

AI and the Crisis of Spiritual Formation: Reconstructing the Philosophy of Christian Religious Education in the Post-Human Era from the Perspectives of Ellul and Heidegger

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Abstract: The dominance of artificial intelligence (AI) in education presents both technical and ontological challenges for Christian Religious Education (CRE), which is grounded in spiritual formation, human relationships, and encounter with the Divine. This article aims to analyse the crisis of spiritual formation caused by AI dominance in CRE and to reconstruct a philosophy of CRE centred on the imago Dei in the post-human era. The study employs a qualitative-philosophical approach, library research, and critical correlative hermeneutics, using Jacques Ellul's theory of technique and Martin Heidegger's concept of Gestell as critical frameworks. The reconstruction draws on the relational doctrine of the imago Dei and Thomas Groome's Shared Christian Praxis. The analysis shows that AI dominance can mechanise spirituality, reduce learners to standing-reserve, and displace the contemplative and relational dimensions of CRE. As its contribution, this article proposes a contemplative-relational model of CRE that places exemplary relationships, faith communities, contemplative practices, hermeneutical dialogue with Scripture and tradition, and technology as a serving instrument at the centre of education. This model restores existential reflection, the divine-human relationship, and authentic faith formation as central aims of CRE.

Keywords: spiritual formation; Christian Religious Education; post-human; imago Dei; Ellul's technique

Abstrak: Dominasi kecerdasan buatan (AI) dalam pendidikan menghadirkan tantangan teknis sekaligus ontologis bagi Pendidikan Agama Kristen (PAK), yang berakar pada pembentukan spiritual, relasi manusia, dan perjumpaan dengan Yang Ilahi. Artikel ini bertujuan menganalisis krisis pembentukan spiritual akibat dominasi AI dalam PAK dan merekonstruksi filosofi PAK yang berpusat pada imago Dei dalam era pascamanusia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-filosofis, penelitian kepustakaan, dan hermeneutika korelatif kritis, dengan teori technique Jacques Ellul dan konsep Gestell Martin Heidegger sebagai kerangka kritis. Rekonstruksi kemudian dikembangkan melalui doktrin imago Dei yang relasional dan Shared Christian Praxis Thomas Groome. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa dominasi AI dapat memekanisasi spiritualitas, mereduksi peserta didik menjadi standing-reserve, dan menggeser dimensi kontemplatif serta relasional dalam PAK. Sebagai kontribusi, artikel ini menawarkan model PAK kontemplatif-relasional yang menempatkan keteladanan relasional, komunitas iman, praktik kontemplatif, dialog hermeneutis dengan Kitab Suci dan tradisi, serta teknologi sebagai instrumen pelayanan. Model ini menegaskan kembali refleksi eksistensial, relasi ilahi-manusia, dan pembentukan iman autentik sebagai pusat pendidikan.

Kata kunci: Artificial Intelligence; pembentukan spiritual; Pendidikan Agama Kristen; pascamanusia; imago Dei; technique Ellul

Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence has changed the way human beings learn, think and make sense of their existence, and this change has not stopped at the threshold of religious education. Papakostas (2025) identifies that the integration of AI into religious education raises the risks of theological distortion, epistemic dependence and conformity of thought, all of which directly threaten the integrity of faith formation. This unease is not merely a defensive reaction to a new technology; it is a fundamental philosophical question about what actually happens when the most personal process in human life, namely the encounter with the Divine, is mediated by algorithmic systems that operate according to a logic of efficiency and predictability.

Within the tradition of Christian Religious Education, spiritual formation has never been understood as the transfer of information. It is the formation of the whole person through relationship, contemplation and openness to the work of the Holy Spirit, which can be neither programmed nor optimised. Contemporary reality, however, reveals a troubling shift. De Kock (2025) notes that empirical research on digital faith formation remains very limited, whilst the digitalisation of Christian education has advanced far ahead of theological reflection upon it. In this situation, the practice of preparing sermon and devotional material with the assistance of large language models has begun to emerge, the possibility of spiritual accompaniment being handed over to chatbots is becoming increasingly real, and Bible teaching is starting to be packaged in adaptive platforms that measure learning progress by quantitative metrics. These tendencies have not yet been documented empirically on an adequate scale, but their direction is sufficiently clear. Papakostas (2025) and Zhang, Song and Liu (2025) show that generative AI has already entered the space of religious education and carries real theological risks. When spirituality begins to be measured by data, something fundamental is at risk of being lost.

Ellul (1964, pp.133-134) warns that *technique* is the totality of methods that orients all human activity towards absolute efficiency; it no longer functions as a tool subject to human ends but as an autonomous, *self-sufficient* force with its own laws and determinations, reshaping human beings to conform to its own logic. In the context of CRE, this means that when AI is integrated without critical reflection, what takes place is not simply the modernisation of method but the colonisation of spiritual space by the logic of the machine. Through the concept of *Gestell*, Heidegger (1977, pp. 26-27) shows that the greatest danger of modern technology lies not in the physical damage it causes but in the way it reshapes human consciousness, so that the whole of reality, including human beings themselves, is regarded as *standing-reserve* available for exploitation. Learners who ought to grow as unique persons before God are at risk of being reduced to *standing-reserve* within an algorithmically driven educational system.

The post-human context intensifies this challenge. Braidotti (2019) defines posthumanism not merely as a discourse about the technological enhancement of the human body but as a fundamental epistemological shift that calls into question the boundaries between human beings, machines and data. From the transhumanist camp, Bostrom (2005) goes further, arguing that the enhancement of human capacities through technology is a logical continuation of human development. The challenge for Christian theology becomes acute when such narratives begin to permeate the discourse of religious education, for it is precisely here that the

doctrine of the *imago Dei* is called not merely to offer a defensive response but to set forth an anthropological vision that is fuller and deeper than the mere optimisation of human capacities.

It should be emphasised that in this article the term 'post-human era' is used as a working definition of a descriptive-critical kind, namely a cultural situation in which the boundaries between human beings, machines and data are increasingly blurred in everyday practice, including educational practice, so that the question of human nature once again becomes pressing. The term is not intended as a claim that humanity has been historically superseded, nor is it identified with the philosophical position of critical posthumanism developed by Braidotti. Transhumanism and critical posthumanism are treated as two currents of thought present within this situation and are addressed separately in the discussion.

Previous research has touched on several aspects of this problem, although each study has its own focus and limitations. Herzfeld (2002) is one of the earliest studies to connect the *imago Dei* with artificial intelligence. She maps the substantive, functional and relational approaches to the *imago Dei*, shows their parallels with the ways in which AI has been designed, and argues that the relational approach is the most adequate. Her study provides a strong anthropological foundation, yet it focuses on AI as a mirror of humanity's self-image rather than on its implications for the practice of religious education. Przygoda, Rynio and Kalisz (2025) analyse the challenges posed by AI to human understanding, Christian education and the pastoral activity of the churches, whereas Corpuz (2025) offers a framework of theological *virtue ethics* to guide the integration of AI into Catholic education. Both provide valuable ethical and pastoral diagnoses but do not yet interrogate the technological logic underlying the integration of AI itself. On the side of the philosophy of technology, Greenhalgh (2025) reads higher education technology through Ellul's provocations, and Mertel (2020) sets out the implications of Heidegger's thought on technology for education. These studies are philosophically incisive, but they do not proceed from theological anthropology and are not directed towards religious education. In the Indonesian context, Lumbantobing and Siagian (2026) map the opportunities, ethics and challenges of AI in CRE, whilst Agustin, Berebon and Kaunang (2026) propose digital asceticism as a Christian educational response to digital distraction. These studies are close to classroom practice but do not yet situate the problem at the ontological level. Chavez (2025) examines the tension between technological culture and Christian faith in the post-human age, but at the level of culture and bioethics rather than pedagogy.

These studies have offered ethical, pastoral and pedagogical diagnoses of technology in education. However, as far as the literature search undertaken has been able to establish, there appears to be no attempt that specifically translates the ontological critiques of Ellul and Heidegger into an operational contemplative-relational model of CRE rooted in the concept of the *imago Dei*. The novelty of this article therefore lies not in the dialogue between Ellul and Heidegger as such, which has been extensively pursued in the philosophy of technology, but in translating their critiques into a pedagogical model of CRE that integrates the relational *imago Dei*, the Christian contemplative tradition and Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis*.

This study aims to analyse how the dominance of AI threatens spiritual formation in CRE through the lens of Ellul's and Heidegger's philosophy of technology, and to formulate a

philosophical reconstruction of CRE that restores the contemplative, relational and existential dimensions to the heart of Christian education in the post-human era. The study does not reject AI as an instrument; rather, it rejects the dominance of technological logic over human consciousness and over the process by which human beings are formed as the *imago Dei*.

Method

This study employs qualitative library research using philosophical-theological analysis to construct conceptual arguments from written sources (Zed, 2014). The study proceeded in three stages. First, primary sources included Ellul (1964, 1985), Heidegger (1966, 1977), Groome (1980, 1991), and biblical texts on the *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1–3; 9:6; 2 Cor. 3:18; 4:4; Col. 1:15), while secondary sources were searched in Scopus, DOAJ, Garuda, and Google Scholar using keywords related to artificial intelligence, religious education, *technique*, *Gestell*, *imago Dei*, and posthumanism. We included peer-reviewed, full-text sources published primarily from 2015 to 2026 that address technology, theological anthropology, and religious education; we excluded purely technical AI studies and selectively retained classic works. Second, the literature was critically examined using Tracy's (1975) critical correlation model by relating Ellul's and Heidegger's technological diagnoses to CRE, spiritual formation, and theological anthropology, while biblical texts were interpreted canonically and theologically. Third, the findings were synthesized into a contemplative-relational paradigm of CRE grounded in the critique of *technique* and *Gestell* and the relational doctrine of the *imago Dei*.

Results and Discussion

AI as Technique That Mechanises Spiritual Formation

Ellul's concept of *technique* helps explain why AI cannot be treated simply as a neutral tool in Christian Religious Education (CRE). For Ellul (1964), *technique* refers not merely to machines but to rational methods that orient human activity toward maximum efficiency. Its distinctive danger is its autonomy: rather than remaining subordinate to human purposes, *technique* develops according to its own logic and reshapes human practices accordingly. Greenhalgh (2025) shows the contemporary relevance of this critique in education, where standardisation, measurement, and efficiency can displace reflection, ambiguity, and forms of growth that cannot be quantified. A similar tendency may emerge in CRE when AI becomes a primary pedagogical solution. Adaptive platforms may reduce spiritual learning to measurable outcomes, chatbots may respond to existential questions through generated patterns, and AI-generated sermons may lack the prophetic dimension arising from human engagement with Scripture and congregational realities. Simon and Maarende (2026) therefore emphasise the need to evaluate CRE through biblical foundations rather than technical metrics.

Hanks and Hanks (2015) deepen this critique through Ellul's concept of the *technological bluff*, whereby technology promises solutions to problems it may itself intensify. In CRE, AI may address declining spiritual engagement while simultaneously deepening relational fragmentation and reducing reflective struggle. Papakostas (2025) similarly argues that the deeper risk of AI in religious education is epistemic conformity: dependence on algorithmic answers may weaken learners' capacity for independent theological thinking.

Agustin, Berebon and Kaunang (2026) identify digital distraction as a challenge to the attentiveness required for faith formation, while Zhang, Song and Liu (2025) show empirically that generative AI can reproduce cognitive bias in religious content. Together, these findings suggest that the central concern is not only whether AI produces correct information but also the learning habits formed when answers become immediately available.

From an Ellulian perspective, spiritual formation may therefore be hollowed out rather than explicitly removed: contemplation becomes information retrieval, prayer becomes algorithmically guided reflection, and spiritual accompaniment is displaced by interaction with systems incapable of genuine relational presence. Przygoda, Rynio and Kalisz (2025) argue that AI cannot replace human love and authentic spiritual accompaniment because these are lived relationships rather than computable functions. However, this critique must acknowledge technology's potential. Díaz (2021) identifies digital technology as a means of evangelisation, while Lumbantobing and Siagian (2026) identify opportunities for AI in CRE. Digital religion also shows that communities can negotiate and reshape technology according to their values and structures of authority (Campbell, 2010). Thus, the issue is not rejecting AI but ensuring that its use remains governed by theological and relational values and that essential dimensions of spiritual formation are not delegated to machines.

Gestell and the Ontological Crisis of the Christian Learner

If Ellul (1964, pp. 133-134) interprets AI dominance primarily as a sociological problem concerning the autonomy of the technical system, Heidegger (1977, pp. 4-5) moves to a deeper ontological level. He argues that defining technology merely as a means and human activity, although correct, does not reveal its essence: the way technology shapes human existence. Heidegger (1977, pp. 17, 20, 23) identifies this essence as *Gestell* or *Enframing*, a mode of revealing that reduces beings to *Bestand* or *standing-reserve*, resources to be ordered, optimised, and exploited. Mertel (2020) argues that education governed by *Gestell* no longer primarily forms human beings toward freedom and existential depth but toward efficient functioning within a system.

Applied to CRE, this logic creates an ontological risk. When AI becomes the dominant infrastructure of religious learning, learners may increasingly be treated, and treat themselves, as objects of spiritual optimisation. Faith progress becomes analytics, spiritual needs become behavioural data, and character growth becomes engagement metrics. The deeper danger is the reduction of the human person as *imago Dei* to a manageable data profile. Šimunec (2016) identifies a fundamental tension between reductionist understandings of human beings and the theological view of persons as creatures whose identity is grounded in relationship with God. AI-driven educational structures can reinforce the former.

The concealment of *Gestell* makes this process particularly difficult to recognise (Mertel, 2020). Access to thousands of sermons, searchable biblical texts, and instant AI-generated theological answers may create an appearance of spiritual abundance while weakening the capacity for silence, patience, struggle, and contemplative encounter with God. Yet Ihde (2010) appropriately challenges an overly totalising reading of Heidegger by emphasising technology's *multistability*, while Verbeek (2005) shows that technology mediates

perception and action without determining them absolutely. This qualification is important: digital mediation is not inherently distorting. However, generative AI and recommender systems are strongly shaped by personalisation. Unlike biblical texts that can confront and challenge readers, personalised outputs tend to adapt to user preferences. The concern, therefore, is not that God cannot be encountered through digital mediation, but that algorithmic personalisation may increasingly shape religious understanding according to users' existing preferences.

Kouppanou (2016) extends this argument through Heidegger's concept of *Weltbild*, showing that digital technology transforms not only learning methods but also how learners perceive themselves, others, and transcendent reality. When a CRE learner's *Weltbild* is shaped by speed, instant gratification, and algorithmic relevance, the capacity to recognise a God encountered through silence, patience, and personal relationships may be weakened. This crisis is also communal. Chrostowski and Mąkosa (2025) found that religious educators in Germany and Poland recognise AI's potential while expressing concern about its implications for their vocation. Similarly, Darmawan, Tanhidy and Doma (2024) show that although technology extends ministry's reach, key persons and deep relationships remain central to young people's discipleship. Technology can extend reach, but it cannot by itself create relational depth.

Finally, Maureira-Velásquez (2024), applying Heidegger's question of technology to transhumanist visions represented by Bostrom and Kurzweil, argues that technological self-enhancement can be understood as a radical expression of *Gestell*. For CRE, this raises a fundamental theological question: not merely how technology should be used in education, but what it means to be human. From a Christian perspective, that question cannot be answered by algorithms alone but must remain grounded in revelation and the theological understanding of humanity as *imago Dei*.

The Post-Human Era and the Challenge to Christian Anthropology

Post-human discourse increasingly shapes education, ethics, theology, and public policy. Zalloua (2020) defines the post-human as an ontological shift in which boundaries between the organic and artificial, consciousness and computation, and subject and data become increasingly blurred. Pokorný (2024) distinguishes posthumanism from transhumanism and metahumanism, which respond differently to perceived human limitations. This article focuses on transhumanism and critical posthumanism because of their relevance to educational and theological discourse.

Bostrom (2005) presents transhumanism as the technological enhancement of human cognitive and emotional capacities. From a Christian anthropological perspective, however, this can imply that human limitation is a defect to be overcome rather than a condition with theological significance. Miletić (2015) argues that within the *imago Dei* framework, vulnerability, limitation, and dependence on God can constitute spaces for authentic relationship with the Divine. Technological self-sufficiency may therefore weaken recognition of human dependence and grace.

Braidotti (2019), by contrast, develops critical posthumanism as a critique of anthropocentrism and exclusion. Her critique can help Christian theology reconsider

hierarchical interpretations of the *imago Dei* that have justified domination over other humans and creation. However, dissolving the human subject into posthuman networks without a transcendent centre creates an anthropological gap. Chavez (2025) similarly argues that technological culture can move humanity toward deeper dependence on impersonal systems rather than fuller freedom. Christian anthropology therefore needs a constructive response. Zimmermann (2023) argues that Christian *personhood* grounds human dignity not in capacity, productivity, or technological integration but in being created, known, and loved by God. Accordingly, CRE should teach limitation as a space of grace in response to transhumanism, while engaging posthumanist critiques of exclusion without abandoning a transcendent foundation for human personhood.

The challenge is also epistemological. Christian knowledge of God is relational and participatory, involving *knowledge by acquaintance* rather than merely *knowledge by description* (James, 1890; Russell, 1911, p. 221). Faith therefore involves the orientation of the whole person toward God, not merely the acquisition of theological information. Schlag (2025) shows that digital culture increasingly blurs direct and mediated experience, raising an important question for CRE: whether digitally personalised religious experiences can be equated with transformative encounter with God.

In Indonesia, Mary, Darmawan and Uda (2026) found that the *domestic church* provides a space of resistance to digital spiritual fragmentation through personal, narrative, embodied, and intergenerational faith transmission. This highlights the theological importance of embodiment and physical presence. In Christian faith, the incarnation itself demonstrates that profound spiritual reality is communicated through embodied presence rather than data. CRE must therefore preserve relational, embodied, and participatory formation even while engaging emerging technologies.

The Relational Imago Dei as the Foundation for Reconstructing CRE

A constructive response to AI dominance and post-human discourse in Christian Religious Education (CRE) requires a positive theological anthropology. The doctrine of the *imago Dei* provides such a foundation because it understands human identity beyond individual capacities. Mufanabadza and Masengwe (2025) argue that the *imago Dei* should not be reduced to rationality, morality, or creativity but understood as a relational orientation, grounded in the relationship between human beings and God.

This relational understanding is biblically grounded. Genesis 1:26–27 identifies humanity as created in God's image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demut*), while Genesis 5:1–3 and 9:6 connect the image with human dignity and the prohibition of murder. In the ancient Near Eastern context, *tselem* commonly referred to a royal image representing a ruler's presence and authority. Middleton (2005) therefore interprets the *imago Dei* partly in royal-functional terms, with humans commissioned to represent God and care for creation. This provides theological legitimacy for technological creativity, but such a function remains relational because humanity is first addressed and commissioned by God and created as male and female. The New Testament deepens this vision through Christ, the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15; 2 Cor. 4:4), into whose likeness believers are being transformed (2 Cor. 3:18). Grenz (2001)

consequently locates the *imago Dei* within relational and eschatological participation in Christ. The relational model therefore does not reject the functional model but directs human creativity, including technology, toward relationship with God and neighbour.

Ušurel (2022) grounds this relational anthropology in Trinitarian theology: because God is relational as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, human beings as *imago Dei* are created for relational existence. Thus, education that reduces learners to system users or digital consumers risks distorting human nature. Šimunec (2016) reinforces this point by contrasting a bio-psycho-social understanding of humans with an eccentric theological anthropology in which God, rather than the self, constitutes the centre of human existence. Spiritual formation therefore involves moving beyond self-centred preferences toward God and neighbour, a movement that personalised AI systems may struggle to facilitate because they tend to adapt to user preferences.

The *imago Dei* is also eschatological. Drawing on Irenaeus (*Adversus Haereses* IV.38; V.6.1), Miletić (2015) argues that humanity is created in God's image yet called toward increasing likeness to God through the Spirit (Irenaeus, 2023). Human beings are therefore creatures in the process of becoming, whereas AI operates through prediction, pattern recognition, and optimisation. Genuine spiritual formation can interrupt existing patterns and move learners toward transformation through the Spirit (Moltmann, 1992).

Peterson (2012) identifies structural, functional, and relational models of the *imago Dei* (cf. Herzfeld, 2002). In the context of AI, the relational model directly addresses what can be lost when technological logic dominates CRE: presence, vulnerability, and love. Corpuz (2025) extends this theological foundation into practice by arguing that AI in Christian education should be governed not merely by technical regulation but by theological virtue ethics and the formation of *habitus*. Faith, hope, and love are not only educational outcomes but conditions for knowing God. The relational *imago Dei* therefore provides both a critique of AI dominance and a constructive foundation for reconstructing CRE around relationship, character, embodiment, and spiritual transformation.

A Contemplative-Relational Model of CRE in the Post-Human Era

The reconstruction of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in the post-human era must move beyond critique toward a concrete pedagogical paradigm. Building on the relational *imago Dei*, this article proposes a contemplative-relational model that integrates Christian contemplative tradition, Heidegger's meditative thinking, and Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis*.

Heidegger (1966, p. 46) distinguishes *rechnendes Denken*, or calculative thinking, from *besinnliches Nachdenken*, or meditative thinking. Calculative thinking computes, plans, and optimises, reflecting the dominant logic of AI, whereas meditative thinking allows reality to disclose itself without immediately seeking an answer. This disposition is enabled by *Gelassenheit*, or releasement toward things and openness to mystery (Heidegger, 1966, pp. 54-55; see also Ehrmantraut, 2010). Christian practices such as *lectio divina*, contemplative prayer, and the Ignatian *examen* similarly prioritise listening, presence, and receptivity. Ellul (1985) contrasts the Word, which requires hearing and response, with the image, which encourages

immediate consumption. Thus, contemplative practice should function not as an optional addition but as an epistemological core of CRE.

This emphasis is supported by research showing the continuing importance of community and personal relationships in digital faith formation (Darmawan et al., 2024; de Kock, 2025). The model therefore prioritises relational presence over technological infrastructure. Groome's *Shared Christian Praxis* provides the pedagogical structure through five movements: naming present praxis, critical reflection, making accessible the Christian Story and Vision, dialectical hermeneutic, and decision or response (Groome, 1980, 1991). These movements assume that faith knowledge emerges through dialogue between lived experience and Christian tradition. Hess (2011) similarly shows the transformative potential of personal narrative and communal reflection, while Hess (2012) argues that *digital storytelling* can foster empathy because it activates human capacities for relational presence rather than because of technology itself.

The model integrates contemplation into each movement: silence and *examen* when naming experience; reflective journaling and unhurried dialogue during critical reflection; *lectio divina* when encountering Scripture; contemplative prayer and communal interpretation during dialectical hermeneutics; and a closing *examen* with concrete commitment in the response stage. AI remains limited to supporting functions such as background research, examining algorithmic responses, reminders, or documentation, and must not replace personal interpretation, spiritual accompaniment, or communal discernment (Source: Author's elaboration based on Groome, 1991).

The integration of *Gelassenheit* and Groome's praxis combines contemplation and critical action. Contemplation prevents reflection from becoming another form of efficiency-driven activism, while critical reflection prevents contemplation from becoming withdrawal from responsibility. The resulting pedagogical hierarchy places the teacher-student relationship and spiritual example first, followed by the faith community, contemplative practices, hermeneutical engagement with Scripture and tradition, and finally technology as a serving instrument. Díaz (2021) confirms that digital technology can support evangelisation when used with theological reflection and awareness of its limits.

Because the model is philosophical and normative, it requires empirical testing. Initial implementation can involve a CRE learning cycle based on the five movements, teacher preparation for silence and reflective dialogue, explicit agreements concerning appropriate AI use, and qualitative evaluation through reflective journals, observation, and interviews rather than cognitive tests alone (Simon & Maarende, 2026). Darmawan, Tanhidy and Doma (2024) further demonstrate that consistent, trustworthy persons remain central to digital discipleship, reinforcing the understanding of spiritual formation as apprenticeship rather than information transfer.

In Indonesia, Mary, Darmawan and Uda (2026) identify the *domestic church* as an important response to digital spiritual fragmentation. This suggests that CRE reconstruction can begin with relational spaces such as family prayer, small-group conversation, and shared silence. Zsupan-Jerome (2017) likewise argues that CRE should develop a prophetic capacity to engage harmful digital discourse while remaining present within digital spaces. Ultimately,

the contemplative-relational model seeks to recover CRE as formation in love of God and neighbour, affirming the *imago Dei* as a relational identity that cannot be reduced to what technology can compute.

Conclusion

This article concludes that the crisis of spiritual formation in the post-human era is not merely a pedagogical or technological issue but an ontological and theological challenge requiring a reconstruction of CRE. Through Ellul, AI is understood as *technique* that can mechanise spirituality, while Heidegger's *Gestell* reveals its tendency to reduce learners as *imago Dei* to *standing-reserve*. The principal contribution is a contemplative-relational model grounded in the relational *imago Dei*, which places exemplary relationships, the faith community, contemplative practices, and hermeneutical dialogue with Scripture and tradition above technology, with AI serving only as a supporting instrument within *Shared Christian Praxis*. For teachers, this model calls for silence, reflection, relational example, and critical AI use; for curriculum developers, qualitative indicators of spiritual formation should complement cognitive assessment; and for churches, families, and theological institutions, relational formation and literacy in technology and contemplative practice should be strengthened. As a conceptual study without field data, the model requires empirical testing through action research or case studies in Indonesian CRE contexts and the development of qualitative instruments for assessing spiritual formation. Ultimately, Christian education should form persons not merely for greater efficiency but for deeper love of God and neighbour, dimensions of human flourishing that exceed algorithmic optimisation.

AI Use Declaration

In developing this manuscript, the author utilized Claude Opus 5 as a supplementary tool for reflecting on and developing ideas across different sections of the article. ChatGPT was used to assist with English paraphrasing and the refinement of language expression. Grammarly and QuillBot were employed for language correction, grammatical improvement, paraphrasing, and enhancing the overall readability of the manuscript. These tools were used solely to support the writing and editorial process. The intellectual content, theoretical framework, analysis, interpretation, arguments, references, and conclusions remain the author's own responsibility. The author has carefully reviewed the output of these tools and takes full responsibility for the accuracy, originality, and final content of the article.

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