



## Digital Mission in a Post-Pandemic World: Reimagining Evangelism and Discipleship

Kezia Meifa Supit<sup>1</sup>, Michelle Johannis<sup>2</sup>, Jeane Maisudu<sup>3</sup>, Jeshinta Tarek<sup>4</sup>,

<sup>1-4</sup> Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado

Author Correspondence : [keziasupit10@gmail.com](mailto:keziasupit10@gmail.com)

**Abstract.** *The COVID-19 pandemic marked a significant turning point in the global church's approach to mission and ministry, particularly through the adoption of digital spaces. The rapid shift to digital platforms was not merely a practical adaptation but reflected a deeper transformation in how the church understands presence, community, and engagement in the world. This article aims to examine how evangelism and discipleship practices have evolved in digital forms in the post-pandemic context, and to explore the theological and ethical implications of "digital presence" within contemporary missiology. Using a practical theology approach, this study employs literature analysis, theological reflection, and case studies from digital church practices as its primary methods. The main findings reveal that evangelism has shifted towards creative digital content targeting digital-native generations, while discipleship is increasingly practiced through online communities and digital spirituality. At the same time, the study identifies key issues such as the validity of digital sacraments, the risk of faith commodification, and the challenge of fostering authentic relationships in virtual spaces. This article synthesizes the idea that digital mission represents a new form of incarnational ministry in the digital age, calling for a hybrid ecclesiology that integrates both physical and digital presence. In conclusion, digital mission is not simply a crisis response to the pandemic but a long-term theological and strategic transformation in how the church participates as the Body of Christ in a digitally connected world.*

**Keywords** *Digital Mission, Post-Pandemic Church, Evangelism, Digital Presence*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the post-pandemic era of COVID-19, digital mission has become an important focus for the global Protestant church. Churches that have relied on physical worship and gatherings have been forced to turn to online platforms to continue ministry. Studies show that "in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a rapid increase in the use of digital technologies by Christian communities around the world" (Chow & Kurlberg, 2020). Lifeway Research reports that before the pandemic only about 27-59% of Protestant pastors broadcast worship online, but in March-April 2020 this figure jumped to 92-97% (LifeWay Research 2020). In other words, for most churches online services are not just an option, but the only way to keep communicating and teaching. The object of research for this paper is post-pandemic digital mission, i.e. how the gospel is spread and followers of Christ are nurtured in virtual spaces after the pandemic experience changed the ministry landscape. We will review past practices and consider how to reimagine digital approaches for the new era. Various digital ministry methods have been used before, especially during the pandemic. Pastors and congregations began to utilize livestreaming of worship services through platforms such as

YouTube, Facebook Live, or Zoom, as well as using social media for teaching and church announcements. Before the pandemic, the use of these methods was limited, with a survey showing that 41% of Protestant pastors did not routinely broadcast worship services online (LifeWay Research, 2020). For example, research suggests that many Protestant churches are now regularly livestreaming, holding Bible studies via video conferencing, and even forming congregational communities that operate entirely virtually. Church websites, Bible apps, and digital newsletters were also part of mission strategies before the pandemic and continue to be used afterward (Kartika Singarimbun, 2021).

These digital methods have strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, an online presence allows for a much wider and more inclusive reach. Research has also found that people find it easier to invite friends to watch online worship than to invite them to physical worship. Most congregants feel the online worship experience can give the impression of "really worshipping" (Kartika Singarimbun, 2021). However, many drawbacks emerged especially before the pandemic. Data shows that almost half of pastors at the beginning of the pandemic struggled with technical issues of moving online (Campbell, H. A, 2020). The issue of digital divide (inequality of internet access) and the lack of technological literacy of congregations are also limitations. In addition, pastors and church leaders often have not received specialized training to minister digitally. Digital approaches also raise theological challenges: for example, can holy communion or other sacraments celebrated online be considered spiritually equivalent to physical worship? Cooper et al. note the question of whether digital presence is real presence, especially in the context of online sacraments. In short, before the pandemic digital services were generally complementary with varying effectiveness and depth of worship, so they have not substantially replaced the role of face-to-face (Cooper, A., Donahue, M., & Shepperd, J, 2021).

The underlying research issue is how to revisit and reformulate digital mission approaches in light of post pandemic dynamics. The sudden shift to digital raises doubts whether the "digital church" can be called a true church or just a technological simulation. Many are concerned that virtual worship falls short of replacing the experience of gathered community and tangible sacraments (Chow & Kurlberg, 2020). In addition, it remains unclear what theological framework is appropriate for assessing the success of digital ministry. In other words, we face a dilemma between new opportunities for *missio Dei* in cyberspace and theological and practical questions about the validity of online faith. This demands research that integrates technical and spiritual aspects and provides a theological basis for the practice of mission in the digital world (Campbel H.A, 2020).

This article proposes a solution in the form of a digital ecclesiology framework and a

holistic pastoral model for online ministry. For example, as Campbell argues, the values and mission of the church have not changed; what has changed is the medium of delivering the gospel. Thus, the church needs to use its digital presence to continue its calling as a servant of the weak and a community builder (Campbell H.A, 2020). We will explore how to utilize technology not only to duplicate old worship services online, but also to reform them with new features (e.g. interactive formats, virtual communities, digital liturgies). This approach emphasizes the importance of reformulating conceptions of sacramental and communion in virtual contexts based on digital ecclesiology, so that communities of faith can grow despite distance (Cooper, A., Donahue, M., & Shepperd, J, 2021).

The scientific contribution of this article is to enrich the discourse on theology of mission with a concrete digital perspective. Theoretically, this paper seeks to develop the concept of church and ministry in the digital medium, complementing studies on digital ecclesiology that emphasize the need for in-depth analysis of the use of digital media in church life. Practically, it is hoped that the results of this study can serve as a guide for the global Protestant church in formulating relevant evangelization and discipleship strategies after the pandemic. Thus, this study also answers the call for in-depth exploration of how church institutions interact with digital media.

The study of digital mission has evolved with the advancement of information technology. Since the early Internet era, researchers have noted the formation of online faith communities: for example, Campbell (2005) documented how people built online faith communities between 1996-2001. The concept of "networked religion" was introduced to describe socially-connective religious practices in digital societies. Five key features of networked religion include networked communities, storied identities, shifting authority, convergent practices, and multi-site realities. These studies show that Christianity had adapted to digital media long before the pandemic, using blogs, discussion forums, social media and podcasts to spread faith and nurture congregations.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation. Chow and Kurlberg (2020) mentioned that churches in Asia and Europe "shifted to online services" once lockdowns were imposed, due to practical needs and diverse technological readiness. They note that the pandemic accelerated the use of technology by the Christian community at large. An important asset of the study is that it highlights the accompanying theological debate: does the so-called "digital church" remain authentic as a congregation? Cross-country studies such as this confirm that the church must understand the new (embodied) dimension of divine presence in cyberspace. In many contexts, religious colleges, church consulting agencies, and major denominations soon published technical guidelines for pastors to conduct online

worship services that engage congregants.

One of the key concepts in contemporary literature is digital presence. Cooper et al. (2021) define digital presence as a technology that gives communities a shared experience and sense of community despite being geographically separated. That is, even if participants are not in the same room, online platforms enable the formation of community bonds. However, this concept raises theological questions, especially about the Sacraments: for example, does online communion usher in substantially the same presence of Christ? Cooper et al.'s study illustrates this dilemma by considering the advantages and disadvantages of virtual communion, as well as challenging the understanding of the Church as a social-digital-and-physical unity. The sacramental approach in digital spaces is an important discussion point for theologians researching online mission.

The concept of online community is also widely discussed. Campbell (2012) explains that religious practice on the internet reflects socio-cultural shifts and exemplifies how religious communities are networked. Online communities enable Christians to form new spiritual identities and support each other beyond local boundaries. In addition, our experience confirms that many congregants miss meaningful interaction (sense of presence) during online worship. The field and ethnographic research shows that these online communities are not a temporary phenomenon, but part of the multisite reality of today's church.

In this context, theories of digital ecclesiology and cybertheology form the basis of analysis. Campbell (2020) asserts that the term "digital ecclesiology" is intended to reflect the church's motivations and strategies in interacting with digital media. He invites church leaders to rethink the theology of the church in the digital age, for example, what factors determine the choice of technology in liturgy, worship, or mission. Discussions at the media theology conference (TheoComm) even highlighted how digitalization can transform our understanding of the nature and structure of the Church. Meanwhile, the term cybertheology or digital theology encompasses various approaches that examine the relationship between Christian faith and digital culture. Le Duc (2020) writes that since digital technology now permeates all aspects of life, theology should not ignore the impact of such technology on human relationships with God and others. Thus, a theological framework that includes digital ecclesiology and cybertheology is used as a basis for analyzing online mission practices and determining the methodological framework of this article.

## 2. METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. A qualitative approach was chosen to gain a deep understanding of digital mission, evangelism, and

discipleship practices in the context of the post-pandemic world, particularly through the use of digital media. This research aims to explore the meanings, experiences, and strategies applied by churches and Christian communities in carrying out digital services

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Impact of Digitalization on Evangelistic Practices**

In the context of *Missio Dei*, or mission as a divine activity, the Triune God sends the church and all believers to participate in His commission. Mission is understood as an act of God that focuses on His concern for the world, relating to creation, maintenance, redemption, and fulfillment. This mission took place in the history of the world and was not limited to the church alone. Along with the times, missions continue to undergo a paradigm shift. Today, the mission faces an era where the media is able to present religion in various spaces. This has the consequence that aspects of the sacredness and sanctity of religion must be compromised. On the other hand, the presence of social media in particular can build a religious presence online and offer an interactive environment where religious understanding and individual experiences can be exchanged. This two-sided world is the reality that the church and mission are now facing (Hine Eirens Josua Mata, 2022).

The development of digital technology in Indonesia has had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including religious practices. Based on the results of the 2024 Indonesian Internet Penetration Survey published by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024), there is an increase in the number of internet users, with the majority coming from Generation Z and Millennials. Most of this generation spends more than six hours per day accessing the internet (APJII, 2024). This creates a need for churches to adapt their approach to stay relevant to the digital consumption patterns of the younger generation, through the presentation of short, interactive, and easily accessible video-based content through mobile devices. This increase in internet access also provides an opportunity for the church to develop a mission strategy that is in accordance with the characteristics of the digital generation. Generation Z and Millennials are actively utilizing social media, video streaming services, and mobile apps as part of their daily lives, including in spiritual activities. Therefore, the church needs to adapt urgently to ensure that the mission of evangelism and discipleship remains contextual in the digital age. Thacker (2023) emphasizes that digital technology has changed the way churches carry out their mission in the public space, so churches are faced with the need to reconsider their strategies, including in terms of freedom of speech and content moderation in digital media.

In addition to the dynamics of digital behavior among the younger generation, the

Industrial Revolution 4.0 also contributes to the formation of digital public spaces and new communication patterns, through the application of technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI). The presence of this technology underscores the importance for the church to formulate a mission strategy that leverages digital innovation in the spread of the gospel (Purnomo & Sanjaya, 2020). However, as revealed by Zandrato (2024), the application of technology, including AI, in the context of the church's mission must remain consistent with biblical principles, so that digital innovation does not sacrifice the essence of theology and Christian values that are the foundation of the church's mission. The Industrial Revolution 4.0 offers the ease of rapid and widespread dissemination of information, allowing churches to reach a larger audience without geographical restrictions. In line with these changes, from a theological perspective, the concept of *Missio Dei* emphasizes that the mission of the church is an integral part of God's work in the world. The Church is seen as an agent participating in an inclusive and global divine mission, which now requires adaptation in the midst of digital developments (Nggebu, 2023). This concept of *Missio Dei* encourages the church to utilize digital media as an extension of its spiritual mission, especially in conveying messages to Generation Z and Millennials who are more responsive to visual and interactive communication. Van den Berg (2021) argues that platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube can be used to convey simple and relevant theological messages, thus bridging the younger generation with Christian values. On the other hand, digital communication theory provides a perspective on how technology is changing human communication patterns. Generation Z and Millennials have a preference for content that is visual, concise, and interactive, which is in line with the characteristics of social media. Therefore, an understanding of digital communication theory is essential for the church to be able to communicate effectively with this generation. Social media not only allows for instant message delivery, but also opens up a more inclusive space for dialogue, providing an opportunity for the church to engage with the younger generation on spiritual issues.

One of the findings of the study on the use of new media as a means of communication in the GBI Family of God congregation in Solo shows that: Through new media (Radio Streaming, Live Streaming, Internet Church, and Facebook), the church is able to provide services to the congregation without distance and time restrictions. Many congregations feel blessed so that they have the desire to continue using the church's new media, be it radio streaming, live streaming, internet church, or Facebook. In fact, the impact extends to reach colleagues, family, relatives, and friends of the congregation (Okselviana & Hastjarjo, 2016). Based on this, Ronda stated that the media has a significant influence in communicating the

gospel message (Ronda, 2016). This view is also supported by Pasasa in his research which shows that missions through digital media and the internet provide opportunities for churches to do outreach with the Gospel wherever they are (Pasasa, 2015). However, the shift to digital evangelism during the pandemic has also raised concerns regarding the potential loss of personal interaction and community building. While virtual spaces can provide a means for followers to connect and participate in religious practices, they may not be able to offer the same level of personal interaction and social support as in-person meetings. This can result in a loss of social support and identity for some individuals, especially for those who may be isolated or marginalized.

Therefore, digital evangelism has played a very important role during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing virtual spaces for worship and community building. However, it also brings challenges that need to be overcome to ensure that all individuals can meaningfully engage in religious practice. One of the main advantages of the effectiveness of digital evangelism during the pandemic is the provision of virtual spaces for worship and community building. Religious organizations have leveraged digital devices such as live broadcasts, video conferencing, and social media to host virtual services and interact with followers in person. This allows followers to continue to participate in religious practices and feel a sense of community, even in physical distancing. Digital evangelism also increases accessibility and convenience for followers.

### **Transformation in Online Discipleship**

The transformation of technology that has permeated global culture, especially among young people, is an unavoidable reality. However, the rapid development of technology has also caused rapid changes in human life, including in the way they adapt to their surroundings (Hardiman, 2018). Online discipleship is now growing rapidly through various approaches that utilize advances in digital technology to nurture students more effectively. One widely used approach is online Bible classes, where participants systematically study the Bible through video conferencing platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. These activities typically include material delivery, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and assignments aimed at deepening understanding and applying God's Word in daily life. Additionally, there is the mentoring method via Zoom or WhatsApp, which is more personal and in-depth. In this method, a mentor provides spiritual guidance directly through video calls, text messages, or voice notes, ensuring that the mentoring relationship remains strong even without physical meetings. Another model is the digital community, which consists of groups of believers connected through social media or messaging apps like Facebook Groups, Telegram, or WhatsApp Groups. These communities serve as spaces for sharing faith

experiences, discussing, and supporting one another in their spiritual journeys, in an informal yet consistent manner. These three forms of discipleship complement one another, offering flexibility suited to modern lifestyles, and enabling broader reach without being limited by location or time. Addressing the challenges and opportunities in building the depth of faith relationships online (Emmeria Tarihoran, 2024)

The shift toward online discipleship brings both challenges and unique opportunities in building virtual faith relationships. One of the main challenges is the absence of face-to-face meetings, which often makes interactions feel less warm and deep due to limitations in capturing body language and emotional expressions. As a result, the relationship between mentor and disciple can feel more formal and less personal. Other challenges include technical obstacles such as unstable internet connections and distractions from various digital elements that can divert attention during the mentoring process. Nevertheless, online discipleship also offers significant potential, such as the ability to reach people from various locations without being limited by physical location, flexibility in scheduling, and freedom to use diverse media and platforms to deliver learning and build spiritual communities. With the right strategy, digital technology can even strengthen communication through text messages, video calls, and discussion forums, so that the quality of spiritual relationships can be maintained even when physically apart. This transformation encourages us to adapt our methods of guiding, listening, and loving creatively so that online discipleship is not merely an alternative but also a means of strengthening spiritual growth in the digital age. Social media, also known as social networking, is part of new media. The level of interactivity in new media is very high. Social media is defined as an online platform that allows users to easily participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most commonly used forms of social media by people around the world. Social media has experienced rapid and significant development year after year. The history of social media began in the 1970s with the invention of bulletin board systems that allowed people to connect with others using email or upload and download software, which was still done using telephone lines connected to modern technology (Fransesco Agnes Ranubaya, 2024). The transformation of discipleship online encourages us to examine the dynamics of digital spirituality, namely how spiritual journeys and faith growth are experienced in the virtual world. A common question that arises is: is it possible for faith to grow healthily without direct physical interaction? In this case, the digital space can actually be an effective tool for spiritual growth if it is used with full awareness, personal discipline, and adequate guidance. Technology provides ease of access to various spiritual resources, such as daily reflections, virtual Bible classes, sermons,

and online communities that encourage faith growth. However, risks such as superficial relationships, emotional isolation, and a tendency toward passive and individualistic spiritual living cannot be ignored. Therefore, healthy spiritual growth in the digital space requires more than just consuming content; it demands the formation of genuine, interactive relationships rooted in spiritual responsibility. It requires a strong awareness and intention in building communities, consistency in practicing spiritual discipline, and the active role of mentors in guiding others. With this approach, digital spirituality does not become an escape from the real world but rather opens new opportunities to expand and deepen spiritual growth amid technological advancements.

### **Theological and Ethical Issues**

1. Can online worship or ministry truly "bring" God into people's lives in the same way as worship in a physical church?

Digital evangelism is an effort to spread religious teachings, particularly Christian teachings, by leveraging technological advances and internet connectivity. This approach involves various digital platforms such as social media, online videos, podcasts, websites, and apps to convey spiritual messages to a wider audience. Through this method, religious services can reach a global audience, build two-way communication with followers, and utilize data analysis to understand their spiritual needs more deeply. However, this approach also faces challenges, such as limited access to technology in some areas, data privacy issues, and the potential for the spread of misinformation. Overall, digital evangelism reflects how religious practices are evolving in the modern era, opening up new opportunities to expand reach and strengthen community engagement through more creative and relevant means (Anwar Jenris Tana, 2024). Theologically, God's presence is not bound by physical limitations. The omnipresent God can work in all places, including through digital means. This belief is in line with the teaching that the Holy Spirit is present among the congregation gathered in His name, both in person and through virtual meetings. Therefore, online worship can still be a real moment to experience an encounter with God, as long as it is carried out with a sincere, respectful, and open heart toward the work of the Holy Spirit. However, from an ethical and pastoral perspective, worship has relational and incarnational dimensions that are difficult to fully replace with digital forms. Face-to-face worship not only connects people spiritually, but also physically, through symbols such as the sacrament of communion, the sign of peace, or shared presence that reflects life as the body of Christ. Physical presence strengthens the aspects of fellowship, church discipline, and more tangible and comprehensive acts of love. Conversely, worship through digital media has the potential to encourage more individualistic, passive patterns of worship that involve less physical

engagement and community connection. Therefore, while online worship can be a valid medium for experiencing God's presence, especially in emergency situations or when physical gatherings are not possible, it cannot fully replace the richness of direct worship experiences. The church plays a crucial role in guiding the congregation to wisely utilize technology while maintaining the values of community, physical presence, and full participation as members of the body of Christ (Tambunan, 2022).

2. What about sacraments such as Holy Communion? Can they be performed digitally?

Some churches believe that Holy Communion performed online remains valid and has spiritual significance, especially in extraordinary circumstances such as a pandemic. They emphasize that Christ's presence transcends physical boundaries, and that the essence of this sacrament lies in the unity of faith and sincerity of the faithful, even when performed virtually. However, on the other hand, many churches rooted in more conservative traditions reject the practice of digital Holy Communion. They argue that this sacrament contains elements of incarnation and community that require the physical presence of the congregation together with a duly ordained spiritual leader. In their view, the Holy Communion is not merely a symbolic act, but must be realized in a real fellowship that reflects the presence of the body of Christ in its entirety, both spiritually and physically. Therefore, acceptance of the online celebration of the Holy Communion is greatly influenced by the theological perspective and traditions of each church. This requires thoughtful reflection and consideration to ensure that the sacrament remains a sign of divine grace, does not lose its unique meaning, and is carried out with respect and spiritual responsibility. In John 4:21-24, it is stated that God is Spirit. He is not bound by space and time. He is present wherever His people gather together. Therefore, the virtual administration of the sacrament of the Holy Communion, participated in by church members from their respective homes, can be carried out. For the attachment to the place of worship as a sacred place to worship God has been replaced by worship in fellowship with Jesus as the true Temple of God (Hakh, 2021).

3. Can technology become a new idol? For example: focusing more on the church's Instagram feed than on building the faith of the congregation?

From a theological perspective, technology can become a modern form of idolatry if its use begins to shift the primary focus away from true worship and discipleship toward things like image, popularity, or convenience. When the church is more preoccupied with pursuing visually appealing Instagram posts, YouTube views, or social media interactions than with nurturing the faith and spiritual maturity of its congregation, technology ceases to function as a means and becomes an end in itself. This is a contemporary form of idol worship. Scripture shows that idols are not merely statues or physical objects, but anything that takes the place

of God in the human heart. If technology is placed above the presence of God, relationships with others, and the church's primary calling, then the spiritual identity of the congregation risks being eroded by superficial digital achievements. This does not mean that technology should be avoided; rather, when used appropriately and with a continued focus on Christ, technology can be a highly effective tool in ministry. The theological challenge lies in how the church can remain faithful in building a genuine and deep spiritual life rooted in the Word, producing the fruit of love, and manifested in tangible service without being trapped by the shallow standards of success dictated by digital culture (Tambunan, 2022).

4. Digital platforms are also governed by algorithms. What if the mission message only reaches the "target" determined by the system, rather than everyone?

In the theological and ethical realm, the use of algorithm-controlled digital platforms poses a major challenge to the church's mission. Algorithms designed to present content based on personal preferences, geographic location, interests, and users' digital footprints can indirectly limit the reach of the Gospel message, which should be comprehensive and universal. This system operates based on worldly logic—enhancing comfort, engagement, and relevance for individuals—rather than on the values of the Kingdom of God, which prioritize inclusivity without discrimination. As a result, mission messages often only reach those who are already digitally active or who meet algorithmic criteria, while socially, economically, or spiritually marginalized groups may be overlooked. This clearly contradicts Jesus' command in the Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations and all segments of society, without exception (Emmeria Tarihoran, 2024). From an ethical standpoint, the church needs to understand that digital systems have inherent limitations and biases, and should not passively entrust the spread of the good news to algorithmic mechanisms driven by commercial interests rather than compassion. Therefore, the church is challenged to be both critical and innovative in using technology while remaining grounded in the spirit of an inclusive mission. A conscious and deliberate strategy is needed to transcend algorithmic limitations, along with an approach that prioritizes personal relationships, direct engagement, and tangible service, so that the Gospel can truly reach everyone, not just those "selected" by digital systems (Anwar Jenris Tana, 2024).

### **Implications of Digitalization for Church Mission in the Future**

The development of digital technology has affected various aspects of life, including religious practices and church services. The church is no longer just a community that is present in the physical space, but also begins to be active in the digital space. Digital ministry, which was originally considered a momentary response to the pandemic, has now become a new way for the church to be present and serve in the world. Therefore, the church

needs to reformulate the understanding of mission in this digital era to remain relevant and effective in reaching the world. Digital ministry is not just a temporary trend, but a structural transformation in the way the church functions. Online ministry through social media, live streaming of worship services, Bible apps, and virtual discussion rooms has become a new means of evangelizing, teaching, and mentoring congregations. In this context, technology has significantly expanded the scope of mission. The church is no longer limited by geographical boundaries, but is able to reach across cities and even across countries through digital networks. This allows for the formation of a global community of faith that is interconnected in one body of Christ, despite being physically separated (Wilkins and Thorsen, 2020). However, digital ministry should not replace physical gatherings, which remain important in church life. Physical engagement in worship, sacraments, and fellowship still provides an irreplaceable experience, especially in building relational depth and spiritual intimacy. Therefore, the church of the future needs to implement a hybrid model, which is a combination of digital and physical presence. Hybrid worship not only provides technical options, but also demands a mature theology of how the presence of God and the communion of people can be realized in two spaces at once (Campbell, 2012).

A further implication is the need for a new understanding of the concepts of “church” and “body of Christ.” In the digital age, the church is not just a local building or institution but also a community of faith that can exist on various digital platforms. This requires a re-reflection on how authority, spiritual leadership and community are exercised online. In addition, digital ethics issues such as privacy, the spread of hoaxes, and ideological polarization are also new challenges that the church must face in the context of digital ministry (Lövheim and Lynch, 2011). Digital transformation in mission also brings great opportunities in theological education and spiritual formation. Online platforms allow for flexible and inclusive training of missionaries and church ministers. This paves the way for small, minority, or remote churches to gain access to spiritual and educational resources that were previously difficult to reach. In this case, digitalization becomes a form of ministry justice that reaches the “ends of the earth” as the mandate of Christ's mission (Thompson and Cross, 2020). However, digitalization also carries the risk of disrupting established church structures. Traditional leadership models and church organizational structures may be challenged by the emergence of digital communities that are more fluid and less hierarchical. Therefore, the church must prepare theologically and structurally to remain relevant without losing its identity and faithfulness to the Word of God. The development of digital liturgy, online pastoring, and cyber-spirituality are areas that need to be seriously explored (Spadaro, 2013).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Digital transformation accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered the birth of a new paradigm in the practice of church missiology. Ministry is no longer limited to physical encounters, but rather extends to cyberspace that offers cross-geographic and cross-generational reach. Digital innovation allows churches to establish spiritual relationships through social media, online platforms, and virtual communities that can accommodate the dynamics of modern life, especially among the digital generation.

This phenomenon demands a rethinking of the concepts of presence, community and spiritual authority. The church needs to develop a theological framework that is able to answer sacramental challenges, maintain the authenticity of relationships, and prevent the commodification of faith in the culture of algorithms. Thus, digitalization is not just a technical tool, but part of the church's call to present God's love contextually, creatively, and responsibly. In an ever-changing reality, digital ministry is a reflection of the church's faithfulness to God's comprehensive and inclusive mission. Presence in the digital space should be interpreted as an extension of the body of Christ that reaches out to new frontiers, while still upholding the depth of spirituality, ethical integrity, and richness of a living faith tradition.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] H. A. Campbell, *Digital Religion: Understanding Religious Practice in New Media Worlds*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- [2] H. A. Campbell, "Rethinking ecclesiology in the digital age: Reflections from the TheoComm panel," *J. Relig. Media Digit. Cult.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 172–181, 2020, doi: 10.1163/21659214-00902003.
- [3] A. Chow and J. Kurlberg, "COVID-19 and digital theological education in Asia and Europe: What's going on?," *Int. J. Christianity Educ.*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 3–9, 2020, doi: 10.1177/2056997120973101.
- [4] A. Cooper, M. Donahue, and J. Shepperd, "The virtual Eucharist: Sacramentality in the digital church," *Ecclesial Pract.*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 75–83, 2021, doi: 10.1163/22144471-bja10018.
- [5] T. Le Duc, "Cybertheology: The theological significance of digital culture," *J. Religion Technol.*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 37–45, 2020.
- [6] LifeWay Research, "How Protestant churches are navigating COVID-19," Apr. 28, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://lifewayresearch.com/2020/04/28/how-protestant-churches-are-navigating-covid-19/>
- [7] J. Packard and A. Hope, "Digital discipleship: Evangelism and faith formation in online spaces," *J. Study Relig. Media Cult.*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 119–136, 2022, doi: 10.1386/jrmc\_00076\_1.
- [8] S. Thumma and W. Bird, *The Other 80 Percent: Turning Your Church's Spectators into*

Active Participants. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2022.

- [9] K. Singarimbun, “E-Church as a Virtual Service Communities During COVID-19 Pandemics,” *Jurnal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2021. [Online]. Available: <https://doi.org/10.25008/JKISKI.V6I1.509>
- [10] H. A. Campbell, “How to build community while worshipping online,” *The Conversation*, Apr. 16, 2020. [Online]. Available: <https://theconversation.com/how-to-build-community-while-worshipping-online-134977>
- [11] J. E. Wilkens and M. J. Thorsen, *Everything is Missional: A Beginning Discussion for the Digital Church*, 1st ed. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2020.
- [12] A. Campbell, “Virtual religion and authentic community: Evaluating online Christian communities,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 100–123, Mar. 2012, doi: 10.1093/jaarel/lfr101.
- [13] H. Lövheim and M. Lynch, “The Mediatisation of Religion Debate: An Introduction,” *Culture and Religion*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 111–117, Jun. 2011, doi: 10.1080/14755610.2011.579716.
- [14] J. B. Thompson and K. J. Cross, “Digital Technology and Global Christianity: New Challenges for Missiology,” *Missiology: An International Review*, vol. 48, no. 2, pp. 163–179, Apr. 2020, doi: 10.1177/0091829620913472.
- [15] A. Spadaro, “Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet,” *Theological Studies*, vol. 74, no. 4, pp. 881–898, Dec. 2013, doi: 10.1177/004056391307400406.
- [16] F. B. Hardiman. “Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital”. *Diskursus - Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi STF Driyarkara*, 17(2). 177-192, 2018
- [17] E. Tarihoran, A. D. Firmanto, A. Supur, dan A. Z. Kurniawan. *Digital Catechesis: “Embracing Technology for Effective Faith Formation”*. *International Journal of Indonesian Philosophy & Theology*, Vol. 5, No. 1. 16-29, 2024.
- [18] F. A. Ranubaya, dan Y. Endi. “Prevention Efforts of Young People Against Radicalism in Social Media According to The Conflict Theory of Lewis A.” *Coser. International Journal of Indonesian Philosophy & Theology*, Vol. 5, No. 1. 1-15, 2024.
- [19] A. J. Tana, dan M. T. Pardosi. “Efektivitas Penginjilan Digital sebagai Media dan Tantangan dalam Pemuridan Generasi Muda”. *JUITAK: Jurnal Ilmiah Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Maret 2024.
- [20] F. Tambunan. “Analisis Dasar Teologi terhadap Pelaksanaan Ibadah Online Pascapandemi Covid-19”. *EPIGRAPHE: Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kristiani*; Vol 4, No. 2, November 2020.
- [21] S. B. Hakh. “Perjamuan Kudus Virtual di Rumah Anggota Jemaat: Analisis Alkitabiah tentang Kehadiran Allah berdasarkan Yohanes 4:21-24. *Dunamis: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, Volume 5, Nomor 2, April 2021.
- [22] E. J. M. Hine, *Gerakan Kerasulan Digital: Menuju Paradigma Misi yang Relevan di Dunia Media Sosial*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Kristen Duta Wacana, 2022.
- [23] APJII, *Internet Indonesia. Survei Penetrasi Internet Indonesia*, pp. 1–73, 2024.
- [24] A. Purnomo and Y. Sanjaya, “Tantangan dan Strategi Gereja Menjalankan Misi Allah dalam Menghadapi Penerapan Industri 4.0 di Indonesia,” *DIEGESIS: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 91–106, 2020, doi: 10.53547/diegesis.v3i2.83.

- [25] C. P. Zendrato, "Menyikapi Perkembangan Teknologi AI (ChatGPT) Sesuai Dengan Kebenaran Alkitabiah," *REI MAI: Jurnal Ilmu Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 23–37, 2024, doi: 10.69748/jrm.v2i1.105.
- [26] S. Nggebu, "Mengaktualisasikan strategi pelayanan misi kontekstual kiai Sadrach pada era posmodern," *Kurios*, vol. 9, no. 2, p. 377, 2023, doi: 10.30995/kur.v9i2.727.
- [27] J. A. van den Berg, "@stephanjoubert: Tweeting the gospel aphoristically," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, vol. 77, no. 4, 2021, doi: 10.4102/HTS.V77I4.6697.
- [28] A. D. Okselviana and S. Hastjarjo, "Penggunaan New Media Sebagai Media Komunikasi Jemaat GBI Keluarga Allah Solo (Studi Kasus Penggunaan New Media Sebagai Media Komunikasi Jemaat GBI Keluarga Allah Solo Tahun 2015)," *Jurnal Kommas*, vol. 1, 2016.
- [29] D. Ronda, "Pemimpin dan Media: Misi Pemimpin Membawa Injil Melalui Dunia Digital," *Jurnal Jaffray*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 189, 2016, doi: 10.25278/jj71.v14i2.210.
- [30] A. Pasasa, "Pemanfaatan Media Internet Sebagai Media Pemberitaan Injil," *Jurnal Simpson*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 71–98, 2015.
- [31] O. F. Opade, "Perspectives on Digital Evangelism: Exploring the Intersection of Technology and Faith," *African Journal of Culture, History, Religion and Traditions*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 15–24, 2023, doi: 10.52589/AJCHRT-IDAP2P2M.