



Maturity of Faith through Adaptability to Science and Technology

¹Yeremias Banusu, ²Marianus Wele, ³Benediktus Denar, ⁴Alphonsus Tjatur Raharso

^{1,2} Program Magister Filsafat Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana, Indonesia

³ Program Doktor Teologi Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana, Indonesia

⁴ Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Widya Sasana, Indonesia

¹banusyeremias@gmail.com; ²ireneus28marianus@gmail.com, ³bennydenar@yahoo.com;

⁴atjaturr@gmail.com

Article History

Received: 5-03-2023

Accepted: 15-05-2023

Published: 01-06-2023

Keywords: faith; formation; spirituality

Abstract: This research examines the experience of religious people in this modern world. Humans will feel the experience of God when they can give distance to the appearance of this modern world. The experience of God is entirely different from the worldly experience that is empty, hollow, and meaningless. The development of science and technology is neutral. It is the desire to be closer to God that determines it. This study aims to find out the struggle of faith in God in this modern world and live it as a religious experience. We used qualitative research. This study found several important things related to the experience of God's people and religion. The development of science and technology marks the modern age. The development of science and technology provides positive and negative problems for the development of human life, especially in terms of providing life changes. James Fowler's theory supports that the formation of inner attitudes and the sharpening of conscience daily are the means of experiencing God.

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to explore the faith experiences of people in this modern age. In this development of science and telecommunications, the narrative of life is increasingly promising. Both negative and positive impacts are displayed before human beings today. When the development of science entangles humans, it alienates humans from this life. This development harms the running of this life. Children and even adults can feel this.

The use of *gadgets* is one such source of experience. Every day, people use *gadgets*. They always hold or keep gadgets in their pockets or bags for almost all their lives. *Gadgets have* become the master of humans themselves. Children no longer hang out and play with their friends. They are busy playing games. Games rule their lives. Adults also do the same. They lack the fighting power to face the challenges and obstacles of this life. They experience despair immediately when they fail in life's activities. It happens because of instant gratification. They want to get everything without the need for a long process. They experience loneliness when they are in a crowd.

The Old Testament Scriptures state that God opposes those who create technology that is oriented towards the greatness of self, group, or nation, for example, in the story of the Tower of Babel (cf. Gen. 11:1-9). God opposed not the building of the city or the building of the tower of Babel, but the motivation of man himself; the building of the Tower of Babel elevated the name of man; the existence of the Tower of Babel affirmed the existence of man, not God. Or,

the luxury story in Solomon's time prompted Solomon to gather many foreign women; later, Solomon fell into idolatry (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-13). Thus, science and technology have started since the beginning of human history. Human beings have the creative power of science and technology because they are God's image and intelligent persons. God Himself is the creator of the universe, the driving force, and the originator of the idea of science and technology.

Parish pastoral ministry related to *gadgets* is indeed a new thing. Parish pastoral work must be able to package its message in technology. St. Andreas Tidar Parish has also tried to package and think about the people's attitude towards the development of science and technology. The statement at the entrance of the Church, "Open your heart, turn off the gadgets," is an awareness effort. On several occasions, the parish has held seminars on gadgets. The seminar theme encourages people to understand the importance of the quality of presence and encounter because the ability to dialogue and relate is one of the essential soft skills of today. In addition, gadgets must also be helpful for the common interest in building this world.

Technological developments open up opportunities. The Church should not close itself but also not immediately accept everything. In this case, wisdom becomes essential when one decides to use the development of science and technology. Technology makes it easier for the Church to spread the message of God's word. Today's proclamation requires exciting content. The strengthening of people's faith happens through sharing or testimony. In short, today's evangelism conveys the importance and necessity of a good and meaningful life. Such a life is in line with the life of Jesus Christ. Finally, technology also supports the broadcasting of Christian worship activities.

The field of evangelization needs to package and present its content well. Not only should the content of the Church be exciting and of excellent quality, but it should also be trustworthy. Simply having a website and a presence on social media is not enough. For that, the Church needs the involvement of subject matter experts. They can help to populate good content. They can also enrich the insights of the congregation.

The Church needs to nurture the involvement of people in physical gatherings. Cyberspace gatherings cannot compete with the excellence of face-to-face human relationships. The Church needs to pay attention to that. The Church should also not forget the importance of sincerity in love, care, hospitality, and service that happens in the real world. Cyber community cannot replace physical community. The Church needs to overcome the people's loneliness, indifference, and selfishness and awaken their passion to meet their fellow brothers and sisters in the real world.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research approach. This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. The descriptive method is a process of explaining an event or a condition that is related to the research theme. We got data through interviews. We interviewed several people. In the interviews we conducted, many of the research subjects gave their responses and answers related to their experiences in using

communication tools properly and wisely. We asked, "What are the positives and negatives of the development of science and technology in your spiritual life?" The second was, "Do you often use gadgets during Sunday or weekday mass, or do you direct your heart and mind more to God during mass?" The third was, "Do you have an experience of God in this glittering world? Why and how is it an experience of God?"

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research presentation, we combine their answers to our questions. The results show that this modern world demands that humans always establish their relationship with God through various meditations from every life experience so as not to lose their way. The belief in the existence of God in human life is inseparable from life experiences. Specific experiences bring them to a point of faith and surrender.

The experience that leads man to believe in God as the highest essence is a religious experience. Religious experiences concern the whole of human life. Life in its truest sense has touched their experiences. Miss Nanik states that God is indeed with her life. She felt this when she came to a point she had never imagined before. God was present to touch her deepest heart. Thus, according to Miss Nanik, the experience of God is the experience of the unspeakable, which is the basis of everything and simultaneously exceeds everything. God is present in every experience, even if one is often unaware.

Table 1. Research Results

No.	Question	Research Subject Responses
1	How do the research subjects respond to the positives and negatives related to the development of science and technology?	The positive things they have felt concerning the development of this era are: <i>First</i> , they can access all things through <i>gadgets</i> related to spiritual matters—for example, access to devotional materials and readings. <i>Secondly</i> , sometimes it isn't easy, especially when they suddenly have to give a devotional. They look for devotionals in gadget applications. <i>Third</i> , it is easy to do pastoral care. Then the <i>negative</i> thing: people are busy with themselves. They become autistic people who don't care about the people around them. Inter-personal encounters become very minimal due to the excessive use of <i>gadgets</i> .
2	In the parish context, during Sunday or weekday mass, do people often use gadgets, or do they direct their hearts and minds more to God during the mass?	The parish once held a seminar related to the use of gadgets. With the theme, Wise Use of Gadgets. Indeed, the use of <i>gadgets</i> depends on the person. However, the parish always invites us to be wise in using <i>gadgets</i> . So, in the Church, there is an inscription at the entrance: Open your heart, turn off the gadget. Then, in the meeting, we also use <i>gadgets</i> to access several things related to the meeting material.
3	Have you had an experience of God in this glittering world? Why and how is it an experience of God?	They feel the experience of God when they have struggles, whether in building a household, pastoral ministry, or living out the calling that God has given them. In this world, they feel the presence of God when they experience an empty life. This emptiness of life will appear when man directs his heart to the world and the progress of the times. In this inner situation, humans need a personal figure who can give an aura of life. God's presence in human life appeared when God sent His son, Jesus Christ. God's love is beyond anything. In essence, this

No.	Question	Research Subject Responses
		technological development does not affect the decline in the meaning of faith in God. This inner voice guides us to live a better life, serve more, pray, and read the Bible.

(Source: Research Data, 2023)

According to the Second Vatican Council, faith means freely giving oneself entirely to God (*cf. Dei Verbum art 5*). It is the content of the statements of Martin and Veri, who are seminarians. According to both of them, faith in God is the total surrender of oneself without hesitation to God's work. The core of faith is a personal relationship with God. People today must pay attention to this disposition of heart in order that they realize Him in common thing.

Miss Nanik and Miss Maria experience the presence of God in their daily lives. In every task and responsibility as a housewife, they need more patience and attention to their children and husband. Therefore, they express it in prayer. They expressed what was in their hearts. The prayer reads, "God of Love, please allow Your servant to be a messenger of love in my little family." This prayer experience continues to be the basis for Miss Maria's duties and responsibilities as a housewife. During her busy schedule, Miss Maria still finds time to pray. God is a loving helper. Prayer, which is born from the depths of the heart and conscience, according to Fowler, is a belief that emphasizes the affectionate nature of human beings. This affectionate attitude makes humans adore, be fascinated by, and revere God's love and saving work.

One of the research subjects gave us an interesting answer regarding faith in this modern world. He said that the role of religion, science, and technology is very important in fostering people's faith in this era. Both have a perfect mutual relationship. Without science and technology, the spread of faith becomes less good and vice versa; without religion, humans live in a void if they only rely on science and technology.

Religious teachings can change the way and mindset of humans for the better. The people themselves should be able to feel the change. The Church must open up opportunities for people to make changes by making decisions while drawing closer to God. The role of human personal change with positive reasons. Change plays a role in bringing God's people to salvation. Then, the change reminds him that God is a lover who has organized his life. The awareness of God can provide a guardrail so that they do not fall and fall into a wrong way of life.

The teachings of the Church must be able to encourage people to practice love. That love becomes real in daily actions. They can motivate others if they are experiencing problems in their household or life. They realize that humans must limit themselves in using science and technology so that they do not feel alienated in their world. With such beliefs, a person will experience life changes. In essence, the change in a person when they become a faithful and obedient religious believer involves three important things: faith, hope, and love.

This faith, hope, and love are the theological virtues. The experience of faith, hope, and love is the experience of God. People will be able to develop themselves spiritually well through these experiences. The experience of presence signifies that God's presence is

abundant in one's life. Thus, the experience of the mystery of God in daily life is the experience of someone who strives for it earnestly. So, in the end, everyone will reach spiritual depths, as Jesus said to his disciples, "Go to a deeper place" (Luke 5:4).

James W. Fowler's theory is relevant to the meaning of faith in this digital era. Fowler's perspective complements the results of this research. Understanding and meditating on this theory should give influence to God's people. As they reflect on the existence of life, they will be able to draw closer to God in all circumstances and events.

According to Fowler, trust is how a person creates unity in the many resources and relationships that are the fabric of one's life through giving meaning. He also divides trust into three aspects. The first aspect is that of trust as how a person sees his relationship with others, with whom he feels united against the background of a number of shared goals and understandings. The second aspect is that of trust as a particular way in which the individual interprets and explains all the events and life experiences that take place in their plural and complex life field. The third aspect is that trust is how the individual sees all the values and forces that constitute the ultimate and inevitable reality for oneself and others (Fowler, 1995:34). To achieve the experience of trust, people must be in direct contact with life through daily life experiences. In today's world, there are so many challenges and obstacles for believers in responding to the situation and conditions of this modern era. Faith becomes a meaningless word when one already has everything.

Fowler provides several stages of development. It contextualized human life in the digital age, which is the dynamic process of changing the maturity of a belief. It consists of several stages of belief development. Fowler emphasizes the aspect of development by today's dynamic mentality, namely using the term process in all areas of life and life experience as the most basic metaphor that permeates how one handles and interprets each person's life experience. The term process here ultimately focuses on a developmental metaphor for understanding human faith beliefs.

Faith as belief emphasizes the affective attitude of faith based on trust. This affective dimension of faith is a person's relationship of trust in God, who has saved humanity through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. God accomplished his saving work through Jesus, who engenders trust, awe, respect, adoration, gratitude, and unceasing supplication on the part of humans.

Prayer is an expression of a person's or congregation's feelings. Whether personal or communal, prayer opens up the dialogic dimension of God and man. Prayer connects humans with others and humans with God. Prayer can maintain that relationship. Groome (2010:90) expressed Bonhoeffer's opinion that faith and obedience cannot be one. Faith will become real when humans are obedient. Faith, as a belief, is a person's relationship with God. This relationship emphasizes the aspect of affection or feeling associated with a deep conscience. This affective aspect discusses matters of the heart; therefore, the primary dimension of this affection is listening to the heart's voice.

According to Fowler, faith is the core of human life that colors and shapes all human life. Faith becomes the focus and orientation of humanity to interpret life in this world. This

understanding of faith as the main thing indicates that faith is the basis and compass for humans to continue to exist while continuously interpreting their lives according to what they are responsible for.

CONCLUSION

Religious experiences are experiences that stem from real encounters. Man experiences his being with the Divine when he has a real experience with God, not a virtual one. Indeed, in such an experience, God is not present as an object. God is a present Subject. Man captures the experience of such presence through religious experiences. Man's sensory perception helps him to experience. But, such perception is not the goal. Man can only approach and experience the secret of life in fragments. That is the experience of the mystery of God.

A sacrificial ascetic lifestyle will build civilization and personal identity. It will neutralize the pragmatic-instrumental mentality evident in the tendency towards a consumptive, materialistic, and hedonistic lifestyle. Through asceticism, people can be free from all disorderly tendencies. The Church needs to help people to get to that stage. The reflection of faith in the Church helps to find life's meaning and orient oneself towards eternal values.

Church accompaniment will provide conviction regarding faith in God. That belief will give believers the strength to endure. They can endure not only in joy but also in sorrow, health or sickness, success or failure. In other words, faith in God gives freedom in the various circumstances of human life today. This experience will lead people to a profound stage of knowing God.

Acknowledgment: The authors acknowledge informants for their availability while collecting data.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declared that the research results that have been carried out are free from conflicts of interest from certain parties who may claim the results of their research.

REFERENCES

- Adisunario, dkk. (1989). *Kamus besar bahasa Indonesia*. Jakarta :Balai Pustaka.
- Angga, S., & Firmanto, A. D. (2023). Digital ecclesia sebagai gereja sinodal yang mendengarkan. *Dunamis: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, 8(1), 170-183.
- Berry, Thomas. (1994). *The universe story: From the primordial flaring forth to the eozoic era*. New York: Harper one.
- Bilung, R., Tarihoran, E., & Nampar, H. D. (2023). Embracing trinitarian relationships: The beauty of living with disabled individuals. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 13–23.
- Departemen Dokpen KWI. (1993). *Dokumen Konsili Vatikan II*. Jakarta, Obor.
- Firmanto, A. D., & Wiwin, W. (2023). Unveiling the Javanese spiritual legacy: Exploring its impact on leadership among catholic priests. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 1–12.

- Firmanto, A. D., Raharso, A. T., & Tinambunan, E. R. (2023). "Kisah Musa" sebagai Panduan Pertumbuhan Rohani dalam Pemikiran Spiritual Gregorius dari Nyssa. *Dunamis: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani*, 8(1), 218-235.
- Fowler, James W. (1995). *Teori perkembangan kepercayaan*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- McGrath, Alister E. (1999). *Christian spirituality*. Oxford: Blackwell Published.
- Melo, P., & Firmanto, A. D. (2023). Peranan teologi Gereja bagi pertumbuhan spiritualitas kaum muda Katolik. *Aggiornamento*, 4(01), 34-35.
- Nancy, Poyah and Bentty Simanjuntak. (2004). *Bahan PA mengenai Allah*. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Poa, A., Pasi, G., & Wijanarko, R. (2023). Legion Of Mary and parish engagement. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 55–62.
- Pratama, A. Y., Firmanto, A. D., & Aluwesia, N. W. (2021). Urgensitas pembinaan orang muda katolik terhadap bahaya krisis identitas. *Vocat: Jurnal Pendidikan Katolik*, 1(2), 78-85.
- Pratiwiningsih, T., Jatmiko, N., & Edison R.L., T. (2023). Spiritual parenting for broken-home children. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 45–54.
- Sudiarja, A. (1994). Agama dan penghayatan iman yang membumi. *Jurnal Orientasi Baru*, 8, 135-147.
- Sudiarja, A. (2003). Pendidikan agama dalam zaman yang berubah, *Basis* 07-08.
- Sujianto, P., Susanto, A. B. D., & Raharso, A. T. (2023). Nurturing support: Guiding divorced Catholics through the post-court journey with pastoral accompaniment. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 35–44.
- Sukidi. (2001). *Wisata spiritual lintas agama*. Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Syukur, R., & Firmanto, A. D. (2021). Pengaruh teknologi di tengah pandemi bagi sosialitas remaja dalam perspektif Armada Riyanto. *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia*, 4(2), 202-210.
- Tandywijaya, E., Jumilah, B. S., & Yustinus, Y. (2023). Finding divine love: Supporting single-parent families on their spiritual journey. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 24–34.
- Tarpin, L. (2008). Humanisme dan reformasi praksis pendidikan. Bambang Sugiharto (ed.). *Humanitas dan humaniora: Relevansinya bagi pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Jalasutra.
- Wicaksono, G., Hamu, F. J., & Sudhiarsa, R. (2023). Finding God amidst the rubble: Support to earthquake victims. *Mysterium Fidei: Journal of Asian Empirical Theology*, 1(1), 63–73.



© 2023 by authors. Submitted for possible open-access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).