

Theology of
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Abigail Boggan, a student at Toccoa Falls College, created the cover artwork. She explains that Christian leadership is learning to sit in the hurt and brokenness of our lives and to embrace the changing of the seasons. In doing so, we see new life blooming as we rejoice in the brokenness, knowing that the Father is at work in our lives. Christian leadership is learning to step into the process of mourning, reflecting, and growing over and over again so that we can lead others through the same process. She hopes we never forget that our role as a leader is one of loving others deeply as we seek out the new growth that comes from seasons of brokenness.

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THE HEAD BOWED GENERATION: AN ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CULTURE, AND LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT: Current literature demonstrates that while there are some benefits to social media, the use of many social media platforms leads to compulsive behaviors that are harmful to the user's overall well-being. This leads to several ethical issues, and the global nature of social media requires a cross-cultural discussion of ethics. An examination of the Striiv fitness app demonstrates some of the possible harmful (and unintended) effects of social media. In contrast, scrutiny of the YouVersion Bible app reveals how a social media platform designed with biblical values not only avoids those harmful effects but also promotes healthy behaviors. Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership Model provides a framework for Christian leaders to apply biblical values to the ethical issues related to the design and use of social media platforms across cultures, and in turn, to protect the well-being of their followers.

KEYWORDS: *Heifetz, Adaptive Leadership, Ethics, Values*

The Head Bowed Generation: An Ethical Perspective on Social Media, Culture, and Leadership

Sidewalks in many cities in China, such as Chongqing and Xi'an, now sport new and unusual lane markers. There is one lane for people walking normally, and a separate lane for the *di tou zu* (低头族), the *Head Bowed Generation*. The purpose is to reduce injuries from collisions between people staring down at their phones rather than watching the road (May, 2018). Social media (SM) has become a global phenomenon – the estimate of SM users is currently 3.484 billion people (45% of the total global population), and 3.256 billion use SM on their mobile devices (Chaffey, 2019). SM use has grown dramatically; in 2005, only 5% of Americans used SM, but as of 2019, 72% used SM regularly, and most use it every day (*Social Media Fact Sheet*, 2019). SM may provide many benefits, but it also has a dark side that is just beginning to come to light.

A review of the literature reveals very little has been written regarding cross-cultural perspectives of ethical standards for SM. Furthermore, while there are many perspectives on the impact Christian theology should have on ethical standards, how to apply that knowledge in the context of SM across cultures remains unclear. The purpose of this paper is to examine the ethics of SM through the lenses of culture, psychology, and theology and consider how modern leadership theory can guide today's Christian leaders in developing principles for its ethical design and use.

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

There is much debate regarding the benefits and detriments of SM concerning individual well-being. A review of the current literature reveals three dominant theories. Social Augmentation Theory argued that SM offers significant benefits for users through adding value to their existing offline relationships by enabling them to build and extend social capital while not in the same location (Katz & Aspden, 1997). The Displacement Hypothesis, on the other hand, postulated that SM might be detrimental because online activity may displace more healthy offline activities, resulting in difficulty establishing and maintaining offline relationships and a negative impact on overall well-being (Kraut et al., 1998). Finally, Uses and Gratifications Theory posited that SM has no significant causal effect on individual well-being (Katz et al., 1973), but existing mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, may lead users to seek escape through increased or unhealthy SM use (Coyne et al., 2020). It is difficult to find a balanced view on the subject amid headlines like “10 Ways Facebook Can Ruin Your Life” (Dailey, 2010) and “Is Facebook Destroying Society and Your Mental Health?” (Chandra, 2018) while nearly half of the world's population continues to use this ubiquitous technology (Chaffey, 2019). However, with a nod to the classic western film (Leone, 1966), a review of current literature reveals a summary of the good, the bad, and the ugly aspects of SM.

THE GOOD

There are many potential benefits to SM, not the least of which is social connection - the ability to communicate easily with other members of a social network (Bekalu et al., 2019). At the time of this writing, social distancing and stay-at-home have become a part of everyday reality in an attempt to flatten the curve of the COVID-19 virus (Maragakis, n.d.), and SM has played an essential role in preventing social distancing from becoming social isolation. SM also allows relationships to be maintained and developed even when distance makes offline connection impossible (Bekalu et al., 2019). It also provides a way for the ill and disabled to connect with the community without the

stigmas sometimes related to their conditions (Chandra, 2018). Finally, multiple studies have shown a link between SM use and life satisfaction, social trust, civic engagement, network diversity, and participation among university students, which in turn lead to improved self-reported well-being (Kim & Kim, 2017; Vannucci et al., 2017).

Social Augmentation Theory suggests that SM also provides a mechanism for building and maintaining social capital, which in turn allows access to knowledge, resources, and support from others in the network (Bekalu et al., 2019). There is a positive link between social capital and several indicators of psychological well-being, such as trust, self-esteem, and self-actualization (Bekalu et al., 2019). SM may also enhance the growth of social capital by allowing the connection to continue and grow when propinquity becomes impossible in today's highly mobile world (Bekalu et al., 2019).

Theologically speaking, human beings have been created and designed for relationships with God and with each other, as God created all people in the *imago Dei*, the image of God (Boccia, 2011). One significant aspect of the Trinity is the eternal loving relationship of three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Boccia, 2011). Therefore, as image-bearers of God, people have been designed for connection with God and others (Boccia, 2011; Eckman, 2006; Johnson & Sanderfer, 2016). SM can, therefore, be thought of as a modern technological extension of the social networks (relationships) that have defined human society from the beginning of time, and may serve as a tool for building and maintaining the human connections that are necessary for personal well-being.

Finally, SM shows promise for use in evangelism and discipleship (Časni, 2019; Hutchings, 2010; White et al., 2016). For instance, ads on SM platforms have allowed mission organizations to engage people from all over the world in gospel conversations. Another interesting example has been the use of video in conjunction with SM. Missionaries upload short videos to YouTube or other video sharing sites that provoke thought about everyday life issues, present clear gospel presentations, or address various discipleship topics. They send SM messages with links to the video, then engage the recipients in conversation about it. There are many such videos available online, but one good example is the Jesus Film Project website, which has over 40 such videos with translations into many languages, along with discussion questions for each (*Conversation Starters*, n.d.). Research is needed to determine the effectiveness of such strategies, but anecdotal evidence is encouraging.

THE BAD

The potential adverse effects of SM are manifold. Most hazardous are allegations of SM platforms causing addictive or compulsive behavior among SM users. Studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have shown that excessive SM use has a very similar effect on the brain as other addictive behaviors such as gambling or substance abuse (He et al., 2017). The study of subjects who excessively used SM showed a reduction of grey matter in the amygdala, which is the part of the brain that governs dopamine release and emotional regulation, and in the ventral striatum, which is the brain's reward center (He et al., 2017). Grey matter reduction in the amygdala-striatum is associated with substance abuse and other addictive behaviors (He et al., 2017). Furthermore, the study gave further credence to the belief that "disruption of reward processing is at the heart of the development and maintenance of excess behaviors" (He et al., 2017, p. 33).

A litany of other adverse psychological effects have links to excessive SM use. For instance, recent studies have lent validity to Carr's (2020) Shallowing Hypothesis, which suggests that a decline in reflective thought may be the result of frequent use of texting, tweeting, and other ultra-

brief SM, resulting in cognitive and moral shallowness. In other words, frequent use of such media may result in impaired academic and work performance, impaired ethical decision-making, diminished ability to develop healthy offline relationships due to less self-reflection, less emphasis on moral life goals, and greater emphasis on self-indulgent or image-based life goals (Annisette & Lafreniere, 2017).

Furthermore, numerous studies show links between SM and time management issues (Hall et al., 2019), anxiety and depression (Aalbers et al., 2019; Marino et al., 2018; Primack et al., 2017; Vahedi & Zannella, 2019), and sleep disruption (Abi-Jaoude et al., 2020; Primack et al., 2017; Sampasa-Kanyinga et al., 2018). It is also linked with physical injuries due to distracted walking, biking, and driving (Stavrinou et al., 2018). These are generally related to the Displacement Theory mentioned earlier, showing that time spent on SM displaces important activities like offline relationships, exercise, and sleep, which negatively impacts well-being (Kraut et al., 1998).

Some recent studies show that normal and proper use of SM may not be harmful at all, citing Uses and Gratifications Theory to explain the causal relationship to any harmful effects (Coyne et al., 2020). Studies that demonstrate the harmful effects of SM, on the other hand, focus on problematic, improper, excessive, emotionally invested, or pathological use (Annisette & Lafreniere, 2017; He et al., 2017). In other words, there is an implication that there are both healthy and unhealthy ways to use SM. Those that use it the unhealthy way are much more likely to be negatively impacted, while those who use it the right way are unlikely to experience any harmful effects. Holmgren and Coyne (2017) found a link between pathological SM use and the “inability to self-regulate within certain reward systems” (p. 377). In other words, the moderator between pathological and nonpathological use is self-regulation. The notion that self-regulation moderates pathology may seem obvious, but this finding is quite relevant when considering how SM interacts with the brain’s reward center.

THE UGLY: UNETHICAL BY DESIGN?

The recent Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which data from over 87 million Facebook users was harvested and used for personalized political advertising, exemplifies the ethical debate over data collection and use (Isaak & Hanna, 2018). Cambridge Analytica gathered data from consenting Facebook users, as well as their Facebook friends without their knowledge or consent (Tarran, 2018). In response to the scandal, Cambridge Analytica simply stated that they had “unwavering confidence that its employees have acted ethically and lawfully” (Tarran, 2018, p. 4). This scandal begs the question, what ethical responsibilities do SM companies have to protect the privacy of the individuals using their service?

A second ethical dilemma that SM has highlighted is intentional behavioral manipulation. Nir Eyal (2014), in his fascinating (and terrifying) book, *Hooked*, explained the methods used by SM designers to make their products habit-forming. Eyal (2014) argued that SM designers are in the business of producing pain killers. They use behavioral science to identify the psychological or emotional pains that are common in people’s lives and use that pain as a trigger to prompt the user to seek (temporary) relief of the pain by using their product (Eyal, 2014). This trigger-action-reward cycle quickly becomes a habit that benefits the SM company but may or may not be healthy for the users. As previously mentioned, studies have shown the apparent effects of SM on the reward center of the brain, lending empirical evidence to Eyal’s claims (He et al., 2017). Studies also point out a direct connection between interference in reward processing and the formation of excessive or

addictive behaviors (He et al., 2017). Recall that Holmgren and Coyne (2017) found that the moderator between pathological and nonpathological use is self-regulation, and Eyal (2014) suggested that SM, by design, bypasses self-regulation by building new habits or compulsions. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the design of such products demonstrates an intention for addictive and pathological use. This conclusion leads to another crucial ethical question – when, if ever, is it ethical to manipulate users into changing their behavior?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MULTICULTURAL THEORIES OF ETHICS

Social media is, for better or worse, a global phenomenon, so a discussion of ethical theory through a multicultural lens is helpful at this point. A useful and straightforward definition of ethics is “the study of whatever is right and good for humans” (Robertson & Fadil, 1999, p. 385). Ethics provides a framework by which we may determine right and wrong, good and bad, in any circumstance (Northouse, 2019). There are numerous models for ethical decision making, but all share three concepts in common: moral perception, moral reasoning, and moral action (Husted & Allen, 2008).

The discussion of ethics goes back at least two millennia. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all held a eudemonistic view of ethics that posited that moral (virtuous) action is that which results in one’s well-being and happiness (Parry, 2014). Put simply, we learn to be moral because moral action makes our life better, and immoral action makes our life worse. Conversely, from an Eastern perspective, Confucius taught that morality (the ethical self) develops through relationships, where our behavior is reflected through the mirror of empathy and shows us how to act in a way that produces harmony (Zhang et al., 2012). Unlike the Western Socratic perspectives, Confucius focused on what is good for the collective rather than the individual (Zhang et al., 2012). Interestingly, one thing that both Socratic and Confucian views have in common is the need for self-awareness and self-assessment in developing a moral identity (Parry, 2014; Zhang et al., 2012).

Two thousand years later, the debate over the definition of ethical behavior continues, and in today’s globalized world, cross-cultural ethics is of particular interest. Some have argued that moral values are inherently relative and culturally defined (moral relativism) and that each culture, therefore, may have completely different ideas of what is morally upright (Rosen, 1980; Skinner, 1971). Kohlberg (1984), on the other hand, argued that all cultures share the same fundamental moral values (universalism) but develop moral identities at different rates due to their environments and cultural traits. Kohlberg’s (1984) seminal work, *Stages of Moral Development*, has formed the basis of much subsequent ethical research by offering a robust framework for understanding the development of moral reasoning (Robertson & Fadil, 1999).

ETHICS AND CULTURE

One major criticism of Kohlberg’s *Stages of Moral Development* is that it is difficult to apply across cultures because it relies heavily on Western individualistic concepts of morality and moral values (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). For instance, while all cultures value justice and fairness, they interpret these values differently when viewed through their unique cultural lenses (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). Furthermore, Kohlberg’s theory did not account for the collectivist values of an interdependent and harmonious society (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). Many scholars have proposed theories to address these concerns. Husted and Allen (2008) built on Trevino’s (1986) interactionist

model of ethical decision-making, agreeing with Kohlberg that moral judgment motivates behavior, but added individual and situational moderators (one of which is societal culture) also influence behavior. Another model of note is Haidt's (2007) Moral Foundations Model, which identified five universal moral foundations: harm, fairness, ingroup, authority, and purity. Much of the existing literature agrees that all cultures may indeed share the same ethical foundations (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). Still, morality is nevertheless perceived differently across cultures because each culture ranks these moral foundations according to their relative importance in that culture (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). In other words, one culture might consider harm and fairness to be the most important foundations, while another culture may consider purity and ingroup to be more crucial.

Another criticism of Kohlberg's (1984) model is the assumption that moral reasoning is the best predictor of moral action. Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) suggests that intrinsic motivations, including moral values, have a more significant influence on behavior than extrinsic motivations. More recent studies have demonstrated that the link between moral reasoning and moral action is weaker than previously assumed (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017) and that moral identity may be a more reliable predictor of moral action. Moral identity is essentially the nexus where self-identity development and moral development meet (Lapsley, 2015). However, in considering the role of moral identity as a predictor of moral action, Jia and Krettenauer (2017) contended that researchers must view moral identity in the context of culture. They argued that the concept of moral identity varies across cultures, especially between individual and collectivist cultures (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). In other words, they suggested that moral identity does predict moral action, but understanding how it does so requires examining the cultural contextualization of moral identity formation.

ETHICS AND THEOLOGY

Immanuel Kant was an eighteenth-century German philosopher who had a profound impact on the link between theology and ethics. Most Western philosophers since the time of Christ considered theology to be the basis for ethical thinking, but Kant argued for the separation of moral thought and theology (Haddorff, 2010). In Kant's view, a rational person is capable of knowing good, and a person who knows good is both capable and responsible for doing good. This perspective became the dominant perspective in ethics for the next two centuries.

In the twentieth century, theologian Karl Barth reoriented the discussion of Christian ethics on a Christ-centered theology (Haddorff, 2010). He insisted that Christian ethics must be grounded in theological ethics, which in turn must be grounded in the character of God. He further rejected Kant's view that man is a free moral agent (able to know and do good), arguing that human beings may only find their true moral identity in the context of a relationship with Jesus Christ (Haddorff, 2010).

APPLICATION

Nir Eyal argued that "our moral compass has not caught up with what the latest technology now makes possible" (Eyal & Hoover, 2014, p. 166). Is it possible to apply the old ethical standards to new technologies like SM, or is a new perspective on ethics required for this modern age? How does the Gospel better equip the followers of Christ to address the ethical design and use of SM and

other technologies? This section will propose an approach to ethical leadership that embodies theological ethics, cross-cultural ethics, and modern leadership theory, and attempt to apply that approach to the two primary ethical issues identified earlier, namely data collection and user manipulation.

CHRISTIAN, CULTURAL, AND MORAL VALUES AS THE BASIS FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Moral values (moral identity) are arguably the best predictors of ethical behavior (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Likewise, each culture has a unique set of values that determine what is considered ethical in that culture (Hofstede, 1983; Husted & Allen, 2008). Barth centered his view of Christian ethics on the character of God and the God-given values learned through theology (Haddorff, 2010). Moreover, Christian values are inherently unifying and cross-cultural, because the character of God is their foundation, and all people are His image-bearers. Of course, any human understanding of God's character and Christian values is both corrupted by sin and viewed through a cultural lens, which warrants caution in any interpretation or application of such values. Values are a common denominator between the Christian, cultural, and moral views of ethics, which implies that many, if not all, moral dilemmas are rooted in a clash between competing values. That is not to say that values are the only driver of moral behavior – language, political ideologies, economic systems, social institutions, population diversity, climate, and other factors all influence ethical outcomes (Strubler et al., 2012). However, values do serve as a useful platform for the discussion of cross-cultural Christian ethics.

Heifetz's (1994) Adaptive Leadership Model (ALM) serves to unite theology, culture, and ethics with its focus on helping followers identify and address the conflicting values inherent in ethical dilemmas. For example, if a missions organization holds the values of bold proclamation and long term-ministry, a dilemma may arise where bold proclamation may limit the ability for long-term ministry in a given culture. In this case, the leader would help the followers to work through the issues and guide them towards a balanced solution that honors their values. Ethical leaders, in Heifetz's (1994) view, are meant to use their authority and skill to accomplish five strategic tenets: (a) to identify the competing values embedded in an issue and to break the problem down into manageable pieces; (b) to create a safe environment for exploring issues; (c) to direct the follower's awareness towards the challenge and overcome any avoidance behaviors that threaten to distract from the issue at hand; (d) to empower followers to take responsibility without overwhelming them; and, (e) to protect followers who courageously ask hard questions and challenge people's thinking. These five principles of leadership may help address the ethical questions related to data collection and use in modern SM applications.

DATA COLLECTION AND USE

One of the most contentious ethical debates in the world of SM revolves around individual privacy rights and the collection and use of personally identifiable data. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers [IEEE] has defined a reasonable set of ethical principles to address concerns about user data and privacy (Isaak & Hanna, 2018). They include: (a) transparency regarding data is collection; (b) disclosure to the user about data collected; (c) user rights over what data is collected and

the purging of that data upon request; and (d) user notification of data breaches or any other changes to how data is collected or used (Isaak & Hanna, 2018). These principles are a reasonable place to start, but in today's global marketplace, there are additional issues to be considered.

Values like user rights (justice) and personal privacy play a significant role in the ethical philosophies of individualistic cultures but are viewed very differently in collectivist cultures (Jia & Krettenauer, 2017). Individualistic cultures consider privacy as a moral right, whereas collectivist cultures might consider an insistence on privacy as rude or suspicious (Husted & Allen, 2008). For instance, in China, asking about a person's height, weight, age, or income in casual conversation may be entirely reasonable. However, in the United States, the same questions are considered an invasion of privacy. Likewise, individualistic cultures consider justice (for individuals) an inalienable right (Robertson & Fadil, 1999). Collectivist cultures, on the contrary, consider individual justice a lesser virtue in favor of collective justice that promotes social harmony and public safety (Robertson & Fadil, 1999). For example, a police officer in China once told the author that justice was only an American idea – “there is no justice here,” he bluntly stated.

How, then, can ALM be applied to the ethical considerations of data collection and use in a global marketplace? The YouVersion Bible app is an interesting case study. It is a Bible reading app that sports an astounding 2058 Bible versions across 1397 languages (“The Bible App,” n.d.). Beyond that, it is also a robust SM platform featuring links to other related content, friend connections, reading plans (challenges) with daily reminders, and connectors to other SM platforms such as Facebook and Twitter (“The Bible App,” n.d.). They collect enormous amounts of data about how people use the app and leverage that data to improve the app and to help users build a habit of Bible reading (Eyal & Hoover, 2014). The company is worth an estimated \$200 million, or it would be if they monetized the app (Eyal & Hoover, 2014). There are several ways that the company could monetize their data – they could use the data for targeted advertisements or sell the data to partners, for example. How would a Christian leader evaluate this decision?

ALM could be applied here to evaluate the competing values and reach an ethical decision. The values in play are multi-layered. At the corporate level, the YouVersion mission statement says that they create “biblically centered, culturally relevant experiences that encourage and challenge people to seek God throughout each day” (“Mission,” n.d., para. 2). In other words, they want to influence users to change their behavior and develop a habit of seeking God daily. Their mission statement implies that they value God's Word, cultural relevance, spiritual growth, and community influence. Additionally, their corporate values would likely include financial responsibility and privacy. Their privacy policy states that “We do not share your personally identifiable data with any third-party advertisers or ad networks” (*YouVersion Privacy Policy*, n.d., sec. “How we use your data”).

YouVersion has the opportunity to earn a significant amount of money by advertising or selling the data they collect. The money earned could open up new ways to pursue and expand their mission, and such a decision would arguably support both their mission and their value of financial responsibility, but at the expense of their value of user privacy. The mediator between these competing values is, at least for Christian leaders, God's Word. From a theological ethics perspective, a Christian company should uphold the biblical values of human life, human dignity, human equality, and bringing glory to God, to name a few. Can collecting information about users' behavior and selling it to third parties be done in a way that affirms human dignity? Are there ways that targeted advertising could glorify God or be a blessing to the user? In the case of YouVersion, CEO Bobby Gruenewald has rejected those possibilities and has chosen to keep the YouVersion

app free to users, free from advertisements, and to maintain user privacy. When asked why he refuses to monetize the data his team collects, he said, “the goal is to reach and engage as many people as possible with scripture. That’s all.” (*Bible App*, 2013, para. 10).

THE MORALITY OF MANIPULATION

The other major ethical issue in SM is user manipulation – using psychology to modify user behavior to comply with the will of the SM company. Is it ever ethical to manipulate users into changing their behavior and forming new habits? Under what circumstances is it ethical to use behavioral psychology to modify a user’s behavior?

One proposal regarding the ethical use of user motivation and manipulation is called the Manipulation Matrix, which asks two questions: does the product make a positive difference in the user’s life, and would the designer personally use it (Eyal & Hoover, 2014, p. 167). Based on this matrix, one could argue that a product designed to impact a user’s life positively and that the designer would also personally use is, therefore, morally and ethically sound. Conversely, a product that a designer would never personally use that may also adversely affect the user’s well-being is consequently ethically and morally bankrupt. On the surface, this seems reasonable and would also seem to fit with Jesus’ words in Mt 7:12, “So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (ESV).

However, there are at least two flaws in this rationale. First, morality and ethics, as discussed earlier, do not always translate across cultural lines. A product considered morally and ethically sound in Asian cultures may appear decidedly unethical to Western sensibilities, and vice-versa. Take, for instance, WeChat, an SM platform primarily used in China. WeChat has become ubiquitous in China, allowing users and companies to post information, read news, message individuals or groups, chat by audio or video, and much more (*All You Can Do with WeChat in 2020*, n.d.). However, it also allows the government to monitor and censor all user communications and propagate government propaganda (Harwit, 2017). From a Western perspective, this would be considered an egregious breach of user privacy, but in China, most people are entirely unconcerned (Guo & Feng, 2012). Why? Because China has a collectivist culture built on the Confucian value of social harmony, among others (Wang et al., 2016). Guo and Feng (2012) suggested that the broad social acceptance of internet monitoring and censorship is rooted in the Confucian traditions of authoritarian leadership and filial piety meant to produce peace and harmony in society. In China, many families hold to “a strong Confucianism family ideology, represented by intrusive parental attempts to make important decisions on behalf of their children” (Guo & Feng, 2012, p. 39), which produces children who have positive views of government censorship.

Second, there is often a wide gap between the intention of the designer and the actual effect. A product intended to have a positive effect may prove to have a profoundly negative impact when it leaves the laboratory and enters the real world. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as the saying goes. One example of this is Striiv. The Striiv pedometer is much more than a simple step counter. It integrates fitness and exercise into an SM experience by sending users challenges to accomplish on their own or to compete with other Striiv users (*Challenges Tutorial*, n.d.). It rewards those who complete the challenges with points to use in their online game, MyLand (*MyLand Tutorial*, n.d.).

At first glance, this seems like a brilliant way to motivate people to exercise more and be healthier – a noble goal, to be sure. It likely would fulfill both criteria in the manipulation matrix for an ethically designed app. However, as Yale University professor Zoë Chance discovered, while it succeeded in getting her to exercise more, it also negatively impacted both her mental health and the quality of her offline relationships (Chance, 2013). The more invested she became in the Striiv app, the more it disrupted her sleeping habits, encouraged excessive and compulsive behavior, and created barriers to healthy connection with her friends and family who were not Striiv users, especially her husband. She found herself walking up and down the stairs at two o'clock in the morning, just to earn a few bonus points! Striiv's marketing material suggests their method behind Chance's madness – "Don't be surprised when you find yourself walking up and down the stairs at 3 am trying to earn extra points!" (*Amazon.Com: Striiv STRV01-002-0C Play Wireless Tracker: Sports & Outdoors*, n.d.). Chance later discovered a link between stress and her addiction to Striiv; the app provided a temporary escape from her stressful reality (Eyal, 2019). Eyal (2019) argued that the actual problem is, therefore, not the escape (the app), but the underlying pain.

There is some truth in Eyal's (2019) assessment. Eckman (2006) similarly stated that compulsive behaviors always begin with some form of unaddressed pain (physical or emotional), and are driven by a desire to escape that pain by activating the brain's reward center through actions that produce dopamine, and other reward-related hormones. As stated earlier, brain imaging studies that show activation of the reward center, the amygdala-striatum, support this notion (He et al., 2017). However, Eyal's (2019) argument falls flat when considering the issue of ethical culpability. He argued that users choose how they use the product, and if they use it as an escape from pain, then the problem is the pain, not the product (Eyal & Hoover, 2014). This is like arguing that the drug dealer selling heroin and the drug manufacturer creating the heroin are not responsible for the harm that their product causes in people's lives – users choose to use it and they alone are responsible for their behavior. Eyal (2014) attested that many SM platform designers deliberately use compulsion (unconscious habit) to drive desired behavior. If the habit created is unhealthy, it is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that such platforms are ethically deficient.

How can ALM be applied and focused through a Biblical lens to design an ethical SM platform? Once again, consider the YouVersion Bible app. Their stated goal is to help users develop a habit of daily Bible reading, and they have designed the app to do exactly that ("Mission," n.d.). User-selected daily reading plans are the centerpiece of the app (Eyal & Hoover, 2014). They send notifications to users as external triggers to get them to return to the app and visual cues within the app to remind them to follow their reading plan. The user has the option to read from any of the myriad of available versions, or listen to an audio Bible if they prefer, which makes it easy and removes some of the roadblocks to habit formation. When the user completes each day's reading, they get a peppy-looking "Day Complete!" message and a calendar view showing all of the days they have completed successfully, which increasingly motivates the user to continue in order to avoid breaking the streak. Friends can enlist each other for accountability by sharing their progress. There is also the ability to add personal notes and bookmarks, which adds value to the app and reduces the likelihood of the user switching to another app. This is known as the IKEA effect, which proposes that consumers base a product's value partially on the quantity of time and effort that they have invested in it (Norton et al., 2012). Finally, the app makes it easy to share Bible verses on other SM platforms, which not only gives the user a little dopamine thrill but also spreads the app and increases the number of users (Eyal & Hoover, 2014).

What this app does not do is perhaps just as important as what it does do. It does not pit users against each other in competition, as Striiv did. Once a user has completed their challenge for the day, there is no need to return to the app – no one will find themselves neglecting their family because they are compulsively reading their Bible (at least not at the prompting of the app). It does not send users challenges at all hours of the day and night, which might disrupt sleep patterns (as Striiv did) or take focus away from work. Instead, it sends one user-selected challenge per day and allows users to choose for themselves how, when, and how often they will be notified (*Notifications on Bible.Com*, 2019). It does not offer infinite content that will keep users scrolling for hours – it only gives users the content they ask for. While there is a way to discover linked content, it requires the user to request it (Shaída, 2019). Finally, this app is clear and upfront about their goal of helping the user develop a habit of daily Bible reading, and they execute that goal effectively and transparently (“Mission,” n.d.).

These design decisions reflect their values, namely that they value the physical and emotional health of the user as much as the spiritual health, and that they value integrity and transparency at an organizational level. As noted earlier, they certainly have difficult decisions to make at times when values are at odds. However, they can resolve these conflicts by clearly identifying the conflicting values and evaluating them using ALM (Heifetz, 1994). It is the role of the Christian leader to highlight the values in conflict, to focus the team on them and their implications, and to evaluate them through biblical and cultural lenses (Haddorff, 2010; Heifetz, 1994).

CONCLUSION

Social media has become ubiquitous in our time, and the debate over the ethical issues surrounding its proper design and use rages on. Christian leaders have an opportunity to lead by example in the world of social media by applying sound leadership and biblical values in our approach to Christian ethics. ALM offers the leader a framework for identifying the competing values inherent in the ethical dilemmas presented by social media and the implications of those values (Heifetz, 1994). The Scriptures and their reflection of God’s character further clarify these dilemmas and invite us to examine them through the prayerful application of biblical values. Just as the current generation may be called the Head Bowed Generation, God is calling the next generation of Christian leaders to also be called by that name: the generation of the Head Bowed – in awe of the character of God.

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