CYBERTHEOLOGY: THEOLOGIZING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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We are living in a time in human history that is being called by different names—the digital age, the information age, or the computer age. What all these different names attempt to convey is a sociological reality where various aspects of human society is run using computer-based technology that enables the transfer of information freely and quickly. The shift from the industrial age to the digital age was ushered in about three decades ago when the Internet was introduced and its use became prolific, especially through such applications as the World Wide Web and email. While technological developments vary widely from nation to nation throughout the world, one would be hard pressed to find any country, even the most under developed, that does not make use of digital technology either in its political governance or economic activities. With half the world's population having access to the Internet, digital interaction is becoming more ubiquitous in human life and is increasingly having profound impacts on human social, mental and spiritual well-being. The question for us to consider today, at least in a cursory manner, is whether this so called digital or information age is a special time frame in human history that warrants not only sociological but also theological reflections. And if theologizing is to be done, is there a need for a brand of theology called, for a lack of a better term, cybertheology? This paper will to some extent try to answer these questions as well as situate cybertheology, if there is such a thing, in relationship with the various theologies available in the field.

Theology as Contextual Theology

First, it is important to start by discussing briefly the nature of theology in general. Nowadays it is no longer controversial to make the claim that theology is never done in a vacuum but is necessarily situated in a particular context in time and place. Steven Bevans, a Divine Word Missionary, is one of the most well-known advocates of this perspective. In his widely consulted book *Models of Contextual Theology* and other subsequent articles, Bevans pointed out the contextual nature of theology even from the earliest days of Judaism when Biblical texts were written and edited by people with very specific experiences that affected their perception of and relationship with God. This contextual dimension of theology continued into the New Testament tradition with the theology articulated by the writers of the four Gospels as well as the epistles.[1] If the theologies that are articulated in the various books of the Hebrew and the New Testaments all reveal a contextual dimension, then in would not be incorrect to state that the theology which we hold to be normative, traditionally articulated by the Church Fathers and those following them, must also contain a contextual dimension. In this case, the underlying root is that of Hellenistic philosophy and European culture.

In the modern era, various theologies have arisen in part as a response to the inadequacy of the traditional Catholic theology to address all the situations of people in different contexts including the poor in Latin America, women, Africans in the Sub-Sahara, Asians, and so on. Theologies that attempt to respond to particular contexts have sometimes been called local theologies or theology of inculturation. However, these designations imply more or less cultural

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[1] Steven B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 7-8.

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or geographic boundaries while the term contextual theology has a wider scope that can encompass social realities beyond culture, ethnicity or geography. Bevans asserts that the contextual nature of all these theologies constitute a "theological imperative" because contextual theology is really the only kind of theology that one is able to do.[2] This theological imperative exists because religions themselves are naturally contextual. Sociologist of religion Otto Maduro said:

> No religion operates in a vacuum. All religions, any religion — whatever it is we understand to be a religion — is a reality situated within a specific human context: a geographic space, a moment in history and concrete and determined social environments. All religions, any religion — whatever it is we understand to be a religion — is always, in every concrete case, the religion of certain human beings.[3]

Therefore, a theology finds its validity and relevance when it is articulated in such a way that reflects the reality of its time, place, and social milieu. As Lonergan asserts, theology "mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion within that matrix" (*Method in Theology, xi*).[4]

By pointing out that theology is necessarily contextual, it does not mean that this is a new form of doing theology. Rather, by adding the word "contextual" before the word "theology," the aim is to make explicit and give credence to a process that has already been existence from the very beginning. The implication is that a particular theology does not have to be held as normative and universally applicable to everyone in all time and place. The "mainstream" theology is, in fact, a contextual theology whose context has been either intentionally or unintentionally suppressed in order to highlight its universal validity and universal applicability.

Classical theology is seen as an objective science of faith that makes use of two theological sources—scripture and tradition. These two sources are seen as above history and culture. However, by asserting that theology is contextual, the theologian wishes to affirm that the present human experience, which is defined by culture, life events and notable social changes, constitutes an important source for theological reflection. In this manner, both the past as contained in the scripture and tradition as well as the present as reflected in the context are accounted for in the theologizing.[5] In *Evangelii Gaudiium* (#117), Pope Francis affirmed the importance of the context stating:

> We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous. While it is true that some cultures have been closely associated with the preaching of the Gospel and the development of Christian thought, the revealed message is not identified with any of them; its content is transcultural. Hence in the evangelization of new cultures,

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[2] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 15.

[3] Quoted in Carlos Mondragon, *Like Leaven in the Dough: Protestant Social Thought in Latin America, 1920-1950* (Plymouth, UK: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing House, 2011), 28.

[4] Elizabeth A. Morelli and Mark D. Morelli, Ed., *The Lonergan Reader* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 443.

[5] Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 5-6.

or cultures which have not received the Christian message, it is not essential to impose a specific cultural form, no matter how beautiful or ancient it may be, together with the Gospel.[6]

Pope Francis goes on to say that it is unreasonable to expect people everywhere to "imitate modes of expression which European nations developed at a particular moment of their history"[7] because no single culture can represent the full expression of the mystery of God. Therefore, when the context as found in a particular time and place is taken into account in the act of theologizing, one can begin to identify theologies inspired by cultural identity such as Asian theology and African theology, theologies that employ the experience of gender as a source as in the case of feminist theology or womanist theology, theologies that consider social location such as liberation theology and queer theology. In this essay, we are concerned with theology that considers the experience that results from social change, in particular, that of technological modernization that results in what has been called the information age or the digital age. I propose that in light of the experience of the modern day technological advancement, there is sufficient reason to begin to articulate a contextual theology called cybertheology.

The Digital Age as a New Context

Although technological development has been a part of human society ever since pre-historic man managed to control fire, the development of computer technology in the last part of the twentieth century and in the beginning of the new millennium has taken human society to unprecedented heights, especially in the area of communication. The digitalization of information and transmission of information in this form is a unique development that has affected how information is produced, disseminated and consumed. Digital libraries and journals are continually being launched online with the hope that these resources will be more accessible to the general public, not to mention as effective ways to cut costs.

The Internet as a new and unique form of communication, however, holds a lot more ramifications for human society. In the document "The Church and the Internet," (2002) produced by the Pontifical Council for Social Communications, the Catholic Church recognized the power of the Internet in bringing about "revolutionary changes in commerce, education, politics, journalism, the relationship of nation to nation and culture to culture—changes not just in how people communicate but in how they understand their lives."[8] Indeed, with the rise of social networks, communication via the Internet is no longer limited to sharing information, but also represents new ways of creating and maintaining relationships that transcend proximity and other limitations presented by religion, culture, and social status. Pope Benedict XVI remarked

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[6] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 117, accessed October 3, 2016, https://w2.vatican.va/content/dam/francesco/pdf/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium_en.pdf.

[7] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 118.

[8] Pontifical Council for Social Communications, "The Church and the Internet," accessed November 5, 2015, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_20020228_church-internet_en.html.

that social networks are responding to a fundamental human need to come together—a need nourished by aspirations rooted in the human heart.[9]

The fact that the Internet in all its manifold forms and applications has permeated every aspect of modern human society means that this form of communication must be reflected upon not only sociologically but also spiritually and theologically. Technology has created for us an entity known as cyberspace, which has often been mistakenly identified with virtual reality, a simulation technology employing specific devices and graphics to create an interactive and immersive environment for the user. Cyberspace, on the other hand, is the notional environment in which communication over computer networks occurs. It is a metaphorical space that exists in our minds, especially when we are chatting with friends and feel as if we are meeting them in a particular space. While cyberspace is not physical, it is not necessarily virtual. As Pope Benedict XVI asserted, "The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young."[10] Indeed, for some gone is the day where they speak of going online or offline as if one sets out the time to take a stroll in some sort of digital wonderland only to return to real life with all of its real world issues and responsibilities. In today's globalized digital world, the Internet is a place we keep in touch with family and friends, meet new people and form new relationships, do business and keep updated on local and international news, search for information on anything from how to tie a tie to how to make *Thai papaya salad*, and share photos, ideas, and feelings with others on social networks, blogs, or forums. Pope John Paul II compared cyberspace to the ancient Roman public forum "where politics and business were transacted, where religious duties were fulfilled, where much of the social life of the city took place, and where the best and the worst of human nature was on display."[11] In Thailand, a comparable image is the large markets where people congregate to work, to socialize and gossip, even to make merit to the monks who make their morning rounds with the begging bowls.[12] In some ways, cyberspace is symbolic of this town market with all the bustling sights, sounds, and colors fused together.

Cyberspace, thus is no longer a place out there but integrally connected to our life so that it is becoming increasingly more artificial to make distinctions between our online and offline life. One only needs to take a glance at the line of Bangkok office workers patiently cueing up at motorbike taxi stations every evening to see how prevalent the Internet is in their lives. The same scene can be observed in the Korean metro where people of all generations are as much immersed in cyberspace through the window of their smart phone as they are solidly supported by the seat on the train which they occupy. According to Antonio Spadaro:

> The Internet is therefore not at all a simple *instrumen*t of communication, which one can choose to use, but it has evolved into a cultural "environment" that determines a style of thought, creating new territories

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[9] Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for World Communication Day 2013," accessed November 10, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20130124_47th-world-communications-day.pdf.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Pope John Paul II, "Message for World Communication Day 2002" accessed November 20, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day.html.

[12] In the Theravada Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia, it is not uncommon to see monks with their begging bowls making the rounds through the markets each morning.

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and new types of education, contributing also to the definition of a new way to stimulate the intelligence and to tighten relationships.[13]

It is, therefore, unsurprising that Domenico Pompili argues that the Internet is a place with real human presence and qualifies as an anthropological space.[14] This realization forces us to give credence to its existence and its role in shaping our thoughts and feelings, and ultimately our spiritual and theological sensibilities.

Cybertheology as a Contextual Theology

One must ask the question what then is cybertheology? There has been very few work that directly attempts to discuss or propose something that would be clearly called a cybertheology. Much of the literature on the Internet and religion has been on how it might impact religious belief or the pastoral opportunities that this technology might bring to the Church. Reflecting theologically on the digital age seems to still be a rather new exercise, perhaps due to the fact that most of the well-trained and seasoned theologians might not have fully grasped the implications of what the digital environment holds for us in the present as well as in the future. Some might still be trying to acquaint themselves with how to make a Powerpoint presentation other than the traditional lectern and paper text. For others, updating one's status implies changing one's resume from "working" to "retired," and not about venting on one's Facebook profile about something unpleasant that happened while catching Pokemon at a shopping center downtown. Understandably, many of us are still trying to become acquainted and comfortable in this new environment as "digital immigrants," while the so-called "digital natives"[15] may not have come of age enough or equipped with the necessary tools to reflect deeply on the new social, cultural and spiritual milieu brought about by the new technology. A few attempts, however, has been made at defining cybertheology. The Indian scholar Peter Singh asserts that "Cybertheology must be understood as the intelligence of faith in the cyber age which influences the way we think, learn, communicate and live."[16] Spadaro also refers to the classic definition of theology to discuss the theological implications of the Internet. He writes:

> Cybertheological reflection is always a reflexive knowledge that starts from the experience of faith…Cybertheology is not, therefore, a sociological reflection on religiosity on the Internet, but is the fruit of faith that frees from itself a cognitive impulse at a time when the Web's logic marks the way of thinking, knowing, communicating, and living.[17]

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[13] Antonio Spadaro, *Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014): Kindle edition.

[14] Domenico Pomili, *Il nuovo ell'antico. Comunicazione e testimonianza nell'era digitale* [The New in the Old: Communication and Witnessing in the Digital Era] (San Paolo, Italy: Cinisello Balsamo, 2011): 62.

[15] The terms "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" were coined by Marc Prensky in his seminal article "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," *On the Horizon*, 9.5 (2001):1-2 to differentiate between the generation who was born and grew up after the rise of digital technologies and those who were born before the advent of digital technology.

[16] M. Peter Singh, "An Overview of Cybertheology" (Paper presented at Seminar on Ekklesiology in Cyber Age, Bangalore, June 26-27, 2014).

[17] Spadaro, *Cybertheology*, Kindle edition.

Following the thought of Singh and Spadaro, we can say that cybertheology is a theology that aims to articulate an important reality—the nexus between theology and the modern age of digital communication and Internet technology. It is a theology contextualized in the digital environment that reflects the nature of the globalized modern culture. While it is a contextual theology, cybertheology is distinguished from other theologies that focus on or give priority to particular sectors/groups in society as previously mentioned. The context of cybertheology, however, is not ethnic and cultural reality but that of tremendous social change brought about by modern day digital technology. Thus, cybertheology can be said to be the systematic reflection on the transformative impact of the digital age on the various dimensions of one's faith life and his/her response to this ever changing milieu.

Finding God in the Digital Age

In cybertheology, all the traditional topics on God, humanity, sin, and redemption, etc. must be reflected in light of the digital context present to us. Moreover, in this digital age that sees ongoing devastating environmental destruction, a cybertheology must also consider human relationship with nature and how promoting mutual well-being can be carried out. Indeed, this new context based on immaterial digits of ones and zeroes may give us important insights on our relationship with God, with fellow human beings, and with the natural environment around us. Any theological exercise has to begin first and foremost with reflecting on one's search for and perception of God. Traditionally Christians have located God within a temporal and spatial framework as reflected in the "Our Father Prayer" which informs the believer that God is in "heaven." The way one grasps what eternity may look like is by imagining a thousand years for God is like a day in our human experience. Thus, by imagining heaven as a particular place and eternity as a day multiplied infinitely, it is easier to imagine how and where God exists. Though theologians affirm that heaven is not a physical place, the faithful are also not discouraged from looking up beyond the stars in order to imagine that up there somewhere is God lovingly looking down upon his children and seeing all of their joys and sorrows as well as their challenges and weaknesses. This gives one a sense of direction and assurance.

Modern science, however, has done much to intrude on the previously construed notions of God and heaven. Science declares that space is, in fact, infinite, thus displacing the possibility of heaven having its own distinctive place.[18] This presents a dilemma for popular spirituality because how then, can God be located in heaven if logically such a place cannot exist?[19] Theologians attempt to deal with this reality by proposing the existence of a spirit world that lies beyond common space or the notion of "sacramental space" within this world or within the Christian community where God's presence is real and could be felt.[20] The digital environment, nonetheless, has presented new opportunities to enrich one's search for God and imagine how God may be present in the world. Lavinia Byrne notes that the universe comprised of observable atoms which cluster together to form things is no longer the only kind of universe which one might hold in conception. With cyberspace comprised of nonphysical digits, we are presented with new dimensions that exist alongside the world of atoms. She asks, "If this digital world is so

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[18] Singh, "Overview of Cybertheology."

[19] Lavinia Byrne, "God in Cyberspace," accessed November 7, 2015, http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports/fileManager/god%20in%20cyberspace.pdf.

[20] Ibid.

accessible to our computers, then why not a spiritual equivalent? Suddenly God fits because there is a place for God to live. The idea that angels may indeed dance on the head of a pin gets re-instated, for there is more to space and time than can presently be seen and communicated."[21] According to Singh, the digital world provides a metaphor for God's presence and "ways of imagining things in a new sense of time and space where digits inform our situation."[22]

Who is My Neighbor in the Digital Environment?

The evolution of Internet technology has led its usage to beyond the mere exchange of information or mere presence on the Web. The key concept for present day digital society is connection. If we are present, but not connected, we are alone.[23] Connection implies relationship, even if those relationships do not always mirror actual ones in real life. For example, on Facebook, your classmate, grandmother, religious superior, as well as gaming partners are all collapsed into the category of "friend". On Twitter, all the people who are connected to you are your "followers." In some ways, these words not only ignore the true nature of the relationship between you and a particular person with whom you are connected, but they also distort the meaning of what it means to be "friend" or "follower." The compression of relationships into singular categories "sanitizes" and strips relationships of their complexities and nuances that only come when there is direct human contact.

Despite the perceived limitations of the Web's mediated relationships, the reality and the prevalence of such relationships require that we not dismiss them categorically but attempt to recognize their existence as well as to see how they may help expand present parameters for what it means to be in relationship. Online relationships do not always necessarily represent a desire to escape real life relationships but in a way symbolic of the deep human desire to communicate with others. The various Internet applications that help people engage in building relationships, sharing information, exchanging ideas, creating new forms of entertainment can persuasively be said to reflect the desire for interconnectedness that are rooted deep within the human spirit.[24] They also manifest fundamental human needs to be open to others and to seek communion with others, an act which helps to realize our own humanity.[25] The digital age and the type of relationships available through this environment force a re-examination and redefining of what it means to be a friend and neighbor. In the Christian tradition, the image of the Good Samaritan in the parable told by Jesus has always been upheld as paradigmatic in how one ought to engage with the people around him or her. Authentic relationship, according to this paradigm, is not restricted by boundaries imposed by cultural, social, ethical, and religious norms, by arbitrary assumptions, or by historical baggage. Moreover, it emphasizes the relational possibilities presented by a heart imbued with charity, mercy and compassion.

Even though this story was told by Jesus two millennia ago, the relationship paradigm that Jesus proposed through this story has not lost any of its relevance through all the ages,

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Singh, "Overview of Cybertheology."

[23] Spadaro, *Cybertheology*, Kindle edition.

[24] Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for World Communication Day 2013."

[25] Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for World Communication Day 2009," accessed November 12, 2015, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20090124_43rd-world-communications-day.pdf.

including the present digital age. If anything, the digital age with its new opportunities and limitations have helped us to be able to reflect on this relationship paradigm in new ways. Cyberspace as a place where people all over the world with their diverse cultural, religious, and social contexts can come together and engage in mutual exchange, sharing, and even support reinforces the idea that human need for communion can and ought to surpass any hindrances. If relationship ought not be restricted by culture, gender, or social status, they must also not be held back by any distance, whether physical or virtual.

The relationship paradigm in the parable the Good Samaritan, however, makes an important reminder, which is to be a neighbor demands that one must behave neighborly. To be neighborly obviously speaks of something more profound than physical proximity or engagement in social and physical contact. It speaks about how people treat each other, especially in times of difficulty and calamity. The digital environment not only helps us to be able to keep in touch with a much greater number of people than we could imagine in traditional society. It also helps us to be more informed about the lives of an even more vast number of people in the world. Recently the term "viral philanthropy" came into existence to describe charitable initiatives, whether planned or spontaneous, that took off in the online world and raised vast sums of money for the aims of the project.

While the digital age proves the power and the possibility of neighborliness, it has yet to be able to fulfill the relationship paradigm that Jesus put forth. In the story, before the Samaritan took out his wallet to pay for the expenses of the room in the inn for the victim to recover, the story tells us that the Samaritan "saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him."[26] Thus, being neighborly is much more than being willing to shell out cash. In fact, money does not even come first in the order of things. Being neighborly, in Jesus' paradigm, means recognizing someone's presence and seeing his pains and suffering, and feeling compassion towards the other. Moreover, it requires a physical dimension, which in the parable, is exemplified by the acts of *going to*, *bandaging* the wound, *pouring* oil and wine, *lifting up* onto the donkey, and *taking to* the inn. These concrete, up-close and personal actions imply that real relationships require the aspect of embodiment to convey the true sense of neighborliness. The digital age may help us to "see" farther and wider, and it may motivate us to open our wallet to support a particular charity, but if we are unable to embrace the dying or wipe the tears of a person who has lost her home to natural disaster, then we must reflect on how to live in this digital age so as to truly be neighbors of one another with human contact at every level of our lives.[27] This is so because only in direct human contact can one pour oil and wine over the wound of another as in the case of the good Samaritan and the Jewish victim, or pouring water over the feet of someone, as in the case of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper. Thus, the emotional and spiritual connections between individuals mediated by the digital environment must be supplemented, concretized, and realized to their fullest expression in embodied manifestations in the physical world.

Human Relationship with Nature

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[26] Luke 10:33-34 (NIV).

[27] Pope Benedict XVI, "Message for World Communication Day 2011," accessed November 11, 2015, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20110124_45th-world-communications-day.html.

Cybertheology must give due importance to the matter of environmental well-being and human culpability in the ongoing degradation taking place. The environmental crisis, which scientists deem as being anthropogenic, is diagnosed by many religious traditions, Christianity among them, as an essentially spiritual and moral problem. It is a manifestation of human ignorance and sin in our relational lives with others—both human and nature. Both Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew have emphasized this point in their writings and speeches on the environment and urged that people confess their environmental sins. The environmental sins that the two church leaders mention reflect part of what Pope John Paul II continually emphasized throughout his papacy—the culture of death. For Pope John Paul II, the culture of death not only includes the lack of respect of human life in all its stages but also the lack of respect for nature as reflected in the "technical and scientific way of thinking, prevalent in present-day culture [that] rejects the very idea that there is a truth of creation which must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected."[28] The lack of peace, Pope John Paul II argued, was not just due to regional conflicts, abortion, poverty, and the like but also due to plundering nature's resources.[29] Similar to other social problems, the ecological crisis is a moral issue reflecting a disharmonious relationship between humanity and God. "If man is not at peace with God, then earth itself cannot be at peace."[30]

Cybertheology must consider this issue of environmental degradation in an age where people seem increasingly removed from nature while opting for more technologically based methods of managing their lives as well as keeping themselves entertained. While in certain cases, technology has helped to connect people more closely with nature, facilitating the opportunity for them to discover details that were unavailable to the average person before; in other instances, however, the technology has hindered opportunities for encounter between human beings and the natural environment. Nowadays, people can easily take a tour of any part of the world—both natural and manmade—by searching for videos on Youtube and other social media outlets. One can even take virtual tours of the majestic redwood forests in California or the awe inspiring Son Doong Cave in Vietnam. Technology has enabled us to "experience" the most extraordinary events and places in the world with just a click of a button. After all, why get on a ship heading into the ocean for days on end without knowing if you'll actually encounter a blue whale if you can see it up close and personal via Youtube? In fact, the virtual tours and the recording of natural places and events are oftentimes much more picturesque and exciting than the experience of going to the actual place. Many have been let down after having seen photos or taken a virtual tour of a particular place only to be sorely disappointed upon making the actual visit to that place. Therefore, the paradox of the digital age for human relationship with nature is that while it seems to help us have greater intellectual connection with nature, it can also cause the emotional and physical connection to be decreased.

In light of the context where human relationship with nature is impacted greatly by technological developments, cybertheology cannot fail to address the implications of this reality

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[28] Pope John Paul II, *Evangeliuum Vitae*, accessed March 26, 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.pdf.

[29] Pope John Paul II, "World Day of Peace Message 1990," accessed March 25, 2016, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.pdf.

[30] Ibid.

on the mission of God to bring life to all abundantly. How can the well-being of human and nature be realized in a context where cyberspace is encroaching ever more greatly onto physical space and manmade space is being created at the detriment to natural sustainability? A cybertheology will only be relevant and valid when it is able to offer a way for humanity to flourish in the digital environment, but not at the expense of nature or the richness that human-nature relationship brings.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed that the digital age is a unique context of social change brought about by technological advancement. This new context warrants a particular contextual theology that reflects the social and cultural milieu of the time. I believe the whole impact of the evolving digital age is yet to be fully discovered and understood. Theologizing needs to be ongoing as dimensions of the digital age evolve and reveal themselves to us and shed greater light on our relationship with God, with fellow human beings, and with the natural environment. While in this paper, I have not much discussed how the digital age may open up entirely new questions for reflection that had never been asked before, what is certain is that methodologically, we must be ready to confront these questions when they arise.

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