

The Lost of Gospel in The Church and Evangelism in the World: The Deadly Scream and the Answers

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Abstract:

This research aims to explore the lost Gospel in worldwide churches, especially the evangelical churches in Indonesia and the loss of evangelism in the world. This research was stimulated by the influence of secularism and pragmatism in the church as a result of the change in worldview from the modern era to being postmodern. Based on content analysis research methods, analyzing specifically the contents of several major literatures, it was found that the Gospel and evangelism had indeed disappeared in many church organizations, including evangelical churches and schools of theology in Indonesia. Because of these churches tend to follow the world's mindset and standards, thus leaving the Gospel as the highest standard, as seen in their world-oriented and worldly-inclined way of life. Many churches are conforming to the world. In fact, the loss of the Gospel in the church and evangelization in the world is the biggest and most serious problem in the world, namely moral, mental and spiritual destruction and eternal destruction. For this reason, reformation of the Gospel and evangelism have become an important and urgent agenda, so that the church returns to its nature as a church, the sole agent of God's gospel in the world and returns to its main function, namely evangelizing the world. That is the only solution to the problems of the church and the world. This research is useful for theologians around the world to provide awareness and awareness for the church to carry out its function as the salt and light of the world through the Gospel and evangelism.

Keywords: Church; evangelism; lost of the Gospel; the world

Introduction

This world is full of screams of people experiencing pain, fear, failure, disappointment, despair, sadness and evil. Unfortunately, the world only provides limited and uncertain answers, but ironically that is precisely what many people seek and strive for in any way. Even though human civilization seems to progress because science, technology and optimism still claim the world is getting better, it screams sadly, and the situation worsens (Matt. 24:12).¹ Heaven has given the only answer to all these screams. The Bible is the only complete and sure answer to all human cries, the fundamental solution to humanity's problems.² Unfortunately, the human heart is in complete disrepair, blind, deaf, and spiritually paralyzed, so the tendency of his heart is only to pursue the answers of the world and ignore the answers of heaven.

¹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2020), 332.

² Shin Hyun Kwan, *Gospel That Must Be Restored, Enjoy and Deliver to the 237 Nations* (Daegu: Mission First Church, 2018), 6.



Even sadder, the gap is getting more expansive because the church, which has the answer from heaven, ignores it and even joins in seeking and offering the world's answers to God's people. As a result, the church becomes the same as the world in general. The church lost its identity and influence. This is the same as the findings of world-class theologians and research experts including Grudem, Washer, McGrath.³

Not surprisingly, many local churches and denominations have become like the world. It is seen in the glamorous lifestyles of church leaders and corporate-like management patterns. Moreover, entertainment worship style, just as in places of entertainment, such as in cafes; and the preaching of the church is no longer about the whole gospel but only the outward gospel; no longer the gospel of salvation, but the gospel of prosperity; and not the true gospel, but the good gospel. All of this happened at the same time as the changing world era to be postmodern and become a spiritual world, without truth.⁴ The gospel has been lost among the churches. However, the congregation of these churches is enormous and continues to grow proliferate, and it seems very active and dynamic with its programs. It looks very professional, but many research results show that such churches have lost the correct gospel. The gap continues to widen because the church is more interested in social sciences, such as psychology, sociology, and communication as a result, the condition of the church becomes the same as the state of the church before the reformation of the 16th century, dirty with immorality, deviating from the teachings of the general church, becoming paralyzed, even as the Lord Jesus Christ himself said, namely the whitewashed grave (Matt. 23:27-28).

The gap between God's will and the church's role is widening. The Apostle Paul could hear the cry for help: "Cross over and help us", and they believed that God was calling them to preach the gospel to the people there (Acts 16:9-10). The churches no longer hear the screams that the Apostle Paul heard. Because many churches have lost the gospel, the world has lost evangelism. Specifically in Indonesia, a five-year study by *the Bilangan Research Center* on 5,000 churches found that only 2.1% of churches did evangelism, the church budget for evangelism was minimal, only 3%.⁵ Too few churches are willing and able to hear this cry for help. For many ears of these churches have turned from the truth to fairy tales to satisfy what their ears desire to hear (2 Tim. 4:3-4). That means, they have lost the gospel. Even in the Apostle Paul's day, many churches had lost the gospel, so they no longer had the sensitivity to hear the world's cry for help. The loss of the gospel is the main and first cause of several factors. The loss of the gospel in today's churches, not only results in the condition of the church being damaged and lost, but also in the loss of

³ Wayne Grudem, *Free Grace: 5 Ways It Diminished*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publisher, 2016), 27-140; Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013), x.; John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, Third Edit. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010), 25-115; Stevri I. Lumintang, *Keunikan Theologia Kristen Di Tengah Kepalsuan* (Batu: Departemen Literatur PPII, 2010), 309.

⁴ Shendy Carolina Lumintang, "Theology of Reformed Spirituality in Disruption Era," In *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, Atlantis Press 669 (2021), 669.

⁵ Handi Irawan (Ketua), "Ringkasan Hasil Temuan Survei," *Bilangan Research Center*, last modified 2017, <https://bilanganresearch.com/hasil-penelitian.html>.

world evangelism. The loss of evangelism in the world is the same as the loss of hope.

Surprisingly since the end of modern times, not a few findings reveal the disappearance of the gospel, especially among evangelical churches. Bock, in his book *The Missing Gospels*, opens up the first-century gospels of the newly discovered church but does not include the canonical gospels;⁶ MacArthur wrote *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, revealing the church's shift away from the gospel under the influence of pragmatism;⁷ Washer reveals through his book *The Gospel's Power and Message* the gap between the True Gospel and the Scandalous Gospel;⁸ Bigney wrote about Biblical betrayal with hidden idols;⁹ Moreover Grudem wrote *Free Grace Theology* and revealed 5 (five) ways the church throughout history belittled the gospel.¹⁰ There has been no research result that unequivocally states that the gospel is lost in the evangelical churches in Indonesia today, resulting in the loss of evangelism in this world. Therefore, this study is essential and urgent to be explored further.

The gospel is the only solution to the world's main screaming problem. However, many churches have lost the gospel because other gospels replaced it, so evangelism is increasingly lost in the world. It is a gap that is getting wider and harder to bridge. Based on gap research, the author is stimulated to research this topic because it can fill the gap. The questions proposed are: Why the church lose the gospel and evangelism, and how to find it again? The answer to such a question would be by revealing the church's current state that impacted the world, which demands church reform by way of re-proclamation of the Gospel to the church, so that will return to life by the gospel and act as evangelists for the world to have hope again.

Method

To achieve this goal, the author uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method.¹¹ Content analysis is a research technique to make conclusions based on text or content analysis in writing systematically.^{12,13} In this regard, the author analyzes the content of an essential and in-depth understanding of related

⁶ Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities* (Nashville, Tennessee: Nelson Books, 2006), 1-55.

⁷ John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, Third Edit. (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2010), 25-115.

⁸ Paul Washer, *The Gospel's Power and Message* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012), 3-74.

⁹ Brad Bigney, *Gospel Treason: Betraying the Gospel with Hidden Idols* (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 2012), 17-100.

¹⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Free Grace: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Publisher, 2016), 27-140.

¹¹ Jr. Chad Nelson and Robert H. Woods, R.H., "Content Analysis" in, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, Edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011), 109-110.

¹² Stevri Indra Lumintang & Danik Astuti Lumintang, *Theologia Penelitian Dan Penelitian Theologis: Science-Ascience Serta Metodologinya* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2016), 114.

¹³ K. Krippendorff, "Reliability in Content Analysis: Some Common Misconception and Recommendations," *Human Communication Research* (2004): 411-433: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014522633>.

research,¹⁴ namely thoughts in the literature on the Bible and evangelism. The steps of the research analysis are as follows: selecting the text that is relevant to the purpose of this research and then finding the text's message regarding the explanation of the gospel and evangelism.¹⁵ At this stage, the author uses <https://openknowledgemaps.org/> to conduct a literature review to obtain representative texts relating to the lost of Gospel in the church and evangelism in the world. To determine publications related to lost of gospel in the church and evangelism in the world, a combination of keywords and phrases is investigated. By searching by the keywords 'lost of the Gospel *1', 'evangelism*2', 'evangelism AND the world*3', and 'church*4'. Search results found 58 papers relevant to the purpose of this study. Based on these 58 papers, the author further searches the references of each paper to find a paper that can be used as a support for primary data; identify words, sentences, statements, and arguments relating to lost of gospel and evangelism in the world (syntactical and propositional); and identify patterns of ideas about to lost of gospel and evangelism in the world in each repetitive paper (thematic). Furthermore, the researcher uses two types of categories to classify the unit of analysis, namely the content of the basic substance of the Bible and lost evangelism, as well as theological-rational argumentation as a reference. From this method, the writer finds the main ideas expressed in the question sentence.

Findings and Discussions

In accordance with the content analysis method, the authors present the findings in the form of questions as follows: Has the Bible Disappeared Among the Evangelical Churches? What Is the Evidence That the Bible Has Been Lost Among Evangelical Churches? Is it true that evangelism in Indonesia has also disappeared? Are Evangelical Theological Schools in Indonesia still based on the Gospel and World Evangelization Motivation? These findings are then discussed in the form of the following questions: What would the Church be like without the Gospel and the fate of the world without it? How to Bring (Reformed) the Gospel into the Church and Evangelism to the World?

Has the Gospel Been Lost Among the Evangelical Churches?

Ontologically, as God is eternal, the gospel cannot be changed, let alone changed by humans.^{16/17} Epistemologically, the Bible, in the form of human knowledge and understanding, can be changed by humans with their way of thinking. It began with a hermeneutical paradigm shift towards the Bible to be no

¹⁴ Satu Elo et al., "Qualitative Content Analysis," *SAGE Open* 4 (1), no. 1-10 (January 1, 2014): 215824401452263, <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244014522633>.

¹⁵ Chad Nelson and Robert H. Woods, R.H., "Content Analysis" in, *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, Edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler, (London: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2011), 109.

¹⁶ Burk Parsons, "The Unchanging Gospel," in *Ligonier, Theology, Salvation, the Gospel* (2009), <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/unchanging-gospel>.

¹⁷ C.H. Spurgeon, "The Unchangeable Christ," In *Blue Letter Bible* (1888), https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/spurgeon_charles/sermons/2358.cfm.

longer oriented to the author and the text, but the reader.¹⁸ Next, the question "Is it true that the gospel has been lost among the evangelical churches?" This does not mean to assess the church of Jesus Christ (organic), but provides some indicators that can be used as a reference to assess the condition of the Christian church (organization). Are evangelical churches still alive and operating by, according to and for the sake of the gospel? Because the true church is a church that is continuously evaluated and renewed by the gospel, following the reformation motto: *Ecclesia Reformata Semper Reformanda*.

Undeniably, church history reveals that the gospel has been lost with the loss of several church institutions in certain areas and at certain times. In the modern era, the gospel has been lost in many churches in mainland Europe, as can be seen in the emptiness of the congregation in many church buildings, and their theological books that no longer speak of the gospel. Even in this early post-modern era, the Bible has been and is being lost due to distortion. Grudem reveals five ways people minimize the gospel in his book *Free Grace Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel*, namely: justification is not just faith alone, preaching is no longer a call to repentance for sins, guarantees of salvation are wrong, underemphasize faith in the person of Christ, and misinterpretation of some texts about absolute grace.¹⁹ After five hundred years of the Reformation, the gospel is reduced to a lesser gospel, that is, a gospel that is no longer complete, and it is no longer a gospel.²⁰ The condition of the church in the 21st century is no different from that in the 16th century.²¹ David Wells questions contemporary evangelicals who claim their faith remains steadfast but lack the zeal for theology.²² The church and its ministers prefer church programs that are operational and quick to see results and use. In this case, the church has been ruled by the spirit of pragmatism.

The factual, operational, and practical truths have replaced theoretical, ideal and doctrinal truths. Horton argues that churches and businesses grow following the same standard procedures regarding pragmatic efficiency. Not only evangelism but also Christian life can be accommodated with secularization and modern routines.²³ It was from America that the gospel was preached with the principles of effectiveness and efficiency. The practical life of the congregation is always related to economic needs, healing from illness, and solutions to social problems. The gospel is forced to deal with work, commerce, finance, healing, and rapprochement between people. These themes demean the gospels on the grounds of making the gospels more relevant.²⁴ Without realizing it, preachers fall into adapting the gospel to listeners' needs. Therefore, the church is looking for preachers who please their ears as opened by the Apostle Paul (2 Tim. 4:3-4). As a result, the church became increasingly worldly. MacArthur wrote: Those trends were all driven by

¹⁸ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 37.

¹⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Free Grace: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel*, 27-140.

²⁰ Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books, 2013), x.

²¹ Alister E. McGrath, *Sejarah Pemikiran Reformasi* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2002), 3-6.

²² David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2004), 14.

²³ Michael Horton, *Kekristenan Tanpa Kristus* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2012), 47.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 41.

evangelicals' obsession with pleasing the world. It was obvious that the market-driven approach to evangelism and church growth was headed for disaster. Thousands of young people have been indoctrinated with pragmatism as a way of life, raised with the idea that worship must be tailored to please "unchurched Harry" in order to be relevant, and taught to regard truth as unattainable.²⁵ Unwittingly the congregation was deceived by the preachers. The results of Barna's research showed that 26% of the congregation liked the prosperity sermon.²⁶ Therefore, MacArthur asserts that the evangelical churches have been entirely dominated by pragmatism.²⁷

Present-day sermons have "put away" the gospel of Jesus Christ and replaced it with another gospel, similar to what Paul preached to the Galatians (Galatians 1:6-12). The gospel is replaced with experiences that are considered miraculous by the preacher's personality. The preaching focuses on marginal doctrines than the gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁸ In this case, Horton judged the church that "Christ is not sufficient for the faith and practice of the church today."²⁹ It is seen in the rise of social sciences such as ethics (morals), Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology, and communication, which dominate the church.³⁰ The influence of Anthropology has made America's evangelization become a cultural and political movement rather than a gospel movement.³¹ Psychology is the most favored news by the church today. Themes of self-development, potential, self-image, and self-confidence filled the church pulpit.³² No wonder many pastors prefer to study Psychology to improve their preaching to motivate and inspire, no longer achieving repentance, transformation, and sanctification.³³

The gospel is increasingly lost and replaced by a new Psychology popularized by Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Osteen, Paul Meyer and Johnson. It includes the concept of self-image, self-talk, and self-esteem that makes humans the center, so Christ was cut off.³⁴ The new Psychology offers a much better life without religion or Theology (Gospel).³⁵ Therefore, Paul C. Vitz unmasked new Psychology of idolatry in his book *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self Worship*.³⁶ The human self is the center of worship. Vitz further states: "Psychology's profound commitment to narcissism, egoism, self-worship, the individual, the isolated self or as I call 'egoism' has been

²⁵ John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 23.

²⁶ George Barna, "New Marriage and Divorce Statistic Released," In *Barna Research in Family and Kids* (2008), <https://www.barna.com/research/new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released/>.

²⁷ John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 92.

²⁸ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 116-117.

²⁹ Michael Horton, *Kekristenan Tanpa Kristus*, 218.

³⁰ David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 123-124.

³¹ Ibid, 5.

³² George Barna, *Marketing the Church* (Colorado: NavPress, 1988), 33.

³³ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2017)133.

³⁴ Ibid, 134.

³⁵ Eric L. Johnson, *Sejarah Singkat Kekristenan Dalam Psikologi, In Dalam Psychology and Christianity: Five Views* (Malang: Literatur SAAT, 2012), 22.

³⁶ Paul C. Vitz, *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-Worship* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), x.

thoroughly demonstrated".³⁷ Not surprisingly, selfishness made the walls between churches thick and high and made the church does not send missionaries except to increase the number of church members.

Not only has the gospel been replaced by the social sciences, but Theology has also lost the gospel. Throughout the modern era, many churches in Europe were transformed by Theology without the Bible, namely liberal Theology. Evangelical church Theology has become paralyzed, stagnant, and more liberal. Well asserts that in the past people (evangelicals) stood far from liberal Theology, now they are cousins.³⁸ Evangelicals are like sailing ships in the sea without a wind, not moving at all".³⁹ In fact, after the Lausanne Movement in 1977 and the Lausanne Movement in Manila in 1989, evangelical thought and movement hardly sound what they used to be.⁴⁰ Moreover, after the evangelical pioneers in Indonesia returned to the bosom of the Father in heaven, the evangelical movement in Indonesia is almost invisible, as happened on a large scale at the time of Octavianus, Marantika, Heath and other evangelical figures. Evangelism synonymous with evangelicals has "weakened" and even "disappeared" in recent years, as has happened in America.⁴¹ Recently figures of the Gospel and Evangelism Movement are getting fewer. To name a few, Stephen Tong, his church and schools have been consistent from the 1970s until now. The evangelical movement and the gospel are closely guarded with theologically reformed evangelicalism.

What Evidence Is There That the Gospel Has Been Lost Among the Evangelical Churches?

The loss of the gospel in the church is revealed in the weak integrity of church leaders and members. Sider quotes Horton: "Evangelical Christians seem to have gradually embraced a hedonic, materialistic, selfish, and sexually immoral lifestyle, like the world at large."⁴² Furthermore, Sider explained the immoral practices of evangelicals, including adultery, divorce, and remarriage due to divorce, a materialistic lifestyle, racism, domestic violence and misuse of church finances and assets. This is also a habit of some international evangelical leaders and preachers, as revealed by several mass media. MacArthur opens: Role models for contemporary pastors are not prophets or shepherds—they are corporate executive, the politician, or word of all, the talk-show host. The contemporary church is preoccupied with audience ratings, popularity polls, corporate image, statistical growth, financial profit, opinion surveys, demographic charts, census figures, fashion trends, celebrity

³⁷ Ibid, xi.

³⁸ David F. Well, *Mengatasi Segala Kuasa Dunia: Kristus Di Dalam Dunia Postmodernisme* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2013), 311.

³⁹ Ibid, 317.

⁴⁰ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Misiologia Kontemporer: Menuju Rekonstruksi Theologia Misi Yang Seutuhnya* (Batu: Departemen Multi Media, YPPH, 2009), 27.

⁴¹ Timothy Keller, "The Decline and Renewal of the American Church, Part 2 The Decline of Evangelism," *In Life in the Gospel* (2022), <https://quarterly.gospelinlife.com/the-decline-of-evangelicalism/>.

⁴² Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience* (Surabaya: Literatur Perkantas, 2007), 27.

status, top-ten lists, and other pragmatic issues. Gone is the church's passion for purity and truth.⁴³

Barna's research results reveal that 66% of Christians in America reject absolute truth, and 72% are millennials.⁴⁴ The numerous cases of sexual abuse, particularly by homosexuals and pedophile Catholic clergy,⁴⁵ and the inappropriate treatment of the charismatic leader of Hillsong Church in Australia, Brian Houston, of two women reveal the loss of integrity that comes from the loss of the gospel in themselves, church leaders and pastors.⁴⁶

Throughout history, the church's face has continued to be shamed by gospel-less leaders who fall on money, sex, and prophecy.⁴⁷ 26% of Christian youth no longer consider living together without marriage a sin, and 13% consider sex outside of marriage normal. The divorce rate for evangelical church members is higher (26%) than for atheists (22%).⁴⁸ Because the alternative gospels dominate the pulpit, the church is without Christ. Holiness is neglected, worldliness is pursued, and statistical prosperity measures a successful church. Billy Graham wrote: "The climate that characterizes church institutions today seems to be dragging the church into a perilous situation. The mindset of materialism and secularism has almost defeated us in this battlefield. If there is no immediate change (reform) in this institution, the church will continue to decline."⁴⁹ Not surprisingly, John R.W. Stott says the church is growing fast, but superficiality is everywhere. Joseph Tong said: "The church is paralyzed", so the church is sick. Leith Anderson stated that: "80% of American Protestant churches are either stagnating or dying."⁵⁰ The church has completely changed its face. The face of the church becomes like a market community.⁵¹ Because indeed, the gospel has been lost in such churches.

Is it true that evangelism in Indonesia has also been lost?

Of course, there must be less evangelism when the church's gospel dwindles. When the church loses the gospel, the world loses evangelism. If the church does not value evangelists, then the church does not do evangelism. Gospel and evangelism are often just names and slogans in many church names.⁵² Wells stated: "This is the

⁴³ Ibid, 92.

⁴⁴ George Barna, "The End of Absolutes: American's New Moral Code," in Barna, *Research Release* (2016), <https://www.barna.com/research/the-end-of-absolutes-americas-new-moral-code/>.

⁴⁵ John G. Stackhouse Jr., *From Architecture to Argument: Historic Resources for Christian Apologetics*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips, *In Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 49.

⁴⁶ Lorna Knowles, "Gereja Hillsong Beberkan Perbuatan Tak Senonoh Yang Dilakukan Penderitanya Terhadap Dua Perempuan," *Dalam News: More from ABC News*, last modified 2022, <https://www.abc.net.au/indonesian/2022-03-18/pendiri-gereja-hillsong-tidak-senonoh/100922150>.

⁴⁷ John G. Stackhouse Jr., *From Architecture to Argument: Historic Resources for Christian Apologetics*, 50.

⁴⁸ Ronald J. Sider, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience*, 37-38.

⁴⁹ Billy Graham "Prakata" ditulis oleh Darrel W. Robinson, *Total Life* (Bandung: Lembaga Literatur Baptis, 2004), xiii.

⁵⁰ Leith Anderson, *Dying for Change: An Arresting Look at the New Realities Confronting Churches and Parachurch Ministries* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1999), 10.

⁵¹ Stanley J. Grenz, "Ecclesiology," in *Postmodern Theology*, 252.

⁵² Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia*, 132-133.

reason why the word evangelical has turned into a slogan...the word evangelical has become meaningless.⁵³ In fact, of the five tasks of the church, evangelism is the most neglected task of the church than worship, education, fellowship, and ministry of love.⁵⁴ Evangelism is the main task of the church. The church exists because of the gospel and evangelism. All other duties of the church are to fulfill its primary task of preaching the gospel (evangelism). The world is getting desperate because the gospel is getting further away from the world. The gospel and evangelism determine the fate of this world.

In fact, churches in Indonesia do not evangelize as research conducted in 2018. The results of the research conducted by the "Number Research Center" with the level of objectivity greatly surprised the church leaders who were present there on January 30, 2018. It was found that in the last ten years: (1). Church growth was dominated by the movement of church members to and from other churches (42.3%) due to biological growth (28.1%) and only 2.1% church growth due to evangelism. (2). The church budget for evangelism programs is minimal, only 3% of all church expenditures per year, while the church spends as much as 25% for internal and external social services.⁵⁵ These data show that churches in Indonesia are not serious about the call to obey Christ's commission, namely evangelism.

Even though the church is still involved in evangelism, evangelism is carried out with motives contrary to the gospel's nature. Evangelism by "simplifying" the gospel, means adapting it to the person being evangelized-not merely the language of communication that suits the listener. In this case, the gospel is simplified for the listener's benefit. Metzger reports, "Since about 1900 evangelicals around the world have emerged a new method of packaging the gospel that has replaced this biblical way of evangelism. We must package the gospel in such a way that it is easily conveyed to gain mental acceptance by the listener. This gave rise to the idea of a 'simple gospel' by his listeners."⁵⁶ The gospel is packaged not only in simple language but also in a straightforward sense, adapted to the audience, so that, on the one hand, educated people underestimate the gospel. On the other hand, they make the gospel easy to accept, but it is no longer the gospel that is preached. Because of this, many people have decided to become Christians, but not because of the gospel.⁵⁷ Of course, people who believe and repent because of the preaching of other gospels must produce Christians other than the original, not followers of Christ.

In addition to changing the Bible by simplifying its understanding, it also emphasizes the method of evangelism to make it easier for evangelized people to understand and believe. It has underestimated the power of the gospel and changed

⁵³ David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth*, 342.

⁵⁴ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia*, 12.

⁵⁵ Handi Irawan (Ketua), Bilangan Research Center "The Survey's Result Summary." National Survey on Church Dynamics in Indonesia involving 4,394 church leaders as respondents and was conducted in 2017 in 34 churches. 57.0 % congregation located in villages, 15,7 % located in Districts, 10,4 % in Regencies, 10,5 % in cities, and 6,4 % in Province's Capital cities, *bilanganresearch.com*.

⁵⁶ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2005), 27.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 29

the nature of the gospel itself, and has released the Holy Spirit.⁵⁷ The last few decades have seen a revival of evangelistic training, seminars, conferences, and evangelism books. However, the same emphasis has been placed on methods, not gospel content. Not surprisingly, many methods marketing patterns. The evangelists play the same role as "drug dealers" and tantalize advertisements, such as prosperity preachers accompanied by evangelism techniques, tactics, and tricks.⁵⁸ This kind of thing is susceptible to manipulation, the sinner's fleshly desires or worldly tendencies. In this regard, Metzger asserts that it is evangelicals who emphasize methods and it is these methods that insult the gospel as if the gospel is powerless without methods.⁵⁹ There has never been a method to produce a gospel message, much less a gospel, and there has never been a method to make the gospel work. There is no one-size-fits-all method. Paul did not preach the gospel with a particular method, but we discovered Paul's method. God is a creative and dynamic Evangelist, so He is not dependent and bound to any particular way or method. The main principle is the whole gospel for the whole world.⁶⁰

Are the Schools of Evangelical Theology in Indonesia still based on Motivated by the Gospel and World Evangelization?

In the modern era of missions, Protestant missionary institutions send teachers and gospel teachers (missionaries) even in the context of colonization (territories). Apart from social services, in general they also establish public schools, including theological (higher) schools, for evangelism. Jaffray Theological Seminary (Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Jaffray) in Makasar, originally named Makasar Bible School, was founded in 1932 by Robert A. Jaffray with a vision to reach the world through evangelism, education and publishing.⁶¹ STT Jakarta (now the College of Theological Philosophy) was established in 1934 in Bogor. However, the vision of evangelism was not written except to educate Indonesian workers for future church services, but the establishment of this school was a response to the vision of Hendrik Kreamer, a Dutch missionary and missionary expert in evangelism (Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Jakarta, 2022).⁶² The Indonesian Bible Institute Batu, originally "Family Bible School", was founded in 1957 by a German missionary, namely German Edy and then led by Octavianus with the initial aim of preparing evangelists for evangelism throughout Indonesia, and together with public schools, organized by the Foundation, became a center for world evangelism.⁶³ In 1966, Heath started the Tyrannical Bible College (formerly the Tyrannical Institute) starting from the mandate of the great mandate (Matt. 28:19-20) in the context of West Java. Heath

⁵⁷ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 8.

⁵⁸ Donald E. Demaray, *Proclaiming the Truth: Guides to Scripture Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979), 19.

⁵⁹ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, 34-36.

⁶⁰ Jr. John A. Baird, *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World* (Philadelphia: The Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1975), 5-6.

⁶¹ *Mengenal Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Jaffray* (Makasar, n.d.), <https://www.sttjaffray.ac.id/profil>.

⁶² "Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Teologi Jakarta," Halaman ini terakhir diubah pada 4 Maret 2022, pukul 06.37, 2022, https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sekolah_Tinggi_Filsafat_Teologia_Jakarta.

⁶³ M. Djami Radja Uly, *Sejarah Berdirinya Sekolah Tinggi Theologia "I-3,"* ed. H. Hasiwinoto, *Institut Injil Indonesia*, (Batu: I-3, 1995), 225-228; Katalog (2012-2014) Institut Injil Indonesia, 19-20.

came from Kentucky, America, in 1961 as a lecturer at the Bandung Institute of Technology. In 1963, Heath and Gerrit Tiendas conducted personal evangelistic training, and this was the forerunner to the founding of the Tyrannical Institute, with the motto "The Source of the Gospel."⁶⁴

Tong founded the International Reformed Evangelical College of Theology (STTRII) with a vision of world evangelism. This school is strict with academic demands, emphasizing Theology and evangelism with a faithful commitment to the Bible (Indonesian Evangelical Reformed Theology College, 2022).⁶⁵ Tong emphasized that the quality of theological studies, apologetics and philosophy is for the benefit of evangelism, not to mention public schools, including the Calvin Institute of Technology, producing complete graduates. Evangelical figures, including Octavianus, Marantika, Heath, Pormes, and Tenibemas established and/or organized STT and public schools with the primary goal of fully evangelizing (the Fellowship of Indonesian Evangelical Theological Schools).⁶⁶ They do Theology and evangelism amid two polarization angles at the end of the modern era, where STT and Christian public schools are in the middle of two narrow (lame) paradigms of evangelism, between theological fundamentalism and theological liberalism, and between spiritual concern (evangelical) and social concern (ecumenical).⁶⁷ Many have run out of energy because of the debate between the two camps, where each maintains its narrow or lame side, namely spiritual responsibility and social responsibility. Only a small number have experienced the theological maturing process, becoming a holistic mission, as revealed in the Lausanne Movement (1989) in Manila, which resulted in the formulation of The Manila Manifesto.⁶⁸

Unfortunately, after the Manila Manifesto, some twenty years later, especially in Indonesia, there was a change in the mission paradigm along with changes in many theological colleges, Christian religious colleges, and state Christian institutes. Some of these colleges were started to produce evangelists and missionaries with special study programs and curricula for this purpose. However, due to many factors that influence and cause, especially national standardization of theological/Christian religious high schools through accreditation, it seems that Missiology study programs are less attractive to students, so many are closed and/or replaced with other study programs. In fact, at present, almost all Christian religious colleges (STT/STAK/Institute) only organize theological studies and Christian education programs at the undergraduate, master's and doctoral levels of study.

As far as the available data, there are only a few theological/Christian high schools that still hold Missiology study programs. There is not a single State

⁶⁴ "Sekolah Tinggi Alkitab Tiranus," <https://www.mebinonline.org/profil-stt-di-indonesia/sekolah-tinggi-alkitab-tiranus/>.

⁶⁵ "Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Reformed Injili Indonesia," <https://sttrii.ac.id/tentang-kami>.

⁶⁶ "Persekutuan Antar Sekolah-Sekolah Theologi Injili Indonesia," <https://www.pasti.or.id/sejarah/>.

⁶⁷ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Misiologia Kontemporer: Menuju Rekonstruksi Theologia Misi Yang Seutuhnya*, 20-70.

⁶⁸ The Manila Manifesto (Excerpt), "Second Lausanne International Congress on World Evangelization" 13, no. 4 (1989), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/239693938901300405>.

Christian Institute that properly organizes a Missiology study program, because as far as data from the Higher Education Database, there are almost no lecturers with a master's degree in Missiology. In addition, due to the limited number of educators and students, in general, theological/Christian high schools prefer to focus on Theology and education study programs only. At the same time, Missiology is only used as a concentration of Theology and education in undergraduate study programs. Even though Missiology and evangelism study programs are still being held through seminars, conferences and training on missions and evangelism the data from the *Bilangan Research Center* revealed that churches in Indonesia hardly do evangelism. Evangelism is dwindling due to the increasing demands and the spirit of human rights in the post-modern era. The pattern of evangelism, planting and growing traditional churches is no longer following the context of the postmodern era. As a result, the world is increasingly neglected.⁶⁹

The Government of Indonesia's policy to improve the quality of education in the last two decades is revealed in the increase in quality standards and the allocation of education funding so that public schools also experience an increase. Finally, public schools are again in demand by the community, not only because of their quality but also because of their very cheap financing. It has implications for private schools, including Christian schools. Not a few Christian schools lack students, and the impact is also on the shortage of operational costs. In addition, Christian schools struggle to meet the demands of national educational standards. On the one hand, few Christian schools have difficulty meeting the minimum standards because, so far, they have only been oriented to traditional patterns, which tend to pay attention to spiritual and evangelistic aspects, and less to the quality of school management. On the other hand, quality Christian schools seem to sell quality at a very high price so that it is only accessible to the upper class. As a result, the gospel is increasingly hidden. The Bible seems limited to the institution's name or label. Indeed, many are considered quality schools, but the true gospel at the institution's heart is no longer visible in the management and school curriculum. If the gospel has been lost among the existing churches, it has been lost among the existing Christian schools.

One of the indicators that reveal the gospel has been lost in many schools and churches in the world, namely the motives of evangelism that are no longer in accordance with the nature of the gospel. The impure (false) motives are full of manipulative evangelism, including: First, evangelism for the sake of church growth (increasing the number of congregations and the economy/church offerings); Second, Christian schools were established only for the growth of the church and the economic interests of the administrators; Third, preaching the gospel for the sake of the salvation of my family, my ethnicity and my nation only (narrow gospel); Fourth, evangelism because of the "gift of evangelism" and "those who are ready" (easy) to accept the gospel; Fifth, evangelize through the "practice of worship" of praise and worship (getting people) such as seeker service worship style.⁷⁰ Sixth, preaching the

⁶⁹ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia*, 208-227.

⁷⁰ The Seeker Service, "Evangelism and Worship," in *The Great Worship Awakening*: <https://catalogimages.wiley.com/images/db/pdf/0787951269.01.pdf>.

gospel with a motive to hasten the return of Christians; Seventh, evangelism without discipleship and schools without discipleship.⁷¹ Such impure motives are gradually limiting, belittling and degrading the Gospel.

From all the problems presented above, the root of the problem is found, namely because the gospel is being lost in the churches in Indonesia. This fact follows what has long been happening in Western churches. It is found that there is a gap between the 1st century and the 21st century, that what the gospel writers wrote in the first century is not the same as what preachers preached in the twenty-first century. The gospels preached today are other gospels, the gospels without Christ, the non-canonical gospels, the gospels that emphasize human effort, the functional, anthropocentric gospels, the gospels plus faith, the cult gospels, the gospels that depend on human decisions. In addition, the gospels taught in church pulpits are those that only offer miracles and abundantly blessed life, the gospel of universalism, the situational gospel, the exclusive gospel, the prosperity gospel, the gospel of making people a member of the church, and the gospel of entertainment. All this is no longer the true gospel but the good gospel, the new gospel, another, which is not really the gospel.⁷²

What would the Church without the Gospel be like and the fate of the world without evangelism?

Before the author presents what would have happened to the world without the gospel and evangelism, it is essential to show how church institutions and their ministers lived and served without the gospel. Two sins have more significant consequences than the sins of killing, stealing and adultery, namely the sin of "not preaching the gospel" and the sin of "preaching another gospel" because from this, all other sins arise. Paul Washer emphasized the same thing: "One of the greatest crimes committed by this present Christian generation is the neglect of the Gospel, and it is from this neglect that all our other maladies spring forth."⁷³ Therefore, the biggest criminals in the world are not those who have been labelled as world criminals, such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini but Christians who do not preach the gospel and other evangelists (false gospels).

The type of crime they inflict does not only result in property loss and psychological and or physical pain. God's wrath and the punishment of being away from God's presence are upon them (Ephesians 3:19, 2 Thess. 1:9). This also applies to Christians who do not do evangelism because in fact they are the same as people who do not have the gospel or Christians who do not believe. As for the evangelists who were not sent by God but speaking in the name of God (Ezek. 13:2-3, Ezek. 13:6-7), the analogy is like a wild animal and likes to disguise like sheep (Matt. 7:15), even what they teach is contrary to the teachings of Christ. To the apostles (Eph. 2:20-22), their teachings are tales (2 Tim. 2:1-3), deceivers who destroy the world (2 Pet. 2:1-3), the greatest criminal in the world, living not according to the gospel and preaching

⁷¹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 39-68.

⁷² Ibid, 74-127.

⁷³ Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*, ix-xi.

what is not; deceive non-Christians, distort the faith of Christians.⁷⁴ To them, Paul declared “cursed is him” (Gal. 1:8), and God absolutely does not like other (false) teaching of the Gospels, as it is written: “It would be better for him if a millstone were tied around his neck and he were thrown into the ground. sea” (Luke 17:1-2, Matt. 18:6-7). Indeed, teachers of other (false) gospels will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction (2 Pet. 2:3b).⁷⁶

What will happen to the world when a false gospel is preached? Non-Christians who accept other (false) gospels will become carnal Christians. Likewise, Christians who study other (false) gospels must be false Christians living in falsehood. They are Christians but living with worldly practices, fornication, defilement, lust, idolatry, witchcraft, enmity, strife, envy, anger, selfishness, jealousy, a spirit of division, envy, drunkenness, debauchery and so on (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul Washer also added: The result of this gospel reductionism has been far-reaching. First, it further hardens the hearts of the unconverted. Secondly, such a gospel deforms the church from a spiritual body of the regenerated believers into a gathering of carnal men profess to know God, but their deeds deny Him. Thirdly, such a gospel reduces evangelism and missions to little more than a humanistic endeavor driven by clever marketing strategies based upon a careful study of the latest trends in culture. Fourthly, such a gospel brings reproach to the name of God...this soils the purity and reputation of the church and blasphemes the name of God among the unbelieving.⁷⁷

In addition to the four things above, the false gospel will also produce Christians who are only Christians, but without the gospel, without Christ, other Christians (foreign and strange). They are Christians who do not know and are interested in the final gospel of Christ, namely nominal Christians, *abangan* evangelicals (do not practice the teachings completely), fundamentalist evangelicals, liberals, and pluralists.⁷⁸

As a result, local and denominational churches, as well as their church members (Christians), are becoming more and more like the world,⁷⁹ and the world is getting more evil and disobedient (Matt. 24:12, 2 Tim. 1:13), even though science, technology and civilization seem to worsen. However, all progress cannot prevent and reduce world crime rates. As has happened, Christianity in many parts of the world is declining in quality and quantity. Ron Luce found that in his research, 88% of children raised in Christian families stopped following God after graduating high school.⁸⁰ According to Ryan Sheehan's research, there is a silent migration away from the church. Three thousand five hundred congregations are withdrawing from the

⁷⁴ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, 38.

⁷⁵ Stephen Tong, *Theologia Penginjilan* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2017), 33.

⁷⁶ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu Dalam Gereja (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 128-131.

⁷⁷ Paul Washer, *The Gospel's Power and Message*, ix-x.

⁷⁸ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Finalitas Kristus Dan Kekristenan: Arrogant, Tolerant, Ignorant?* (Jakarta: Geneva Insani Indonesia, 2018), 80-95.

⁷⁹ Stevri I. Lumintang, *Theologia Reformasi Abad XXI: Gereja Menjadi Serupa Dunia*, 116-207.

⁸⁰ Ron Luce, *Battle Cry for a Generation: The Fight to Save America's Youth* (Colorado: David C. Cook Publishing Co, 2005), 21.

church every day, and 80% are millennials, generations Y and Z. In line with that, until 2015, around 10,000 churches were closed.⁸¹ The church that God sent to be the "salt and light" of the world is becoming more and more like the world, so the world is becoming more hopeless, and heart-wrenching. Then what should we do? Let us pay attention to the answers to the following questions.

How to Bring (Reform) the Gospel into the Church and Evangelism into the World?

To answer the question above, the author begins by finding the terms used by theologians that are synonymous with the term reform. Next, the writer explains the meaning of the phrase gospel reformation followed by historical arguments about the reformation of the gospel by both Martin Luther and John Calvin. In the end he puts forward several arguments regarding the absoluteness of the gospel and evangelism. It brings implications for the absoluteness of the gospel as the heart of the church and evangelism as the heart of the world.

Synonymous Terms with Gospel Reformation

True, among the existing churches, many have become like the world, so world screams louder and faster its steps towards destruction (theological). This assertion is not without arguments because experts also have the same opinion. Among them, Wayne Grudem reveals 5 (five) ways to reduce or shrink the meaning of the gospel.⁸² Darrell L. Bock exposes the lost gospel (the Missing Gospel).⁸³ John MacArthur opens the gospel of pragmatism (another gospel) is changing the church to be like the world.⁸⁴ Therefore, the only way out is the Bible. Erwin W. Lutzer presents reform efforts to save the gospel (rescuing the Gospel).⁸⁵ Will Metzger, in his book, *Tell the Truth*, discusses the Restored Gospel,⁸⁶ and Shin Hyun Kwan emphasizes restoring the Gospel.⁸⁷ Paul Washer affirms recovering the Gospel.⁸⁸ Because, indeed, the gospel is being lost (missing Gospel) and is causing the millennial generation to be missing (missing generation).⁸⁹ Like the "firstborn" who seems close to the Father (Luke 15:25-31), lives with and serves his father, but is actually far and lost, like the priests and scribes (Luke 15:2).

The gospel will never be lost, and the church of Jesus Christ cannot be lost. However, what can be lost is the understanding, confession and preaching of local and denominational churches regarding the gospel can become thin, distorted, and contradictory, not the gospel anymore. No one wants to lose, but what has been lost

⁸¹ Ryan Sheehan, "3500 People Leave the Church Every Day," *The Fuller Institute, Barna Group, The Kross and Pastoral Care Inc.*, christianpost.com.

⁸² Wayne Grudem, *Free Grace Theology* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 27-140.

⁸³ Darrell L. Bock, *The Missing Gospels: Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities*, 1-55.

⁸⁴ John MacArthur, *Ashamed of the Gospel: When the Church Becomes Like the World*, 35-259.

⁸⁵ Erwin W. Lutzer, *Rescuing the Gospel: The Story and Significances of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016), 7-186.

⁸⁶ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, 49-90.

⁸⁷ Shin Hyun Kwan, *Gospel That Must Be Restored, Enjoy and Deliver to the 237 Nations*, 1-51.

⁸⁸ Ibid, 1-51.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 1-51.

must be sought and found. There is only one way to return to the gospel: gospel reformation. Gospel Reformation is a movement to revive His church from deviations by preaching or teaching God's word, namely the GOSPEL purely and consistently. Reformation is the same as an awakening or resurrecting from death or re-awakening from an unconscious state.⁹⁰ The Reformation is the work of the Triune God. He revives, and returns His church to Him. As the head of the church, Jesus Christ did not allow His body (Rom. 12:4-5 and 1 Cor. 12) to be defiled and corrupted by the church's ministers. It is impossible, the Head of the Church allowed His body to stagnate, get sick, retreat and turn into another body (church). He indeed revives, dynamizes, moves, heals, and even restores the nature of the church that has changed, no longer following the Bible.

Understanding the Reformation of the Gospel with Its Theological-Historical Arguments

Gospel reformation is to return His church to a gospel worldview,⁹¹ which produces a way of thinking, living and acting.⁹² Reformation is a special calling, similar to the gospel call, namely a callback or return to a new relationship with God.⁹³ The reference for church reform is the gospel of the kingdom of God, namely the person, deeds and teachings of the Lord Jesus. It is also what the sixteenth-century reformers and modern-day evangelical theologians reaffirmed.⁹⁴ So reformation is a call to return to what the Lord Jesus did and taught. There is no repetition of history,⁹⁵ but rather the teaching, affirmation and return of unchanging truth to the changing church throughout its history. Whenever the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, it must always demand a response from His people, namely to believe and repent. That is reform. Reformation is a call to repent and believe again in the gospel. God also uses those who believe in the gospel and repent to reform the church and the world. Bornkamm believes, "Today he is still calling us in order that with us and through us he may change the world."⁹⁶

God first called Luther to repent and believe in the gospel, and then God called His church through Martin Luther. Internal and external calls marked God's call to Luther. External calls are disappointment and anxiety after seeing the state of the church and the behavior of church servants who live immorality, blasphemy and religious falsehood;⁹⁷ while the internal call, namely when Luther was enlightened when he read Romans 1:16-17, his eyes were opened about the truth justified by faith alone, which later became the principle of reformation. Luther finally understood that

⁹⁰ Elmer Towns, *Tanggapan Pihak Penginjilan Efektif, Dalam Evaluating the Church Growth Movement*, ed. Gary L. McIntosh (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2006), 331.

⁹¹ David J. Engelsma, *The Reformed Worldview on Behalf of Godly Culture* (Grandville: PRC Evangelism Committees, 2005), 1-28.

⁹² Mark P. Cosgrove, *Foundations of Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2006), 19.

⁹³ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, 49.

⁹⁴ Heinrich Bornkamm, *The Heart of Reformation Faith*, 65.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 71.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Century of Tradition and Reform* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 1999), 377.

by faith alone, justification occurs.⁹⁸ He also studied the writings of the Apostle Paul more and more about humans' active and passive nature towards God's truth. Finally, in 1515 Luther experienced enlightenment and understood justification by faith (*Iustitia Dei*).⁹⁹ From here the fire of reformation ignited and the reform movement manifested in the confession of 95 theses at the gate of the Wittenberg church on October 31, 1517.¹⁰⁰

Not only was Luther called to the task of reforming the church, John Calvin and other reformers were called by God to be reformed and/or reformational theologians. Many argue that there is nothing special about John Calvin's conversion. Many even doubt it. As in his interpretation of the Psalms in 1557, Calvin experienced what he called a sudden conversion, and after that, he became excited by pursuing true doctrines. He became thirsty and considered himself a beginner.¹⁰¹ Calvin's conversion was closely related to his call for reform, as his interpretation of the Psalms was to his attitude toward the superstition of the Papacy.¹⁰² Even long before that, around 1533, Calvin had been involved in the reform movement due to his conversion. He believed that the unexpected work of the Holy Spirit within him had separated him from the (Roman Catholic) era in which he lived.¹⁰³ Calvin became a theologian who was strongly called to reform the church by providing the church with writings centered on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Absolute gospel as the heart of the church and evangelism as the heart of the world

Why are people not interested in the gospel and evangelism? Apart from having no experience with the true gospel and evangelism, they are also first and foremost because of the lack of God's grace. The gospel is the grace of God. People who experience the gospel are those who have received God's grace.¹⁰⁴ The gospel is the power of God, not for the success and welfare of sinners, but the complete salvation of every believer (Rom.1:16-17). Then the gospel will impact the quality and welfare of the lives of believers (church) and the world. Is the Bible theological? The gospel can be summarized in the following statements, that the gospel is the good news of and about God's love, the only way God has ordained for man, God's act of becoming man in Christ, Christ is true God, the only fundamental solution to basic human problems. God chooses, redeems and seals His chosen people, has the status as a child of God and the authority to rule this world, grows towards maturity in faith, has an impact on social renewal, processes believers in spiritually abundant

⁹⁸ Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism*, second edition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 11.

⁹⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, Third Edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2005), 222: *Iustitia Dei* according to Luther: (1). A righteousness which is a gift from God, rather than a righteousness which belongs to God; (2). A righteousness which is revealed in the cross of Christ. (3). A righteousness which contradicts human preconceptions.

¹⁰⁰ Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism*, 13.

¹⁰¹ Francois Wendel, *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2002), 37-38.

¹⁰² Ibid, 37.

¹⁰³ Albert-Marie Schmidt, *Calvin and the Calvinistic Tradition* (New York: Harper-Brothers, 1960), 25.

¹⁰⁴ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 173-174.

life, has the assurance of eternal salvation, and the reality of eternal life. In the new heavens and earth.¹⁰⁵ From some statements above, the gospel is the good news that will determine the fate of mankind since believing, throughout life until life in eternity.

From the explanation above, the Bible is everything. All that is "the most/est" high, noble, majestic, main, great is the gospel. John Piper stated, "The Gospel is the highest, the best, final and decisive."¹⁰⁶ In this regard, the following author declares the superiority of the gospel: (1). The gospel is God's greatest gift to perishing sinners; (2). The gospel is the main agenda of life and the goal of all of Christ's work. All activities of the Lord Jesus are activities of preaching the gospel and for the sake of the gospel; the gospel and evangelism are the absolute will of God the Father, the vision and mission of Jesus Christ; and the gospel is the ultimate goal of Christ dying, rising, and going to heaven and will come Back; (3). The gospel is the main agenda of the life and ministry of the apostle Paul. The gospel is the main reason and purpose of Paul's ministry. It is Paul's pride; because of the gospel itself, preaching the gospel becomes the privilege of the preachers; and for the sake of the gospel, the preachers willingly control themselves and suffer; (4). The Bible is the final solution to man's fatal problem; (5). The gospel and the preaching of the gospel are the greatest good of believers to each other.¹⁰⁷

Based on the five reasons above, the theological motives of evangelism are: First, evangelism is the main task of the church (the most important, the most valuable and the most urgent);¹⁰⁸ Second, the gospel message determines human destiny (Mark 16:16). Third, the church exists because of evangelism; Fourth, the Gospel establishes the task of evangelizing, which defines the church's office.¹⁰⁹ Synergizing with that, Stephen Tong emphasized 5 (five) theological motivations regarding evangelism, namely: the will of God, the sending of Christ, the encouragement of Christ's love, the feeling of indebtedness, and the hope of Maranatha.¹¹⁰ This theological belief comes out of the Bible and influences the theological motives of evangelism manifested through evangelistic approaches and methods. Never the method of producing the gospel message, much less influencing the gospel, and never the method of making the gospel successful. It is the gospel that shapes motives, approaches and methods. The gospel is suitable for all people in all times and spaces. Even though there is no suitable method for all places and times, the dynamics of the gospel are not due to the dynamics of the method but because the gospel itself is dynamic (Rom. 1:16).

Only the Gospel is absolute, while approaches and methods are not absolute. Therefore, the church should give great attention and energy to the gospel, not to the method of evangelism. Paul did not preach the Gospel with specific methods that he

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 142-167.

¹⁰⁶ John Piper, *God Is The Gospel* (Wheaton: Illinois: Crossway, 2005), 27.

¹⁰⁷ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 214-235.

¹⁰⁸ Gereja Yang Memandang Rendah Para Penginjil (Pekabar Injil) Adalah Gereja Yang Memandang Rendah Penginjilan, Yang Pada Hakikatnya Mengungkapkan Gereja Yang Merendahkan INJIL (Stevri P.N.I. Lumintang).

¹⁰⁹ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Injil Palsu (Non-Biblikal Dan Non-Kanonikal) Dalam Gereja*, 239-249.

¹¹⁰ Stephen Tong, *Theologia Penginjilan*, 50-60.

had previously established, but we (the theologians) discovered Paul's methods and made them ours. God is a creative and dynamic Evangelist, so He is not dependent and bound to certain ways or methods. His incarnation is his strategy, approach, and methods with the gospel as the main principle. The gospel is not the object of the message, but the subject of the message. The gospel is perfect, all-encompassing, and for all, as John A. Baird, Metzger and the Evangelicals stated: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People.^{111 112} The whole mission, which is a mission that starts from the whole gospel, demands the full role of the church through complete mission projects to reach the whole human being.¹¹³ Likewise, what Metzger argues is that the full gospel is preached to reach people fully through the role of the church/school as a whole,¹¹⁴ including within and through educational institutions. The schooling approach (informal, non-formal and general formal and Schools of Theology) is an effective way of realizing the full gospel message and achieving the vision and mission of church members.¹¹⁵ Because the gospel is complete, the church's role in the world is also complete, especially the full role of proclaiming the gospel in the world.

Conclusion

Based on a study of a number of literatures using content analysis methods, it was found that many worldwide denominational churches and evangelical churches, including evangelical theological schools in Indonesia, have lost the Bible and evangelism. This is because these church organizations tend to follow worldly standards of thought and way of life, leaving the Gospel as the highest standard, as seen in world-oriented and worldly-oriented ways of life and work. To rediscover the lost gospel and evangelism, the church must undergo reformation by the gospel itself, bringing the gospel back into the church (re-evangelized) and affirming that evangelism is the essence and main task of the church. Furthermore, the church must continually diagnose itself with the gospel, treat it with the gospel, and maintain the church's health with the gospel. The evangelical church is a church that constantly checks its heart health. Here are the answers to the research questions of this paper.

Truly, all things come from the Gospel, by the Gospel, and for the Gospel of glory forever and ever. The church originates from the gospel, is run by and according to the gospel, and it is for the gospel that the church exists and functions. There is no church without the Gospel and evangelism. The church is a product of the Bible and evangelism. Therefore, a church not related to the gospel is not a church; a church that does not evangelize is not a church either. The gospel is the heart of the church. The health of the church is very dependent on the gospel. The depletion of the gospel in the church reveals the depletion of the health of the church. The loss of the gospel in the local and denominational churches opens the door to the church's end. Because of that, the evangelical church is a church that constantly

¹¹¹ John A. Baird, *The Whole Gospel for the Whole World*, 5-6.

¹¹² Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*.

¹¹³ Stevri Indra Lumintang, *Misiologia Kontemporer: Menuju Rekonstruksi Theologia Misi Yang Seutuhnya*, 73-124.

¹¹⁴ Will Metzger, *Tell The Truth: : The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People*, 1.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

checks its health with the gospel. The evangelical church is a church that operates by and for the sake of the gospel. The evangelical church is an evangelical church.

The church that evangelizes the world is God's main agenda. Therefore, evangelism should be the main agenda of the church. The church is the sole agent of God's mission in the world. God's mission is the whole mission, just as the gospel is the whole. God's mission is not only about the human mission. The mission of humanity is mandated to all humans, but the mission of redemption is only mandated to the "redeemed" namely the church. The mission of evangelism is only given to churches that have the gospel. True evangelism is the mission of redemption for sinners which is the basis for the mission of humanity. It cannot be reversed. There is no real humanity without the gospel of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ is truly God and man, the church acts as the "salt and light of the world". The salt and light of the world is the church's function that originates and operates from the heart of the church, namely the gospel. There is no "salt and light of the world" without the gospel. The gospel and evangelism are God's way of saving and controlling the world. The fate of this world lies in the gospel and evangelism. The screams of the world only end in death, but the Gospel gives life, real life on earth and eternal life in heaven. That means the gospel and evangelism are God's absolute and main agenda through the church. Just as the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's greatest good to us humans, so is the preaching of the gospel our believer's greatest good to our neighbors.

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