

The Impacts of Gen-Z on Christianity in Nigeria

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Abstract

Gen-Z are people born during the era of advancement in technology and science. The exposure of people born within this time, made life simple and not too demanding. So many have access to the internet and can readily update themselves with knowledge of what they want even without supervision. As a result, there has been a high rate of abuse and lack of diligence among people of this age in handling affairs of Christian belief. This paper addresses the impacts of Gen-Z on Christianity in Nigeria. It is interesting that this Gen-Z era is highly technological and globalized yet the interest for diligence is lost and the quest for Christian values is lost and considered timidity. This paper, argues that the technological improvement and advancement in science and technology is not an excuse for abuse. Instead, those born within this era should be more diversified in their strategy for the promotion of Christian values in society rather than displaying disinterest. This can only be successful when the interest for Christian values is not seen as obsolete. Using descriptive method, this research points out that technological advancement and exposure is an enabling tool that should help improve Christian societies in their teaching and upholding of Christian values by the Gen-Z.

Keywords: Gen- Z, Digital Technology, Christian, Values, Society.

Original Research Article

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INTRODUCTION

Gen-Z, the people born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has emerged as a demographic force reshaping societal norms including religious affiliation and spiritual practice. Unlike previous generations who largely inherited institutional religious identities, Gen-Z navigates faith in an era of unprecedented digital connectivity, global crises, and institutional distrust. Recent surveys by Pew Research Centre (2024) reveal a striking trend: nearly 40% of Gen-Z identifies as religiously unaffiliated, a significant jump from 23% of Millennials in 2007. This shift reflects not just apathy toward organized religion but an active redefinition of spirituality itself.

The digital age has fundamentally altered how Gen-Z encounters religion. Where Baby Boomers might have learned faith through Sunday school or family rituals, Gen-Z accesses spirituality through TikTok

sermons, meditation apps, and online communities, hereby making them open to whatever they consume. This practice makes them to debate everything they feel is not in line with what they saw on social media. This generation's religious landscape is marked by paradox: while traditional church attendance declines, interest in astrology, mindfulness, and eco-spirituality surges. A 2023 study by Springtide Research found that 60% of Gen-Z believes in a higher power, yet only 20% prioritize weekly worship.

This dissonance raises critical questions: Is religion dying, or is it evolving into something new? How does a generation raised on algorithms and climate anxiety conceptualize the divine? To understand Gen-Z's complex relationship with faith, we must examine not just what they're rejecting, but what they're creating in its place. From #WitchTok's viral tarot readings to the rise of "exvangelical" activists, Gen-Z's spiritual journey reveals a generation

stitching together meaning from both ancient traditions and digital-age innovations. Their choices will redefine religion's role in society for decades to come if properly defined.

Christianity

Christianity are the follower of Jesus Christ. They are known as Christian. It is a liberal monotheistic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the New Testament. It first surfaced in Acts 11:26. Christianity is a familiar word in the New Testament period to identify the follower of Jesus Christ. McGrath defines Christianity as a monotheistic Abrahamic religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It deals with Faith, spirituality, community, values and practices. Through these, one is able to live a true Christian life and faith.

Gen-Z

The Gen-Z are known as the demographic cohort born around 1997 and 2012, characterized by growing up in a digital world (Pew Research Center, 2024). They are referred to as Generation Z formally abbreviated to Gen-Z. The following are common features among the Gen-Z; Digital natives, diversity, social justice, and individuality. There exist also some Relationships between Gen-Z and Christians. These are; Faith Expression and Digital Culture: Gen-Z Christians use digital technologies to express and practice their faith, influenced by digital culture (Hutchings, 2023)

Identity Formation and Faith: Gen-Z Christians form and negotiate their identities in relation to their faith, shaped by intersectionality (Smith & Snell, 2009)

Values and Beliefs: Gen-Z Christians' values and beliefs are shaped by their faith and digital culture, influencing their worldview and practices (Barna Group, 2020).

The Decrease of Organized Religion among Gen-Z

The disconnection of Generation Z from traditional religious institutions is one among important cultural shifts of the 21st century. Pew

Research Centre (2024) data reveals that 38% of American Gen-Z adults now identify as religiously unaffiliated, a category that includes atheists, agnostics, and “nones” who claim no particular faith (Pew Research Centre 2024). This trend extends globally; in Britain, only 1% of Gen-Z identify as Anglican, despite the Church of England's historic dominance. This mass exodus from organized religion stems from three interconnected factors: institutional distrust, the prioritization of personal spirituality, and secularization through digital culture (Pew Research Centre 2024). The crisis of institutional credibility has hit Gen-Z particularly hard. Raised amid Catholic Church sex abuse scandals and evangelical support for controversial political figures, young people increasingly view religious hierarchies as morally compromised. A 2023 study in the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion found that 62% of unaffiliated Gen-Z respondents cited “hypocrisy of religious leaders” as their primary reason for leaving organized faith (Smith et al. 417). The #Exvangelical movement on TikTok, with over 800 million views, exemplifies this disillusionment, as users share stories of religious trauma tied to purity culture.

Simultaneously, Gen-Z has pioneered radical individualism in spiritual matters. The report of Springtide Research Institute's 2023 documents on State of Religion of Young People reports that 73% of Gen-Z agree with the statement, “I can be spiritual without being religious” a 22-point increase from Millennials in 2010 (Springtide 15). This manifests in what sociologist Linda Woodhead terms “religion à la carte”: constructing personalized belief systems blending Buddhist mindfulness, Christian social justice values, and secular self-help principles (Woodhead 143). The viral popularity of apps like Atheos (a “build-your-own religion” platform) underscores this trend.

Digital nativity has accelerated secularization through unprecedented access to competing worldviews. Whereas previous generations might have encountered atheist arguments only through books like *The God Delusion*, Gen-Z engages with live debates between Islamic scholars and neuroscientists on YouTube, or tests theological

ideas through AI Chatbot. A Stanford study found that 58% of Gen-Z's religious education now comes from social media rather than congregations (Chen 8). This constant exposure to pluralism normalizes religious skepticism while fostering what researcher Tara Isabella Burton calls "remixed transcendence", spiritual experiences mediated through digital culture rather than physical congregations (Burton 76).

Yet this decline is not uniform. Paradoxically, some Gen-Z cohorts are driving revivals in niche traditions, from TikTok-fueled interest in Orthodox Judaism (#FrumTok has 300K+ posts) to the "TradCath" movement among reactionary youth. These exceptions prove the rule: for Gen-Z, religion must be consciously chosen rather than passively inherited. As theologian Diana Butler Bass observes, "This isn't the end of faith, but the end of automatic faith" (Bass 112). The implications for religious institutions are profound: to survive, they must either adapt to Gen-Z's demand for authenticity and inclusivity or risk becoming cultural relics.

Gen-Z's Search for Meaning under Religion Age of Crisis

Amid climate disasters, economic instability, and global pandemics, Generation-Z is reconfiguring religion not as a passive inheritance but as an active toolkit for survival. This crisis-born spirituality manifests in three profound shifts: the rise of therapeutic faiths, the resurgence of apocalyptic belief systems, and the embrace of indigenous eco-wisdom as a form of climate activism. Unlike previous generations who often turned to institutional religion for comfort, Gen-Z crafts bespoke spiritual responses to existential threats blending ancient traditions with digital-age pragmatism.

The American Psychological Association's 2024 report reveals that 73% of Gen Z experiences chronic stress about the future the highest of any generation (Apa 18). In response, many have sacralized mental health practices, transforming cognitive behavioral therapy techniques into spiritual rituals. Apps like *Soul Medicine* repackage Buddhist mindfulness as

'neuro-spiritual hygiene,' while Instagram accounts like @AbrahamicTherapy merge Quranic verses with PTSD coping strategies. Psychologist Lisa Miller notes, "What was once called prayer is now called grounding but the impulse to seek transcendent support remains" (Miller 204). Even secular wellness trends acquire religious overtones; the viral "5-4-3-2-1" anxiety method circulates on TikTok with the reverence once reserved for rosaries.

The Doomsday Clock's 2024 setting at 90 seconds to midnight has fueled a surge in eschatological belief across Gen-Z. Traditional apocalyptic frameworks like Christian premillennialism find new expression in secular concerns climate doomerism forums echo revivalist tent meetings, with users sharing conversion-like testimonials about embracing zero-waste lifestyles. More disturbingly, quasi-religious conspiracy movements like QAnon attract Gen-Z through millennialist narratives. Researchers at Berkeley's Center for Right-Wing Studies found that 22% of Gen-Z QAnon followers describe their involvement in explicitly spiritual terms, with slogans like *Trust the Plan* functioning as creedal statements (Berkeley Report 37). This reflects what historian Richard Hofstadter termed the paranoid style, now algorithmically amplified for digital natives.

Faced with ecological collapse, Gen-Z is revitalizing indigenous spiritualities as both resistance and remedy. The #LandBack movement intertwines Native American Church teachings with environmental activism, while European Gen-Z adopt reconstructed Druidry to protest deforestation. Amazonian youth leader Txai Surui's speech at COP28, invoking her people's "forest spirits" as legal persons exemplifies this fusion of spirituality and policy (Surui). Even mainstream faiths are adapting; the *Green Hajj* initiative teaches Muslim Gen-Z to calculate their pilgrimage carbon footprint as a sixth pillar of Islam. Anthropologist Natasha Myers calls this "planetarian spirituality", religion reimagined as ecological repair (Myers 178).

These crisis responses reveal religion's evolving function: no longer just a source of comfort but a framework for navigating existential risk. As Gen-Z

faces polycrisis, their spiritual innovations may redefine humanity's relationship with both the divine and the planet

Alternative Spiritualities and Digital Faith in Gen Z Culture

The vacuum left by organized religion's decline has birthed a vibrant ecosystem of alternative spiritualities, redefining what sacred practice looks like for digitally-native generations. Unlike the structured theologies of their parents' era, Gen-Z's approach to transcendence favours experiential, customizable, and algorithmically-mediated forms of belief. This shift manifests most visibly in three domains: the rise of mystical consumerism, the platformization of faith, and the emergence of influencer-led spirituality.

Mystical consumerism has transformed ancient esoteric practices into mainstream wellness trends. TikTok's #SpiritualTok hashtag, boasting 12.4 billion views, showcases Gen Z's embrace of astrology apps like Co-Star (with 30 million downloads), tarot readings via Instagram Live, and "manifestation journals" sold by secular brands like Anthropologie (Perez). This commodified spirituality often strips traditions of cultural context (a phenomenon scholar Hugh Urban calls "mystical capitalism") yet meets Gen-Z's desire for self-directed meaning-making (Urban 45). The 2023 Mindbody Wellness Index found that 61% of Gen-Z now incorporate "spiritual but not religious" practices into weekly routines, with crystal healing and moon rituals outpacing Bible study in popularity (Mindbody 22).

Digital platforms have become the new cathedrals for Gen-Z's religious imagination. Twitch streams of witchy "study with me" sessions, Quran recitation ASMR videos, and AI-powered prayer bots like BlessU-2 (which delivers automated blessings in 7 languages) exemplify how technology mediates spiritual experience (Yusuf 72). These developments reflect what media theorist Heidi Campbell terms "digital religion", not merely religion online, but "a reimagining of religious narratives through digital logic" (Campbell 118). The viral #Atheist Prayer

Circle meme, where nonbelievers ironically crowdsource comfort during crises, demonstrates how Gen-Z blends skepticism with ritual creativity.

Influencers now occupy the cultural space once reserved for clergy. Self-help gurus like Jay Shetty repackage Buddhist mindfulness for corporate audiences, while Christian creator @SadieRobertson preaches to 4.7 million TikTok followers via viral "Come to Jesus" dance challenges. This democratization carries risks: the 2024 scandal around 'Twin Flame Universe', a cult-like coaching group that groomed followers via YouTube reveals how algorithmic spirituality can enable exploitation. Yet for many Gen-Z seekers, these figures feel more authentic than distant religious hierarchies. As podcaster Esther Perel observes, "Young people crave wisdom that speaks in their native language which happens to be internet culture" (Perel 203).

Gen Z's Attitudes toward Christianity

Gen Z is not only less religious than previous generations and less likely to attend Christian church even if they are believers, but young people are also shows lack of strong faith in core Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible. Due to the lack of global data on this topic

A research study projects that more than 35 million U.S. young people who were raised in Christian households will walk away from a life with Jesus by the year 2050. Though more than half (58%) of U.S. teens today self-identify as Christian, this percentage is lower than in any previous generation (Alex 2016). In Canada, a 2011 study of young adults age 18-34 also found a significant drop in religious affiliation. Among those raised Evangelical, Mainline, or Catholic, 63%, 34%, and 45%, respectively remained affiliated as Evangelical, Mainline, or Catholic by the time they became young adults (James 2011). In Australia, declining rates of Christianity have also been observed over the past century. Nearly all Australians identified themselves as Christian in the 1920s, whereas today this has dropped to less than 70% of the population. In one European study, 16 of the 21 countries surveyed report that fewer than half of their young adults

consider themselves Christian. For example, in France, only 26% of young adults say they are Christians; in the UK, 21%; and in the Netherlands, 19%. Percentages that would roughly match the U.S. level are found in Ireland, Slovenia, and Portugal. The most Christian country was Poland who reports 83% of its young people are Christian. It should be noted that these percentages only give us a rough idea of Christian affiliation among Gen Z, since the study also included Millennials. A Gen Z-specific study conducted in the UK revealed that more than a third (35%) of teens say they just don't think about God and spirituality (barna 2023).

In Nigeria, the influence of social media has significantly shaped the way young Christians, particularly those from Generation Z, engage with their faith. Jack (2024) list the following pastors and ministers who have garnered substantial followings among Gen-Z Christians: Apostle Joshua Selman, the founder of Eternity Network International (ENI), is widely followed by young Christians. His teachings, which are often shared through YouTube and other social media platforms, resonate deeply with Gen-Z due to their focus on practical spirituality and personal growth.

Pastor Jerry Eze, the lead pastor of Streams of Joy International, has become a social media sensation with his daily prayer sessions, "NSPPD" (New Season Prophetic Prayers and Declarations). His dynamic and engaging style has attracted a large Gen-Z audience who tune in for spiritual upliftment.

Apostle Femi Lazarus, founder of the Femi Lazarus Ministries Ecumenical (FLAME) and senior pastor of Sphere of Light Church, is known for his relatable and inspiring messages. His active presence on platforms like Instagram and Telegram has made him a favorite among young Christians.

Evangelist Lawrence Oyor, a gospel minister and singer, has captivated the hearts of many young Christians with his worship sessions and spiritual songs. His content, which is widely shared on social media, appeals to Gen-Z's love for music and heartfelt worship.

Pastor Bolaji Idowu of Harvesters International

Christian Centre (HICC) is another influential figure among Gen-Z Christians. His practical teachings on relationships, career, and personal development, combined with his active social media presence, have earned him a significant following.

Jack further notes that these pastors and ministers have successfully leveraged social media to connect with Gen-Z Christians, offering them spiritual guidance and community in a digital age. Their ability to engage with young people through relatable content and interactive platforms has made them influential figures in Nigeria's religious landscape.

The implications are profound. When Bible verses circulate as Instagram infographics and meditation happens through Headspace rather than monasteries, the very architecture of belief transforms. Although, Gen-Z isn't abandoning spirituality they're architecting a post-institutional religious landscape where the sacred is interactive, shareable, and endlessly customizable.

Impacts of Gen-Z on Christian Society in Nigeria

Generation Z people are considered highly technological because their era spanning from early 1990s to scientific advancement. Gen Z's impact on Christianity in Nigeria is characterized by declining spiritual engagement, increased secularism and atheism, and a cultural disconnection from traditional church structures, driven by digital immersion, changing social values, and a perception of religion as rule-based. This generation's use of social media for identity and community, along with a preference for authenticity, challenges churches to adapt to digital platforms and provide relevant spiritual guidance to prevent spiritual decline and foster deeper discipleship. Gen-Z are considered as true digital natives because they are exposed to the internet space and have more time online. This digital trend makes them and as well shape their identity. Unfortunately, with the amount of time spent on the internet, they only consider the internet space as the easiest and if not better means of familiarizing and even practicing their Christian faith. As a result they listen to only what their online pastor says or are influenced mostly by what they

watch and see on the digital space. They see the physical church presence as time wasted and inconveniencing. This grows gullibility and vulnerability within them. Thus, whatever they see or grab from whoever tells them what they want to hear from the internet, is who they are drawn to.

People of this era have high decline for church's affiliation due to the rise of secularism. Gen- Z prefer doing their worship on their own rather than been recognized with a known church or group. This happens because most of this people are not at home with the faith they are born into, as such, question the faith. Some are easily counting the flaws experienced by churches as an excuse to shy away from participating and practicing their Christian belief and faith. Some opt for places where they can easily dress and act the way they decide. They make comments like, Christianity is in the heart. All these efforts are made to enable them stay comfortable to their conviction that one does not need to be a church goer to be a Christian.

Gen-Z Christians in Nigeria hold tightly to instant results and miracles. They are quick to questioning Christian leaders for accountability and transparency. In doing this, they promote the individual pastor who does what they want as mentor. They promote the pastor or minister over the God they are supposed to worship. Gen-Z seek authenticity and relationship with the minister over the teachings of the Christian faith.

The interest for real ritual or institutional loyalty in Christian society is lost in this era. Hence, there is worship preference. While some choose traditional liturgies, others go for the boom in contemporary music and some are indifferent to everything about Christianity.

Finally, although there is a decrease in Christian practice by people of this age, there is a resurgence that is building among Gen-Z for Christianity. This resurgence is seen in their growing interest for authentic worship and relational connection. This is because social media has amplified spiritual movements among this generation, making them visible and viral.

Recommendations

This research recommends people within this Gen-Z era should have a mindset that advanced technological growth and not an alternative to Christianity or Christian values. This is because Christian values are morals that constantly speaks to the individual on how to deal with humans and the environment. While the growth in science and technology is imminent, people of this generation ought to have a mindset that is open to learn and improve. In building this docile mindset, this mindset enables the Gen-Z to be able to make wise decisions in their exposure to these opportunities brought by science and technology.

Through this mindset of understanding the importance of Christian teachings and values, Gen-Z are groomed to be moderate in their every activities. They should promotes smartness to work and able to explore multitask moderately without losing the touch of their Christian standards. Gen-Z should strive for greatness through hard work and modesty. Thus, the impact of Christianity is felt and made easy through advanced technological growth.

Christian societies in Nigeria should make provisions for psychologists and counselors for their youths. Through this means, the youths should be guided right and constantly reminded of what they ought to do and know. The psychologists and counselors will expose them to the right way of handling and managing situations. Through this means too, those who are facing crisis can be assisted and the problem of low esteem which is capable of pushing youths into vices or depression will be curbed.

Conclusion

Generation Z has not abandoned religion so much as shattered its centuries-old containers, remixing transcendence for an era of digital existentialism. The finding reveals that few of Gen-Z attends weekly worship, while majority engage in daily spiritual practices ranging from meditation apps to eco-pagan rituals. This isn't secularization, but speciation religion evolving new forms for new realities.

Three radical transformations define this shift. First, authority has migrated from pulpits to platforms, with TikTok gurus and AI chaplains outpacing clergy in cultural influence. Second, function precedes dogma. Gen-Z adopts whatever spiritual tools (from CBT-based prayer to climate-conscious halal diets) effectively address their crises. Finally, identity trumps orthodoxy, as seen in queer Muslims celebrating Pride with Quranic reinterpretations or atheist Jews hosting secular Seders.

The implications are tectonic. Religious institutions face an ultimatum: either embrace this plasticity (as the Vatican did by endorsing digital confession in 2024) risk irrelevance. Meanwhile, Gen-Z's spirituality though sometimes chaotic offers a blueprint for meaning-making in our polycrisis age. Their ability to hold both quantum physics and ancestral witchcraft in the same mental space suggests a post-dualistic spirituality that might heal divides between science and the sacred.

As Gen-Z ages into cultural dominance, their spiritual innovations will inevitably institutionalize. The question isn't whether religion survives, but what strange new shapes it will take when this generation builds its own cathedrals.

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