Human, Faith, and Machine:
Theological Reflections on AI and Spiritual Growth



SPIRITUAL GROWTH IS

"Transformation in relationship with God and neighbor—not the accumulation of religious information or optimized behavior."

THE HUMAN PERSON

Embodied • relational • morally responsible • called to communion

Image of God: Genesis 1:26–27

AI MAY SUPPORT

Access to Scripture • language assistance • learning • reflection prompts • coordination for service

AI CANNOT REPLACE

Prayer as relationship with God • human pastoral care • reciprocal friendship • the church community • moral responsibility

A CHRISTIAN RHYTHM

Read • Attend • Discern • Pray • Share • Serve

Be doers of the word, and not merely hearers.
— James 1:22

Be still, and know that I am God.
— Psalm 46:10

Speaking the truth in love.
— Ephesians 4:15

DISCERNMENT QUESTIONS

- Does this strengthen attention?
- Is the output truthful and checked?
- Does it deepen human connection?
- Does it serve love of neighbor?

Let AI assist the journey; let wisdom, grace, community, and faithful action shape the growth.

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RudyCT Academic Series
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Abstract

Artificial intelligence is increasingly present in education, work, communication, health care, and religious life. Its capacity to generate language and personalize interaction creates new possibilities for learning and access, yet it also raises profound questions about human identity, spiritual authority, moral agency, and the meaning of growth. This article offers a Christian theological reflection on the relationship among human beings, faith, and machines. It argues that spiritual growth cannot be reduced to the accumulation of religious information, the optimization of behavior, or the simulation of spiritual conversation. Christian formation concerns the whole person—embodied, relational, morally responsible, and called to communion with God and neighbor. Drawing on biblical teachings about the image of God, wisdom, love, prayer, community, discernment, and vocation, the article examines AI's potential roles and limits in spiritual practices, pastoral care, Christian education, and public life. It develops a framework for discernment that asks whether a given use of AI strengthens attention, truthfulness, agency, embodied relationships, and loving service. AI may assist human learning and care, but it cannot replace prayer as relationship with God, the church as a community of

persons, or the responsibility of people who teach, counsel, lead, and make decisions. The article concludes with practical guidance for churches, families, educators, and institutions seeking technological engagement marked by wisdom, humility, and hope.

Keywords

Christian theology; artificial intelligence; spiritual growth; theological anthropology; prayer; human agency; spiritual formation; pastoral care; Christian ethics; discernment.

1. Introduction: The Human Quest for Meaning in a Machine-Mediated World

Artificial intelligence is often discussed through a language of speed, scale, accuracy, and productivity. These terms describe important properties of computational systems, but they do not answer the prior question: what ends should technology serve? An algorithm may produce a rapid answer, yet speed alone does not make the answer wise. A model may identify statistical patterns, yet a pattern is not automatically a morally legitimate basis for judging a person. A system may automate a task, yet automation does not determine who should be accountable when the task affects a life. The central Christian question is therefore not simply whether AI can perform a function. It is whether the function, its design, and its consequences honor the worth of persons and the common good.

The scale of current change makes this question urgent. Machine-learning systems now assist in image recognition, translation, medical triage, credit assessment, recruitment, customer service, content moderation, logistics, and public communication. Generative AI can produce text, images, code, audio, and synthetic video. These systems may help a small school prepare learning materials, help a hospital organize records, or help a local government translate information into regional languages. They may also fabricate evidence, reproduce discriminatory patterns, harvest personal information,

displace workers without protection, and make consequential decisions difficult to challenge. The same technical capability can support care or facilitate harm, depending on the institutional setting and the power relations surrounding it.

Christian faith contributes a distinct but publicly discussable moral vocabulary. It speaks of creation, the image of God, neighbor-love, truth, justice, mercy, work, sin, responsibility, and hope. These concepts do not replace engineering, law, economics, or empirical evaluation. Rather, they help communities ask what a technical system is for, whom it benefits, whose labor and data it depends on, and who bears its errors. The biblical tradition also resists the temptation to confuse power with wisdom. In Genesis, the human vocation is not unlimited control but accountable care. In the prophets, prosperity is judged in relation to justice. In the Gospels, greatness is associated with service rather than domination.

This article argues that Christian faith can affirm technological creativity while insisting that the human person must never be reduced to a tool, score, prediction, or market segment. Human dignity is not earned through intelligence, productivity, independence, or digital competence. It belongs to persons because they are created and loved by God, embodied, relational, morally responsible, and open to communion with God and others. AI can assist human action, but it cannot take over the theological and moral responsibility of persons and institutions. The task is to build forms of innovation that enlarge human capacity for knowledge, care, participation, and justice.

2. Spiritual Growth as Transformation, Not Optimization

This article is a narrative theological essay rather than an empirical experiment or a claim to settle every Christian debate about artificial intelligence. It brings biblical interpretation into dialogue with Christian moral theology, philosophy of technology, and research on AI in education and

spiritual practice. Scripture is read in literary and canonical context, not as a technical manual or a collection of slogans. The essay attends especially to creation, wisdom, the teaching and practice of Jesus, the work of the Spirit, the life of the church, and the hope of renewal.

The phrase “spiritual growth” refers here to the lifelong shaping of persons toward deeper communion with God and more faithful love of neighbor. Christian traditions describe this process in diverse ways: sanctification, discipleship, growth in holiness, spiritual formation, or participation in the life of Christ. These terms are not interchangeable in every doctrinal system. They share a concern for transformation that includes knowledge, desire, habits, relationships, ethical conduct, worship, and hope. Spiritual growth is not a measurable output that can be reliably inferred from a person's digital behavior or generated through a sequence of automated prompts.

AI is a broad term for computational systems that perform tasks involving prediction, classification, language, perception, or decision support. Generative models create outputs from patterns learned in data. Their apparent fluency should not be confused with human understanding, conscience, prayer, or the life of the Spirit. At the same time, AI's effects are real because people rely on systems, institutions grant them authority, and design choices influence the options available to users. Ethical analysis must therefore examine the sociotechnical arrangement: data, developers, vendors, users, organizational incentives, oversight, and avenues for remedy.

The essay proceeds normatively and practically. It asks what Christian faith may affirm, what it should question, and how communities might act responsibly. It recognizes denominational differences and does not claim that a single spiritual practice or theological anthropology exhausts Christian tradition. The focus is on broadly shared biblical commitments—dignity, truth, justice, love, prayer, community, humility, and service—while acknowledging that their application requires local interpretation. Where recent scholarship about spiritual chatbots or AI in religious practice is cited,

it is treated as an emerging field, not as settled evidence about long-term spiritual outcomes.

3. What AI Can Do—and What It Does Not Establish

A system's apparent fluency can encourage people to attribute to it more than the available evidence warrants. A language model may generate a coherent answer, imitate a style, summarize a document, or respond with conversational warmth. These achievements arise from computational processes trained on data and shaped by design and deployment. The system can be useful without possessing the human experiences that words often express. Producing sentences about grief is not the same as grieving; generating a prayer is not the same as praying; identifying a moral argument is not the same as having a conscience that is answerable to God and neighbor.

This distinction is not a claim that machines are insignificant. AI can have substantial effects because people rely on it, organizations embed it in decisions, and institutions grant it authority. A system need not be conscious to shape access to employment, credit, healthcare, education, or public services. Indeed, the danger may be greatest when powerful systems are treated as neutral or inevitable. Their outputs can acquire institutional force even when the underlying model is uncertain, biased, or poorly suited to the context. Moral significance therefore concerns both the system's actual properties and the human practices through which it is used.

Christian theology has historically treated intelligence as more than calculation. Human intelligence includes bodily perception, memory, emotion, practical judgment, moral deliberation, imagination, social learning, and the ability to seek meaning. It develops through relationships, language, culture, education, work, and spiritual formation. Human beings can revise their purposes, confess wrongdoing, forgive, and respond to another person as a neighbor rather than as a data point. These features do not imply that

every human decision is wise or just. They do remind us that intelligence is embedded in a life and a community, not merely in the production of correct-looking outputs.

The 2025 note *Antiqua et Nova* distinguishes the instrumental capacities of AI from human intelligence understood in its embodied and relational dimensions (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith & Dicastery for Culture and Education, 2025). This distinction is especially relevant when an organization treats a model's score as an authoritative judgment. A risk estimate may inform a clinician, but it does not itself care for a patient. A hiring model may rank applications, but it cannot assume the employer's duty to provide fair consideration. A chatbot may help someone find a Bible passage, but it cannot become a pastor or a community of faith. The proper response is neither to deny useful machine capabilities nor to project human personhood onto them. It is to assign authority and responsibility carefully.

4. The Human Person: Embodiment, Relationship, and the Image of God

Genesis 1:26–27 declares that humankind is created in the image and likeness of God. The passage gives no technical definition of the image, and Christian traditions have interpreted it in several ways: as a capacity for reason, a vocation of stewardship, a relational reality, a status bestowed by God, or a combination of these. For the purposes of AI ethics, a crucial implication is that the worth of a person is not contingent on performance. If dignity depended on superior calculation, memory, speed, or productivity, machines could appear to threaten human worth whenever they surpassed particular human capacities. The biblical affirmation points elsewhere: the human person has value before any system measures or ranks that person.

The image of God belongs to humanity as a shared and inclusive status. Genesis names male and female together (Genesis 1:27); the text does not reserve dignity for rulers, experts, able-bodied people, or economically productive citizens. The Bible's broader witness extends moral concern to

strangers, widows, orphans, the poor, the sick, and those without power. Deuteronomy 10:17–19 joins God's impartiality with a command to love the stranger. James 2:1–9 condemns partiality toward the wealthy. These passages challenge AI systems that reproduce unequal treatment or make exclusion harder to see. If an automated system disproportionately denies services to a marginalized group, its technical sophistication cannot excuse the institution from examining the harm.

Dignity also has a relational dimension. Human beings are not isolated units but persons whose lives are formed and sustained in relationships—with God, family, community, institutions, and the created world. The biblical story describes human flourishing through covenant, mutual responsibility, and belonging. The command to love one's neighbor (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:29–31) places the other person before us as someone to be encountered, not merely predicted. This does not prohibit all classification; institutions need categories to organize services. It does require that categories remain subordinate to attentive human care and that a person be able to explain, contest, and sometimes transcend a profile assigned by a system.

Human dignity is embodied. The biblical account of creation describes human life as formed from the earth and animated by God's breath (Genesis 2:7). The incarnation, in Christian confession, further affirms the significance of embodied human life (John 1:14). A digital representation can capture information about a person, but it cannot contain the whole person. Health records, click histories, facial images, voice samples, and behavioral predictions are partial traces. When institutions treat such traces as a complete identity, they risk turning people into objects of surveillance and control. Respect for dignity requires data minimization, contextual integrity, meaningful consent where possible, and limits on secondary use.

The Bible also recognizes vulnerability and dependence. Human worth does not disappear through illness, age, disability, poverty, error, or the need for assistance. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) makes

neighbor-love concrete through costly attention to a wounded stranger. A dignity-centered system should therefore be judged by how it treats people who have the least power to refuse, understand, or correct it. A tool that improves average efficiency while abandoning those who cannot navigate a digital interface may be administratively efficient and morally deficient. The biblical measure is not only the success of the capable but the treatment of the vulnerable.

5. Vocation, Stewardship, and the Purpose of Human Creativity

Genesis 1:28 and 2:15 portray human beings as entrusted with the earth and placed in a garden "to till it and keep it" (NRSVUE). Christian traditions have sometimes interpreted dominion as permission for unrestricted exploitation. A more careful reading holds authority together with responsibility: the created world belongs to God, and human beings are accountable stewards. This matters for AI because technological capacity can encourage a culture of mastery. Data can be collected simply because it can be collected; behavior can be manipulated because it can be predicted; labor can be automated because it can be made cheaper. Stewardship asks a different question: what forms of use protect life, sustain communities, and preserve the conditions of flourishing?

Stewardship is not passive conservation. It includes creative work, scientific inquiry, and the use of tools to address human needs. AI may help identify crop disease, forecast flood risks, improve energy efficiency, translate health guidance, or make public information more accessible. Such applications can be expressions of responsible care when designed with local knowledge and evaluated against real outcomes. In a country exposed to earthquakes, floods, volcanic hazards, and unequal access to services, predictive systems may help authorities prepare and allocate resources. Yet the same systems can fail when data omit remote communities, when warnings are inaccessible to people with disabilities, or when officials mistake a forecast for certainty.

The biblical account also limits human claims to ultimate authority. The prohibition against idolatry (Exodus 20:3–6) is not only about statues; it warns against giving ultimate trust to finite things. AI becomes an idol when people treat it as an all-knowing oracle, a substitute for moral judgment, or a source of salvation from uncertainty and conflict. This warning is not a reason to avoid computational tools. It is a reason to keep them in their proper place. A model can illuminate a decision, but it cannot decide what is worthy of love, what justice requires, or what sacrifices a community should accept.

The story of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9) offers another caution. Its concern is not that human beings cooperate or build, but that collective power can become self-aggrandizing and resistant to limitation. Contemporary AI development can similarly concentrate technical and economic power in a small number of firms, states, or institutions. When decisions about data, infrastructure, language, and platform rules are made without public participation, communities become dependent on systems they did not shape. A Christian account of stewardship therefore includes institutional restraint, shared governance, and accountability for those who control powerful technologies.

6. Technology, Sin, Desire, and Moral Responsibility

Christian ethics does not assume that good intentions automatically produce good outcomes. The doctrine of sin describes the ways human beings and institutions distort their capacities, relationships, and purposes. In technological settings, sin may appear as greed that prioritizes extraction over care; pride that treats prediction as omniscience; fear that encourages surveillance; indifference that externalizes harm; or self-deception that hides value choices behind technical vocabulary. These patterns do not make technology inherently evil. They explain why moral reflection must examine the incentives and power structures surrounding its design and use.

AI systems are made and maintained through human decisions. People choose what problem to address, what data to collect, which outcomes to

optimize, what errors to tolerate, which groups to test, and what level of human review to provide. The resulting model may behave in ways its creators did not fully anticipate, but unpredictability does not erase responsibility. It changes what responsible conduct requires: testing, monitoring, documentation, incident response, and willingness to suspend a system when evidence indicates unacceptable harm. Responsibility should be distributed according to actual roles and power, while remaining traceable enough that no organization can claim that "the algorithm" alone made the decision.

The New Testament's moral vision places freedom within accountability. Galatians 5:13 says that freedom is expressed through service in love. Romans 14:12 reminds believers that each person will give an account to God. These passages resist both technological fatalism ("innovation cannot be stopped") and simplistic voluntarism ("each user can solve the problem alone"). Developers, executives, procurement officers, regulators, professionals, and users have different responsibilities. The organization that deploys an AI hiring system has greater control over its consequences than an applicant who must submit to it. Ethical governance should assign duties in proportion to power, knowledge, and capacity to prevent harm.

Confession and repentance also have practical analogues. An institution should be able to acknowledge when an AI system caused harm, tell affected people what happened, provide remedy, and change the system or its use. A public statement of principles is inadequate if the organization refuses to correct a harmful practice. Christian repentance is more than regret; it involves turning from wrongdoing and repairing relationships where possible. In organizational life this can mean withdrawing an unfit model, reopening decisions, compensating losses, revising procurement standards, and listening to people whose experiences were previously ignored.

7. Neighbor-Love as a Measure of Spiritual Maturity

Jesus summarizes the law through love of God and love of neighbor (Matthew 22:37–40). Neighbor-love is not a sentimental feeling added after technical decisions are complete. It provides a test for the whole life cycle of AI. Who is treated as the neighbor in the design brief? Whose needs are made visible in the data? Who has the opportunity to explain a decision? Who receives the benefits and who absorbs the cost? Does the system make it easier to respond to people with patience, or does it encourage institutions to avoid them? These questions convert a theological virtue into a practical discipline of attention.

The Good Samaritan narrative is especially instructive for automated service systems. The Samaritan sees a person in need, interrupts his journey, approaches the injured man, and assumes material responsibility for care (Luke 10:30–37). The story does not imply that every service must be delivered face-to-face or that automation is incompatible with compassion. It does show that moral responsibility requires more than categorizing a case. A hospital chatbot may help patients find information, but there must be a human pathway when a person is frightened, confused, or at risk. A government portal may speed up applications, but a citizen who cannot use it must not be abandoned to a digital dead end.

Neighbor-love also includes truthful communication. Ephesians 4:25 calls the community to speak truthfully, and Proverbs repeatedly warns against false witness. Generative AI makes it easier to fabricate images, voices, documents, and persuasive text at scale. Such material can damage reputations, manipulate voters, defraud older adults, or inflame religious and ethnic tensions. Christian communities should develop habits of verification before sharing content, especially when a message confirms existing fears or attacks a vulnerable group. Platforms and publishers also bear responsibility to label synthetic media where appropriate, reduce deceptive amplification, and offer accessible routes for correction.

Love does not mean avoiding disagreement or withholding legitimate criticism. It means that a person should not be exposed to deception, harassment, or unjust exclusion for the convenience of an institution. A Christian framework therefore joins care with truth, and compassion with accountability. When a model is used in a consequential context, affected individuals should receive understandable information, a meaningful opportunity to contest an outcome, and access to a human decision-maker able to change the result. A nominal "human in the loop" is insufficient if the human reviewer lacks time, authority, or relevant knowledge. The person who seeks remedy must encounter an accountable human process, not a symbolic signature.

8. Justice, Vulnerability, and the Communal Character of Faith

The biblical prophets repeatedly judge societies by their treatment of the poor and their use of power. Amos condemns those who "trample on the poor" and manipulate economic institutions (Amos 5:11–12); Micah calls for justice, kindness, and humility (Micah 6:8). These texts invite analysis not only of individual prejudice but of structures that distribute opportunity and risk. AI systems trained on historical records may reproduce patterns shaped by past discrimination. They may also create new forms of exclusion when data are incomplete, proxies are misleading, or design teams assume that the experiences of a dominant group are universal.

Bias is not one technical defect with one technical fix. It can enter through the definition of a problem, sampling choices, labels, measurement, model objectives, deployment thresholds, and institutional responses to errors. A recruitment model trained on past hiring data may learn to favor profiles associated with previous employees. A credit system may penalize neighborhoods because historical disadvantage is encoded in financial records. A facial recognition system may have different error rates across demographic groups. Fairness testing can reveal some disparities, but it

cannot by itself determine whether the original decision rule is ethically justified. Sometimes the just response is not to improve the prediction but to stop using the system for that decision.

Christian justice asks whether social arrangements enable people to participate in life and to receive what is due to them. It therefore includes distributive questions: who owns the infrastructure, who profits from data, which communities receive investment, and whether productivity gains are shared. It also includes procedural justice: can a person understand and challenge a decision? Recognition justice asks whether the system represents groups respectfully and accommodates language, disability, and cultural context. Reparative justice asks how to address injuries already caused. These dimensions overlap with, but are not reducible to, statistical parity metrics.

Indonesia's social and linguistic diversity makes contextual fairness especially important. A system trained largely on high-resource languages and urban data may misunderstand local expressions, accents, informal work, or community-specific needs. Digital services can increase access in some regions while excluding people with limited connectivity, older devices, low digital literacy, or disabilities. Christian institutions should not assume that a product marketed as “inclusive” has been tested with Indonesian communities. They can ask for evidence about training data, subgroup performance, accessibility, data protection, local language quality, and mechanisms for appeal. They can also involve local pastors, teachers, health workers, community organizations, and users in evaluating whether an application is helpful and safe.

Justice further requires attention to the global distribution of AI's material costs. Data centers require electricity, water, minerals, and land. Content moderation and data labeling may rely on low-paid labor, including workers exposed to disturbing material. Communities that host infrastructure may bear environmental burdens without receiving commensurate benefits. A Christian ethic of solidarity asks technology companies and institutions to

disclose these dependencies and to improve labor and environmental conditions throughout the supply chain. Human dignity includes the people whose invisible work makes apparently effortless automation possible.

9. Truth, Wisdom, and Spiritual Discernment

Christian faith has a deep concern for truth. In John 8:32, truth is associated with freedom; in John 14:6, truth is central to Jesus' self-description. These passages do not equate truth with the output of any institution or person. They do insist that deception is spiritually and socially serious. AI-generated answers can be fluent and wrong, citing nonexistent sources or combining accurate and inaccurate claims. Users may over-trust the output because it sounds confident. In academic, legal, medical, and pastoral settings, a plausible error can cause lasting harm.

The ethical issue is not merely “hallucination” as a technical term. It is the human practice of presenting unverified output as knowledge. A researcher remains responsible for checking sources and interpreting evidence. A student remains responsible for the claims submitted under the student's name, within the rules of the institution. A pastor remains responsible for doctrinal and pastoral counsel. A company remains responsible for customer-facing claims. AI can support inquiry by suggesting search terms, organizing notes, or offering a draft, but the user must verify facts, trace references, and disclose use when disclosure is required.

The difference between information and wisdom is especially important. Information can be retrieved or generated; wisdom involves judging what is good, fitting, and responsible in a particular situation. Proverbs 4:7 commends the pursuit of wisdom, while James 1:5 invites believers to ask God for wisdom. An AI assistant may present options, but it cannot bear the spiritual discipline of discernment. It cannot know the full significance of a family conflict, a congregational wound, or a patient's fears merely from the

data entered. Wisdom requires listening, humility, prayer, experience, and accountability within community.

Misinformation also harms public life. Synthetic political content, fake endorsements, fabricated sermons, and manipulated audio can undermine trust. Christian leaders have a responsibility to model careful speech and to correct falsehoods without amplifying them unnecessarily. Congregations can teach members to examine source, date, context, and evidence; to distinguish fact from interpretation; and to avoid forwarding emotionally charged content before verification. At institutional level, media literacy and provenance practices should accompany technical tools. A church or university can provide a designated channel for reporting synthetic impersonation and clarify how official communications are authenticated.

10. Privacy, Interior Life, and the Freedom to Grow

Privacy is more than secrecy. It protects the space in which people form relationships, seek counsel, explore belief, and make choices without unjust observation. The biblical tradition includes the importance of trust, confession, and discretion. Proverbs 11:13 praises the trustworthy person who keeps confidence; Matthew 6:6 refers to prayer in a private place. These texts do not prescribe a modern data policy, but they remind communities that not every personal fact should be exposed or converted into an institutional asset.

AI increases the capacity to infer sensitive information from ordinary data. Location patterns, browsing behavior, voice characteristics, facial images, and social networks may reveal health conditions, political affiliation, religious practice, or emotional vulnerability. A person may not have knowingly consented to such inferences. In churches, schools, and workplaces, data collection can be particularly coercive because people may fear losing access or approval if they refuse. Institutions should collect only what is needed for a legitimate purpose, define retention periods, restrict access, secure data, and

prohibit incompatible secondary use. Consent should be specific and meaningful rather than hidden in a long document or bundled with essential services.

Surveillance can also alter behavior. When people know that every interaction may be monitored, they may avoid asking questions, seeking help, or expressing dissent. The result is not only loss of privacy but a weakening of trust and agency. A Christian community should be cautious about using AI to infer spiritual commitment, rank members, monitor attendance patterns for punitive purposes, or predict who may leave a congregation. Such practices may treat pastoral care as population control. Data can help identify unmet needs, but care must remain voluntary, relational, and proportionate.

Privacy protections should include special care for children, people in crisis, migrants, and others with limited power. Institutions must also consider cybersecurity and the risks of data breach. A data set intended for ministry or education can be repurposed or exposed. Leaders should ask: What would happen if this information became public? Would the person reasonably expect it to be used this way? Is there a less intrusive means to achieve the same goal? Who can access the data, and who is accountable if it is misused? These questions translate respect for the person into concrete stewardship of information.

11. Work, Calling, and the Spiritual Meaning of Human Labor

Work is a significant part of human life, though it does not define a person's worth. Genesis portrays work as part of human vocation, and the Bible affirms the value of labor while criticizing exploitation. The command to rest in Exodus 20:8–11 places limits on production and recognizes that human life is more than work. AI may relieve people of dangerous, repetitive, or burdensome tasks. It may also threaten livelihoods, intensify work through monitoring, devalue professional expertise, or shift economic gains toward owners of capital and data.

A Christian assessment must avoid two errors. The first is to romanticize every existing job, including work that is degrading or unsafe. The second is to celebrate productivity while ignoring workers who lose income, status, bargaining power, and community. The proper question is how technological change can be organized so that it supports dignified work and a fair transition. Employers should assess likely effects before deployment, consult workers and unions, provide retraining tied to actual opportunities, and share productivity gains where possible. Governments can support income security, lifelong learning, and labor protections that keep pace with new forms of work.

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1–16) does not provide a modern wage formula, but it challenges assumptions that market productivity is the sole measure of deservingness. Christian communities can therefore question economic models that treat workers as disposable inputs. If an AI system removes tasks from a role, the organization should ask what new responsibilities emerge, whether the remaining work becomes more intense, and how workers can participate in redesign. Workplaces should not use algorithmic management to set impossible pace, penalize legitimate breaks, or make disciplinary decisions opaque.

In Indonesia, the consequences of automation will vary across formal employment, informal work, small enterprises, public services, and regional economies. A large business may absorb transition costs that a small enterprise cannot. A digital platform may provide income access but also shift risk to contractors. Universities and churches can help workers understand AI tools without implying that every worker must become a programmer. Digital literacy, domain expertise, communication, ethical judgment, and the capacity to learn remain valuable. A just transition requires specific pathways, not slogans about reskilling.

12. AI in Christian Education and the Formation of Character

Education is not merely the transfer of information. It forms judgment, habits, relationships, imagination, and responsibility. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 presents teaching as embedded in daily life, while the Gospels portray learning through dialogue, example, questioning, and community. AI tutors, translation tools, accessibility systems, and writing assistants can support learners. They may help a student receive explanations at different levels, practice a language, or obtain feedback outside classroom hours. They can also encourage dependence, facilitate plagiarism, expose sensitive student data, or narrow learning to what can be easily measured.

A Christian educational approach asks whether AI strengthens the student's capacity to think, create, and act responsibly. Teachers can use generative systems to develop examples, generate practice questions, or adapt materials, while making their own pedagogical judgment visible. Students can use AI to brainstorm or receive feedback when course policies permit, but should learn to verify claims, cite sources, disclose assistance, and distinguish their own reasoning from generated text. Assessment should value process, oral explanation, reflection, collaboration, and application, not only polished submissions that a model can produce.

The risk of unequal access matters. Students with paid tools, strong connectivity, and confident digital skills may gain advantages over those without them. Institutions should not require students to submit personal data to commercial platforms without careful review. They should ensure that AI-supported instruction remains accessible to students with disabilities and responsive to local languages and contexts. Human teachers remain essential because education involves recognition, encouragement, ethical example, and responsiveness to a student's circumstances. A model can offer feedback, but a teacher can notice that a learner is discouraged, confused, or carrying burdens not visible in a data record.

For Christian schools and universities, AI literacy should include theological and ethical reflection without turning technology lessons into fear-based instruction. Students can study how training data shape outputs, how recommendations influence attention, and how automated decisions distribute benefits. They can compare a system's claims with biblical principles of truth, justice, dignity, and service. Such learning prepares graduates to participate in technological change rather than merely consume it. The educational aim is not to compete with machines at speed but to become more capable of judgment, collaboration, and responsible creativity.

13. Prayer, Silence, and the Practice of Attention

Spiritual growth requires attention, and attention is formed by habits. A person repeatedly shaped by interruption, speed, and the pressure to respond may find it difficult to remain with Scripture, grief, gratitude, or another person's story. This is not a moral diagnosis of every digital user. It is an invitation to notice how technological environments shape desire and time. The Psalms include waiting, lament, praise, and silence; these practices cannot be reduced to immediate solutions. Psalm 46:10 calls the faithful to stillness, while Luke 5:16 describes Jesus withdrawing to pray. Such passages suggest that Christian life includes deliberate forms of attention that resist the demand for constant availability.

AI can support a prayer rhythm in limited ways. A Bible application may make a reading plan accessible; a speech interface may assist someone with a disability; a reminder may help a person return to a chosen practice; an AI tool might suggest questions for reflection. These functions can serve a learner or worshipper when they remain subordinate to the person's intention and the community's theological judgment. A reminder is not prayer, however, and the completion of a digital streak is not evidence of holiness. The tool may prompt a practice; the person still attends, responds, and grows through grace.

Silence also has theological significance. In prayer, believers may wait without receiving a clear answer. A machine is designed to respond to a prompt, but the spiritual life includes waiting, lament, uncertainty, and receptivity to what cannot be controlled. Cho's reflection on prayer and divine silence draws attention to temporality, vulnerability, and the difference between response generation and prayer as a practice of relationship (Cho, 2026). An AI system may generate devotional language about waiting; it cannot itself wait in faith or undergo transformation through silence.

Christian educators can help people develop rhythms rather than merely issue bans. A household might set aside a period for shared reading or conversation without nonessential notifications. A study group might begin with quiet, read a passage slowly, then use a digital tool only for a defined question. A church could offer both accessible digital materials and embodied gatherings. These choices should take account of disability, caregiving, work, safety, and unequal access. The purpose is not to make disconnection a spiritual badge; it is to make room for presence, rest, reflection, and encounter.

Attention becomes spiritually meaningful when it is directed toward God and neighbor. If a digital practice helps a person learn Scripture in a language they understand, maintain connection with a distant community, or access a needed accommodation, it may support growth. If a practice repeatedly crowds out sleep, conversation, prayer, or responsibility, the person and community may need to reconsider its place. Galatians 5:22–23 names self-control among the fruit of the Spirit; this suggests a freedom shaped by love rather than compulsion. Digital discipline is therefore not self-salvation. It is a way of making space to receive grace and respond more freely.

14. AI, Spiritual Companionship, and Pastoral Care

The prospect of an AI “spiritual companion” brings theological questions into ordinary conversation. Some people may ask a chatbot to explain a Bible

passage, compose a prayer, explore grief, or discuss doubts they hesitate to share with another person. Such interaction can feel private and patient. It may lower the barrier to seeking information and can help a person articulate a question before speaking with a pastor or friend. But conversational warmth should not be mistaken for reciprocal care, spiritual authority, or human presence.

Recent scholarship has begun to examine spiritual conversation with companion machines and the possibility of purpose-built spiritual chatbots (Watts & Wilks, 2024; Cole-Turner, 2025). These works raise questions rather than demonstrate that chatbots cause spiritual growth. Cole-Turner considers possible supportive roles while cautioning against assigning a chatbot the role of pastor or priest. This distinction is important: an AI may prompt reflection or provide general information, but a pastor is accountable to a congregation, knows particular histories, can discern when silence or referral is appropriate, and participates in mutual life. A machine can simulate attentive language without bearing those responsibilities.

Pastoral care often involves ambiguity and vulnerability. A person may ask, “Does God still love me?” while carrying grief, abuse, shame, or fear. A generalized answer can be technically correct yet pastorally inadequate. A chatbot cannot reliably know whether the person is safe, whether a theological phrase will intensify harm, or whether a human intervention is urgent. It should not be presented as a confidential counselor, crisis service, confessor, or substitute spiritual director. Where a young person or adult discloses danger, human safeguarding procedures and qualified professional support matter.

The church can establish a wise boundary without forbidding every use. A chatbot might help someone locate a passage or generate questions for a Bible study, provided that the output is checked and the user understands its limits. It should not claim to speak for God, offer absolution as though it held ecclesial authority, or make promises of confidentiality that the service cannot

guarantee. Communities should avoid uploading identifiable pastoral notes, prayer requests, or counseling records into unapproved systems. If AI is used in a pastoral workflow, leaders should disclose it, define what data are processed, retain human review, and create an accessible route to a person.

Putrawan's analysis of AI and religious practice identifies interpretive authority, spiritual accompaniment, and community formation as important areas of change (Putrawan, 2025). The theological task is not to decide that digital mediation is always false or that every online exchange is spiritually empty. It is to discern what kind of relationship a tool affords and what it cannot provide. A spiritual companion in the Christian sense is not simply a system that speaks supportively. It is a person or community able to share responsibility, practice fidelity, correct with love, and accompany another through time.

15. Media, Witness, and the Integrity of Christian Life

Christian witness is communicated through speech, conduct, worship, teaching, and service. Digital media can extend access to sermons, Bible study, and pastoral resources. Translation and transcription tools may help people who speak different languages or live with disabilities. AI can assist a small congregation with routine communications, but it can also produce inaccurate theological explanations, imitate a pastor's voice, or create false announcements. If churches use automated content, they should identify who reviews it and who is responsible for its pastoral and doctrinal claims.

The temptation to use AI for scale can neglect the relational nature of ministry. A congregation is not simply an audience to be optimized for engagement. Pastoral care involves listening, confidentiality, discernment, and presence. A chatbot can direct a person to a resource or provide basic information, but it should not be presented as a substitute for a pastor, counselor, or emergency service. Clear boundaries are essential when someone discloses abuse, suicidal thoughts, domestic violence, or a serious

medical crisis. The system should direct the person to appropriate human support and avoid creating a false impression of confidentiality or competence.

The command to love one another (John 13:34–35) calls churches to treat digital communication as part of moral life. Congregations can establish rules for the use of synthetic images, voice, and text; verify public statements; obtain permission before processing personal stories; and protect children's information. Church leaders should not use AI to simulate testimonials, fabricate attendance, or manipulate giving. The means of evangelization matter because they shape the credibility of the message. Truthful and transparent communication is part of Christian witness.

AI may also support theological reflection by helping readers compare translations, organize historical sources, or locate themes. These uses should be accompanied by scholarship, context, and humility. A model may summarize a passage in a way that misses genre, historical setting, or doctrinal complexity. Pastors and teachers should show how interpretation is tested against Scripture, tradition, reason, and the life of the community. The tool can assist the study of theology; it cannot replace the community's responsibility to interpret and live the faith.

16. Human Agency, Responsibility, and the Work of Discernment

Human agency includes the ability to understand reasons, form intentions, deliberate, act, and answer for one's conduct. AI can extend agency by helping people overcome barriers, explore options, and carry out tasks. It can diminish agency when it narrows choices, manipulates attention, conceals decision rules, or makes refusal practically impossible. The ethical goal is not to keep humans involved in every computation. It is to ensure that people retain meaningful authority over decisions that affect rights, safety, livelihood, and relationships.

"Human oversight" is often invoked as a safeguard, but its quality varies. A reviewer may be expected to approve hundreds of automated recommendations quickly, lack access to the data or model limitations, or be penalized for disagreeing with the system. Such oversight is ceremonial. Meaningful oversight requires sufficient time, competence, authority, access to relevant information, and protection for dissent. It also requires clarity about when the human must intervene and how the institution learns from errors. If a decision is too complex or harmful to explain and contest, the organization should reconsider whether it should be automated at all.

Accountability should follow the chain of decisions. Developers have duties concerning design, testing, documentation, and known limitations. Vendors have duties concerning claims, updates, security, and support. Deploying institutions have duties to assess context, train staff, inform affected people, monitor outcomes, and provide remedy. Professionals have duties to exercise judgment within their expertise. Regulators have duties to set enforceable standards and investigate serious failures. Users have responsibilities too, but those responsibilities must not be used to shift institutional obligations onto people with little power.

Practical accountability includes an inventory of AI systems, risk classification, impact assessments, documentation, incident reporting, redress mechanisms, and periodic review. It also requires a culture in which employees can raise concerns without retaliation. The biblical tradition values truth-telling, correction, and restoration. A Christian organization should therefore make it possible to question a system before harm becomes normalized. Accountability is not hostility toward innovation; it is a condition for trustworthy innovation.

17. Embodiment, Worship, and the Life of the Church

Christian spirituality is embodied and communal. The biblical story does not present human beings as minds temporarily trapped in bodies. Genesis

describes the human as formed from the soil and animated by God's breath (Genesis 2:7); the incarnation proclaims the Word made flesh (John 1:14). The body is not a technical inconvenience to be transcended. It is part of the person whom God creates, loves, heals, and calls into relationship. Spiritual growth therefore involves how people eat, rest, move, touch, speak, mourn, celebrate, and inhabit places with others.

This embodied account places limits on fantasies of digital immortality or the full transfer of a person into software. AI may preserve a person's writing, voice, or images, and a synthetic avatar may imitate familiar expressions. Such replicas can comfort some people, but they raise questions about consent, grief, identity, and the ownership of a person's likeness. The representation is not the person. Christian hope is not simply the persistence of data; it is grounded in God's promise of resurrection and renewed creation (1 Corinthians 15:42–49; Romans 8:19–23). This is a theological claim, not a technical hypothesis about storage.

Worship also forms people through shared, embodied practices. Singing, hearing Scripture read aloud, sharing bread and cup according to a church's tradition, laying on hands, serving meals, and gathering across generations teach through participation. Digital worship can reach homebound people, connect dispersed communities, and offer access when travel is difficult. It may be a genuine form of participation for some, while particular traditions hold specific theological convictions about sacraments, assembly, and presence. Churches should state those convictions honestly and avoid treating a screen as automatically equivalent to every dimension of gathered worship.

A digital tool can support the church's embodied mission when it helps people arrive at deeper participation: a translation makes a service accessible, a livestream includes a person who cannot travel, a scheduling tool helps volunteers coordinate food distribution, or an online group keeps members connected between gatherings. The tool becomes spiritually distorting when

it is mistaken for the community itself, when it encourages leaders to measure belonging solely through clicks, or when it replaces human care for administrative convenience. Acts 2:42–47 portrays communal life through teaching, fellowship, shared meals, prayer, and material generosity. It reminds churches that spiritual growth is practiced together, not merely consumed privately.

The body of Christ includes varied abilities and needs (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). Accessibility should not be treated as a special favor or an afterthought. Technology may enable participation for people with mobility, sensory, communication, or chronic-health needs. At the same time, participation should not be conditioned on sharing personal data or adopting a single platform. A community can offer multiple ways to learn, worship, and serve, recognizing that faithful presence may look different across persons and seasons of life.

18. A Framework for Theological Discernment and Spiritual Growth

A framework for spiritual discernment should begin with the question of formation: what kind of person and community might this use of AI help shape? The first movement is **purpose**. Name the real need before choosing a tool. Is the aim to learn a biblical language, prepare accessible materials, organize a volunteer schedule, or respond to a pastoral concern? A vague desire to "modernize" is not enough. The second movement is **attention**. Ask what the tool does to time, focus, habits, and the learner's ability to remain present. Does it support a practice or quietly take its place?

The third movement is **truth**. Examine where the output came from, whether claims can be verified, what context may be missing, and which voices are represented. Scripture is read in literary and historical context, alongside the interpretive resources and accountability of a faith community. The fourth movement is **relationship**. Ask whether a tool helps a person connect with teachers, friends, pastors, or neighbors—or encourages withdrawal from

human interaction. If the issue involves vulnerability, safety, conscience, or grief, identify a human pathway before deployment.

The fifth movement is **agency and integrity**. Can users understand what the system is doing, choose whether to use it, disclose its contribution, and challenge a consequential outcome? Is the learner practicing judgment or simply accepting an answer? The sixth movement is **justice and care**. Who may be excluded, stereotyped, monitored, or placed at risk? How are privacy, accessibility, labor, and environmental costs addressed? The seventh movement is **practice and fruit**. Christian discernment considers what follows: does the use cultivate love, patience, courage, truthfulness, humility, self-control, and service (Galatians 5:22–23)? These are not metrics for ranking souls; they are communal signs to reflect upon.

A final movement is **review**. Spiritual formation and technological contexts change over time. Communities should ask learners and those affected what actually happened, acknowledge unintended harm, and revise the practice. The framework can be used for an AI Bible-study assistant, an online prayer platform, an educational chatbot, or a church communication system. Its purpose is not to guarantee that every decision is easy. It helps Christian leaders recognize that technical feasibility is not sufficient warrant. A tool should be welcomed when it serves a legitimate need in a way consistent with truth, agency, embodied relationship, justice, and the community's understanding of faithfulness.

19. Practices for Churches, Families, Educators, and Leaders

Churches can begin by asking how AI already shapes their members' lives, rather than assuming that AI arrives only when the church purchases a product. Congregants may use chatbots for Bible questions, students may rely on AI for assignments, and families may encounter generated images or recommendations every day. Pastors can create spaces where people discuss these experiences without shame. They can teach the difference between a

helpful study aid and a spiritual authority, and ensure that pastoral care remains available through accountable human relationships.

A church that uses AI for a Bible study, translation, administrative planning, or communication should disclose the use and review the output. Leaders should not enter confidential prayer or counseling records into public tools. If a congregation uses a chatbot or automated pastoral information service, it should state its limits clearly and provide a direct route to a pastor or trained care worker. Human review is especially important for doctrine, pastoral advice, crisis response, and any material presented as the church's official teaching.

Families can model discernment through conversation rather than surveillance alone. Parents and caregivers can ask what young people find useful or unsettling online, discuss how to check AI-generated claims, and agree on privacy and sleep practices. They should be prepared to explain that a chatbot may sound empathetic but is not a friend who can take mutual responsibility. Adults can also listen to young people's knowledge of platforms and trends. This mutual learning strengthens trust and gives families opportunities to connect technology with biblical wisdom, care, and self-control.

Christian schools, universities, and seminaries should teach AI literacy alongside theological reflection. Students can compare AI-generated interpretations with Scripture, examine a model's assumptions, and disclose assistance in academic work. Institutions should protect student and pastoral data, provide accessible alternatives, and avoid relying on AI-detection tools as definitive evidence of misconduct. Faculty and church educators need time to redesign learning so that AI supports inquiry without replacing close reading, dialogue, and the development of judgment.

Businesses, public institutions, and Christian organizations should preserve accountability wherever AI affects people. They can publish understandable

explanations, conduct impact assessments, provide appeals, and consult affected communities. Churches and universities can collaborate across religious and professional boundaries to promote privacy, accessibility, trustworthy information, dignified work, and fair distribution of technological benefits. Spiritual growth does not remove Christians from public responsibility; it should deepen their participation in the common good.

20. Indonesia and the Global South: Contextual Wisdom and Shared Agency

The Global South is not a single context, and Indonesia itself contains diverse regions, languages, religions, economies, and levels of infrastructure. The ethical challenge is not merely to gain access to AI products developed elsewhere. It is to shape the terms on which technology is adopted, governed, and adapted. This includes the ability to evaluate vendors, secure data, audit outcomes, develop local expertise, and withdraw from systems that do not serve the public interest. Digital sovereignty should not become isolationism; it should mean meaningful capacity and accountable choice.

AI may help address real needs: agricultural extension, disaster preparedness, translation, accessible education, public-health information, and support for small businesses. These applications are most promising when co-designed with communities and tested in real conditions. Local knowledge should not be treated as noise to be cleaned from a data set. A flood-risk tool, for example, may benefit from combining remote sensing with community observations about drainage, informal settlements, and evacuation routes. A language model that handles Bahasa Indonesia but not local languages may have limited value for people who need it most.

Risks include dependence on foreign infrastructure, extractive data practices, unequal access, low-quality automated content, and decisions made from incomplete records. The power to define categories can be as consequential as the power to own hardware. If a system treats informal work as evidence

of unreliability, or interprets local linguistic patterns as error, it can reproduce injustice under a veneer of objectivity. Indonesian universities, public agencies, civil society, religious organizations, and private firms can jointly develop standards for local evaluation, open educational resources, and public-interest use cases.

Christian institutions can contribute through education, social service, health care, and community networks. They can convene dialogue across faiths and sectors, identify harms experienced by vulnerable groups, and support digital literacy. Their contribution will be credible when they practice what they teach: protect member data, correct misinformation, disclose AI assistance where relevant, and prioritize human care over efficiency metrics. In this way, Christian ethics can participate in a plural public conversation about technology and the common good.

21. Objections and Replies

One objection is that theology should remain outside AI governance because public policy must be secular and pluralistic. The concern is understandable: no religious institution should impose doctrine on citizens who do not share it. However, public reasoning can receive contributions from religious traditions when arguments are expressed in accessible terms and remain open to scrutiny. Christian claims about human dignity, care for the vulnerable, and limits on power can be discussed alongside human-rights, democratic, and professional frameworks. The article does not propose that public institutions enforce a Christian theology; it proposes that Christian communities act responsibly and contribute to shared ethical deliberation.

A second objection is that AI is simply a tool, and moral responsibility belongs only to users. This is partly right: machines do not bear responsibility in the same way that persons and institutions do. But the phrase “just a tool” can conceal design choices and power relations. A tool's affordances shape action, and an organization that selects and deploys it creates conditions for

predictable use. A hiring system's impact cannot be assigned solely to an applicant who never chose it. Responsibility belongs to the people and institutions that design, procure, configure, and govern the tool, in proportion to their knowledge and control.

A third objection is that human judgment is itself biased, inconsistent, and sometimes cruel. This is true. Human involvement is not a magical guarantee of justice, and automation may improve consistency in some tasks. The relevant comparison is not between imperfect machines and ideal humans; it is between actual sociotechnical arrangements. Human decisions can be audited and appealed; automated decisions can too, if institutions build those mechanisms. The goal is to combine computational strengths with accountable human judgment, while preventing either from escaping scrutiny.

A fourth objection is that strong safeguards will slow innovation and deny benefits to people who need them. Some safeguards do impose costs, and poorly designed rules can block useful applications. Yet the absence of safeguards also has costs: errors, discrimination, privacy violations, loss of trust, and expensive remediation. A proportionate approach distinguishes low-risk assistance from high-impact decisions, supports testing and learning, and involves affected communities. Responsible innovation is not innovation without constraints; it is the capacity to create durable public benefit while taking foreseeable harms seriously.

22. Recommendations for Christian Leaders and Educators

Christian leaders should begin with theological literacy about technology. They need not become engineers, but should understand the basic difference between a model's output and human understanding, between a prediction and a moral judgment, and between technical performance and social value. Seminaries and church leadership programs can include AI ethics, privacy, misinformation, labor, and digital pastoral care. Case-based teaching is

particularly useful: learners can examine a hypothetical church chatbot, an AI hiring tool, or a synthetic political video and identify affected people, duties, risks, and alternatives.

Churches should adopt practical governance. A designated leader or committee can maintain an AI-use register, review high-impact applications, and ensure staff training. Confidential pastoral data should not be entered into public systems without appropriate safeguards. Generated theological or public-facing material should be reviewed by a responsible human. Congregations should disclose synthetic media and avoid impersonation. Where AI is used in counseling or spiritual support, boundaries and escalation routes should be explicit. The church's commitment should be to facilitate human care, not to create a cheaper substitute for it.

Educators should teach students to use AI critically and honestly. Policies should state what assistance is allowed, how it should be acknowledged, and what counts as independent work. Rather than relying only on automated detection, educators can ask students to explain decisions, document revisions, compare sources, and connect knowledge to lived or professional contexts. Institutions should protect student data and avoid vendor contracts that compromise privacy or create unequal access. Faculty should receive time and support to redesign assignments rather than being expected to solve every issue individually.

Christian leaders should also engage in public policy and interfaith collaboration. AI affects people across religious boundaries; justice requires broad participation. Churches can work with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, and secular organizations, professional associations, universities, and community groups to promote digital literacy, accessibility, labor dignity, and responsible public systems. Public witness is strongest when it is grounded in service and careful evidence. The aim is to help society build technologies that enable people to flourish, especially those whose voices are often overlooked.

23. Conclusion: The Human Person before God in an Age of Intelligent Machines

AI confronts Christian communities with an ancient question in a new form: what does it mean to become fully human before God? Machines can produce language, imitate styles, identify patterns, and personalize information. They can assist education, accessibility, research, and communication. Yet spiritual growth is not the accumulation of generated religious answers, the optimization of measurable habits, or the performance of piety through a screen. It is a transformation of persons and communities in which knowledge is joined to love, freedom to responsibility, and faith to embodied action.

The biblical witness places this growth within God's initiative and human response. The image of God gives every person dignity beyond capacity or productivity. Jesus calls disciples into a way of love and service. The Spirit forms virtues that cannot be reduced to a score. Prayer teaches attention and dependence; Scripture invites truthful interpretation; the church offers a community in which people worship, learn, forgive, and care for one another. These realities do not make technology irrelevant. They give Christians a standard by which to assess what technology is doing.

AI may support spiritual growth when it expands access, helps a learner formulate a question, assists a person with a disability, or frees a caregiver for more human attention. It may hinder growth when it becomes a hidden authority, displaces prayer and reflection, encourages isolation, invites the disclosure of confidential information, or turns spiritual life into data to be optimized. The same tool can be beneficial in one setting and harmful in another. Christian discernment must therefore consider intention, design, context, consequences, and the human relationships around the system.

The practical calling is to use machines with gratitude, humility, and limits. Christians should ask what their tools teach them to notice, whom they help

them to love, what they conceal, and who remains accountable. Churches and families can form habits of verification, silence, conversation, service, and responsible disclosure. Educators can build learning that requires interpretation and reflection. Pastors can use technology to support communication while remaining present as accountable human caregivers. Institutions can choose justice and privacy over convenience when the two come into tension.

The measure of technological progress is not whether a machine appears more spiritual or more human. It is whether human beings, by God's grace, grow in wisdom, truthful speech, compassion, courage, community, and faithful service. The machine may assist; it cannot live this vocation on behalf of people. In a world of increasingly intelligent tools, the Christian task is to remain attentive to the One who calls persons into communion, and to one another as neighbors whose flourishing is entrusted to our care.

Glossary

Contemplative prayer: A form of prayer marked by attentive presence, silence, receptivity, and openness to God rather than the pursuit of immediate answers.

Discernment: The prayerful and communal practice of evaluating claims, choices, and actions in light of Scripture, wisdom, experience, and love of neighbor.

Spiritual formation: The lifelong shaping of a person toward Christian faithfulness through Scripture, prayer, worship, community, service, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual companion: A person who accompanies another in faith through accountable listening and guidance; the term should not imply that an AI system provides reciprocal human or pastoral care.

Theological anthropology: Christian reflection on what it means to be human in relation to God, other people, the body, creation, sin, grace, and vocation.

Artificial intelligence (AI): Computational systems designed to perform tasks involving prediction, classification, language, perception, planning, or related capabilities.

Algorithm: A set of computational procedures or rules used to transform inputs into outputs.

Automation bias: The tendency to over-rely on an automated recommendation, even when contrary evidence or uncertainty is present.

Data minimization: The practice of collecting and retaining only the personal data necessary for a defined, legitimate purpose.

Dignity: The inherent worth of every person, understood in Christian theology as grounded in God's creative and loving relationship with humanity.

***Imago Dei*:** Latin for “image of God,” a biblical and theological account of human identity and vocation rooted especially in Genesis 1:26–27.

Human agency: A person's capacity to understand, deliberate, choose, act, and answer for conduct within relationships and institutions.

Human oversight: Meaningful human authority to understand, monitor, challenge, modify, or stop an AI-supported process.

Generative AI: AI systems that generate text, images, audio, code, or other outputs based on patterns learned from training data.

Model: A computational representation learned or specified to produce predictions, classifications, or generated outputs.

Responsible AI: The design, deployment, and governance of AI in ways that respect rights, fairness, safety, privacy, accountability, and social and environmental well-being.

Sociotechnical system: The combined arrangement of technology, data, people, organizational procedures, incentives, and institutions through which an AI system operates.

Stewardship: The accountable care of resources and creation entrusted to human beings, rather than unrestricted ownership or exploitation.

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