting in God's presence. Ethically this raises the question: how should Christians set boundaries around technology so that devices serve spiritual life rather than dominate it? It becomes a matter of non-maleficence, avoiding harm to faith practices and beneficence, enabling conditions for flourishing spiritual life (Chanda, 2025).

Commodification of Faith and Performative Religiosity

Another ethical problem is the commercialization of spiritual content and the transformation of faith practices into modules, apps, influencers, digital sermons and follower-counts. As Gärtner and Hennig (2022) argues, online religiosity often becomes performative: the faith act is displayed for metrics (views, likes, shares) rather than for the transformation of the heart. This commodification raises ethical concerns about authenticity, integrity and substance in spiritual practice.

From a Christian ethical standpoint, the virtues of humility, sincerity and justice should govern how faith is mediated online (Reed et al., 2024). If technology encourages us to reduce worship to a product or self-display, it may undermine the essence of spiritual community and the imago Dei in others (McFarland Taylor and Einstein, 2022). Churches and faith communities must ask how their online offerings reflect the gospel rather than global attention-economy incentives. This ethical concern ties into autonomy, since when faith is shaped by algorithms and performative logics, believers' freedom to encounter God and community authentically may be compromised (Ty, 2023).

Privacy, Surveillance, and Data Ethics

The digital era is replete with data-tracking, algorithmic profiling and surveillance platforms. In a church or faith context, the collection of personal data, worship habits, donation behaviour, online engagement presents serious ethical risk. As Tchamba (2025) warns, many congregations are ill-prepared to protect congregants' data, threatening trust, spiritual safety and confidentiality.

Christian ethics emphasise justice (fairness, equity), autonomy and the dignity of persons made in God's image. When technology harvests personal information without clear consent, manipulates behaviour or prioritises engagement over care, faith communities risk violating these principles. Furthermore, algorithmic decision-making may shape what spiritual content individuals receive (Chanda, 2025), subtly controlling religious experience rather than empowering free discipleship. The ethical task is to develop stewardship of digital life: transparent policies, consent frameworks, data minimisation, and

accountability in how faith communities use digital tools. This means not simply adopting new technologies because they are available, but asking: "Who benefits? Who is vulnerable? What power dynamics are involved?" (Escuredo & Vinuesa, 2020).

Algorithmic Influence, Manipulation and Power

Beyond data collection lie deeper issues of algorithmic shaping: recommendation engines, curated religious content, personalized spiritual training and AI-driven devotional apps. These shape what users see, meditate on and believe. As Jackelén (2021) observes, digitalisation and AI "alter how religion is experienced", the personal, social, political and global dimensions of relational life shift when algorithms mediate spiritual formation.

Theologically and ethically, this challenge connects to virtue ethics and the formation of character: if digital tools shape our spiritual formation invisibly, then the question arises: are we forming disciples or consumers? Ethical reflection must ask whether technology supports virtue-formation (patience, belonging, compassion) rather than shallow engagement or self-promotion (Conwill et al., 2025). Moreover, the tech industry's ethics (Green, 2021) shows that "ethics-washing" is possible, companies claiming ethical design while conforming to commercial logic. Faith communities must therefore not assume that digital tools are neutral or benign, but critically evaluate their embedded logics and power structures.

Justice, Access, and Digital Inequality

Technology has the potential to democratize access to worship resources and spiritual tools, but it also deepens digital divides: those without devices, stable internet, digital literacy, or language access are left further behind (Zaluchu et al., 2023). From a Christian ethical viewpoint rooted in justice and neighbour-love, this creates an imperative: digital ministry must not leave out the marginalized or assume that "virtual presence" is equally accessible for all. Faith communities must therefore ask: who is not being reached by our digital outreach? Are we replacing physical community with digital substitutes that exclude those lacking certain technologies? Ethical reflection must ensure that the move online does not become a stratification of spiritual resource access.

Embodiment, Presence, and Community

Ethical questions around embodiment and community persist. While digital worship and online fellowship offer reach and immediacy, they can also reduce the bodily encounter that is central to Christian worship: touch, gaze, shared space, communal voice. As Hutchings (2017) warns, the essence of Christian worship is not just information but presence, relationship and embodied encounter. Ethically, the risk is that technology becomes a substitute rather than a supplement to embodied community. Spiritual well-being depends on relational ties, sacramental life and corporeal presence (Cloete, 2015). Churches must therefore navigate how digital tools can enhance but not replace the embodied practices of community, mutual care and worship.

Impact of Technology on Spiritual Well-Being

Understanding Spiritual Well-Being in a Technological World

Spiritual well-being is an integral concept that covers harmony in one's relationship with self, others, the environment, and the transcendent (Fisher, 2000; Ryff, 2021). Within Christian theology, it describes the balance of an individual's inner life with God and their moral, communal, and emotional integrity. In contemporary society, technology has become a central environment where these relationships are experienced and negotiated. Digital tools shape how believers pray, meditate, learn, and connect, influencing both personal spirituality and collective religious life (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021).

Technology's impact on spiritual well-being is ambivalent, it can nurture faith and deepen access to spiritual resources, yet it can also fragment inner life, promote isolation, and commercialize devotion. Scholars like Jackelén (2021) and Chanda (2025) note that as artificial intelligence, virtual worship, and digital mediation become normalized, theology must engage these tools as moral and spiritual forces that reshape the way humans encounter the divine.

Positive Contributions to Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation

On the positive side, technology has revolutionized access to religious education and fellowship. Online worship, faith-based podcasts, social media devotionals, and mobile Bible apps have democratized access to spiritual materials. During the COVID-19 pandemic, digital platforms sustained faith

communities, enabling live-streamed services, small-group meetings on Zoom, and global prayer networks (Campbell, & Dyer, 2021; Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). These innovations demonstrated that digital connectivity can maintain communal identity and faith formation during physical separation. Moreover, digital media provide opportunities for believers to participate in global Christianity, connecting individuals from different cultures and denominations. Social networks have created virtual communities of prayer, mentorship, and mutual encouragement, supporting believers who might otherwise be isolated geographically or socially (Ty, 2023). AI-driven translation and captioning tools have enhanced the inclusivity of online worship and scripture engagement across linguistic and physical barriers (Chanda, 2025).

Scholars such as Zaluchu et al., (2023) and Dorobantu (2022) argue that technology, when guided by theological ethics, can function as a means of grace, a channel through which believers encounter God in new contexts. For example, digital storytelling, worship music production, and online retreats have fostered creative expressions of faith, especially among younger generations more accustomed to digital interaction. Thus, when intentionally used, technology can nurture spiritual resilience, provide mental comfort, and foster new forms of worship and discipleship (Detweiler, 2013).

Risks and Negative Implications for Spiritual Health

Despite its benefits, technology poses serious challenges to spiritual well-being. Continuous digital engagement fosters overstimulation, distraction, and anxiety, which inhibit contemplative and reflective practices essential for spiritual maturity (Turkle, 2015; Newport, 2019). Constant exposure to social media can lead to comparison, vanity, and spiritual fatigue, reducing prayer and worship to performance rather than devotion (Gärtner & Hennig, 2022).

Theological ethics highlights that when faith becomes mediated through consumer platforms, believers risk spiritual commodification, measuring devotion by likes, followers, or monetized influence rather than transformation of the heart (McFarland Taylor & Einstein, 2022). This trend echoes what Augustine termed *ordo amoris*, disordered love, where created things displace the Creator in one's affections. When digital tools become idols of attention or identity, spiritual well-being deteriorates, producing restlessness rather than peace. Furthermore, as Zuboff (2019) explains, surveillance capitalism transforms human behaviour into data. Within religious contexts, this commodification of personal faith experiences undermines sacred privacy and agency. When online worship and religious apps collect behavioural data for marketing or recommendation systems, the integrity of spiritual autonomy is compromised (Tchamba, 2025). Believers' interactions with scripture and worship become mediated by algorithmic curation rather than free spiritual pursuit.

Effects on Community, Fellowship, and the Sense of Sacred Space

Spiritual well-being is not only individual but also communal. Technology has reshaped how communities of faith gather, worship, and serve. Online church communities have expanded inclusivity for persons with disabilities, migrants, or those in remote regions (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). Yet, these virtual gatherings sometimes lack the tactile and sacramental depth of in-person fellowship, shared meals, physical touch, communal singing, and embodied ritual (Hutchings, 2017). Jackelén (2021) observes that digitalisation alters the relational web of life, personal, social, and political, creating a context where community becomes simultaneously expansive and fragile. Virtual connections can maintain contact but may fail to cultivate empathy, accountability, and mutual care, elements crucial for Christian koinonia (fellowship). Practically, the concern is whether digital worship becomes a substitute for accountable community, reducing pastoral care, mutual correction, and deep belonging (Cloete, 2015). Studies show that believers engaged primarily online report both greater accessibility to resources and increased feelings of loneliness or superficial connection (Baym, 2015; Twenge, 2019). The paradox is that digital technology expands reach but sometimes erodes depth. Spiritual well-being, therefore, depends on finding equilibrium between digital accessibility and embodied belonging.

Psychological and Moral Dimensions of Digital Spirituality

The moral psychology of technology use also affects spiritual wellness. Excessive screen time and social comparison can generate anxiety, envy, and depressive symptoms, reducing one's openness to divine presence (Twenge, 2019). Likewise, the culture of immediacy promoted by digital platforms weakens patience, contemplation, and gratitude, virtues central to spiritual growth. Ethical reflection thus demands digital temperance, the virtue of moderation, as an essential aspect of Christian discipleship (Conwill et al., 2025). In addition, AI-driven personalization introduces a subtle moral hazard: believers may encounter only the kinds of religious content that confirm existing preferences, leading to

"algorithmic spiritual echo chambers." This narrows theological imagination and can foster polarization within religious discourse (Ty, 2023). As Jackelén (2021) and Green (2021) suggest, genuine spiritual well-being requires critical awareness of these algorithmic influences and intentional openness to diverse, challenging, and transformative spiritual encounters.

Towards a Balanced Digital Spirituality

Ultimately, the impact of technology on spiritual well-being depends on the discernment and values guiding its use. Christian ethics calls for a posture of stewardship, using digital tools for edification rather than exploitation. Practices such as digital fasting, Sabbath rest, and intentional disconnection restore sacred rhythms of attention and presence (Detweiler, 2013). Churches can cultivate "digital virtues": gratitude, discernment, patience, humility, and compassion, ensuring technology remains a servant of faith rather than its master (Ess, 2020). By integrating theological imagination with ethical responsibility, believers can experience technology as a medium of grace, a space where human creativity collaborates with divine presence. However, such engagement must remain conscious of limits, aware that no algorithm can replace authentic communion with God and neighbour. True spiritual well-being in the digital age will arise not from rejecting technology, but from inhabiting it faithfully, guided by love, wisdom, and moral reflection.

A Christian Framework for Digital Discernment and Spiritual Well-Being

A key weakness in many debates about faith and technology is that they stay at the level of "pros and cons" without offering a clear framework that churches and believers can actually apply. Building on the theological themes in this paper, I propose a practical framework of digital discernment that tests technology by how it affects spiritual formation, not only by whether it is "useful." The framework has four questions. First is attention: does this tool support sustained prayer, Scripture meditation, and presence to God, or does it train constant switching and shallow engagement? If a platform repeatedly breaks attention, it should be treated as a formation problem, not just a productivity problem. Second is embodiment: does digital practice remain connected to bodily life, local responsibility, and real relationships, or does it push faith into disembodied spectatorship? Third is community and accountability: does technology strengthen koinonia through mutual care and truth-telling, or does it replace community with audience, encouraging performance and isolation? Fourth is justice and dignity: does the technology respect persons as image-bearers by protecting privacy, reducing exploitation, and avoiding manipulation, or does it treat people as data to be harvested and predicted? This framework can be applied at two levels. Individually, believers can shape a "rule of life" that includes practices like time boundaries, intentional offline prayer, and regular digital fasting. Communally, churches can create guidance that treats digital life as discipleship: teaching about attention, modelling healthy use, protecting data, and designing online ministry that leads people back into embodied fellowship rather than replacing it. The goal is not fear of technology but faithful stewardship, where digital tools become supports for formation rather than hidden masters of desire and attention.

Conclusion

Technology has become an inseparable part of contemporary existence, shaping how people communicate, learn, and worship. For Christians, this transformation offers both promise and peril. The discussions throughout this paper demonstrate that technology is neither inherently redemptive nor inherently destructive; rather, it is a cultural instrument that reflects human creativity and moral orientation. Its impact on spiritual well-being depends on how it is designed, interpreted, and used within the community of faith (Campbell & Dyer, 2021; Jackelén, 2021). Yet the deeper issue is formation: digital tools do not only extend what believers can do; they also shape what believers repeatedly attend to, desire, and practise. Because spiritual life is built through habits, technology's influence is often most visible in the slow reshaping of prayer, patience, community, and moral imagination. Theologically, the digital age compels renewed reflection on the imago Dei, what it means to be human in the image of God amid algorithmic mediation and artificial intelligence. Human creativity in developing technology can express divine likeness when oriented toward service, justice, and communion. Yet when technological systems commodify persons, fragment relationships, or displace the centrality of God, they distort that same image (Grenz, 2001; Dorobantu, 2022). The church, as a living body of believers, must continue to proclaim that human value is not determined by data metrics or digital visibility, but by the Creator who endows every life with worth.

Ethically, technology challenges Christians to discern how to inhabit digital spaces faithfully. Digital culture generates moral dilemmas involving distraction, privacy, performativity, and inequality, and these issues demand moral imagination grounded in love, justice, and stewardship (Chanda, 2025). The ethical responsibility of believers also extends beyond individual piety to institutional practice: churches and ministries should model transparency, inclusivity, and care in how they adopt platforms, collect data, and shape online engagement. Practically, a faithful Christian response requires discernment that is concrete enough to guide real choices. This paper's proposed discernment test (attention, embodiment, community, justice) offers a practical guide for digital discipleship (see Section 6). The emerging discipline of digital theology encourages believers to view technological engagement as a form of discipleship. Just as earlier Christians learned how to use available media for evangelism and teaching, the church today must navigate algorithms, data, and networks with theological and ethical wisdom (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). This requires humility, awareness, and ongoing evaluation of how technological choices shape spiritual health and communal life.

Generally, this study affirms that spiritual well-being in a digital world cannot be achieved by withdrawal or uncritical adoption, but through responsible participation shaped by Christian virtues and communal guidance. Technology should serve the flourishing of persons made in the image of God, nurturing relationships, justice, and hope. Future dialogue among theologians, ethicists, and technologists remains important for ensuring that emerging innovations align with principles such as beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and autonomy (Chanda, 2025; Ty, 2023). In the end, the ethical and theological task of the church is to humanize technology, orienting it toward love of God and neighbour. The digital age, for all its complexity, remains a space of possibility, but it must be inhabited with discipline and wisdom. When believers engage technology with discernment and humility, it becomes less of a competitor for the heart and more of a tool that can support genuine formation, community, and faithful witness.

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