August E. Grant, Amanda F. C. Sturgill, Chiung Hwang Chen, and Daniel A. Stout, eds. *Religion Online: How Digital Technology is Changing the Way We Worship and Pray*. 2 volumes. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2019. 624 pages. $164.

Digital technology has the power to diminish and to expand. While it shrinks the global world in immediacy, it also broadens our own by showing us our small place within a network of seemingly infinite connection and possibility. This double volume captures that dynamic as it examines how technology, from the printing press to artificial intelligence, has shaped the religious ethos of both institutions and individuals. Focusing on current digital media, the editors have worked to create a resource that they describe as expansive and inclusive, with the caveat that it is not comprehensive. They aim to give clear examples with enough detail to contribute a wider snapshot of how communication technologies are influencing religious practices.

The seventeen chapters of the first volume are not based in any one tradition, but together look at religious life shaped by the digital landscape. Chapters focus on different social media platforms, website information and design, digital ritual, and the religiosity of fandom. They commonly show the dynamic and shifting relationship that institutions and adherents have with digital technology. Many contributors include the stipulation "at the time of writing," which reflects the temporal nature of this project. They pull stories and data from an information landscape that becomes immediately dated, but points to a larger wave of digital influence within belief and practice. While some individual chapters do take root in a particular faith tradition, they produce content that is relatable and applicable to other belief systems. One does not have to be a Catholic priest to understand the dynamics clergy face when navigating an online presence that balances their calling with social connections, as is described in chapter 8. The basic guidelines for website accessibility are not just for the Reformed Judaism congregations examined in chapter 9.

Ultimately, this volume sparks imagination for the many questions that technology poses in our religious lives. It challenges readers to consider the ways we delineate between souled and non-souled beings and the roles taken in our lives by artificial intelligence. These pages highlight the problems associated with the sheer amount of data that is presented to believers. Chapter 6 specifically addresses the ethics of big data in religious practice and how the velocity, volume, and variety of information has created another level of weaponization of religious discourse. This first volume also insinuates a new level of identity that an offline world rarely offered. While no chapter directly addresses the idea of multiple religious belonging, several examine how institutional religious life needs to coexist with the heterogeneous individual practices that digital culture offers. This applies to traditional religious practices as well as those that come with the cultural religiosity of belonging to groups like Deadheads (chapter 16) and Lady Gaga's Little Monsters (chapter 17).

Volume II is organized completely differently, beginning with faith traditions rather than a particular online technology. Each chapter looks at how different faith traditions have utilized digital technology to share their beliefs, shape their public image, nurture their communities, and maintain their organization. The chapters break down into these categories: one on Buddhism, seven on Christianity (Roman Catholic, mainline Protestant, evangelical Protestant, Mormon, Amish and Anabaptist, Seventh-day Adventist, and Eastern Orthodox), two on Hinduism, one on Islam, one on Jainism, three on Judaism (Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform), and two on New Religious Movements (including Scientology and New Age). The editors determined the number

of chapters based on numbers of religious adherents and their digital usage. They also noted that while they initially included more chapters on Islam, they found that digital applications were more uniform in Islam than for other religions. These chapters reveal wide similarities in institutional relationship with digital media, despite different faith claims, practices, and beliefs. Every tradition wrestles with the constant new realities that an ever-evolving technological world presents.

Volume II echoes the first as it illustrates how the themes of digital implementation are valuable but also marked by skepticism. Many faith traditions take at least some advantage of the benefits digital technology offers. Increased online presence enables organizations to disseminate information, evangelize seekers, and edify believers. The internet offers a point of access to faith material and to fellow believers that might not be available offline, which is particularly important for diaspora believers. These connections, especially with the advent of social media, have empowered adherents to contribute to faith conversations, both local and global, in ways not possible before. However, while some embrace the greater egalitarian nature of online dialogue, the collapse of hierarchy also produces skepticism and even fear for many faith institutions. How can a common faith message be maintained (or controlled) amid the multivocal contributions of its adherents? For many bodies of believers, the new digital reality means navigating their message in a landscape that they largely do not trust.

The reality of technology in our lives requires some level of digital engagement, and *Religion Online* awakens us to the excitement of its presence and potential in our religious lives. However, it also highlights a central question: Can an online experience truly be equal to offline faith participation? Is Snapchat's pilgrimage to Mecca as effective as walking the steps themselves? Can lighting a virtual candle on a computer screen create the same moment experienced within a sanctuary? Moreover, do believers have digital literacy to navigate the 24-hour news cycle of unverified information? These volumes will challenge readers of this journal in particular to consider how the homiletic event fits in with the constant messaging that digital technology contributes to the lives of believers. Reading its pages, one can't help but wonder how homiletics both participates in and struggles against the noise of information generated in our social digital age.

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