

## Media, Technology and Sacred Narrative in Biblical Perspective

Osajie Justina Nwazuni<sup>2</sup>

Department of Religion and Human Relations, University of Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria.

**Corresponding** :Osajie : [justina.osajie@unidel.edu.ng](mailto:justina.osajie@unidel.edu.ng)

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### ABSTRACT

This research investigated the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective using Christian in Delta State, Nigeria as a case study. Survey method were employed and data were collected using random sampling technique to generate a population size of 400. The population were selected from Christian in churches in RCCG, winners, CGM, Anglican church, Catholic Church, Christ Embassy, MFMM, and DLCBC. 400 questionnaires were sent out, a total of 306 returned. With a mean criterion of 3.0, the statistical tools of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Crombach Alpha correlation of 0.05 were used to analyse the study. Reviewing the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective are: increase in spreading of the gospel of Christ, reach large/world-wide audience, access to audio-visual biblical sacred narrative that improve understanding, expansion of Christianity/church growth, fosters church communication and care in time of emergency and need, enhance worship experience and improve accessibility that also encourage young generation to actively involved in spirit edifying gospel music, access to online service when the distance involve is much, access to bible reference materials, access to sermons and devotional materials etc. The study concluded and also gave some relevant recommendations to Christians not to allow technology provides distractions that will draw them away from the main message and purpose of Christianity which is soul winning and the kingdom of God (Matt.6:33).

## INTRODUCTION

According to Daniel 12:4, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. Media and technology are one of the signs and proofs of Daniel 12:4 and are topics of interest that need to engage Christian attention. The relationship between the Bible, technology, and media seems to have been naturally designed and thus places a responsibility on religious scholars to understand and manage the entire relationship. We must understand technology to live responsibly before the Creator. Although most of us are not directly involved in creating technology, we all consume its fruits and live in a society shaped by technology. To comprehend technology, we must be aware of it, understand its nature, and recognize its role in culture. Even though not everyone is a technologist, we all benefit from technological innovations. The church, in its mission to spread the teachings of Christ, cannot ignore technology and media due to their role in spreading information and uniting people from diverse backgrounds. Technology is a creation recognized by God, who is credited as the founder and creator of all things (Genesis 1:1,26-27, 2:21-22).

The Bible showcases several instances where individuals used tools and technology, demonstrating how God gave humans the knowledge to create. We saw Cain built a city (Gen. 4:17), Tubal-Cain made things out of bronze and iron (Gen. 4:17), the Israelites made golden image with the use of their ear rings, also we saw in sacred biblical narrative were Noah was the seen as the first man on earth to create an ark (Gen.6) that was able to contain all living creature and preserve them from death, the building of tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-19), Solomon built a temple for God (1 kings 6), Jesus used tools as a carpenter. Sacred biblical narratives (Exodus 31:2-5) also tell us that God himself called Be-zal'e-el the son of U'ri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship to do cunning works in gold, silver, brass, stones, carving timbers, and all manner of workmanship. Meaning that God himself gave man the knowledge and permission to create all manner of technology, we also saw how Paul the apostle used letters to communicate with fellow believers, showing the impact of technology and media in Christianity. The printing press invention also made the Bible more accessible to everyone, regardless of social status. Today, technology allows people to read, watch, and examine biblical narratives conveniently. It has connected individuals, given them a voice, and facilitated the creation of virtual communities. Religious leaders increasingly use technology in their ministries, emphasizing the importance of incorporating digital media into Christianity while being mindful of its potential ramifications. The danger lies in becoming too reliant on technology, losing sight of the original intent, and diluting messages meant to benefit society. This paper explores the impact of media and technology on Christian life through biblical narratives, using Christian individuals in Delta State, Nigeria, as a case study.

## **Conceptual Clarifications**

### **Media and Technology**

Technology and media are inextricably intertwined, with advancements in technology driving the evolution of media formats. From print media to social media platforms, technology has continually shaped how information is created, disseminated, and consumed. The term "technology" itself originates from Greek roots, signifying the study of "art, skill, or craft" for "making or doing" something, encompassing both technical knowledge and the tools employed.

D.W. Gill's definition further clarifies technology as the products of inventors and engineers, encompassing devices like telephones, computers, and automobiles, highlighting its role in solving problems and improving human lives.

### **Sacred Narratives**

Sacred narratives, or sacred stories, play a crucial role in many cultures, claiming to convey deep cosmic or spiritual truths. These narratives derive their sacredness from the belief in their inherent truth, regardless of their actual factual basis. Biblical narratives, for instance, can be categorized into six acts: Creation (In the beginning), The Fall (Human rebellion), Israel (A chosen people), Jesus (The faithful Israelite), Church (The new Israel), and New Creation (A new heaven and a new earth), each encapsulating specific themes and events within the broader narrative.

### **Biblical Perspectives**

The concept of perspective, is defined as a particular way of thinking influenced by beliefs and experiences, is central to understanding biblical interpretation. While the Bible doesn't explicitly use the term "perspective," it emphasizes the importance of sound judgment, reason, wisdom, and diligent evaluation, aligning these qualities with its principles and teachings. In Romans 12:2, Paul exhorts believers to "be transformed by the renewal of your mind," suggesting that perspectives should be grounded in faith and scripture rather than personal biases or feelings. This emphasis on biblical perspective encourages a disciplined approach to thought, promoting personal and communal growth.

### **Technology and Christianity**

Technology has profoundly impacted Christianity throughout history. The invention of the printing press in the mid-1400s facilitated the rapid spread of religious ideas, significantly contributing to the Reformation. The printing of Bibles in English and German by William Tyndale and Martin Luther, respectively, made scripture accessible to wider audiences. The printing press's impact on Christianity, however, wasn't universally positive. The English Parliament, in 1644, attempted to censor printing due to its perceived potential

for spreading dangerous ideas, particularly concerning religion. Throughout history, prominent figures in science and technology, including Blaise Pascal, Isaac Newton, and Samuel Morse, held strong Christian beliefs. Their work was often motivated by a conviction in the rationality of the universe and the inherent goodness of the material world. Samuel Morse's first telegraph message, "What hath God wrought?" reflects this fusion of scientific advancement and religious faith. Technology's influence on Christianity continues to be a topic of discussion and debate. The advent of radio broadcasting, exemplified by Theodore Epp's "Back to the Bible" program, opened new avenues for evangelical outreach. Billy Graham's use of television for his crusades further expanded the reach of religious messages, making them accessible to a global audience. In Nigeria today of which Delta State is part of, we have witness some of the largest Christian gathering and life streaming world-wild such as Shiloh of the Living Faith Church a.k.a Winners Chapel, The Redeemed Christian Church of God annual convention, Glory Rain of salvation ministry, Pastor Dr. Paul and Becky Enenche Miracle crusade Asaba of Dunamis Church etc. were sacred narratives are told and explained in the context of the bible and souls are won for Christ thereby expanding the kingdom of God through the use of technology. Wycliffe, the Bible translation people, believe that is possible to translate the scripture into every known tongue within the next 50 years or less, largely because of the use and aid of technology. To no doubt, technology has been good for Christianity in a number of ways. It has greatly magnified the voice of those preaching the gospel. Instead of reaching hundreds or even thousands when preaching a sermon, a pastor now has a possible audience in the millions. It has enriched the message of the Cross by providing more information to more people in a shorter amount of time, it has increased the number of channels of distribution of the gospel, provided helps for the encouragement, the strengthening, and edification of the saints through technology tools and discipleship material and it allows Christians to administer grace to a world that is distracted and burdened, by using tools that people are familiar with and expect to see in everyday contexts. These developments highlight the complex and ongoing interplay between technology and religion, showcasing how technology can serve as a powerful tool for spreading and shaping religious ideas.

## **Theoretical Literature**

### **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**

The Diffusion of Innovation Theory, first proposed by Everett Rogers in 1962, offers a valuable framework for understanding how technological advancements influence social systems, including religious communities like Christianity. This theory posits that innovations progress through distinct stages of adoption within a society, ranging from early adopters, known as innovators, to those who are slower to embrace new ideas, termed laggards. Innovators, characterized by their willingness to embrace change and experiment with new technologies, are often the first to adopt innovations. Early adopters, often considered opinion leaders, play a crucial role in influencing the adoption decisions of others. They are receptive to new ideas and willing to take risks,

making them important catalysts in the diffusion process. The diffusion of innovation relies heavily on communication channels, which serve as conduits for disseminating information about the innovation. In the context of church services, these channels can include social media platforms, church websites, peer networks, and leadership endorsements. Effective communication strategies are crucial for promoting the adoption of technology-mediated worship practices, highlighting their benefits and addressing potential concerns or barriers to adoption. The theory outlines a five-stage process that individuals go through when deciding whether to adopt an innovation: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. This process can be applied to the church's adoption of technology-enhanced worship practices. Understanding the factors influencing each stage of the decision-making process can help identify barriers to adoption and develop targeted interventions to facilitate Christian engagement with technology in religious contexts.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

Several empirical studies have explored the impact of technology on church services and Christian engagement. Ojo et. al (2024) focused on assessing the impact of technology on church services and youth engagement, recognizing the transformative nature of technology in various aspects of life, including religious institutions. The study examined the adoption and impact of digital innovations such as live-streaming, social media outreach, mobile apps, and multimedia worship formats, highlighting their potential to enhance accessibility, participation, and connection, particularly for younger generations. However, the study also identified challenges such as the potential dilution of spiritual experiences and the digital divide, underscoring the need for a strategic and thoughtful integration of technology that balances modern conveniences with core religious values. The research concluded that technology can play a vital role in enhancing worship experiences, improving accessibility, and engaging younger congregants, but it must be integrated carefully to ensure its positive impact on the church. Robert Peerson's (2024) investigation, titled "Salvation May Just Be A Click Away: A Case Study in the Impact of New Media Communications in the Evangelical Church in the Bible Belt," aimed to understand how churches are using new media communications and to equip them with the knowledge and tools needed to leverage these mediums for growth. Through an exploratory qualitative case study, the research team examined the usage of new media in evangelical churches within the Bible Belt region of the United States. They interviewed representatives from successful and influential churches to analyze their new media communication efforts. The study highlighted the value of new media for churches seeking to remain relevant in today's society. It identified five key norms that churches use in their new media communications, suggesting that while new media tools are valuable, churches must adopt them strategically and ethically.

Ernest Nyarko (2023) in his paper "The Church, Digital Technology and Media: A Biblical Reflection on Romans 8:19-23," examined the interplay between the church, particularly in Ghana, digital technology, and media. The study utilized a descriptive and theological approach, exploring the meaning of the church and the nature of technology and media within the context of biblical perspectives. However, since technology and media are products of human ingenuity and natural resources, they like other creations as Paul argues in the selected passage (Rom. 8:19-23), are also subject to the present corruption of the creation as a result of sin or futility. In other words, technology and media are not excluded from the effects of humanity's fall into sin. They are also groaning from the pain of sin and waiting eagerly for their redemption from the bondage of decay. The study concluded that the Church needs to take advantage of technology and media for the benefit of its mission here on earth which is spreading of the gospel and winning of souls.

According to Barna Group (2020) in the State of the Church 2020. They found out that churches that effectively utilized technology during the pandemic reported increased attendance and engagement compared to pre-pandemic times. This suggests that technology can serve as a powerful tool to extend the reach of church services, making them accessible to a broader audience, including those who might be geographically distant or physically unable to attend in person. Although many literature has talk about technology and Christianity or Churches but this paper tends to look at the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective using Christian in Delta State, Nigeria as a case study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study used survey technique method and purposive research design approach as the research design. This action was taken to guarantee that the target population could be reached. The study chose to utilize the survey technique because the objectives is to assess the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective using Christians in Delta State, Nigeria as a case study. The research used primary data, and its sample of interest was drawn at random from Christian in churches in Delta State such as The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), Living Faith Church (Winners Chapel), Deeper Life Christian Bible Church (DLCBC), Church of God mission (CGM), Anglican Church, Catholic Church, Christ Embassy, and Mountain of Fire and Miracle Ministry (MFMM). The random sampling technic was used to get a sample size of 400 from the intended population. A self-structured questionnaire titled the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective (M.T.C. L.S.N.B.P.) was used to perform this study.

The research utilized this questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was delivered to each responder in unique sets of a total of 400 copies. 306 of those copies were returned and utilized for the analysis and interpretation of the data. This indicates that 76.5% of respondents to the survey completed it. The research questions were analysed using a mean criterion of 3.0 for the research question, an aggregate mean below 3.0 means the respondents disagree with the stated research question while an aggregate mean of 3.0 and above means the respondents agree with the stated research questions. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the respondents, and to suit the need and purpose of the study. The questionnaire was designed in two (2) sections. The first section looked at demographic data of the respondents such as; gender, age, marital status, academic qualification etc. and the second section analyse the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective using Christians in Delta State, Nigeria as a case study. The questionnaire adopted a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Strongly Disagreed (SD), and Disagreed (D). In addition, the responses from survey respondents were compiled and assessed using SPSS and Crombach alpha correlation of 0.05 coefficient.

**Table 1. Sectorial Distributions of the Questionnaires**

Senatorial District	Names.of L.G.A	Names of Selected L.G.A	Names of Churches Selected	No. of Questionnaires Distributed and No. Returned
Delta South	Bomadi Burutu Isoko North Isoko South Patani Warri North Warri South Warri South-West	Isoko South Warri South	RCCG Winners Chapel CGM Anglican Church Catholic Church Christ Embassy DLCBC	66/50 66/56
Delta North	Aniocha-North Aniocha-South Ika North-East Ika South Ndokwa East Ndokwa West	Oshimilli South Ika South		70/61 66/51

	Oshimili South Oshimili North Ukwuani			
Delta Central	Ethiope East Ethiope West Sapele Okpe Udu Ughelli- North Ughelli- South Uvwie	Ughelli North Ughelli South		66/46 66/42          <b>400/306</b>

*Source: author's compilation (2024)*

## PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### Presentation of data

The data analysis is based on research objectives. Primary data were reviewed. In the main analyses, participants were identified according to demographic characteristics. Age, gender, marital status and all other demographic variables are calculated as percentages. In secondary analysis we use mean, standard deviation and Chrombach alpha correlation of 0.05 for descriptive statistics.

**Table 2. Respondents Socio-demographic characteristics**

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	137	44.8
Female	169	55.2
Total	306	100
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	132	43.1
Married	174	56.9
Total	306	100
<b>Age Range</b>		
25-35 years	59	19.3
36-45 years	84	27.5
46-55 years	68	22.2

56 years and above	95	31.0
Total	306	100
<b>Highest Educational Qualification</b>		
FSLC/WAEC	58	19.0
NCE/ND	79	25.8
HND/BSC	124	40.5
MSC/PHD	45	14.7
Total	306	100
<b>Position in Church</b>		
Pastor	101	33.0
Deacon/Deaconess	63	20.6
Church Worker	95	31.0
Member	47	15.4
Total	306	100
Total	306	100

Source: Authors Survey, 2024.

In Table 2 we can see the details of the population. Among the 306 respondents, the majority of them are female accounted for 55.2% of the total. According to their marital status, 174 are married (56.9% of the total) and 132 are single (43.1% of the total). In terms of age, most respondents are over 56 years of age; Similarly, when asked about their educational status, HND/BSC have the highest constituting of 124 (40.5%) respondents and the lowest respondents have MSC/PHD; in terms of the various position handled in church, the highest is pastors which is 101 (33.0%).

### Data Analysis

In order to determine the appropriateness of the research questions, the data of this study are presented and analyzed below using mean, standard deviation, SPSS software and Crombach Alpha correlation coefficient of 0.05.

### Research Question

What are the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective?

**Table 3. Participants' views on the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective.**

S/N	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Through the use of media and technology, biblical sacred narrative has been understood better by	3.9	3.7	Agreed

	Christian in Delta State thereby encouraging them to spread the gospel of Christ.			
2	The use of media and technology in explaining biblical sacred narrative have given Christianity a voice to reach large/world-wide audience.	3.2	3.1	Agreed
3	Media and technology enable Christian in Delta State to access audio-visual biblical sacred narrative that improve understanding whenever it is needed .	3.2	3.1	Agreed
4	It has helped in the expansion of Christianity/church growth in the State.	3.6	3.5	Agreed
5	Media and technology fosters church communication and care in time of emergency and need.	3.6	4.1	Agreed
6	It enhance worship experience and improve accessibility that also encourage young generation to actively involved in spirit edifying gospel music.	3.6	3.4	Agreed
7	Media and technology enable Christian to gain access to online service when the distance involve is much.	4.3	3.9	Agreed
8	Increasing access to bible reference materials.	4.2	3.7	Agreed
9	Media and technology helped the body of Christ in Delta State to gain access to sermons and devotional materials.	3.9	3.5	Agreed
10	It makes it possible for Christian to have many translation of the bible handy.	4.4	4.1	Agreed
11	Technology has helped in advancing the translation of biblical sacred narrative into different languages in Delta State for better understanding.	3.8	3.6	Agreed
12	It also has helped in assisting people with disabilities in the State to access the word of God.	4.1	3.8	Agreed
13	Increased the number of souls won for Christ through the help of media and technology.	3.2	3.2	Agreed
	<b>Aggregate Mean</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

*Source: Author's survey, 2024.*

As seen in Table 3, item 1-17. The table aims to discuss the impact of media and technology on Christian in narrating biblical sacred using Christian in Delta State as a case study. As shown in the table above, the mean criterion for this study is 3.0. Additionally, based on all responses, the standard deviation is 3.6 and the aggregate mean is 3.9. According to the findings, all the respondents' anonymously agreed that media and technology has impacted positively on Christian living in Delta State base on sacred narrating in biblical perspective.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Responses to the research questions revealed the impact of media and technology on Christian living base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective using Christians in Delta State, Nigeria as a case study. Christians and Churches in Delta State have all witness: increase in spreading of the gospel of Christ, reach large/world-wide audience, access to audio-visual biblical sacred narrative that improve understanding, expansion of Christianity/church growth, fosters church communication and care in time of emergency and need, enhance worship experience and improve accessibility that also encourage young generation to actively involved in spirit edifying gospel music, access to online service when the distance involve is much, access to bible reference materials, access to sermons and devotional materials, many translation of the bible handy, translation of biblical sacred narrative into different languages for better understanding, assistance to people with disabilities to access the word of God and increased in the number of souls won for Christ as seen in table 3 are all the impactful benefits of media and technology on Christian living in Delta State base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective. The result of this study is in line with the findings of Ojo et al (2024) that media and technology has a significant potential for enhancing worship experience and improve accessibility that also encourage young generation to actively involved in spirit edifying gospel music. The findings are also in line with that of the empirical literature as seen in Ernest Nyarko (2023) that media and technology have an advantage of helping the church in spreading the gospel and winning of souls here on earth. Also the study is supported by that of Barna Group (2020) that the use of technology lead to church group and also a powerful tool that makes church service to be accessible to broader audience despite the distance involved. From the empirical evidence of Robert Peerson (2024) above, it is seen that media and technology enhance church growth and communication which is in line with the findings of this paper. Consequently, through the findings of the research question and the associated empirical literatures evidence, this study has been able to highlight the impact of media and technology on Christian living in Delta State base on sacred narrative in biblical perspective which is the objective of the study.

## CONCLUSION

While technology does more good than harm to Christianity, Christians need to stop letting technology define them or set standards for the church. Christian has never talked about comfort and safety. God wants us to leave our place of comfort (Matthew 16:24), to talk with blind people, and for "lambs to come among wolves" (Matthew 10: 16). We cannot hope to satisfy the world by adopting the ways of the world. Jesus said that if the world hates him, it will also hate his disciples (John 15:18).

Christianity calls us to be strong and not slip, changed by Christ, not like the way the world is, true light and true salt, not artificial light and salt as a substitute. Christians need to separate themselves from advanced technology. What's wrong with spending a few days without a TV, cell phone, computer or radio? Why not spend that time in fellowship with other believers and our God to refresh the soul? By reconnecting with the world around us in such a way that we can be "still" and know that God is. Finally, let's keep the conversation going between us about this issue. The Bible says that "in the multitude of counselors there is life." Despite the many benefits of media and technology for the Christian Fellowship, it must be mindful of the negative effects of these technologies and also not allow this technology to replace God in their lives. Christians should also remember to "turn off, turn away, rest, enjoy God and what God has created".

## RECOMMENDATION

The study recommended the following that:

- i. Christians should exploit the positive impact of media and technology for the continuous growth of the church by constantly.
- ii. Christian should guide their heart, mind, soul, eyes and entire body diligently by rejecting uncritical, consumeristic, adoption and other negative effect of digital technologies when using it.
- iii. The Church should not allow technology to redefine and reshape Christianity to fit into the mood of our culture.
- iv. The Church should not allow technology to create a worship experience of isolation and entertainment but rather one of reverence and participation.
- v. Christians should not allow technology provides distractions that will draw them away from the main message and purpose of Christianity which is soul winning and the kingdom of God (Matt.6:33)

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Osajie, Nwazuni

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