

**THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CHRISTIAN YOUTH IN BENIN CITY:
A CASE STUDY OF DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH**

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**AN ORIGINAL ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS,
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DEDICATION

This work is wholly dedicated to God Almighty, the source of wisdom, knowledge, and inspiration. Without His grace and sustaining strength, this research would have been impossible.

I also dedicate this work to every Christian youth striving to remain faithful in a digital world. May your lives continue to reflect the light of Christ amidst the noise of social media and modern culture.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned hereby certify that this project work was carried out by **Otugo Emmanuel Efeoghene** in the Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City and that it is the sufficient in both scope and content in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Degree in Religions.

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital age, social media has become one of the most influential forces shaping the thoughts, behaviors, and identities of young people. This study, titled "The Impact of Social Media on Christian Youth in Benin City: A Case Study of Deeper Life Bible Church," looks at how social media use affects the faith, moral values, and religious identity of Christian youths. The main goal of this research is to examine both the positive and negative effects of social

media on the spiritual lives of young believers. Its objectives include identifying the patterns of social media engagement among Deeper Life youths, examining how social platforms influence their faith and moral discipline, and exploring the church's role in guiding responsible digital behavior.

Data for this research were collected through a structured questionnaire given to young members of the Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City. The study used a descriptive research design to analyze the responses with simple percentages and tables for clarity. This method made it easier to understand the social media habits, challenges, and views of Christian youths within a real-world religious context. The analysis offered valuable insights into how these young people manage their faith amid the rapidly changing media landscape, balancing spiritual beliefs with online exposure.

The findings show that while social media serves as a powerful tool for evangelism, communication, and spiritual education, it also brings challenges like moral distraction, exposure to unchristian content, and a decreasing interest in personal devotion. Many respondents recognized social media's dual role as both a blessing and a test of faith. The study recommends that the Deeper Life Bible Church should strengthen digital mentorship programs, promote responsible social media usage, and utilize online platforms more effectively for evangelism and faith-building. Lastly, the research concludes that when guided by strong moral and spiritual principles, social media can serve as a bridge rather than a barrier between Christian youths and their divine purpose.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Over the past decade, social media has become a central part of daily life, especially among young people. Platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) are not just tools for communication anymore, they are spaces where identity is shaped, values are shared, and decisions are influenced. In places like Benin City, where urban life is fast-paced and technology is easily accessible, the presence of social media in the lives of youths is undeniable.

For Christian youth, this presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, social media can be used for good things such as to listen to gospel music, follow inspirational pages, share Bible verses, and even attend virtual church programs. On the other hand, it can expose users to content that contradicts Christian values, such as sexual immorality, profanity, materialism, and toxic peer influence. Many young Christians today find themselves caught in the middle, trying to stay faithful while navigating an online world that often promotes opposing values (Oyeleke & Olasupo, 2021).

In conservative churches like the Deeper Life Bible Church, where strong emphasis is placed on holiness, modest living, and separation from worldly influences, this tension becomes even more noticeable. Church leaders and parents have raised concerns about the growing impact of social media on their youth, including signs of spiritual decline, a drop in church participation, and

increasing interest in worldly trends. According to Barna Group (2018), regular exposure to secular media has been linked to reduced spiritual engagement among young Christians globally, a trend that may be mirrored in local contexts like Nigeria.

Yet, there seems to be a gap in research, especially within the Nigerian context, that looks closely at how social media is affecting Christian youths in specific denominations. Most discussions on this topic are either generalized or anecdotal. This is why this study focuses specifically on youths in the Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City in order to understand how social media is influencing their spiritual lives, social behavior, and personal values.

By taking a closer look at this group, the study hopes to provide useful insights that can guide church leaders, parents, and even the youths themselves in making more informed choices about social media use. It also seeks to encourage a balanced approach that allows Christian youth to benefit from digital tools without compromising their faith.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In today's world, social media has become an integral part of young people's lives, serving as a space for interaction, self-expression, and access to information. In Benin City, where smartphones and internet connectivity are widespread, platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and X are used daily by youths. While these platforms are often viewed as entertaining or harmless, they exert a strong influence on how young people think, speak, and behave. For Christian youths, who are called to live by biblical teachings, social media creates

both opportunities and challenges, offering spiritually uplifting content like gospel music and sermons but also exposing them to immoral trends, peer pressure, and values contrary to their faith.

Within Deeper Life Bible Church, which emphasizes holiness, discipline, and spiritual growth, the impact of social media is particularly concerning. Many youths in the church struggle to maintain the biblical standard of separation from worldly influences, as social media exposes them to fashion trends, language, and behaviors that conflict with church teachings. This has led to cases where some young people show declining interest in church activities and personal devotion, becoming more attached to online content instead. However, there are also youths who use social media constructively to share scriptures, participate in online fellowships, and engage in digital evangelism, demonstrating its potential as a tool for spiritual growth.

The statement of the problem of the study is to balance the doctrinal life of Christian youths with the growing influence of social media, by examining whether they are able to stay faithful to their spiritual beliefs in the face of digital distractions, or whether they are finding ways to use social media as a tool to strengthen their faith and share the message of Christ with others.

1.3 Clarification of Terms

1.3.1 Social Media

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2023), social media is defined as “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.”

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) describe it as “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” In this study, social media refers to digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter) which are actively used by Christian youths in Benin City. These platforms are examined as spaces that influence their faith and lifestyle, presenting both distractions from spiritual commitments and opportunities for gospel propagation and spiritual growth.

1.3.2 Christian Youth

The Cambridge English Dictionary (2023) defines a youth as “a young person, especially a teenager or someone in their early twenties.” When combined with the term Christian, it refers to a young person who identifies with and practices the teachings of Jesus Christ. Hiebert (2013) explains that Christian youth are individuals in their formative years who are trying to grow in faith while engaging with the wider world. In this study, Christian youths are members of Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City, aged approximately 13 to 30, who are expected to live by biblical principles and uphold the doctrines of the church while navigating the realities of social media use.

1.3.3 Impact

Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2023) defines impact as “the power of a person, action, or thing to have a strong effect on someone or something.” Creswell (2014) explains that in research, impact

refers to the measurable or observable effect of one variable on another. In this study, impact refers to the influence of social media on the attitudes, spiritual lives, and moral behavior of Christian youths. It considers both positive effects, such as using social media for online Bible studies and evangelism, and negative effects, such as distraction from church commitments and exposure to secular trends.

1.3.4 Deeper Life Bible Church

Adeboye (2007) describes Deeper Life Bible Church as one of Nigeria's largest Pentecostal denominations, well known for its emphasis on holiness, modesty, and separation from worldly influences. Founded in 1973 by Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi, the church teaches strict biblical doctrines and discourages members from engaging in activities that may compromise their spiritual growth. In this study, Deeper Life Bible Church serves as the case study for exploring how Christian youths within such a highly doctrinal environment use social media and how it affects their spiritual lives.

1.3.5 Benin City

Ugbem (2019) identifies Benin City as a major urban center in southern Nigeria with a rich cultural history and a large population of young people. As the capital of Edo State, it is a hub for education, technology, and religious activities, with widespread internet access among residents. In this study, Benin City is the geographical location of the research and provides the

context for investigating how social media usage among Christian youths is shaped by the urban environment and cultural influences.

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to examine the influence of social media on the spiritual life, moral behavior, and religious identity of Christian youths in Deeper Life Bible Church, Benin City. It also seeks to explore how these youths manage the tension between their church's conservative values and the realities of engaging with modern digital platforms.

In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives are to be considered:

1. To examine the types of social media platforms most commonly used by Christian youths in Deeper Life Bible Church;
2. To identify the ways in which social media affects their spiritual growth and religious practices;
3. To assess whether social media content aligns or conflicts with the doctrinal teachings of Deeper Life Bible Church;
4. To explore how young members balance their online presence with the church's expectations of discipline and holiness; and

5. To understand the perceptions of church leaders and youth members on the role of social media in shaping Christian identity.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study is significant because it seeks to address a critical issue affecting Christian youths in today's digital age: the influence of social media on their spiritual, moral, and social lives. With the rapid rise in the use of platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, young people are increasingly exposed to both positive and negative influences online. For youths in Deeper Life Bible Church, Benin City, who are expected to live by strict biblical doctrines and maintain a life of holiness, understanding how they navigate social media is crucial.

The findings of this research will benefit church leaders by providing insight into how social media affects their young members. It will help them develop better strategies for guiding youths to use these platforms responsibly, turning them into tools for spiritual growth, evangelism, and gospel propagation rather than sources of distraction and moral decline. Parents will also benefit as they will gain a deeper understanding of the digital challenges their children face, enabling them to offer better support at home.

Furthermore, this study will be of academic importance as it adds to the growing body of knowledge on the relationship between religion and technology. Previous studies, such as Oyeleke and Olasupo (2021), have highlighted the moral challenges associated with social media use among Nigerian youths. However, few have focused specifically on Christian youths in a

highly doctrinal environment like Deeper Life Bible Church. By focusing on this context, the research will fill an existing gap and provide useful data for future studies in related fields.

Ultimately, the study will serve as a guide for Christian youths themselves, helping them reflect on their social media habits and make informed choices that align with their faith and values. As Barna Group (2018) observed, when properly guided, young believers can turn technological tools into platforms for sharing their faith and positively influencing others.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study focuses on Christian youths aged 15 to 30 who are members of Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City. It explores how social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok influence their spiritual life, values, and commitment to church teachings. The study is limited to one denomination and one geographical location, but for emphasis, reference will be made to other parts of Edo State and where necessary other denominations. So the findings may not represent the experiences of youths in other churches or regions. Some participants may also be unwilling to share their true opinions due to personal or religious sensitivities. Lastly, financial constraints can also be a limitation as some of the young members of the denomination who were not present during the time the interview was carried out will need to be visited, hence, transport fare will be needed.

Despite these limitations, the study aims to offer useful insights into how social media shapes the faith and lifestyle of young Christians within a conservative church setting.

1.7 Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative and structured research interview to explore how social media affects the spiritual lives and values of Christian youths in Deeper Life Bible Church, Benin City. Information are collected verbally and discipline related technique is used to put them together. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select participants from different church branches within the city, focusing on individuals who are both committed to their faith and actively engaged online. Stratified sampling is also utilized so as to focus on the members of the Deeper Life Bible Church who are considered as youth. Furthermore, Area sampling is used to focus on the Benin City as the geographical area on which the research is being carried out. Data will be collected through a structured questionnaire with close-ended questions. These will capture information on gender, age, educational status, social media habits, platforms used, and perceived spiritual impact. The questionnaires are personally distributed during youth meetings and church activities, with prior approval from church leaders.

1.8 Division of Work

This research project is divided into five chapters, each focusing on a specific aspect of the study. Chapter One introduces the study by presenting the background, clarification of terms, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, significance, scope and limitations, and research methodology. Chapter Two provides a comprehensive review of related literature. It covers discussion on social media use, identity, religious expression, spirituality and the impact of social media on Christian youths, particularly within conservative church settings such as Deeper

Life Bible Church. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology. It explains the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presents and analyzes the prospects and challenges of the exposure of the Deeper Life Bible Church Youth to various social media platforms Chapter Five summarizes the entire study, evaluates, offers recommendations based on the findings and draws conclusion to the

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Religion, Identity and Digital Age

In recent years, social sciences, especially sociology, have shown renewed interest in the connection between religion and identity. Scholars are increasingly recognizing that these two concepts may be closely linked, particularly when examined in specific groups like adolescents, young adults, or older generations. To understand this connection, it is important to explore the concept of the self, as forming an identity is a key part of human development. For instance, adolescence is widely seen as a crucial stage when individuals actively search for and shape their sense of identity.

Despite this significance, there is still a clear lack of research directly looking at how religion and spirituality serve as pathways for recognizing and developing identity. Religion, with its beliefs, practices, and lifestyles, along with the spiritual values it promotes, can significantly impact how individuals build their self-understanding. However, the specific role of religion and

spirituality in shaping identity is often overlooked. This may be due to differing views among scholars: some see religion as a meaningful tool that enhances understanding of identity formation, while others view it as a limiting factor that can obstruct the development of a unique identity (King, 2003)

This study aims to explore the relationship between religion and identity, focusing on three themes: the unique role of religion in shaping personal identity, the ways religion and ethnicity intersect in identity development, and the influence of religion on identity formation among young people. Defining these areas provides clarity and structure for examining the issue.

The focus on youth is intentional and significant. Young people undergo various stages of development and often try out different identities as they search for individuality and coherence. At the same time, they are usually more open to new ideas, outside influences, and guidance. This makes them particularly receptive to the effects of religion, which may play a major role in shaping their sense of self over time. Religion can thus serve as a guiding force during this crucial life stage, offering values, meaning, and a sense of belonging that contribute to the overall process of identity formation.

Religion has been defined in many ways by different scholars. However, there is no widely accepted definition of religion. This is due to the complexity of the subject, the many different religions, the variety of religious experiences, and the different origins of religions, among other factors. Like music, religion is tricky to define. Still, many theologians, philosophers,

psychologists, sociologists, and others have offered various definitions based on their viewpoints and frameworks.

This shows that religion has been defined in numerous ways, often depending on specific schools of thought or academic disciplines. For example, scientific approaches often shift between explaining religion's social or psychological functions and its belief systems (Berger, 1974). The term religion comes from the Latin word *religare*, which means "to bind back" or "to rebind." This suggests that religion involves restoring a broken or missing connection through worship between God and the worshippers. Another less common origin of the word comes from the Latin *relegere*, which means "to re-read" (Griffiths, 2000, p. 22).

Boffetti (2004), citing Paul Tillich, describes religion as "that which we designate as our symbol of ultimate concern" (p. 17). This means that religion involves symbols that carry deep spiritual importance, influencing how worshippers live. Pecorino (2000) believes a strong definition of religion should meet several criteria: it should engage with all parts of life, include various people, address many issues, cover a wide range of beliefs, exist in both private and public settings, allow for different views on its truths, and have effects that can be seen as either beneficial or harmful to individuals and groups.

Based on these criteria, he defines religion as "the most intensive and comprehensive method of valuing that is experienced by humankind" (Pecorino, 2000, p. 46). He argues that this definition is both hopeful and practical, as it helps us understand and describe religious experiences better.

It also helps distinguish religious experiences from other human experiences and sheds light on the connections between religion and other areas of life, such as language.

Anih (1992), citing Schleiermacher (1978), states that: “Religion is the feeling of man’s absolute dependence” (p. 31). This absolute dependence comes from humanity’s sense of lacking in protection, provision, sustenance, and superiority. This leads people to rely on the divine for things they cannot provide for themselves.

Schleiermacher sees religion as a feeling of dependence on a Supreme Being who is thought to be all-knowing and all-powerful. This sense of dependence arises from our awareness of human limits, such as our inability to fully explain mysteries like the origin of humanity, the meaning of death, or what happens after we die. Confronted with these unknowns, people naturally seek a higher Being who they believe can provide answers and solutions. In line with this, Anih (1992) draws from Otto (1968) to explain that religion is linked to strong feelings of awe, fear, mystery, and fascination when people encounter the holy or the supernatural. For believers, this Being is not only unseen but also eternal and extraordinary, forming the core of religion.

Otto's view aligns with Schleiermacher's. Both emphasize faith in a powerful supernatural Being. However, Otto focuses more on the increasing sense of dependence that people feel when facing life’s mysteries, which drives them to seek comfort in the Divine. Looking at religion from a psychological perspective, Anih (1992), citing Howells (1978), describes it as a natural human response that helps protect people from fear. Since stress and uncertainty often lead to emotional reactions, religion offers a path to peace and reassurance.

In this context, religion emerges as humanity's way of dealing with the fear of the unknown. People turn to a Supreme Being for comfort, protection, and hope. Anih (1992), referencing Durkheim (1965), adds a social angle, describing religion as "a universal system of beliefs and practices focused on sacred things" (p. 74). Because humans cannot see God directly, sacred symbols and objects serve as a bridge, giving people something concrete to connect with the Divine.

From another perspective, Taylor (1972), cited in Anih (1992), views religion as a blend of beliefs, rituals, and customs that link people to a higher reality beyond the physical world (p. 82). This suggests that religion relies not only on belief but also on ceremonies and practices that strengthen those beliefs. Kant (1964), as cited by Anih (1992), connects religion to morality. He argues that acting rightly reflects obedience to divine commands and, therefore, constitutes a religious act (p. 95).

Burchardt (1985), also cited by Anih (1992), perceives religion as the expression of deep human desires for meaning and fulfillment, which extend beyond what individuals can achieve alone (p. 104). Religion, in this sense, satisfies longings that are both personal and shared, often spanning across history.

Other thinkers provide additional insights. Caird (1974), sees religion as the complete expression of human awareness, while Spencer (1968), claims it acknowledges a power greater than what we can comprehend. Both emphasize the limitations of human knowledge and suggest that religion emerges from recognizing forces beyond our control. Similarly, Alston (1954), cited by

Anih (1992), defines religion as "belief in a living God who rules the universe while remaining morally connected to humanity" (p. 145). Arnold (1976), links religion with morality, characterizing it as ethics shaped by human feelings about right and wrong.

Not everyone agrees on the value of religion. Karl Marx, for instance, is a strong critic. According to Anih (1992), Marx (1965), describes religion as "the opium of the people" (p. 162), arguing that it dulls human reason and serves as a means of exploitation. From this viewpoint, religion can promote dependency and irrationality, which powerful groups may use to control others.

These varied perspectives illustrate that religion is complex. It encompasses more than belief in the Divine; it also influences emotions, morality, community life, and how people understand the unknown. For its supporters, religion offers order, comfort, and peace. For its critics, it can become a burden or a tool for oppression.

Ultimately, religion clearly plays a significant role in shaping identity. Its impact may vary, being strong in some societies, weaker in others, or nearly absent in a few. But throughout time and across different cultures, religion has consistently influenced how people view themselves, their communities, and their connection to something greater than themselves.

Mol (1978) notes that the concept of identity is used in two distinct ways in the social sciences;

The first way considers identity as something fixed, or at least a slowly changing core of personality that shows in all areas of a person's life, regardless of the influences from different

role models. The second way views identity as fluid and adaptable, with individuals changing as they move from one social setting to another, potentially presenting a different identity on each occasion. He further highlights that the first view raises the issue of the involuntary aspect of identity, while the second focuses on its adaptability.

The first perspective is especially seen in primary groups, mainly during early life, while the second is evident since much of life takes place outside of these primary groups. Considering both views on identity, several observations emerge: Both seem valid and relevant; some institutional areas, notably the family, are crucial in the first sense, while other settings, like the workplace, are key to the second. Other institutions, such as religion and ethnicity, also illustrate the second view of identity (Hammond, 1988).

This suggests that both primary and secondary groups play an important role in shaping an individual's or group's identity at a specific time and over time. Family and other settings like schools or workplaces are essential for forming identity.

The Link between Religion and Identity

This examination of the connection between religion and identity draws from three areas of literature. It starts by discussing religion as a way to express a deep sense of unity, particularly in light of Durkheim's insights. The next part focuses on ethnicity as a channel for forming identity, especially through the lens of religion. The final section looks at the connection between religion and identity, particularly regarding youth, religiousness, and the search for identity.

Hammond (1988), referencing Durkheim, points out that religion stems from social circumstances that create an environment for involuntary acceptance of a lifestyle, particularly due to group membership. For example, people express their sense of unity and belonging through participation in rituals, ceremonies, belief systems, and behaviors toward symbols and objects viewed as sacred. This idea closely reflects the practices of the central Australian Aborigines, which served as a case study in Durkheim's research.

A careful look at Durkheim's ideas may raise questions about their validity. First, how much does modern society resemble the Australian countryside from many years ago? Second, how much does the religion that Durkheim describes look like modern religion? There is little similarity between the social contexts of the past and today's social environments. Likewise, past religions, as described by Durkheim, have few commonalities with contemporary religions (Hammond, 1988).

Considering these points, one might be tempted to dismiss Durkheim's insights as impractical in today's society. It seems likely that society no longer demonstrates the same deep sense of unity as it did in the past. If it does, that unity lasts only a limited time. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the church may reflect deep-rooted primary affiliations, particularly when these ties include aspects of connections within the group (Hammond, 1988).

A correlation exists between religion and ethnicity. This correlation remains whether one perceives ethnicity subjectively or objectively or uses proxies like acculturation or assimilation into a group. For example, participation in a religion characteristic of one's ethnic group often

closely relates to the strength of one's ethnic identity (Moskos, 1980; Padgett, 1980; Reitz, 1980). Some literature explores how different ethnic groups see and practice a single religion in various ways (Greeley, 1971; Abramson, 1973).

There is little doubt about the strength of the connection between religion and ethnicity, but interpreting this positive correlation is not simple. Ambiguity arises when trying to provide a clear explanation for this link. For example, Smith (1978), argues that the religions of immigrant groups in America did not merely originate from their home countries; religion also plays a crucial role in shaping ethnicity as migrants form communities in America, even where none existed before.

Similarly, Abramson (1980), suggests that sometimes religion equates to ethnicity, but this does not apply to all ethnic groups. He cites groups like the Amish, Mormons, Hutterites, and Jews as examples of a direct link between religion and ethnicity. This strong connection implies that without religion, the likelihood of an ethnic group surviving decreases. In some cases, religion is foundational in forming ethnicity, but its influence is lessened by other important factors like unique territorial origins and possibly a distinct language.

Groups that fit this description include the Greek Orthodox or the Dutch Reformed. In other cases, a connection between ethnicity and religion exists, but religion plays a minor role in forming ethnic identity. These observations suggest that religion and ethnicity can vary in how strongly they relate to each other and in their meaning, potentially leading to different types of

connections between the two. The debate on the legitimacy of ethnic revival and religious revival arises from these insights (Hammond, 1988).

Overall, while religion and ethnicity may be significant factors in identity formation, their impact in today's context is likely less strong and pervasive than before. In this light, the connection between religion and identity will be discussed concerning youth seeking to form their identities. Young people often struggle with identity coherence as they search for a sense of self. Essentially, youths go through this psychological journey to solidify their self-experience and to define and connect with their family, career, and societal roles (Damon, 1983).

The search involves desires and behaviors that connect youths to something outside of themselves. This connection helps shape their individuality and independence. Religion, at its best, provides both (King, 2003). This indicates that religion can play an important role in shaping youth identity. Erikson (1965), also acknowledges that religion is likely to impact a young person's identity formation. He points out that religion ties closely to a vital part of the social and historical context that supports identity development. Additionally, he argues that religion is the oldest institution that creates a supportive environment for developing loyalty and attachment to an ideology. This attachment forms after successfully resolving the psychological challenges of identity formation (Erikson, 1968).

Erikson suggests that religion offers a higher perspective, which helps shape moral beliefs and behaviors based on ideological grounds. Furthermore, religious norms play a crucial role in transitioning beliefs to a community of followers. This means that religious beliefs, values, and

morals help empower youths to better understand the world and their role in it. Religious ideologies likely deepen understanding of events and experiences and connect meanings to them (King, 2003).

Religion probably plays a significant role in identity formation in cultures where youths face constantly changing social and political environments. The meaning derived from religious affiliation is essential for youth identity development and well-being. Without the perspectives provided by religious beliefs and the guidance they offer, the variety of choices available to modern youths can lead to despair, hopelessness, and confusion. Religion can provide answers and perspectives on life's complex issues that are especially relevant for young people (Erikson, 1964).

The existing research on religion and identity is limited. However, some studies suggest that religion connects to identity formation. For example, religiosity helps explain commitment and purpose in identity formation (Tzuriel, 1984).

In related research, Fulton (1997) found a positive link between high identity achievement and high religiousness scores, as well as low scores in extrinsic religiousness (p. 271). This indicates that achieving identity is greatly tied to internalizing religious commitment. Additionally, research shows that religious attendance is related to identity choices like foreclosure and achievement, while lower religious attendance is linked to identity diffusion (Markstrom-Adams et al., 1994).

On a different note, Hunsberger et al. (2001) found "a weak correlation between religious commitment and identity achievement" (p. 298). Conversely, identity diffusion was associated with lower engagement in church and temple commitments. Overall, religion appears to be a key factor in identity formation, influenced by circumstances, the groups studied, and the time frame of the research.

The term "digital age" has become an important topic for various scholars as they explore how technology impacts our lives. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as "the present time, in which many aspects of human life are dominated by the use of digital technology, especially computers and the internet" (Oxford English Dictionary). The Cambridge English Dictionary offers a similar definition, stating it is "the present time when most information is in a digital form, especially when compared with earlier times when information was kept in printed form" (Cambridge Dictionary). Both definitions highlight a major change: a shift from paper and analog systems to a world focused on digital tools. This shift shapes how we communicate, work, and store knowledge.

For researchers, the digital age means more than just a dictionary concept. It marks a change in how people live, connect, and build communities. Manuel Castells (1996), refers to this as the rise of the "network society," where digital networks play a key role in our social and economic lives. Similarly, Jan van Dijk (2006), views it as a new stage in human development, where work and leisure increasingly rely on digital technologies. These insights remind us that the digital age is more about our interconnected lives than about technology itself.

This view builds on ideas from Marshall McLuhan. His famous statement that “the medium is the message” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 1) suggests that technologies shape our thinking, communication, and social structure, beyond the content they provide. In today’s world, smartphones, social media, and online platforms are not just neutral tools. They influence our attention spans, reading habits, and personal relationships. The digital age is not just about convenience or speed; it also alters how we perceive and experience life.

Nicholas Carr (2010), discusses this in terms of thought and focus. Reflecting on his reading habits, he states, “What the Net seems to be doing is chipping away my capacity for concentration and contemplation” (p. 6). He worries that our constant scrolling, notifications, and link-driven browsing lead us to skim instead of read deeply. Some critics see his argument as overly pessimistic, but it raises an important question: in pursuing speed and instant access, are we losing depth and reflection?

Sherry Turkle (2011), adds another aspect, that is, how technology affects emotions and relationships. After years of studying digital behavior, she points out a contradiction: “We are increasingly connected to each other but oddly more alone” (p. 19). Quick texts and curated posts often seem easier than real conversations. Phones disrupt family meals, notifications interrupt meaningful discussions, and social media profiles can replace genuine interactions. Turkle does not completely reject technology. She encourages mindful use, urging us to ensure that digital tools strengthen, rather than weaken, our connections.

The digital age also has political implications. Eli Pariser (2011), describes the “filter bubble,” a personalized environment created by algorithms that shape our online experiences. “Your filter bubble is your own personal, unique universe of information” (p. 9), he writes. While this customization can improve browsing, it risks trapping us in echo chambers that filter out different viewpoints. The danger is clear: democracy relies on open dialogue, yet filter bubbles quietly limit the range of voices and ideas we encounter.

Economically, the digital revolution brings both opportunities and risks. Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee (2014), describe it as creating both “bounty and spread” (p. 56). On one hand, technology fosters innovation, efficiency, and growth. On the other hand, it increases inequality by creating opportunities for some while displacing others from traditional jobs. Their work shows that the digital age involves not just progress, but also fairness in how its benefits and burdens are shared.

These perspectives provide a complex understanding of life in the digital age. Dictionaries clarify how technology shapes modern life, but scholars reveal its profound effects on our thoughts, emotions, politics, and economies. McLuhan emphasizes the impact of media, Carr warns of reduced attention, Turkle highlights the paradox of connectivity, Pariser points out hidden barriers set up by algorithms, and Brynjolfsson and McAfee remind us of economic inequalities. The digital age is not a neutral backdrop. It is the stage where modern life unfolds, filled with both opportunities and challenges that require careful thought about how we use and shape technology for the future.

2.1.1 Social Media

Social media has drawn considerable attention from scholars, as it has become an essential part of daily life in the twenty-first century. To understand its effect on Christian youth in Benin City, we first need to clarify how the term is defined and understood. Standard dictionaries provide straightforward definitions that capture the main characteristics. Merriam-Webster defines social media as “forms of electronic communication, such as websites for social networking and microblogging, through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content”. The Cambridge English Dictionary describes it as “websites and computer programs that allow people to communicate and share information on the internet”. Both definitions emphasize the technological medium and the community aspects that arise from its use. However, these definitions do not fully reflect the complexity of social media in shaping social identity, interaction, and values.

Scholars have offered more detailed definitions. For example, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (p. 61). Their focus on Web 2.0 and user-generated content highlights the participatory culture that sets social media apart from traditional media, where audiences were mostly passive consumers. Boyd and Ellison (2007), take a different perspective by concentrating on social network sites, which they define as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom

they share a connection, and view and navigate their list of connections and those made by others within the system” (p. 211). This definition stresses the relational structure of social media, highlighting how networks and visibility shape user experiences.

Further insight comes from Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, and Silvestre (2011), who suggest that "social media functions can be understood through seven interconnected dimensions: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups" (p. 243). These elements illustrate the layered nature of social media. Users express their identities through their profiles, engage in dialogue through comments and messages, build communities through groups, and seek reputation through likes, shares, and followers. This framework shows that social media cannot be simplified to mere communication tools; instead, they are complex ecosystems that influence human interaction in both empowering and challenging ways.

Scholarship consistently highlights broader features of social media, including participation, interactivity, and networked visibility. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), emphasize that "participation is crucial because users do not just consume content; they actively create it" (p. 62). Shirky (2008), notes that this shift has transformed communication from a “one-to-many” model typical of mass media to a “many-to-many” model where everyone can contribute and interact. Boyd and Ellison (2007), point out the visibility of networks, stating that being able to see and explore connections sets social media apart from earlier online forums. However, some critical scholars warn that this apparent freedom isn't absolute. Fuchs (2017), argues that social media

platforms, while participatory, are influenced by capitalist structures and algorithms that shape user behavior and commercialize interactions.

Discussions on the effects of social media have expanded into cultural contexts, with African scholars especially examining its moral and civic implications. Olorunnisola and Douai (2013), note that “social media in Africa often carries the dual burden of being both a civic space and a contested arena where questions of morality, power, and belonging are negotiated” (p. 88). This observation is particularly relevant in Nigerian society, where religious institutions significantly influence the values of young people. In these settings, social media serves not just as a communication platform but also as a space where moral identities can be tested, reaffirmed, or challenged.

Linking these definitions and debates to the situation of Christian youth in Benin City reveals both opportunities and challenges. In churches like the Deeper Life Bible Church, which stresses holiness and separation from worldly practices, social media acts as a space of negotiation. The identity aspect mentioned by Kietzmann et al. (2011), appears when Christian youths express their beliefs online by posting Bible verses, personal stories, or gospel music. At the same time, these platforms expose them to secular trends that might clash with church teachings, creating a struggle between faith and peer influence. The “sharing” function allows young people to spread sermons, evangelistic messages, and uplifting content, turning social media into a tool for ministry. Yet, as Fuchs (2017), warns, the same platforms are controlled by algorithms that may favor entertainment or fashion over content that aligns with church values.

The pursuit of “reputation” and “presence” further reveals these tensions. Many young people measure their visibility by the number of likes, followers, and comments they receive, which can shift their focus from spiritual approval to digital validation. For members of Deeper Life Bible Church, this creates a careful balance between using platforms to share their faith and being lured into self-promotion. Shirky’s (2008), idea of many-to-many interaction shows the empowering potential of social media for evangelism, but it also highlights the risks of distraction and moral compromise. The “groups” function is noteworthy for young believers who engage in online fellowships, Bible study WhatsApp groups, or prayer chains, extending communal worship beyond physical spaces. These activities demonstrate how social media can serve as a digital extension of religious life.

In summary, social media can be viewed as digital platforms that facilitate identity construction, interaction, and community, grounded in Web 2.0 technology and influenced by cultural and institutional factors. While scholars emphasize its participatory and empowering aspects, they also acknowledge its structural limits and moral challenges. For Christian youth in Benin City, especially those in Deeper Life Bible Church, social media presents both blessings and burdens: it opens new avenues for evangelism, fellowship, and affirming identity, while also introducing competing values and potential distractions from spiritual commitments. This dual nature highlights the need to study its impact in a local religious context.

2.1.2 Youth

The idea of "youth" has always mattered in human societies, but it remains a debated and changing term in both academic and everyday conversations. Different cultures, fields, and historical contexts have influenced the meaning of youth, often reflecting broader social values, power dynamics, and aspirations. The English Oxford Dictionary defines youth as "the period between childhood and adult age", emphasizing this stage's transitional nature. Merriam-Webster states that youth is "the time of life when one is young, especially the period between childhood and maturity". These definitions highlight the biological and chronological aspects of youth, framing it as a life stage between dependence and independence.

However, scholars argue that youth cannot be limited to age boundaries. Wyn and White (1997), note that youth is "a socially constructed category that reflects changing cultural, political, and economic realities" (p. 12). This means that being young is not fixed; it is shaped by society's expectations and structures. In some cultures, youth may be expected to take on adult responsibilities sooner. In modern settings, particularly in urban areas, youth can extend into the late twenties as education, delayed marriage, and economic dependence lengthen the transition to adulthood.

The United Nations (2013), provides a formal definition, categorizing youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24 years. This definition is commonly used in development and policy discussions, but it has faced criticism for being too narrow and not acknowledging cultural diversity. Arnett (2000), introduced the term "emerging adulthood," which refers to a distinct developmental phase occurring between ages 18 and 25. During this period, individuals

explore their identity, relationships, and career options. This view expands the definition of youth beyond adolescence, recognizing the psychological and social challenges linked to modern transitions into adulthood.

In African scholarship, youth is seen as more than just a biological stage; it is also a political and cultural concept. Burgess (2005), highlights that, "in many African contexts, youth is often defined by access to resources, marriage, and participation in community decision-making rather than just age" (p. 28). Similarly, Honwana (2012), describes African youth as "waithood," a phase of waiting between childhood and adulthood characterized by unemployment, economic uncertainty, and delayed independence. These perspectives show that youth encompasses social belonging, economic empowerment, and cultural expectations, not just age.

Sociologists argue that youth involves navigating personal identity and societal standards. Erikson (1968), in his psychosocial development theory, claimed that adolescence and youth are crucial for forming identity. During this time, individuals grapple with figuring out who they are and where they fit in. This struggle often manifests through experimentation, rebellion, and adopting peer values. Today, social media amplifies this process by providing young people a way to shape and negotiate their identities in view of peers and adults.

In the Nigerian context, the idea of youth gains additional significance. The National Youth Policy of Nigeria (2019), defines youth as those aged 15 to 29 years, a broader classification that reflects local realities of delayed economic independence and ongoing family reliance (Federal Ministry of Youth and Sports Development, 2019). In Benin City, like in other urban areas,

youth balance modernity with tradition. They navigate cultural expectations of respect, religious commitments, and societal roles while being influenced by global trends through education, entertainment, and especially social media.

In the Christian context, youth in churches like Deeper Life Bible Church face unique challenges. Deeper Life emphasizes holiness, modesty, and discipline, encouraging its members to live distinct from worldly practices. Yet, as definitions and scholarly insights highlight, this stage is one of exploration, negotiation, and identity formation. Youth in Deeper Life experience tension as they strive to uphold religious values while engaging with a broader youth culture increasingly shaped by digital interaction and social media trends.

The task of forming identity, as Erikson (1968), outlined, becomes even more complicated with digital media. Christian youth in Benin City navigate their identities not only with family and church but also with a virtual audience of peers, influencers, and global communities. Social media presents both opportunities and challenges. It offers chances for evangelism, community building, and sharing knowledge, but it also creates peer pressure, exposes them to secular values, and distracts from spiritual commitments. This aligns with Honwana's (2012), concept of "waithood," where many Nigerian youths linger in uncertain spaces, both economically and spiritually as they try to balance modern youth culture with their faith.

Summarily, the idea of youth is deeply connected to social forces, cultural expectations, and technological influences. For Deeper Life youth in Benin City, the youth journey involves the struggle to live faithfully in a highly connected age. Their experiences reflect Wyn and White's

(1997), view that youth is socially constructed and shaped by a changing environment. Social media acts as both a mirror of the struggles and aspirations of Christian youth and a force that forms their identities, relationships, and understandings of faith.

In conclusion, youth is more than just a biological or chronological phase. It is a complex mix of age, culture, identity, and societal expectations. From dictionary definitions that emphasize age to scholarly insights that highlight social construction, identity struggles, and cultural realities, the concept shows its depth. In Nigeria, especially in Benin City, youthhood represents both opportunity and vulnerability, particularly for those in faith-based communities like Deeper Life Bible Church. As Christian youth engage with social media, they embody the tension of being part of the world while trying to uphold spiritual values in a digital culture that often challenges those values. Understanding youth in this way provides a solid foundation for examining the impact of social media in the study.

2.1.3 Identity

Identity is one of the most complex and enduring questions in understanding human life. It influences who we are, how we see ourselves, and how others see and respond to us. The Oxford English Dictionary (2022), defines identity as “the fact of being who or what a person or thing is” (p. 654). Merriam-Webster (2023), describes it as “the distinguishing character or personality of an individual” (p. 478). These definitions capture the essence of sameness and uniqueness that

make up identity. However, many scholars argue that identity is not just about being; it is also about becoming. It involves how individuals and groups find meaning, belonging, and selfhood over time and across different contexts.

Erikson (1968), in his prominent work *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, referred to identity as “a subjective sense of invigorating sameness and continuity” (p. 50). For him, identity develops through combining past experiences, the present, and future goals into a unified whole. He noted that youth is a critical period for the search for identity, often marked by a crisis of “identity versus role confusion” (p. 128). This struggle is particularly intense in situations where young people face conflicting pressures, trying to balance personal beliefs, cultural norms, and societal expectations.

Later thinkers expanded on Erikson’s ideas. Stuart Hall (1996), claimed that identity should not be seen as fixed, but rather as “a production, which is always in process and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (p. 4). So, identity is fluid, dynamic, and constantly shaped by cultural influences, historical events, and social interactions. In our interconnected world, Castells (2010), further emphasized that identity is created through meaning, and in this information age, much of that meaning comes through technology (p. 6). These insights remind us that identity is not just a personal issue but is deeply linked to social structures, cultural stories, and digital spaces.

In African contexts, identity has even more layers. Burgess (2005), observed that identity is often connected not only to age or individual expression but also to access to resources, social roles,

and cultural belonging. Honwana (2012), described African youth as caught in “waithood,” a drawn-out stage between dependence and independence shaped by economic challenges and delayed adulthood. These ideas show that identity is not only a personal matter but a social condition, shaped by family expectations, cultural traditions, and the larger economic and political environment.

In discussing the Nigerian experience, identity becomes a site of tension and negotiation. Youth in Benin City, like many in other urban African settings, stand at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. They inherit cultural values tied to family and heritage but also face global influences through education, entertainment, and particularly social media. For Christian youth, especially those in conservative churches like Deeper Life Bible Church, identity becomes more complicated. Their self-view is meant to be grounded in holiness, discipline, and faithfulness to biblical teachings, yet they live in a world where social media regularly offers alternate identities to consider.

This tension is evident in how young people present themselves online. Social media is not merely a communication tool but a platform where identity is performed, negotiated, and sometimes fragmented. A Deeper Life youth may show dedication in physical church settings, yet online they might feel pressured to follow popular trends, share fashionable selfies, or seek approval through likes and followers. Stuart Hall’s (1996), idea that identity is always evolving becomes clear here: these youths are constantly juggling various selves that is, the self their

church expects, the self their peers recognize, and the self they display online. The challenge is not only about self-expression but also about integrity, belonging, and survival in a digital world.

Religious identity particularly serves as both an anchor and a challenge. Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2010), state that religious identity is “a central and often enduring component of the self that provides existential meaning and a sense of belonging” (p. 61). For Deeper Life youth, their faith is supposed to define who they are. Yet in online environments, they often encounter competing messages and lifestyles. Some find strength in using social media to share scripture, testimonies, and sermons, transforming digital spaces into opportunities for witness. Others may sense their religious identity weakening as secular influences grow. This duality illustrates how identity is continuously negotiated, usually amid tension.

Ultimately, the idea of identity cannot be seen as a fixed possession; it is a lived experience that is always changing, often conflicted, and heavily influenced by the social world. For Christian youth in Benin City, identity is not just a personal question but also a communal and spiritual one. It is shaped at the crossroads of cultural heritage, religious beliefs, and online visibility. Social media has made identity more public, more performative, and more susceptible to outside pressures, while also creating chances for self-expression, community building, and spiritual outreach.

In conclusion, identity is best understood as a dynamic, multifaceted experience shaped by both personal beliefs and outside influences. Dictionaries emphasize its essence as sameness and uniqueness, but scholars remind us that identity also involves process, creation, and negotiation.

For Christian youth in Benin City, particularly those in Deeper Life Bible Church, identity represents a lived struggle between faith and culture, between the sacred and the digital, and between who they aspire to be and who society urges them to become. This ongoing tension makes the study of identity crucial for understanding the role of social media in today's youth.

Identity is one of the most enduring questions of human existence. It addresses not only who we are but also who we are becoming amidst constant change. Dictionaries capture this concept clearly and simply. The Oxford English Dictionary (2022), defines identity as “the fact of being who or what a person or thing is” (p. 654). Merriam-Webster (2023), describes it as “the distinguishing character or personality of an individual” (p. 478). Scholars remind us that identity is never fixed; it is a dynamic process shaped by personal beliefs, social groups, cultural stories, religious frameworks, and, in our time, digital performances. Erikson (1968) emphasized that identity is a developmental achievement, “a subjective sense of invigorating sameness and continuity” (p. 50). Hall (1996), expanded on this by arguing that identity is always “a production, never complete, always in process and constituted within representation” (p. 4).

This shows that identity is not one-dimensional. To understand it fully, we must distinguish between its types, which describe the different forms of identity, and its dimensions, which are the perspectives through which these identities are lived and expressed. For Christian youth in Benin City, especially those in the Deeper Life Bible Church, these types and dimensions do not exist separately. They constantly interact, sometimes supporting each other and other times pulling in opposite directions, especially under the influence of social media.

Types of Identity

1. Personal Identity

Personal identity refers to one's sense of self. Locke (1690/1975), described it as "the sameness of a rational being across time" (p. 350). Erikson (1968), later expanded this idea, stressing the need for young people to integrate their past, present, and future into a coherent self-concept. For a Deeper Life youth, personal identity often comes from their salvation story, commitment to holiness, and goal to live according to biblical teachings. Yet on social media, personal identity may become fragmented. The young Christian who privately believes in modesty might create an online self that reflects global youth trends to seek affirmation through likes and followers.

2. Social Identity

Social identity comes from belonging to groups. Tajfel and Turner (1986), explained that "part of an individual's self-concept derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 16). In Deeper Life, membership provides a strong social identity marked by discipline, holiness, and separation from worldliness. However, online, group memberships can multiply. A young church member might belong to both a Christian WhatsApp group and a secular Instagram community at the same time. These competing group influences create identity struggles as they try to stay true to their faith while engaging with peers in broader digital spaces.

3. Cultural Identity

Cultural identity relates to heritage, traditions, and shared practices. Hall (1990), describes it as both “being” and “becoming” (p. 225). For Nigerian youth, cultural identity includes local traditions, such as Edo practices in Benin City, but is also influenced by global cultures shared through digital media. Social media exposes Deeper Life youth to music, fashion, and slang from around the world, complicating their cultural identity. Within the church, teachings often critique these global cultural forms and urge youth to resist them. The result is a layered struggle as they navigate being Nigerian, being global, and being Christian.

4. Religious Identity

Religious identity provides meaning and belonging. Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2010), describe it as “a central and often enduring component of the self” (p. 61). For Deeper Life youth, religious identity is meant to be the strongest anchor, defining them as children of God set apart for holiness. Yet social media continually challenges this identity. Some youth use platforms to share scripture or Christian music, affirming their faith publicly. Others find their convictions weakened as secular images and lifestyles dominate their feeds. This highlights the fragility and negotiation involved in maintaining religious identity in the digital age.

Dimensions Of Identity

While types of identity explain the broad categories of selfhood, dimensions of identity illustrate how these identities are lived and experienced. For youth in Benin City, these dimensions are particularly prominent as they navigate between church expectations and the pull of social media.

1. Internal Dimension

The internal dimension refers to the private and personal awareness of self. Erikson (1968), noted that this provides individuals with a sense of inner continuity (p. 50). For Christian youth, this dimension includes spiritual awareness, seeing themselves as born again and striving for holiness. Yet this internal conviction faces constant challenges from external influences. A Deeper Life youth may value modesty internally but struggle with external temptations to present a trendier image online.

2. Relational Dimension

The relational dimension highlights how identity is shaped through interactions with others. Families, friends, peers, and church communities all play a role. Tajfel and Turner (1986), stressed that group belonging significantly influences self-concept (p. 16). For Deeper Life youth, this dimension is strengthened by their close church community. However, social media introduces new relational spaces where online feedback such as likes, comments, shares which shapes how youth view themselves. This dimension shows that identity is never fully private; it is performed and validated in relationships.

3. Cultural Dimension

The cultural dimension connects individuals to shared traditions and stories. Hall (1990), pointed out that cultural identity is always in process, never fully complete (p. 225). For Nigerian youth, this dimension involves balancing Edo traditions, Nigerian social values, and global youth cultures. Deeper Life teachings often resist mainstream cultural expressions, urging youth to embody biblical values. Yet social media consistently exposes them to mixed cultural forms, making the cultural dimension of their identity an ongoing negotiation.

4. Digital Dimension

The digital dimension is specific to our modern age. Chen (2013), defines digital identity as “the online manifestation of the self” (p. 23). On social media, youth create and display curated versions of themselves, often seeking validation through likes and followers. For Deeper Life youth, this digital identity may significantly differ from their offline religious identity. In church, they may adhere to holiness standards, but online, they could portray a different persona that aligns with global digital youth culture. This digital aspect makes their identity highly visible and often conflicting, reflecting the struggle of living between faith and the digital world.

In conclusion, The idea of identity is best seen not as a fixed label but as a layered reality that unfolds through its types and dimensions. The types, including personal, social, cultural, and religious, provide the basic categories that help individuals understand who they are. The dimensions, such as internal, relational, cultural, and digital, show how these identities play out, change, and are expressed in daily life. Together, they illustrate that identity is both what we hold inside and how the world shapes us.

For Christian youth in Benin City, especially those in Deeper Life Bible Church, these views are highly relevant. Their personal and religious identities root them in faith, while their social, cultural, and digital dimensions expose them to new influences and challenges, particularly through social media. This way, identity does not just define them; it reflects their ongoing journey of becoming as they work to live authentically in a world where tradition, faith, and modern technology constantly come together.

2.1.4 Religious Expression

Religious expression is one of the earliest ways people understand the sacred and show their connection with the divine. The Oxford English Dictionary (2022), defines expression as “the process of making one’s thoughts or feelings known” (p. 412). When it relates to religion, it refers to how faith, beliefs, and devotion are communicated or lived out. Merriam-Webster (2023), describes religious expression as “an outward indication of religious feeling or belief, especially in worship, practice, or lifestyle” (p. 556). These definitions emphasize that religion involves not only personal conviction; it has visible expressions as well.

Scholars support this idea. Durkheim (1915/1995), argued that religion is inherently social. Its expressions, including rituals, symbols, and practices, unite people into a moral community. Geertz (1973), described religion as "a set of symbols that create strong and lasting emotions and motivations by shaping ideas about the general order of existence" (p. 90). In simpler terms, religious expression makes unseen beliefs visible. It links inner conviction with outward actions.

Religious expression can take many forms. It includes rituals such as prayers, fasting, worship services, and sacraments. It can also be ethical, reflected in moral behavior and lifestyle choices. Furthermore, it can be cultural, shown through art, music, clothing, or architecture that have religious meaning. Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2010), explain that religious identity is closely tied to expression. Faith “is rarely confined to belief alone but is embedded in practices and shared symbols” (p. 62). For Christians, religious expression matters; scripture commands it: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, NKJV).

In Nigeria, religious expression is vital for identity and community. Ojo (2010), noted that Pentecostal and evangelical movements in Nigeria emphasize holiness and a visible distinctiveness. They turn outward actions like dress codes, speech, and worship practices into important markers of faith (p. 47). This is especially true in Deeper Life Bible Church, where members are encouraged to show their commitment to God through modest clothing, avoiding worldly entertainment, and actively participating in church activities. Here, religious expression serves not only as individual devotion but also as a collective statement of holiness and separation from the world.

However, social media has transformed how youth express their faith. It provides a space where expressions of belief can go beyond physical locations like churches and enter digital networks. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), claim that online platforms have created “digital religion,” where faith is practiced, performed, and debated in virtual settings. For Deeper Life youth in Benin City,

this means their religious expression includes both in-person church gatherings and online platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube. Some share Bible verses, testimonies, or gospel music on these platforms, while others may find it challenging to maintain a consistent Christian presence online while keeping up with popular secular trends.

This mix of faith and technology raises important questions. In the digital age, religious expression is not just about appearing holy within a church community; it's also about managing visibility in front of a global audience. For instance, a Deeper Life youth might avoid worldly clothing in person but feel pressured to conform to popular youth culture on social media, creating tension between offline and online expressions of faith. This dynamic reveals both the advantages and challenges of social media. It provides opportunities for evangelism and witnessing but also exposes youth to conflicting values that could weaken their religious commitments.

Therefore, understanding religious expression is essential for studying Christian youth in Benin City. It highlights that faith is not merely a private belief; it is also a visible and active reality that must be demonstrated within family, church, society, and now on digital platforms. For Deeper Life youth, religious expression includes both duty and difficulty: a duty because they are called to share their faith publicly, and a difficulty because social media continually challenges what it means to live as a Christian today.

Forms of Religious Expression

1. Verbal Expression

One of the most common forms of religious expression is verbal, which includes spoken or written declarations of faith. Merriam-Webster (2023), defines expression as “the outward manifestation of thought or feeling in words” (p. 556). In Christianity, this idea is rooted in scripture: “With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10, NKJV). For Deeper Life youth, verbal expression happens through prayers, testimonies, preaching, and open conversations about their faith. Social media enhances this, as WhatsApp statuses, Instagram captions, or tweets become platforms for verbal witness. However, this also creates a challenge in the sense that the same voice that praises God in church may fall into using worldly slang online to fit in with peers.

2. Non-Verbal Expression

Religious expression often goes beyond words. Gestures, symbols, attire, and even silence can express faith more powerfully than speech. Geertz (1973), noted that symbols and non-verbal signs “act to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods” (p. 90). In Deeper Life, non-verbal expression is especially important. Modest clothing, a simple appearance, and the avoidance of jewelry all indicate a commitment to holiness. On social media, though, non-verbal signs take on new forms. Profile pictures, shared images, and other digital cues represent faith,

even as they highlight the tension between modest religious expression and trendy online personas.

3. Ritual Expression

Rituals express faith through structured acts of worship like prayer, fasting, Bible study, singing, communion, and evangelism. Durkheim (1915/1995), argued that rituals are “the means by which the community reaffirms its shared beliefs” (p. 95). For Deeper Life youth, ritual expression includes daily devotional prayers, weekly Bible studies, and active participation in church events. Social media has expanded the reach of rituals through livestreamed services, online prayer meetings, and shared gospel songs, allowing youth to maintain these practices outside church walls. However, digital rituals can feel less intense than in-person gatherings, raising questions about their depth and authenticity.

4. Ethical Expression

Religious expression also extends to the moral aspects of daily life. Ysseldyk, Matheson, and Anisman (2010), pointed out that religiosity is tied to “lived practices and moral codes” (p. 62). In Deeper Life, ethical expression is crucial. Abstaining from immorality, demonstrating modest behavior, and being honest and humble are signs of true faith. This form of expression can be the hardest for youth to maintain on social media, where temptations abound—indecent images, inappropriate jokes, and popular trends often contradict church teachings. Ethical expression

becomes a struggle: they must decide whether to live in holiness both online and offline or to compartmentalize their faith and give in to digital pressures.

5. Communal Expression

Religion is inherently communal. Durkheim (1915/1995), stated, “there is no religion without a church” (p. 44). Communal expression includes worship gatherings, fellowships, choir rehearsals, and youth activities. For Deeper Life youth, this communal aspect fosters a sense of belonging and accountability, reinforcing their shared identity as believers. Social media alters this dynamic by expanding community into digital spaces such as WhatsApp fellowships, Facebook groups, and Zoom Bible studies. While this increases participation, it also divides attention, as online gatherings compete with other distractions and secular content. The challenge is to maintain the same level of commitment in digital communities as in physical ones.

6. Digital Expression

Today, digital expression has become a unique form of religious practice. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), refer to this as “networked religion,” where faith is shared through digital platforms. For Deeper Life youth, digital expression includes livestreaming services, creating gospel TikTok videos, sharing testimonies online, and engaging in virtual evangelism. Social media acts as both a platform for preaching and a space for prayer, widening the scope of religious experience beyond the church. Yet, this brings a paradox: while it amplifies their witness, it also exposes them to distractions, ridicule, and competing secular narratives. Digital expression represents

both an opportunity for bold testimony and a struggle between staying true to their faith and gaining social acceptance.

These six forms of religious expression; verbal, non-verbal, ritual, ethical, communal, and digital, are essential for understanding how social media affects Christian youth in Benin City. Each form shows how their faith can be strengthened or challenged in the digital era. For Deeper Life youth, who prioritize holiness, modesty, and separation from the world, social media is a double-edged sword. It offers new ways to express faith while also tempting them to compromise. Their verbal witness may weaken, their non-verbal modesty might be questioned, their rituals may shift to digital forms, their ethics may come under challenge, their communal relationships could feel strained, and their online presence may mix with secular influences.

Religious expression is not fixed; it is dynamic. It changes, evolves, and sometimes struggles in the face of modern challenges. For Deeper Life youth, the key question is not whether to express their faith, but how to do so in an authentic way, both in the sacred spaces of the church and in the noisy, demanding spaces of social media.

2.1.5 Spirituality

Spirituality is a significant part of human existence. It shapes how people connect with themselves, others, and something greater than themselves. The Oxford English Dictionary (2022), defines spirituality as “the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things” (p. 1174). This definition highlights that spirituality goes

beyond the visible. It encourages individuals to focus on deeper meanings, purposes, and ultimate truths. Similarly, Merriam-Webster (2023), describes spirituality as “sensitivity or attachment to religious values” (p. 984). This shows its strong link to religious life and practices.

Scholars have built on these dictionary definitions by emphasizing the many dimensions of spirituality. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005), describe it as “a search for the sacred” (p. 35). This suggests that spirituality is not just mere belief; it involves actively seeking God, truth, and transcendence in our daily living. In his book, "The Varieties of Religious Experience", James (1902/2008), noted that spirituality manifests through “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine” (p. 31). These views stress that spirituality is not confined to organized religion but is a deeply personal journey toward connection and meaning.

In Christianity, spirituality is viewed as a close relationship with God. Foster (1978), stated that “Christian spirituality is simply, the life of God dwelling in the soul of man” (p. 4). This means spirituality is about practical faith: prayer, Bible study, holiness, worship, and communion with God. The Deeper Life Bible Church highlights spirituality through an emphasis on living a holy life, avoiding worldly influences, and being devoted to Scripture. Young people in this setting learn that true spirituality shows itself in moral discipline, obedience, and a commitment to evangelism.

However, the idea of spirituality is changing in today's world. Scholars like Tacey (2004), observe that spirituality has become more individualistic, often separate from traditional

religious institutions. He explains, “the hunger for spirituality is real, but it often rejects institutional forms of religion” (p. 15). For young members at Deeper Life in Benin City, this cultural shift clashes with the church’s belief that true spirituality cannot be separated from Christian teachings and practices. Social media complicates this clash by presenting a variety of spiritual alternatives, from New Age ideas to motivational philosophies, which can subtly pull young believers away from the strict interpretation of spirituality that their church emphasizes.

At the same time, social media also creates new ways to express spirituality. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), refer to this as “digital spirituality,” where prayer, reflection, and sharing personal stories increasingly happen on online platforms. For Christian youth, posting a Bible verse on WhatsApp, livestreaming a church service, or sharing a testimony on Instagram can become modern forms of spiritual practice. Yet, this also raises important questions: Does digital spirituality strengthen one's relationship with God, or does it risk reducing faith to mere performance and the need for attention from others?

In summary, spirituality is both a timeless and a debatable concept. It reflects people's desire for deeper meaning, though its expression varies across cultures, religions, and generations. For the youth at Deeper Life Bible Church, spirituality is a key part of their identity. It influences how they live, what they believe, and how they respond to worldly challenges. However, in a social media-driven age, their spirituality is continuously tested, redefined, and negotiated between traditional values and digital realities.

Perspectives on Spirituality

Spirituality has many layers and varies in definition and practice depending on the context. The Oxford English Dictionary (2022), describes it as "the quality of being concerned with the spirit or soul rather than material or physical things" (p. 1174). Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) broaden this view by describing spirituality as "a search for the sacred" that may or may not connect with organized religion. These definitions talk about the diverse experiences of spirituality. These are some key perspectives through which it is often understood.

1. The Religious Perspective

This perspective grounds spirituality in faith, worship, and loyalty to divine authority. William James (1902/2008) defined it as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine" (p. 31). Richard Foster (1978), describes Christian spirituality as "the reality of God dwelling in the soul of man" (p. 4). For Deeper Life youth, spirituality closely ties to their Christian faith, expressed through prayer, holiness, and separation from worldly influences. However, social media brings some forms of distractions and lifestyles that challenge this commitment.

2. The Psychological Perspective

From this view, spirituality fulfills a human need for meaning, purpose, and inner strength. Viktor Frankl (1946/2006), noted that "man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life" (p. 99). Here, spirituality focuses more on personal fulfillment and resilience than on rituals.

For youth in Deeper Life Bible Church, spirituality connects them with God and offers a sense of identity and strength in facing peer pressure, academic challenges, and digital influences. Social media, with its mix of affirmations and comparisons, serves as both a resource and a challenge to this aspect of spirituality.

3. The Cultural Perspective

Spirituality is also influenced by traditions, values, and community practices. Tacey (2004), notes that modern societies often have "a hunger for spirituality that is not always satisfied by institutional religion" (p. 15). In African settings, spirituality is usually communal, linked to family, respect, and shared moral values. For Christian youth in Benin City, this cultural aspect interacts with their religious identity. However, constant exposure to global cultures through social media encourages individualism and alternative spiritualities, creating tension between cultural connections and digital modernity.

4. The Individual Perspective

Today, many people define spirituality on their own terms, often outside of organized religion. Zinnbauer et al. (1997), point out that more individuals identify as "spiritual but not religious" (p. 550). This perspective emphasizes personal freedom, self-expression, and internal experience. For Deeper Life youth, this postmodern outlook clashes with the church's focus on collective faith and adherence to doctrine. On social media platforms, this individualized spirituality

flourishes, as young people share their faith experiences through quotes, images, and personal reflections, often combining Christian themes with popular culture.

In conclusion, the perspectives of spirituality; religious, psychological, cultural, and individual show that spirituality is complex and experienced in various ways. For Deeper Life youth in Benin City, spirituality primarily comes through the religious lens, deeply rooted in prayer, holiness, and commitment to God. Still, the psychological need for meaning, the cultural sense of belonging, and the postmodern pursuit of individuality shape their experiences, especially as social media provides a platform for negotiating these aspects of identity.

For these youths, spirituality is not only about doctrine; it also involves navigating the competing influences of faith, culture, and modern technology. Their journey mirrors the broader human quest for meaning that is, a search anchored in tradition but also stretched by the digital age. Social media does not erase their spirituality; it reshapes it, pushing them to balance faithfulness to their religious values with openness to new expressions of self and spirit.

Dimensions of Spirituality

Spirituality is a broad and deep concept that connects to the most important parts of human life. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005), define it as “a search for the sacred,” noting that this search looks different in various human experiences. Roof (1993), describes spirituality as “multidimensional, involving belief, experience, and practice, both personal and communal” (p.

76). Among these different expressions, three are key to understanding spirituality: the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transcendental dimensions.

1. The Intrapersonal Dimension

The intrapersonal dimension refers to the inward and personal experience of spirituality. William James (1902/2008), called it “the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine” (p. 31). It reveals itself through inner reflection, personal devotion, and the search for meaning. Practices like meditation, prayer, and self-examination are important to this dimension, as they relate to the individual’s close connection with the sacred.

2. The Interpersonal Dimension

The interpersonal dimension highlights the relational side of spirituality. It shows how individuals express their beliefs within their communities and relationships. Palmer (1999), explains that “spirituality is not about the private self but about how we stand in relation to others and to the world” (p. 15). This dimension appears through fellowship, communal worship, acts of kindness, and accountability within spiritual groups. It emphasizes how spirituality shapes social connections and shared practices that build a collective identity.

3. The Transcendental Dimension

The transcendental dimension looks beyond the individual and the community to the divine or ultimate reality. Schleiermacher (1996/1799), describes this as “a feeling of absolute dependence”

on a higher power. This dimension captures the human desire for a connection with God, transcendence, and a purpose beyond material life. It finds expression in worship, reverence, obedience, and surrender to the sacred.

In conclusion, the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transcendental dimensions together show spirituality as a complete reality: an inner journey, a relational experience, and a transcendent connection. For Christian youth in Deeper Life Bible Church, these dimensions are highly relevant. Their intrapersonal spirituality is portrayed through private devotions, their interpersonal spirituality through church fellowship, and their transcendental spirituality through a life of obedience and holiness before God. However, in today's digital age, social media both supports and complicates these dimensions by providing tools for spiritual growth while also introducing distractions and different values. Therefore, studying these dimensions is important for understanding how young people live, negotiate, and reshape spirituality while navigating faith in an advanced world.

2.1.6 Dress Code

Dress code is as old as society itself. It reflects the need for order, modesty, and cultural identity in how people present themselves. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a dress code as “a set of rules specifying the correct manner of dress in a particular context” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010, p. 212). Similarly, Merriam-Webster describes it as “formally or socially imposed standards of attire” (Merriam-Webster, 2018, p. 145). These definitions show that

clothing goes beyond necessity; it embodies social norms, moral values, and cultural expectations.

Scholars have emphasized the symbolic aspect of dress. Entwistle (2000), notes that “dress is the situated bodily practice that is shaped by social norms, but also one that individuals use to present themselves in everyday life” (p. 12). This means that what people wear is never neutral as it carries meanings about identity, morality, and belonging. Kaiser (2012), adds that clothing serves as “a system of communication, where meanings are constructed and conveyed through appearance” (p. 67). In this way, dress code becomes a visible language through which individuals both conform to and negotiate societal expectations.

Religious communities have historically attached great significance to dress codes. They see them not just as external rules but as expressions of inner values. For instance, Arthur (1999), explains that “the body, as clothed, is the most immediate form of cultural inscription, communicating values of modesty, purity, or status” (p. 27). In Christianity, clothing is often connected to modesty, holiness, and the call to be different from worldly fashions (1 Timothy 2:9). This is especially true in conservative groups like the Deeper Life Bible Church, where dress reflects inner spirituality and obedience to biblical standards.

For youth, dress code becomes even more significant. Adolescence and young adulthood are times of identity formation. During these years, appearance becomes a powerful way of expressing oneself. As Barnard (2002), explains, “clothing mediates between the individual and society, allowing young people to negotiate their identities while situating themselves within or

against cultural norms” (p. 89). For Christian youth, this negotiation can be tough. The church encourages modesty and separation from worldly fashion, yet social media constantly promotes new trends, styles, and aesthetics that often conflict with these values.

Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook heighten the role of dress in shaping youth identity. They create visual spaces where appearance is judged, liked, or criticized right away. As Rocamora (2016), points out, “social media reshapes the fashion system, making visibility and instant recognition central to the construction of identity” (p. 119). For Deeper Life youth in Benin City, this creates a unique tension. They are expected to uphold the church’s conservative dress standards while also navigating a digital culture that rewards fashionable display. This tension reflects deeper struggles of spiritual commitment, identity negotiation, and belonging.

Dress codes are not just about rules for attire; they are mainly about meaning, identity, and values. For Deeper Life youth, the church’s focus on modesty in dress affirms their distinctiveness as Christians in a complex and immoral world. Yet, in the digital age, social media pulls them toward fashionable display and peer validation, often challenging traditional and orthodox teachings. Understanding the concept of dress code in this way shows that clothing is not a trivial matter but a central space where faith, culture, and modernity intersect.

Dress codes serve many purposes in society that go beyond just covering the body. At their core, they protect people from harsh weather, environmental dangers, and sometimes social exposure. However, as Entwistle (2000) notes, clothing is "never simply functional, but always expressive

of the social and cultural world" (p. 15). This suggests that dress codes serve both practical and symbolic roles.

Another important role of dress codes is communication. Kaiser (2012), emphasizes that "clothing and appearance are non-verbal forms of communication through which individuals send signals about status, identity, and group belonging" (p. 83). A person's outfit can silently indicate their profession, social role, cultural background, or personal values. This communication is clear in uniforms, professional dress codes, and traditional attire, all of which send strong messages without using words.

Dress codes also help maintain social order and regulation. By defining what is acceptable in settings like schools, workplaces, or public spaces, dress codes encourage conformity, discipline, and mutual respect. Crane (2000), states that "rules of dress help to maintain boundaries between groups and reinforce the values of the institutions that enforce them" (p. 41). In this way, dress codes promote social cohesion and subtly guide behavior and identity.

Finally, dress codes help shape identity and self-expression. They allow individuals to showcase who they are or want to be while also placing them within larger social groups. Barnard (2002), explains that "clothing mediates between the self and society, balancing personal identity with group expectations" (p. 89). For young people especially, dress codes are vital for navigating individuality and belonging.

The Importance of Dress Code to Religious Communities

In religious communities, dress codes have a sacred meaning. Clothing is not just about communication or order; it connects to spirituality, morality, and following divine principles. Arthur (1999), notes that "religious dress codes transform the body into a site of moral and spiritual meaning, marking it as distinct from the secular world" (p. 27). Therefore, clothing becomes a visible sign of faith and commitment.

One key aspect of dress in religion is the focus on modesty. In Christianity, passages like 1 Timothy 2:9 instruct believers to dress in "modest apparel" as an outward sign of inner holiness. This idea goes beyond just fabric or style; it reflects an attitude of humility, self-control, and separation from worldly excess. For groups like the Deeper Life Bible Church, dressing modestly is crucial for maintaining spiritual identity and moral standards.

Religious dress codes also promote communal identity and unity. By dressing according to their faith's guidelines, members affirm their belonging to a community and their distinction from broader secular cultures. Miller (2011), observes that "dress within religious groups functions as a uniform of faith, signaling loyalty to God and solidarity with fellow believers" (p. 112). For youth, this can be both empowering and challenging as they deal with influences from peers and popular culture.

Moreover, religious dress codes serve as a witness to outsiders. They show that the community holds different values and lives by a higher standard. Thus, clothing becomes a form of testimony that is, a way of visibly expressing one's faith. In the Deeper Life tradition, the

simplicity and modesty of dress reflect a conscious rejection of vanity and worldly desires, acting as a silent form of evangelism.

In summary, dress codes play significant roles in society. They provide protection, facilitate communication, maintain social order, and aid in identity formation. In religious communities, they take on even deeper meanings, reflecting values of modesty, unity, and spiritual witness. For Deeper Life youth in Benin City, this creates a unique situation. They are encouraged to follow the church's teachings on modest dress as a sign of their faith while also navigating a digital culture that promotes fashion trends, self-expression, and peer validation. Understanding both the general roles of dress codes and their specific importance in religious contexts is essential for exploring how Christian youth manage identity, faith, and social media in today's world.

CHAPTER THREE: DEEPER LIFE BIBLE CHURCH

3.1: Historical Background of Deeper Life Bible Church

Deeper Life Bible Church is a Pentecostal holiness movement in Nigeria. It emphasizes personal sanctification, strict moral discipline, and a clear Christian identity. Ukah (2008) describes it as “a holiness revivalist church, emerging from the radical reading of Scripture by W. F. Kumuyi and sustained by a disciplined lifestyle that distinguishes it from other Pentecostal movements” (p. 143). Unlike many modern churches focused on prosperity or charismatic expressions, Deeper Life Bible Church has consistently presented itself as a community dedicated to holiness, prayer, evangelism, and separation from worldly influences.

The history of Deeper Life Bible Church is closely tied to Nigeria’s socio-religious history in the late 20th century. It began in 1973 when William Folorunso Kumuyi, a mathematics lecturer at the University of Lagos, started a small Bible study group in his living room. This gathering of about fifteen students was intended not as a church but as a fellowship for deep study of the

Scriptures. However, Ojo (2006) explains that “what began as an informal fellowship soon attracted hundreds of students and lecturers, drawn by Kumuyi’s uncompromising teaching on holiness” (p. 115). His reputation as a disciplined teacher and devout Christian gave weight to his message, and the fellowship quickly grew beyond the university campus.

The Nigerian context of the 1970s significantly shaped this movement. The country was recovering from a civil war, and widespread corruption, social instability, and moral decline fueled a desire for spiritual renewal. In this environment, Pentecostal and charismatic movements thrived. Yet, Deeper Life Bible Church stood out by emphasizing holiness and sanctification over flamboyant displays of spiritual gifts. Gaiya (2002), notes that “Kumuyi’s message was countercultural in its severity, stressing separation from worldliness in a society increasingly embracing modern consumer values” (p. 89).

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, Deeper Life Bible Church evolved from a fellowship into a well-organized church with pastors, workers, and branches across the country. Membership quickly grew into the hundreds of thousands. Ukah (2008), states that “Deeper Life created a new paradigm of Pentecostalism in Nigeria, emphasizing; discipline, doctrinal rigor, and a rigid lifestyle that set it apart from other charismatic churches” (p. 144). The church’s emergence at this time provided an alternative to prosperity-driven Pentecostalism, establishing a unique identity in Nigeria’s expanding Christian landscape.

The church’s organizational life emphasized discipline and adherence to doctrine. Leaders and members were expected to show holiness not just in their words but also in their conduct and

appearance. Adeboye (2007), notes that “conformity to both doctrine and lifestyle became essential markers of belonging within Deeper Life, reinforcing the church’s identity as a holiness movement” (p. 67). This focus laid the groundwork for its distinctive dress code, which later became a visible sign of spiritual identity.

By the 1990s, Deeper Life Bible Church had grown into one of Nigeria’s largest Pentecostal churches, with its headquarters in Lagos hosting tens of thousands of attendees every Sunday. Its influence reached globally, with branches in Africa, Europe, and North America. This expansion transformed it into a transnational holiness movement, sharing its strict theology and lifestyle codes including dress standards with places where African Pentecostalism had to engage with Western cultural values.

Theologically, Deeper Life Bible Church focused on holiness, heavily influenced by John Wesley’s doctrine of sanctification and the Keswick spirituality of deeper Christian life. Burgess (2008), emphasizes that “while many Pentecostal groups shifted toward prosperity theology, Deeper Life retained its Wesleyan emphasis on sanctification as a second work of grace” (p. 233). For Deeper Life, holiness was not an abstract concept but a lived experience reflected in both inner purity and outward modesty.

Over the years, the church has faced criticism for what some view as excessive legalism, especially regarding its lifestyle and dress code rules. Critics argue that its strict teachings reduce holiness to outward conformity. Marxist-influenced critics have also dismissed its focus on personal piety as a distraction from structural and political issues in Nigeria. However, for

members, these lifestyle codes provide liberation from the vanity of worldly culture. Adesanya (2011), observes that “the Deeper Life tradition internalized holiness not only in behavior but externalized it in the strict codes of appearance, thereby creating a visible identity for its members” (p. 56).

Although Pastor Kumuyi has recently encouraged a more balanced approach and discouraged judgmental attitudes, the church’s teachings on holiness remain deeply rooted in its culture. Ukah (2008), concludes that “even where official stances have mellowed, the cultural memory of strictness remains deeply embedded in the church’s organizational DNA” (p. 145).

The historical background of Deeper Life Bible Church shows that its dress code is not just a tradition but part of a larger theological and cultural effort. From its beginnings in the 1970s, the church sought to clearly distinguish its members from a morally compromised world. This distinction, expressed through clothing, is still a central issue for today’s youth in the church. In places like Benin City, where young believers find themselves caught between global social media trends and the holiness heritage of Deeper Life Bible Church, this historical context helps explain the tension they experience in shaping their religious and personal identity.

3.2: Geographical and Demographic Context: Benin City

Benin City, the capital of Edo State in southern Nigeria, is an important historical and cultural center in West Africa. Its geography and population show the link between history, culture, and modern growth, making it a unique city in Nigeria and beyond.

Benin City lies in the tropical rainforest zone of southern Nigeria. Its position along main transportation routes has historically made it a center for trade and cultural exchange. Egharevba (1968), noted that “Benin developed as a great forest kingdom whose centrality in trade and culture made it an enduring power in precolonial Nigeria” (p. 42). The fertile land and abundance of natural resources helped the city become a space for commerce and craftsmanship, especially in bronze and ivory art, which gained international recognition.

The increase in population in Benin City reflects wider trends of urban lifestyle in Nigeria. The National Population Commission (2006), reported that Edo State had over three million residents, with Benin City being the largest urban area. Recent research estimates suggest even greater numbers, mainly due to people moving from rural areas and the city’s role as an educational and administrative center. This rapid growth has created both opportunities and challenges, leading to more economic activity along with strains on infrastructure and social services (NPC, 2006).

Benin City is mainly home to the Edo (or Bini) people, who trace their lineage to the ancient Benin Kingdom, which was a strong force both politically and culturally for centuries. However, similar to many Nigerian cities, Benin has become more diverse, with communities of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and other ethnic groups. Omoera (2014), states that “the cosmopolitan nature of Benin City makes it a microcosm of Nigeria, where traditional practices and modern lifestyles intersect in powerful ways” (p. 215). This mixture of cultures has enriched the city’s social fabric, creating a distinct identity rooted in history yet open to external influences.

In religious context, Benin City portrays Nigeria's diverse landscape. Christianity, Islam, and African traditional religions coexist in the city, though Christianity has become the most dominant in recent decades. Ojo (2006), points out that "Pentecostal and evangelical movements have transformed the religious landscape of Benin, reshaping both spiritual and social life" (p. 384). Traditional beliefs remain significant, especially during festivals, chieftaincy practices, and efforts to maintain cultural heritage.

Another important area of Benin City is its youthful population. Nigeria is regarded as one of the youngest countries globally, with over 60% of its population under 25 years old (United Nations, 2019). Benin City reflects this, with a vibrant student body due to major institutions like the University of Benin. Larkin (2015), highlights that "the dynamics of urban youth in Nigeria are shaped by the collision of traditional moral values with the pressures of a media-saturated modern world" (p. 97). This youthful energy is seen in Benin's cultural creativity, political activism, and expanding job market.

In this context, the geography and demographics of Benin City is a foundation for understanding the experiences of Christian youth. The city's history as a cultural and religious center, combined with its diversity and rapid urban growth, creates an environment where young people encounter various influences. While traditional values still influence daily life, modern technologies, especially social media, introduce new complexities to how identity, morality, and religious expression are experienced.

For Christian youths in the Deeper Life Bible Church, Benin City presents both opportunities and challenges. The city's diversity and youthful life mean they possess a space where their church's teachings on modesty, morality, and discipline often contend with the modern lifestyle promoted on social media. Therefore, the geographical and demographic uniqueness of Benin City are not just about the background, they significantly impact how faith, identity, and social media interact in the daily lives of young Christians today.

3.3 Administrative Structure

Deeper Life Bible Church started as a small Bible study group in 1973, founded by Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi. It has since grown into one of Nigeria's largest Pentecostal and evangelical churches, with branches in Africa, Europe, North America, and Asia. Its organization and management structure have played a key role in its longevity and global reach. Like many churches in Africa, Deeper Life Bible Church combines charismatic leadership with structured governance systems that reflect spiritual goals and practical needs.

Foundational Leadership and Centralized Authority

The General Superintendent leads Deeper Life Bible Church. This role has been held by its founder, W. F. Kumuyi, since the beginning. The church's constitution names the General Superintendent as the spiritual and administrative leader. Hence, this position covers doctrinal decisions, oversight of pastors, and the general direction of the ministry (Gaiya, 2002). Burgess

and Van der Maas (2003), state, "the highly centralized role of the General Superintendent reflects a charismatic model of leadership that ensures theological uniformity and practical discipline" (p. 345). This leadership style aligns with Weber's concept of "charismatic authority," where the founder's spiritual influence gives legitimacy to the organization's control (Weber, 1978, p. 215).

Pastor Kumuyi influences the church on both administrative and doctrinal levels. He is considered the guardian of holiness teachings that shape Deeper Life Bible Church's identity. As Ojo (2010), points out, "Kumuyi's emphasis on holiness and strict moral standards has shaped the administrative policies of the church, making them instruments of both governance and spiritual formation" (p. 94). Leadership in the church is deeply connected to its core values, where administration supports spiritual beliefs.

Structural Tiers and Organizational Hierarchy

Deeper Life Bible Church has a hierarchical administrative structure to ensure order and consistency across its branches. At the international level, the church is led by the General Superintendent and an international council of elders, who provide guidance and oversee global activities (Ukah, 2008). Below them are national overseers who lead the church in each country. These overseers are responsible for adapting the church's teachings to their local environments while strictly following the doctrines of the headquarters church.

In Nigeria, where the church has the largest membership, the structure includes regional overseers, state overseers, and district coordinators. Ukpong (2016), notes that "the layered administrative system of Deeper Life Bible Church functions like a pyramid, with authority flowing from the top down, but with accountability mechanisms built into each level" (p. 142). This structure makes sure that decisions from the international headquarters in Lagos reach even the smallest local assemblies and that reports and feedback are communicated upwards.

At the grassroots level, pastors or coordinators manage local assemblies. They organize services, implement programs, and ensure adherence to doctrinal standards. These leaders report to higher overseers, balancing spiritual independence at the local level with organizational unity at the national and international levels.

Committees, Ministries, and Specialized Units

To improve its administrative efficiency, Deeper Life Bible Church runs specialized committees and ministries that focus on specific needs. For example, there are units for children, youth, women, and evangelism. Kalu (2008), states, "the establishment of specialized ministries within Pentecostal churches like Deeper Life has been instrumental in managing growth and meeting the needs of diverse constituencies" (p. 276). These groups ensure that every demographic within the church is supported and also serve as channels for evangelism and missions.

The youth ministry is particularly important for the church's growth. It is closely monitored to ensure that young members adhere to the church's teachings on holiness, including guidelines on

modest dressing and behavior. Leaders of these ministries are often appointed by higher overseers, which reflects the church's preference for centralized decision-making.

Doctrinal Oversight and Administrative Discipline

A unique aspect of Deeper Life Bible Church's management is the combination of doctrinal oversight with administrative discipline. Rules regarding conduct, worship, and dressing are not left to personal interpretation but enforced through leadership. As Ojo (1988), states, "Deeper Life functions not just as a church but as a disciplined community, where administrative structures enforce a vision of holiness and purity" (p. 57). Moreover, this discipline also applies to leaders, who must meet strict standards and may face suspension or removal if they do not. These disciplinary measures are intended to restore and maintain the church's purity, which further portrays a vision of administration as a service to God and the community of believers.

The administrative structure of Deeper Life Bible Church affects how its teachings, including its dress code, are communicated and upheld. Through its hierarchical system, guidelines on modesty and holiness are relayed from the international headquarters to local assemblies. Local leaders must ensure compliance, and members are guided through both teaching and example.

In Benin City, and other urban areas, this administrative framework gives the church a strong way to influence the youth's identity. By combining centralized authority with local oversight, the church helps young people who are often vulnerable to social media and modern fashion pressures, stay aligned with its values of modesty and holiness. Therefore, the administrative

structure serves as both a system of governance and a vital means for maintaining the church's spiritual and moral vision in various contexts.

3.4 Doctrine

The doctrines of Deeper Life Bible Church, are not merely theological statements but living principles that shape the community life, identity, and daily practices of its members. For Deeper Life, doctrine is inseparable from lifestyle and belief is expected to translate into visible conduct. The church teaches that there are twenty two (22) doctrines which are inferred from the Bible. This include; the total depravity of man, the Godhead (Trinity), the Holy Bible, Repentance, Restitution and so on.

This outlook is one of the church's most defining features and has made it both admired and criticized in different contexts.

Biblical Authority and the Centrality of Scripture

The doctrine of Deeper Life Bible Church is rooted in the conviction that the Bible is the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. Kumuyi consistently emphasized that the Scriptures provide the only reliable foundation for belief and practice. According to Kalu (2008), the church's theology is "anchored in a biblicist approach that interprets every matter of doctrine and ethics through a literal reading of the Bible" (p. 263). This doctrinal stance has been the bedrock of the church's emphasis on holiness, separation from worldliness, and insistence on obedience to divine commandments.

The church's doctrinal statement affirms the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, salvation by grace through faith, sanctification, baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, and the second coming of Christ. Yet, more than affirming these classical evangelical doctrines, Deeper Life stresses their practical implications for everyday life. For example, salvation is not only understood as a spiritual experience but also as the beginning of a visible transformation that should affect speech, appearance, relationships, and moral choices (Gaiya, 2002).

Holiness and Sanctification

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Deeper Life doctrine is its teaching on holiness. Pastor Kumuyi often described holiness as the very heart of Christianity, a non-negotiable condition for seeing God. Ojo (1988), observes that "the Deeper Life message is essentially a holiness message, stressing inward purity and outward conformity to biblical standards" (p. 59). This dual emphasis means that holiness is viewed both as an internal spiritual state and as an outward way of life that can be recognized by others.

Sanctification, therefore, is considered a second definite work of grace, following salvation. It is the process of cleansing the believer from the root of sin and enabling them to live a victorious Christian life. The church connects sanctification with separation from worldly habits, entertainment, and fashion trends, seeing these as potential distractions from spiritual focus. This

doctrinal position has directly shaped the church's conservative lifestyle practices, including its strict dress code and rejection of adornments.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Evangelism

Deeper Life also places strong emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues and empowered service. However, unlike some other Pentecostal movements that highlight ecstatic manifestations, the church ties Spirit baptism closely to evangelism and holy living. According to Ukah (2008), "for Kumuyi, the real evidence of Spirit baptism is not uncontrolled emotionalism but power for holy living and zeal for evangelism" (p. 194). This doctrinal stance reflects the church's pragmatic spirituality, which avoids excesses but affirms Pentecostal distinctives.

Evangelism flows naturally from this doctrinal foundation. From its earliest years, Deeper Life became known for its aggressive evangelistic outreach, emphasizing house-to-house preaching, tract distribution, and public crusades. This evangelistic spirit is framed as a doctrinal obligation: believers are expected to share their faith as a demonstration of obedience to Christ's command and evidence of Spirit empowerment.

Separation from the World

One of the most controversial aspects of Deeper Life doctrine has been its teaching on separation from the world. Drawing on passages such as 2 Corinthians 6:17, the church insists that Christians must avoid conformity with worldly lifestyles, fashions, and practices. In practice, this

has meant a prohibition on jewelry, makeup, extravagant hairstyles, secular entertainments, and immodest clothing. According to Ojo (2010), “Kumuyi’s teaching insists that the Christian life must be visibly different from the surrounding culture, not in arrogance but in holiness” (p. 96). This teaching has attracted both admiration and criticism. Supporters see it as a courageous stand against moral decay, while critics argue that it is legalistic and culturally restrictive. Nonetheless, it remains one of the strongest doctrinal markers of Deeper Life identity.

The doctrine of Deeper Life Bible Church is not only theological but also sociological, as it creates a visible culture of holiness that distinguishes its members from others. This is particularly evident in the church’s dress code, which arises directly from its doctrinal teaching on holiness and separation from the world. The insistence on modesty in appearance, especially among women, reflects the conviction that holiness must be both inward and outward.

For young people in particular, this doctrine has a profound impact on identity formation. In a society where fashion and social media promote self-expression through appearance, Deeper Life’s doctrine challenges youths to ground their identity in spiritual values rather than cultural trends. Thus, the doctrine functions as a countercultural force, shaping not only belief but also the way members present themselves publicly.

By linking doctrine to practice in this way, Deeper Life Bible Church demonstrates how theology can shape culture, identity, and everyday life. The doctrinal emphasis on holiness, sanctification, and separation from the world makes the dress code not merely a rule but a lived

expression of faith. It reflects the church's broader aim: to raise a generation of believers whose lives, in every visible and invisible aspect, testify to the transforming power of the gospel.

3.5 Youth Participation in Deeper Life Bible Church

Youth participation in religious communities has always been recognized as a key factor in supporting spiritual growth and continuity across generations. In the Deeper Life Bible Church, young people have been viewed not just as followers of faith but as drivers of change within the church and the wider Nigerian society. The founder, Pastor William Folorunso Kumuyi, placed great importance on training and mentoring young men and women from the church's early days. He understood that their energy, creativity, and eagerness to learn could help spread the gospel (Kalu, 2008).

Historically, the church's rapid growth in the late 1970s and 1980s was closely linked to its ability to attract young people, particularly university and high school students. Early Bible study gatherings at the University of Lagos drew hundreds of students who wanted a more personal and practical approach to Christianity (Ojo, 2010). These meetings were not just religious events; they became spaces where young men and women discovered purpose, guidance, and moral direction. In this way, the youths were not passive recipients of religious teaching. They actively shaped the character of the emerging movement.

Deeper Life Bible Church formalized this focus on youth participation by creating organized ministries, such as the Deeper Life Campus Fellowship (DLCF) and Deeper Life Student

Outreach (DLSO). The DLCF, which grew quickly on Nigerian campuses in the 1980s, offered young people a chance to engage in Bible study, prayer, evangelism, and moral accountability (Ukah, 2007). Through this structure, youths were trained for leadership roles, promoting discipline, commitment, and responsibility. The retreats, held both nationally and regionally, is targeted towards reinforcing these goals by providing intensive teaching and worship sessions to strengthen the faith and moral lives of young believers.

Moreover, youth participation in Deeper Life Bible Church has always been closely connected to its strict moral code. The church stresses modesty in dressing, discipline in behavior, and holiness in lifestyle, putting young people at the forefront of living out these values. According to Ojo (2010), many young members embraced these values as part of their identity, even when they conflicted with mainstream youth cultures shaped by modernization and globalization. While some critics claim that this strictness pushes youths away, the church insists that this discipline helps them build resilience against social issues, peer pressure, and moral dilemmas in today's society.

In addition, Deeper Life Bible Church has made significant investments in the intellectual and spiritual development of its youth. Pastor Kumuyi, a former university lecturer, strongly supported education as a tool for empowerment. This focus on education which is in alignment with Nigerian youths, many of whom found a supportive environment in the church where academic success was valued alongside spiritual dedication (Kalu, 2008). Therefore, youth

participation often manifests both in worship activities and in intellectual growth, career development, and personal discipline.

The importance of youths in evangelism within the church is clear. Young members often form the backbone of missionary and outreach efforts, sharing the gospel in rural and urban areas, schools, and campuses. Their involvement was especially noticeable during the church's countrywide crusades, where youths took charge of planning, coordinating, and actively participating in evangelistic programs (Ukah, 2007). Their willingness to input their time, energy, and resources shows their deep connection to the life of the church.

Considering the influence of social media, the role of youths becomes very vital. As digital natives, young members of Deeper Life Bible Church find themselves at the crossroads of traditional faith practices and the new global digital culture. Social media provides them with platforms to express their faith, share church teachings, and engage in evangelism. However, it also exposes them to different ideologies, alternative lifestyles, and distractions that may clash with the church's conservative beliefs. In this context, youth participation becomes an important area where the values of Deeper Life Bible Church are discussed, challenged, and redefined in the digital age.

In summary, youth participation in Deeper Life Bible Church shows both continuity and change. It maintains the church's traditional emphasis on holiness, discipline, and evangelism while also reflecting how young people reinterpret these values in a fast-changing world influenced by technology and social media. For this study, the experiences of Christian youths in Benin City,

particularly within the Deeper Life Bible Church framework, demonstrate how social media affects both their individual lives and the shared identity and witness of their religious community.

3.6 Social Media and Evangelism

The advent of social media has changed human interaction and the way the Christian faith is shared today. Evangelism, which has traditionally depended on face-to-face preaching, printed tracts, and organized events, is now heavily influenced by digital platforms. Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), and YouTube allow us to reach wider audiences, breaking down barriers of distance and time. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), note that the digital revolution has created new spaces for religious communication. Online environments are now places where faith can be practiced, discussed, and shared. This means evangelism is no longer limited to traditional church settings; it has entered the global digital public square.

Evangelism is simply the act of sharing the Christian message with the world. In the past, this has been done through missionary journeys, door-to-door outreach, or large gatherings. Yet, as Hodges (2017), explains, “the message remains constant, but the medium evolves with time” (p. 112). This shift from oral and print culture to digital media shows how Christianity adapts to keep the gospel available to modern audiences. For churches in urban areas like Benin City, where young people are heavily engaged in social media, this adaptability is essential. Social media is not just an alternative; it has become a vital platform for effective evangelism.

The link between social media and evangelism raises questions about authenticity, authority, and the depth of faith communication. On one hand, social media makes evangelism accessible. Every believer with a smartphone can propagate their faith. On the other hand, it can lead to shallow engagement with the gospel. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), argue that digital religion often mixes religious devotion with cultural performance such that likes, shares, and posts can sometimes replace deeper discipleship. This dynamic points out the complex nature of social media evangelism: it has unmatched reach but also poses the risk of trivializing sacred messages.

In Nigeria, especially within Pentecostal and evangelical communities, social media is increasingly seen as a crucial evangelistic tool. Ojo (2018), mentions that many Nigerian churches now livestream their services, hold online prayer meetings, and use WhatsApp groups to maintain spiritual connections outside of Sunday services. These practices extend the church's presence into the daily digital lives of members, hence, allowing continuous spiritual engagement. For youth in Deeper Life Bible Church, this digital interaction presents challenges and opportunities. While the church is renowned for its conservative stance, its growing use of media shows that it recognizes the cultural realities that shape young Christians in Benin City.

An essential advantage of social media in evangelism is its ability to connect with young people. Researchers like Babatunde (2020), emphasize that young adults are the largest online demographic and are highly responsive to digital evangelistic efforts. For youth living in a world of prompt communication, the gospel needs to reach them where they are, that is, online. This is particularly important for Deeper Life youth in Benin City, who must reconcile the church's

teachings with the wealth of competing ideas they encounter online. In this context, social media becomes both a battleground and a mission field.

However, using social media for evangelism raises theological questions. Does the brevity of tweets or Instagram posts makes the gospel oversimplified? Can online fellowship really replace the sense of community found in person? Many Christian leaders grapple with these questions today. Campbell and Tsuria (2021), assert that “the digitalization of religion is not merely about using technology but about reimagining the structures and practices of faith in a networked age” (p. 60). This reimagining requires careful thought. The gospel must be propagated faithfully, without being watered down by the fast-paced, entertainment-driven culture of the internet.

Considering Deeper Life Bible Church, which is based on holiness, discipline, and conservative Christian principles, social media creates a kind of paradox. It offers remarkable chances to reach young people, extend evangelism beyond Benin City, and connect with communities abroad. Yet, it also challenges the church’s long-standing focus on distancing itself from “worldly” influences. The church’s use of digital media for evangelism needs a careful balance between preserving doctrinal integrity and engaging with contemporary culture.

In summary, social media has become a vital tool for evangelism, changing how the gospel is shared in today’s world. While it opens up new means for sharing faith and reaching young people, it also brings challenges that need to be considered thoughtfully. For Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City, the goal is not only to use social media for evangelism but also to guide its youth in engaging with these platforms in ways that strengthen their faith rather than undermine

it. In this way, social media serves as both an opportunity and a test for the integrity of Christian witness in the digital age.

3.7 Social Media and Religious Expression

In the 21st century, social media has become a key player in how people express their identities, beliefs, and views about the world. Religion has also felt its impact. Religious expression, which once took place in churches, temples, and mosques, now finds a large audience in digital spaces. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter) serve as modern altars where faith is shared and sometimes debated. As Campbell and Tsuria (2021), note, social media has changed how religious individuals communicate and practice their faith. What used to happen from the pulpit is now broadcast worldwide through smartphones, giving believers a chance to engage in religious life with new immediacy and reach.

Religious expression means the various ways people show or live out their religious beliefs. This can include prayer, worship, moral behavior, clothing, art, rituals, and public statements of faith. In Christian practice, expressing faith has often been communal as we sing hymns, attend services, or evangelize together. However, social media has mixed up the lines between private devotion and public display. Helland (2005), points out that this has resulted in two types of online religious expressions: religion online, where churches use the internet to extend their ministries, and online religion, where individuals directly create and experience spirituality. This combination shows how social media has broadened the ways faith can be expressed, even as it challenges traditional religious authorities.

The digital world allows believers to share their faith through personal, creative, and accessible methods. Online testimonies, live-streamed sermons, gospel music videos, and Bible study groups on Zoom or WhatsApp spread the Christian message to millions every day. Social media acts as a tool for evangelism and a way to share personal experiences. Ojo (2018), highlights that “digital technologies have revolutionized how religion is lived and expressed, particularly among youth in urban Africa” (p. 117). Young Christians use social media to share scriptures, post religious quotes, or discuss moral issues and life purpose. For many, this online involvement extends their worship, thereby, showing faith through technology.

However, the connection between social media and religious expression can create tension. The digital space often emphasizes visibility, popularity, and performance, which can clash with Christian values of humility and sincerity. Campbell (2013), warns that “the performative nature of social media can turn religious devotion into spectacle” (p. 62). For example, when worship becomes about content creation or faith is judged by likes and shares, the distinction between genuine expressions of faith and performative spirituality becomes unclear. This is especially relevant for conservative groups like the Deeper Life Bible Church, which has long valued modesty, discipline, and spiritual sincerity over outward displays.

The Deeper Life Bible Church members learn to show their faith through modest clothing, moral behavior, and personal evangelism. Traditionally, the church has been wary of popular culture, including technology. Yet as the digital world increasingly shapes social interaction, even Deeper Life members, especially the youth, are figuring out how to express their faith online

without compromising their beliefs. In this way, social media presents both a challenge and an opportunity: a space where faith can either be diluted by worldly trends or enhanced through creative witness.

Young people in Benin City, like others across Nigeria, are deeply affected by digital culture. Their smartphones connect them to a global dialogue that blends entertainment, politics, and religion. For Christian youths in Deeper Life Bible Church, this digital environment requires careful consideration of morals and spirituality. While they are encouraged to be witnesses for Christ, they must also be careful not to fall into the trap of self-promotion. The Apostle Paul's advice to "be not conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2) resonates strongly here. Through posts, comments, and online conversations, these youths are finding ways for their religious expressions to align with both their faith and the surrounding digital culture.

Social media has also led to new forms of collective religious expression. Digital prayer meetings, online crusades, and evangelistic campaigns allow churches to reach audiences they could not have imagined a generation ago. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social media became the main way for worship and community. This shift sped up the digital transformation of many Nigerian churches, including Deeper Life, which started live-streaming services and sharing sermons through its media department. As Babatunde (2020), explains, "digital evangelism has bridged the gap between physical church attendance and spiritual engagement" (p. 103). Religious expression now has a hybrid nature. It is both physical and digital, individual and communal.

Still, the digitalization of religious expression brings up important theological and ethical questions. Does the immediacy of social media make the sacred seem ordinary? Can spiritual experiences be authentically shared through screens? Campbell and Tsuria (2021), argue that religious communities must now figure out how to “translate spiritual authenticity into digital formats without losing the sacred essence of faith” (p. 76). For churches like Deeper Life Bible Church, this entails reevaluating traditional forms of worship and communication while keeping true to scripture.

Additionally, the look and feel of social media which involve; visual appeal, brevity, and emotional engagement can shape how religious messages are conveyed. Evangelical groups often adjust their content to fit these styles, creating short video clips, inspiring posts, and relatable memes. While these tools can effectively communicate faith, they also risk trivializing deep truths if not approached with care. Therefore, the challenge for modern churches is not just to use social media well, but to make sure that every digital communication genuinely reflects Christian beliefs.

In conclusion, the connection between social media and religious expression highlights the ongoing relationship between faith and culture in a digital world. Social media has broadened the ways people can express their religion, enabling believers, especially youth, to share their faith across global networks. However, it also requires maturity, wisdom, and a solid theological foundation to keep digital expressions true to the gospel. For Deeper Life Bible Church youth in Benin City, social media serves as both a mission field and a reflection of their devotion. That is,

a mission field for spreading Christ's truth and a mirror showing the sincerity of their faith. The challenge is to turn these platforms from distractions into spaces for divine encounters, where the timeless message of holiness finds a new voice in a connected world.

3.8 Perceived Impact on Faith and Identity

The rise of social media has changed almost every part of human life. It affects how people talk, think, and even what they believe. Researchers have noted that social media is not just a new technology; it is a cultural force that reshapes values, spirituality, and personal identity (Campbell, 2013). The mixture of faith and digital life is a major area of study, especially as people turn to online spaces to express, question, and redefine their religious identities.

Faith, in the context of religious studies, means a personal belief in the divine, shown through thought, practice, and moral direction. Identity, on the other hand, is how someone understands themselves in relation to community, culture, and belief systems. When social media connects with these two important parts of human life, it creates new ways of experiencing religion and perceiving oneself (Turkle, 2011).

Heidi Campbell (2013), explains that social media has “altered the ecology of faith communities” (p. 45) by providing both opportunities and challenges for spiritual growth. The availability of religious content online allows people, especially young people, to explore spiritual materials outside their immediate religious organizations. For Christian youths in Deeper Life Bible Church, platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become places where sermons,

devotional materials, and testimonies are shared widely. This allows their faith to reach beyond the walls of the church.

However, this digital expansion of faith subtly changes how believers form their religious identities. Social media creates what Berger (1999), calls a “pluralistic environment” (p. 88), where many truths exist and compete for attention. In this platform, youths encounter not just their church's teachings but also different ideas, secular beliefs, and various expressions of Christianity. This exposure can either energize or weaken their faith, depending on how they handle these influences.

For many Christian youths, especially those in the Deeper Life Bible Church, which advocates for holiness, modesty, and separation from worldly influences, the open nature of social media presents a challenge. It provides a space for evangelism and spiritual growth while also introducing values that may clash with the church's conservative practices. Gurevitch, Coleman, and Blumler (2009), state that “media are not just transmitters of information; they are social institutions that participate in shaping cultural meanings” (p. 166). This cultural influence reaches faith and identity building, where young believers must constantly balance church teachings with mainstream digital culture.

The effect of social media on identity is further explained by the idea of “performed identity.” Erving Goffman (1959), discusses how identity is often presented for others, with individuals choosing certain traits to gain approval. On social media, this performance aspect is even stronger. Young people involve in religious expressions through posts, captions, and images that

fit their desired self-image. Within Deeper Life Bible Church, where strict moral standards and modest dress are important, social media serves as both a way to witness and a space of silent conflict. Here, the desire for acceptance in online communities can clash with the expectation for spiritual uniqueness.

Scholars like Dawson and Cowan (2004), argue that digital spaces let individuals build “networked religious identities” that are flexible and interactive. This can make better how faith is expressed by creating new forms of community and discussion. However, it can also weaken the sense of belonging that traditional churches offer. For example, Deeper Life youth might find support in online fellowship but could also face distractions that undermine their doctrinal beliefs.

Additionally, consistent exposure to different opinions and lifestyles online can lead to what Bauman (2000), calls “liquid identity,” where personal and spiritual limits become less defined. In this situation, religious beliefs can shift in response to online trends, likes, and social approval. This is especially important for Christian youths in urban areas like Benin City, who are always trying to balance the digital and spiritual aspects of their lives.

Despite these challenges, social media offers significant chances for strengthening faith and identity. Research shows that online religious engagement can boost spiritual growth when it is guided by solid doctrine and purposeful mentorship (Campbell & Tsuria, 2021). For Deeper Life members, digital evangelism, virtual Bible studies, and online testimonies are ways to continue the church’s mission. These digital efforts match the church's long-standing focus on evangelism and holiness, showing how faith can adjust to new technology without losing its core values.

In summary, the effect of social media on faith and identity is complex and layered. It can promote spiritual connections, encourage inclusivity, and create new chances for evangelism, but it can also fragment belief, weaken spiritual discipline, and blur the lines of religious identity. For Deeper Life youth, the goal is to use social media as a tool for evangelism and spiritual growth rather than as a means to conform to secular trends.

Ultimately, social media has changed how faith is practiced, shared, and felt. It urges believers to rethink what it means to stay true to their beliefs amid the changes of the digital age. As Campbell (2013), notes, “the internet does not replace religion, but it reconfigures it” (p. 47). Thus, Christian youths need to find ways to integrate technology into their spiritual lives that deepen, rather than weaken, their identity in Chris

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the data collected through a structured questionnaire given to selected youths from the Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City. The goal of this chapter is to evaluate how social media affects the faith, identity, and religious expression of Christian youths in the church. The data were analyzed descriptively to show patterns, trends, and views on social media use and its impact on their spiritual lives. A total of 30 valid responses were obtained and analyzed.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic analysis showed that most respondents (about 73%) were between 18 and 25 years old, making this the most active age group on social media. Around 13% were between 26 and 30 years, 10% were over 30 years, and only 4% were 13 to 17 years old. This indicates that most participants are young adults who are technologically savvy and socially engaged.

In terms of gender, 67% were female and 33% were male. Educationally, 43% of respondents were undergraduates, 37% were graduates or postgraduates, 13% were secondary school students, and 7% were in other categories.

Regarding occupation, most respondents (60%) were students, followed by 23% self-employed, 10% civil servants, and 7% unemployed. Additionally, 57% of respondents had been members of Deeper Life Bible Church for over six years, 20% for 1 to 3 years, and 23% for less than a year. This distribution suggests that most respondents are mature, well-grounded in church teachings, and active participants in the church community.

4.3 Patterns and Purposes of Social Media Use

The analysis revealed that WhatsApp is the most popular social media platform among respondents (73%), followed by Facebook (13%), YouTube (10%), and TikTok (4%). This shows that communication-focused platforms are preferred over those based on entertainment.

In terms of usage frequency, 80% of respondents use social media several times a day, while 10% use it once daily and another 10% a few times a week. When asked about their average

online time, 67% reported spending 1 to 3 hours daily, 20% spent 4 to 6 hours, and 13% spent more than six hours.

For the purpose of use, 47% of respondents said they primarily use social media for communication, 30% for education or information, 17% for evangelism or sharing their faith, and 6% for entertainment. Notably, 90% follow Christian pages or religious accounts, indicating that faith-based engagement is an important part of their online experience.

4.4 The Impact of Social Media on Faith and Identity

Social media has significantly influenced how Christian youths perceive, express, and live their faith. The study found that 70% of respondents agreed that social media has made it easier to share their faith, and 80% stated they have learned more about Christianity through it. However, 40% admitted that social media has sometimes led them to question certain church doctrines, while 67% felt pressured by trends that go against Christian values. Despite this, 75% expressed that social media has helped them gain confidence in publicly expressing their Christian identity.

These findings show a complex relationship between exposure and conviction. Social media serves as both a spiritual resource and a place for moral challenges. For Deeper Life youths, raised in an environment that emphasizes holiness, modesty, and separation from the world, this exposure is both enlightening and demanding. It enables them to learn, connect, and share their faith, yet it requires careful decisions to maintain spiritual discipline amid moral distractions.

4.5 Social Media and Religious Expression

Social media has become a platform for Christian witness among Deeper Life youths. 60% of respondents reported that they frequently share Bible verses or church-related content online, while 73% said their church encourages the use of social media for evangelism. Additionally, 57% of participants often join online church services or fellowships, and 83% agreed that social media is an effective tool for evangelism.

This shows how technology has changed traditional evangelism. Youths are no longer limited to physical church spaces; they now extend their witness into digital platforms. Social media allows them to connect with friends, share testimonies, and promote church events, making the online world an extension of their spiritual mission.

However, this expansion comes with challenges. 63% of respondents reported experiencing conflict between social media culture and church values. Some mentioned that the desire for popularity, worldly entertainment, or inappropriate online interactions can distract from their spiritual focus. This indicates that while social media is useful for evangelism, it also requires strong moral discipline from users.

4.6 Challenges of Social Media Exposure

Despite its benefits, social media presents significant challenges to the faith and moral integrity of Christian youths. The most commonly mentioned issue is distraction from spiritual growth. 70% of respondents agreed that time spent online often replaces time for prayer, Bible study, or

fellowship. Constant scrolling and engagement with secular trends can easily divert attention from spiritual matters.

Another major challenge is encountering immoral or conflicting content. 77% of respondents admitted to coming across posts, videos, or discussions that oppose Christian beliefs. This exposure can lead to confusion, weaken moral certainty, and gradually degrade spiritual standards if not approached with maturity.

Moreover, 80% of respondents agreed that social media contributes to moral decline among Christian youths. This reflects the broader societal concern that digital culture often promotes materialism, sensuality, and rebellion. Hence, such are values that conflict with the conservative teachings of Deeper Life Bible Church.

Additionally, the pressure to conform to global social trends in fashion, lifestyle, and speech has also been reported. Many respondents confessed to feeling out of place or judged for upholding conservative standards online. This conflict highlights the balance between maintaining religious differences and seeking social acceptance.

Overall, the challenges posed by social media are not merely technological but deeply spiritual and ethical. Without proper guidance, the very platform meant for spreading the gospel can become a subtle channel for spiritual compromise.

4.7 Prospects of Social Media Exposure

While the challenges are significant, the potential of social media exposure among Deeper Life youths is also promising. Many respondents believe that social media, when used correctly, can serve as a powerful tool for evangelism, discipleship, and global Christian witness.

The study found that 87% of respondents think social media can be used positively to strengthen faith. Platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Facebook have turned into spaces for sharing sermons, testimonies, and online Bible teachings. These digital exchanges help spread the gospel and foster fellowship among members who might be separated by distance.

Furthermore, 83% of respondents supported the idea of the church organizing digital mentorship programs to educate youths on responsible media use. This shows that Deeper Life youths are open to combining their spiritual commitment with digital skills. With proper mentorship, they can become effective ambassadors of Christ online.

The potential also extends to global evangelism. Social media eliminates geographical barriers, allowing Deeper Life members to reach people in other cities and countries. This digital missionary potential aligns with the church's vision of "bringing the total gospel to the total man."

Social media can also help shift the public perception of holiness-based denominations like Deeper Life. By engaging positively online, youths can present a balanced image of their faith thus, one that is grounded in doctrine but also loving, engaging, and open to discussion.

In summary, these prospects suggest that social media is not inherently harmful; it is a tool that reflects the intentions of its users. When used with discipline, awareness, and purpose, it can become a means for spiritual influence and moral growth.

4.8 Summary and Interpretation of Findings

From the data analyzed, it is clear that social media has a dual role in the lives of Deeper Life youths in Benin City as it can both strengthen and challenge their faith. The findings indicate that social media use is nearly universal among young church members. It has opened new avenues for evangelism, learning, and self-expression. However, it also exposes them to worldly influences and distractions that can hinder spiritual growth.

These findings support Campbell's (2013) observation that digital media "redefines religious experience by merging sacred communication with modern media interaction" (p. 67). Likewise, Ojo (2018) notes that Christian youths in Nigeria are increasingly using social media to express and expand their faith, even as they struggle to maintain spiritual discipline.

In conclusion, the challenge lies not in the use of social media itself but in how it is used and for what purposes. Deeper Life youths are encouraged to engage with technology mindfully and to shine as light in digital spaces. With proper guidance, mentorship, and accountability, social media can serve as a powerful tool for faith development, moral influence, and global evangelism, rather than a source of distraction or decline.

CHAPTER FIVE: EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Evaluation

The main goal of this study was to understand how social media impacts the faith, identity, and religious expression of Christian youths in Benin City, focusing specifically on members of the Deeper Life Bible Church. The research aimed to assess how social media use has shaped,

challenged, or strengthened the moral and spiritual lives of young people within a conservative Christian setting. The data analyzed in chapter four revealed patterns indicating both the transformative potential and the risks of digital exposure. The findings show that social media is now a key part of everyday life for Deeper Life youths. Most respondents reported using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and TikTok multiple times a day, spending an average of one to three hours online daily. This trend reflects not only the adoption of technology but also the deep integration of digital communication into their spiritual and social practices. As Boyd (2014) noted, “the digital environment has evolved into a social ecosystem where young people explore their identities and values through interaction” (p. 29). This observation resonates with the experience of Deeper Life youths, who, though guided by conservative church teachings, are increasingly on a spiritual journey within online communities. The research also highlights that social media is seen as more than just a source of entertainment or information; it serves as a platform for expressing faith and evangelism. Many respondents said they follow Christian pages, share Bible verses, and join livestreamed services. This shows a shift from traditional methods of evangelism to a mixed approach where faith is both preached in church and shared online.

However, the data also reveal the mixed nature of this engagement. While 70% of respondents felt social media has helped them share their faith and 80% reported learning more about Christianity online, a significant number also admitted to facing moral and spiritual dilemmas. For example, 67% felt pressured by online trends that conflict with Christian values, while 40%

acknowledged that they had sometimes questioned certain church teachings based on what they found online.

This conflict highlights a critical point made by Campbell (2013), who stated that “digital media does not simply transmit religion; it transforms it, creating new spaces where sacred values are negotiated and redefined” (p. 67). In other words, social media has not just provided a venue for religious communication, it has also become a place where young Christians continually balance faith with modern influences.

For the Deeper Life Bible Church, this presents a unique challenge. As a denomination founded on principles of holiness, modesty, and separation from the world, the church stresses discipline and doctrinal purity (Okon, 2019). Yet its youths are now navigating a digital world filled with diverse ideas, lifestyles, and moral standards. The church's views on modest clothing, moral conduct, and limited interaction with the world now intersect with a globalized digital culture promoting self-expression, visibility, and connection.

It is important to note, however, that most respondents (over 83%) supported digital mentorship programs and church-led initiatives to guide their online behavior. This indicates not a rejection of church teachings but a desire for balance i.e an acceptance that faith and technology can coexist positively if managed well.

Additionally, this evaluation shows that while social media can distract from spiritual growth, it also opens up new opportunities for Christian youth engagement. Through WhatsApp groups,

YouTube sermons, and online evangelistic efforts, Deeper Life youths are discovering fresh ways to connect with peers, share faith-based content, and reinforce biblical teachings. As Livingstone (2019) remarked, “technology becomes transformative only when users invest it with moral intention” (p. 54).

Thus, the evaluation suggests that the impact of social media on Christian youths is not simply positive or negative; it largely depends on how they use it. The findings imply that with the right spiritual guidance and education, social media can serve as a crucial tool for spiritual growth, moral reflection, and evangelistic outreach.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has shown that social media has significantly affected how Christian youths, especially those in the Deeper Life Bible Church, experience, express, and practice their faith. It has changed their sense of community, reshaped their learning patterns, and expanded their religious expression.

The study confirms that the youths of Deeper Life Bible Church in Benin City are active social media users. For many, it acts as a tool for communication, learning, and spiritual engagement. It also fosters a sense of belonging, allowing them to connect with like-minded believers beyond physical church boundaries. However, this openness also presents moral and spiritual risks.

The strength of social media lies in its ability to enable global connectivity, instant communication, and information sharing. Yet, this same openness can lead to moral compromise,

distractions, and confusion. In a world where digital influence shapes thinking and behavior, Christian youths face the ongoing challenge of keeping their spiritual identity while engaging with modern society.

As Erikson (1968) stated, “identity is formed through the interplay between personal choice and the expectations of one’s environment” (p. 162). This idea applies to Deeper Life youths, whose identities are being shaped at the crossroads of church teachings and online culture. They are learning to combine their spiritual beliefs with modern forms of communication, aiming to stay true to biblical teachings while adjusting to new realities.

In the context of the Deeper Life Bible Church, a group recognized for its strong doctrines and moral restraint social media presents both a test and an opportunity. It challenges members to maintain holiness in a digital world full of moral uncertainties while empowering them to share their faith more broadly than ever.

The study's findings show that the effect of social media is not the same for everyone. For some, it is a tool for evangelism and faith growth; for others, it can become a source of temptation and distraction. Nevertheless, the overall conclusion is that social media can be a positive tool when its use is guided by intentional spiritual discipline and support from the church.

Therefore, the study concludes that social media is not a threat to Christianity or the Deeper Life community as it reflects the spiritual maturity of its users. When approached wisely and with moral clarity, it can strengthen personal faith, promote unity, and carry the message of salvation

beyond traditional limits. However, if misused, it can weaken values and disconnect young believers from their spiritual roots.

The challenge for Christian leaders is to bridge the gap between doctrine and digital culture. They need to equip youths with the judgment necessary to thrive spiritually in a digital environment without compromising their beliefs.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered to the leadership of Deeper Life Bible Church, Christian educators, and researchers in religious and youth studies:

1. Digital Discipleship Programs:

The Deeper Life Bible Church should create structured digital mentorship programs to teach youths how to use social media responsibly. These programs should combine biblical principles with practical lessons on digital ethics, content creation, and online evangelism.

2. Integration of Faith and Technology in Church Teaching:

The church should include discussions about social media in youth meetings, Bible studies, and leadership seminars. By addressing both the opportunities and risks of digital platforms, the church can help youths engage online without sacrificing their spiritual values.

3. Promoting Online Evangelism:

Social media can extend the church's mission of evangelism. Youths should be encouraged to share uplifting content, church programs, testimonies, and Bible verses online. This will not only strengthen their faith but also help spread the church's message to a larger audience.

4. Media Literacy and Accountability:

Training on media literacy should be a part of the church's youth education. Understanding how algorithms, advertisements, and digital trends influence behavior will help youths resist harmful influences and make thoughtful choices.

5. Encouraging Time Management and Balance:

Church leaders and parents should assist youths in balancing online activities with spiritual commitments like prayer, Bible study, and fellowship. Creating "digital fasting" days or accountability groups could also help maintain this balance.

6. Leveraging Technology for Christian Education:

The church can invest in producing quality digital content such as podcasts, short videos, and mobile devotionals to connect with youths who spend more time online than in traditional church settings. This would make spiritual learning more accessible and relevant to their everyday lives.

7. Further Research:

Future studies should look into how denominational values shape youths' engagement with social media in different Christian contexts. Comparative studies between conservative and

liberal denominations in Nigeria could provide more insight into how faith communities navigate the digital age.

8. Reinforcing Identity Formation through Faith Communities:

The church should create interactive platforms both online and offline, where youths can discuss faith, identity, and morality in a safe, supportive setting. Such spaces can help them build confidence in their Christian identity despite societal pressures.

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APPENDIX

Survey Questionnaire

Form Title:

The Impact of Social Media on Christian Youth in Benin City: A Case Study of Deeper Life Bible Church

Form Description:

This questionnaire is part of a research project on “The Impact of Social Media on Christian Youth in Benin City: A Case Study of Deeper Life Bible Church.”

Your honest responses will help assess how social media affects faith, identity, and religious life among Christian youths. All answers are confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Thank you for your participation.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Age Bracket

☐ 13–17 years ☐ 18–25 years ☐ 26–30 years ☐ Above 30 years

2. Gender

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Prefer not to say ☐ Other

3. Educational Level

☐ Secondary School ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Graduate/Postgraduate ☐ Others

4. Occupation

☐ Student ☐ Self-employed ☐ Civil servant ☐ Unemployed

5. How long have you been a member of Deeper Life Bible Church?

☐ Less than 1 year ☐ 1–3 years ☐ 4–6 years ☐ Above 6 years

Section B: Use of Social Media

6. Which social media platform do you use most frequently?

☐ Facebook ☐ WhatsApp ☐ TikTok ☐ YouTube

7. How often do you use social media?

☐ Several times a day ☐ Once a day ☐ A few times a week ☐ Rarely

8. Average time spent on social media per day:

☐ Less than 1 hour ☐ 1–3 hours ☐ 4–6 hours ☐ More than 6 hours

9. Main reason for using social media:

☐ Communication ☐ Evangelism ☐ Entertainment ☐ Education

10. Do you follow Christian pages or accounts on social media?

☐ Yes, frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

Section C: Impact on Faith and Identity

11. Social media makes it easier to share my faith.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

12. I have learned new things about Christianity through social media.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. Social media sometimes makes me question church doctrines.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

14. I feel pressured by social media trends that contradict my Christian values.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

15. Social media helps me express my Christian identity more confidently.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Section D: Religious Expression and Evangelism

16. I often share Bible verses or church programs on social media.

☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

17. My church encourages members to use social media for evangelism.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

18. I participate in online Christian livestreams or fellowship.

☐ Frequently ☐ Occasionally ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

19. Social media is an effective tool for Christian evangelism.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

20. Social media helps strengthen communication among church members.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Section E: Challenges and Prospects

21. I have experienced conflict between church values and social media trends.

☐ Yes, often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Rarely ☐ Never

22. Social media distracts me from prayer or Bible study.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

23. Social media exposes me to immoral or unchristian content.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

24. Social media contributes to moral decline among Christian youths.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

25. Social media can be used to strengthen faith among Christian youths.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

26. The church should organize mentorship or training for responsible social media use.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Section F: General Perception

27. Overall, social media has influenced my faith:

☐ Positively ☐ Negatively ☐ Both ☐ Not at all

28. Social media has changed how I see myself as a Christian youth.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

29. Social media can promote modest dressing among Christian youths.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

30. The church should set clearer social media usage guidelines.

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree.