

## Discourse on the Substance and Existence of Evangelism According to Literary Descriptions

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### Abstract

Evangelism is at the core of the Christian mission, which has been a subject of profound study in religious literature. This article discusses the complexity of evangelism service across time, culture, generations, organizations, and sectors. In an academic context, qualitative research methods with content analysis are employed to explore the substance and existence of evangelism. Through the selection of relevant literature and careful content analysis, this article successfully reveals patterns, themes, and essential understandings related to evangelism. The conclusion of this research emphasizes the importance of the role of the Holy Spirit in evangelism, as well as the involvement of individuals and churches in ministry, and then how relevant it is to the context of theology and church practice. This article is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of relevant and impactful thinking and practices of evangelism, while offering a deeper understanding of the role of evangelism in the mission of the church in the modern era.

### Abstrak

Penginjilan merupakan inti dari misi Kristen yang telah menjadi subjek kajian yang mendalam dalam literatur keagamaan. Artikel ini mengulas kompleksitas pelayanan penginjilan melalui rentang zaman, budaya, generasi, organisasi, dan sektor yang melintasi. Dalam konteks akademik, metode penelitian kualitatif dengan analisis konten digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi substansi dan eksistensi penginjilan. Melalui pemilihan literatur yang relevan dan analisis konten yang cermat, artikel ini berhasil mengungkap pola-pola, tema-tema, dan pemahaman esensial terkait penginjilan. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya peran Roh Kudus dalam penginjilan, serta dilibatkannya individu dan gereja dalam pelayanan yang kemudian seperti apa relevansinya dengan konteks teologi dan praktik gereja. Artikel ini diharapkan akan memberikan kontribusi penting dalam pengembangan pemikiran dan praktik penginjilan yang relevan dan berdampak, sambil menawarkan pemahaman yang lebih kaya tentang peran penginjilan dalam misi gereja di era modern.

## **A. Introduction**

Evangelism, as the core of the Christian mission, has been a subject of deep study in various theological literature. The conceptualization of the substance and existence of evangelism has been at the forefront of understanding and practicing church ministry. Therefore, this article will discuss the complexity of evangelism service as reflected through the spans of time, culture, generations, organizations, and sectors that it traverses. Evangelism also encompasses various aspects related to the dissemination of the Christian message, ranging from the responsibility of believers in fulfilling Christ's great commission to the church's vital role in proclaiming the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ.

However, discourse on the substance and existence of evangelism is not confined to mere literary analysis. In an academic context, research methods serve as a crucial foundation for understanding the essential aspects of evangelism service. Through a content analysis approach, this study will delve deep into the substance of the Gospel message conveyed, the roles of individuals acting as evangelists, and the various methods employed in the evangelism process.

This journal article aims to present the findings and discussions of research that explore the substance and existence of evangelism, as outlined in the literary descriptions presented earlier. By referencing various texts and insights from experts in the field of evangelism, this article will provide profound insights into the current practices and understanding of evangelism within the ever-changing cultural and temporal contexts. Through this research, it is hoped that a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the role of evangelism in the mission of the church and its relevance in addressing the challenges of the modern era can be attained.

## **B. Method Of Research**

The relevant research method to explore the substance and existence of evangelism is qualitative method with a content analysis approach. This approach enables researchers to deeply analyze the texts and literature that are the focus of the study. In stepping into the exploration of the substance and existence of evangelism, the first step taken is the selection of relevant literature. The literature that becomes the focus of the research includes sources that discuss topics related to evangelism and Christian theology. Through this stage, researchers have ensured that the research base is filled with appropriate and substantial material. After selecting the literature, the next step is the codification process. Here, researchers develop an analysis framework that includes categories relevant to the research objectives. For example, these categories include the substance of the Gospel message, the role of evangelists, evangelism methods, and other aspects considered significant in the context of evangelism. With this framework, researchers can systematically organize the data found in the selected literature.

Once the framework is formed, researchers conduct content analysis of the codified literature. In this stage, researchers explore the texts deeply, identifying patterns, themes, and essential understandings contained within them. This analysis is done carefully and meticulously, ensuring that every aspect relevant to the substance and existence of evangelism can be comprehensively uncovered. After the data is analyzed, the next step is interpretation. Here, researchers attempt to understand and interpret the findings of the content analysis. This interpretation not only includes understanding the substance and existence of evangelism but also how these findings can be relevant to the wider context of theology and the practice of church evangelism. Thus, this research not only provides a profound overview of evangelism but also makes a significant contribution to the development of relevant and impactful thinking and practices in evangelism.

## C. Results and Discussion

### **Evangelism Is Winning Lost Souls**

The topic of Evangelism as an effort to win lost souls is revealed in a book entitled in Indonesian "Cara-Cara Memenangkan Jiwa" (with its original title "The Art of Soul Winning,") written by Murray W. Downey, this book encapsulates views on the significant responsibility carried by every individual who acknowledges Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. Its main focus lies in the endeavor of winning souls for the Lord, a task deemed crucial by the author. The book's content is divided into three parts, systematically explaining approaches to fulfilling this responsibility.

The first part of the book discusses the spiritual preparation needed for someone to succeed in the mission of winning souls. The author emphasizes the importance of having a pure heart, full of compassion, and supported by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of the Word of God as spiritual weapons. As the author puts it, "The prerequisite of a soul winner is a pure heart, a heart full of compassion, the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God as the sword of the spirit" (Downey, nd, 18-20). The second part of the book outlines various challenges faced by evangelists in winning souls, including the different backgrounds and attitudes of the individuals they encounter. Different approaches are required depending on the characteristics of individuals, such as children, confused people, reckless individuals, and others. The author emphasizes that in facing these challenges, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is the key to producing valuable results, as written, "All these require the work of the Holy Spirit which will lead in due time, that is, the time to reap these precious fruits" (Downey, nd, 53).

In addition to relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the author also emphasizes the importance of wisdom and astuteness in dealing with various groups and situations. The final part of the book discusses strategies for confronting false teachings or heresies that arise within the church and society. The author emphasizes that in facing heresies, humility and issuing warnings using spiritual weapons are important for Christians, as stated, "Christians should neither be proud nor look down on others. Christians should also not be swayed and weak, but give warnings and admonitions using spiritual weapons" (Downey, nd, 155).

Thus, according to Downey, there are several important prerequisites for someone who wants to be a soul winner, especially the importance of having a "pure heart" dedicated to God, marked by the filling of the Holy Spirit with His strong love (Downey, n.d., 18). Downey also asserts that love for souls is not a natural impulse, but it is the compelling love of Christ. The concept of "a heart full of compassion" is highlighted as another significant prerequisite for a soul winner. This view refers to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the example of the ministry of Apostle Paul, both of which were driven by the love of Christ (Matthew 9:36; 2 Corinthians 5:14).

In a different context, Dawney highlights the importance of relying on the Word of God and the Spirit of God in dealing with various groups and situations (Dawney, n.d., 113). Dawney then emphasizes that the essence of the new birth is the work of the Holy Spirit on individuals who are spiritually dead due to sin. The new birth recreates the human heart, resurrecting it from spiritual death, and giving spiritual life. The result of this new birth is repentance, as a conscious act, which is the result of God's grace and is the first step towards faith taken by those who have experienced the new birth.

Furthermore, Dawney emphasizes the role of a soul winner anointed by the power from above and driven by the love of Christ in combatting spiritual darkness (Dawney, n.d., 115). Dawney asserts that humans cannot defeat the devil with their own strength, as the devil has power that surpasses humans to a certain extent. Therefore, being an instrument of God in winning souls requires anointing from above, from the Holy Spirit. The truth of this statement emphasizes that winning souls means being a tool of God that requires divine support and guidance in facing the forces of darkness.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, a renowned preacher in the history of Christianity, has been a powerful instrument in spreading the Gospel in England. The impact of his ministry, both in

proclaiming the Gospel and in literature documenting his life and service, is still felt in the Christian world to this day. In his book titled in Indonesian, "The Soul Winner: Strategi Jitu Untuk Pemenang Jiwa", Spurgeon highlights that winning souls is not just about increasing the number of Christians, but rather about the importance of repentance, which involves forsaking previously cherished sins and demonstrating earnestness in living free from sin (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 21). From God's perspective, a soul winner must surrender themselves entirely to Him, living in holiness and humility. From a human perspective, a character that aligns with the call and service to the Lord Jesus Christ is also required.

The importance of preaching in the proclamation of the Gospel also comes under Spurgeon's scrutiny. These sermons should center on the person and work of Jesus Christ, delivered in simple language so that they can be understood by all strata of society (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 81). Although many obstacles may be encountered in the effort to win souls, Spurgeon asserts that strengthening ministry while seeking God's help is the best course of action to take (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 128). Additionally, Spurgeon also highlights that winning souls is not easy and requires sacrifice. However, the joy gained from bringing souls to Jesus is a precious benefit for a soul winner (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 188). Thus, winning souls is the primary calling favored by God. This serves as a reminder that this work aims to proclaim the forgiveness available in Christ for those living in sin (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 188). In conclusion, Spurgeon emphasizes that winning souls is not just a task, but a sacred and crucial calling for every Christian who loves the Lord Jesus Christ.

In line with his assertion that evangelism is the winning of lost souls, which is God's work, Spurgeon highlights the danger of pride in spiritual ministry. He asserts that "a proud minister is a terrible spectacle" (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 39). This view is not merely an opinion but a profound truth. For one who serves to win souls for Christ, they should only be a tool used by God for His purposes and goals, which is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. If a servant of God falls into pride, it means they desire to seize God's glory and do not fully rely on the service they perform for God. Such pride is also a trap of the devil that can sabotage their ministry.

Furthermore, Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of faith in the work of the Holy Spirit in the proclamation of the Gospel. He writes that "we must believe that the Holy Spirit will make our preaching effective because we are only instruments in His hands" (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 81). This statement is indeed accurate as it affirms that all servants of God and their ministries are merely instruments used by the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ and His work. The effectiveness of Gospel proclamation occurs because of the work of the Holy Spirit, who opens the minds and hearts of people to receive Christ. It is the Holy Spirit who convinces a sinner to believe in Christ and repent, transforming spiritually dead hearts into living ones through faith.

Furthermore, Spurgeon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging that the spiritual fruit produced by believers is a result of God's grace and gifts. He asserts that "never forget that the fruit of the righteous, though it naturally springs from within him, because of his regenerate nature, yet is always the result of the grace and gift of God" (Spurgeon, 2010, p. 201). This statement aligns with the teaching of the Word of God, which affirms that every believer is a branch of Christ as the vine. Although the fruit is produced through the branches, it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Thus, every Christian should be grateful to be a tool that produces fruit in the hands of God, all of which are the result of God's grace.

Therefore, the discourse on evangelism as winning lost souls conveys three important affirmations. First, spiritual preparation is necessary to succeed in the mission of winning souls, with an emphasis on having a pure heart, full of compassion, and supported by the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of God's Word. Second, evangelists must face various challenges wisely and rely on the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so they can produce valuable fruit in winning souls. And third, evangelists must avoid pride in spiritual ministry, believing that the effectiveness of ministry depends on the work of the Holy Spirit and acknowledging that spiritual fruit is the result of God's grace and gifts. In conclusion, winning souls is not just a task but a sacred calling favored by God, which must be carried out with humility, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and acknowledgment of God's grace.

## Evangelism is Good News for Everyone

In the theological study, the practice of Gospel proclamation has been a primary subject since biblical times, encompassing both the Old and New Testaments. Despite practices dating back to biblical times, various opinions and understandings regarding the proclamation of the Gospel remain a heated debate among scholars. Experts such as Gustav Warneck, a modern Protestant missiologist, and Josef Schmidlin of the Roman Catholic Church, have introduced the term *Missionslehre*, referring to theories about the church's mission. With the development of modern missiology, various terminologies have been proposed to study the expansion of the church, including *Keryctics*, highlighting the proclamation of the Gospel; *Prosthetics*, emphasizing the addition of members to the church fellowship; *Auxanics*, examining the growth and development of the church; *Halieutics*, depicting the analogy of fishing; *Agrics*, relating to fellowship as a field; as well as *Pleutics* and evangelistics, highlighting the role of apostolate and efforts to spread the Gospel. This was written by Henk Venema, a Reformed theologian from the Netherlands who has long served in Indonesia, particularly in remote areas of Papua (Venema, 2006, 37-46).

With the development, emerged a field known as Missiology, Apostology, or Mission Science. This discipline emphasizes the concept of commissioning and the proclamation of the Gospel, wherein the church is regarded as a messenger sent to spread the testimony of the salvation Gospel to the ends of the earth (Venema, 2006, 52). Missiology as a scientific discipline addresses various aspects of the church's mission, including strategies of proclamation, church expansion, cross-cultural interactions, and the development of local churches in various global contexts. Thus, the scholarly examination of Gospel proclamation has significantly contributed to our understanding of the church's role in disseminating the message of salvation to the entire world.

The foundation of Gospel proclamation can actually be found in the teachings of the Bible, rooted in God's activities since creation, as recorded in Genesis 1:26-28. There, God created humanity in His own image and gave them the mandate to rule over the earth and manage it. The principle of universalism in God's mission is also clearly depicted when God chose the nation of Israel as His instrument, not exclusively for that nation alone, but with the purpose of blessing all humanity and nations, as conveyed in Revelation 5:9-10. Thus, God's mission not only becomes the starting point of all His activities but also the ultimate universal goal, encompassing the whole world and all nations (Genesis 1:26-28; Revelation 5:9-10).

In this understanding, God's mission is not limited to historical aspects but also has protological and eschatological dimensions that transcend time and space boundaries. This means that the proclamation of the Gospel not only encompasses the past and present but also delves into future dimensions. God's mission is not merely a historical activity that occurred in the past but also a judgment on the future that impacts the eternal destiny of humanity. Thus, understanding these protological and eschatological principles provides a solid foundation for the proclamation of the Gospel, which not only leads to historical dimensions but also invites us to look forward with the hope bestowed by God (Venema, 2007, 87).

The presence and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ in this world are considered the fulfillment of all promises stated in the Old Testament, declaring Him as the awaited Savior and Messiah. As a mystery now revealed, Christ's ministry brings salvation to all humanity, surpassing cultural or ethnic boundaries (Venema, 2006, 216). The church, as the living body of Christ, is entrusted with the sacred responsibility to continue His mission in this world. The primary focus of Gospel proclamation is to glorify the Name of the Lord by spreading the good news of salvation to all nations and tribes on earth (Venema, 2006, 228).

The proclamation of the Gospel to all nations worldwide is not merely a task but a profound calling. This signifies that the proclamation of the Gospel aims not only to spread religious teachings but also to evoke reverence and adoration for the name of the Lord among nations.

Thus, every step taken by the church in fulfilling this mission should be directed towards offering glory to God, not for human interests alone (Venema, 2006, 228).

Venema asserts that Missiology is a branch of study that delves into God's teachings in His Word regarding the mission of the Christ's church. This task is to convey the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all layers of society worldwide, not limited to any specific group or nation. This statement reflects that the primary foundation of Missiology, as well as all other branches of theological studies, is the teachings found in the Word of God. In this context, Missiology not only looks at the practical needs of the world but also prioritizes obedience to the teachings of the Word of God. Thus, the primary focus of Missiology is the endeavor to disseminate the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to all corners of the earth, in accordance with the guidance found in the Word of God (Venema, 2006, 66).

Furthermore, Venema (2006, 90) states that the position of Israel has a universal nature. This is a consistent fact because Israel's selection as the people of God began with the call to Abraham, with the purpose of becoming a blessing to all nations. Israel was not blessed exclusively for itself but as a chosen people to bring other nations who do not know God to come and believe in the true God. Similarly, the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah born from the lineage of Israel has the same purpose, which is to redeem, save, and restore people from all nations within the scope of the Kingdom of God. In this context, it is important to understand that Israel is not only meant for its own blessing but to be a channel of blessing for all humanity. The call given to Abraham is a universal call that reaches all nations. Therefore, Israel's special position as the chosen people is to serve as mediators for the introduction and belief in the true God for nations that have not known Him.

The presence of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah also expands the horizon of God's salvation. Although born from the lineage of Israel, His mission is to extend salvation to all people, not just to the nation of Israel. As the Messiah sent by God, Jesus Christ brings a message of universal salvation that encompasses all humanity. Therefore, His coming is not just for a particular nation but for all who need salvation and restoration. In this framework, the universality of Israel's position and the mission of Christ as the Messiah affirm the principle of inclusivity in God's salvation plan. This illustrates God's broad view and mercy that embrace all humanity, regardless of their origins or cultural backgrounds. As the people of God called to inherit this universal blessing, our responsibility is to spread the message of salvation to everyone, inviting them to believe in the true God and accept the salvation offered by Him.

Although Venema asserts that the Gospel is good news for everyone, he disagrees with the understanding of missiology that encompasses social work and the restoration of societal structures (Venema, 2006, 236-239). Venema criticizes views that limit missiology only to the science of Gospel proclamation, arguing that missiology should be holistic. However, many missiology experts and practitioners reject this view and assert that missiology should include the holistic dimension of the Kingdom of God, involving all aspects of human life, including spiritual, political, economic, social, cultural, emotional, educational, and others. According to a different perspective, missiology, as expressed by Johannes Verkuyl, is a study or reflection on the salvific activity carried out by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, aimed at the whole world to realize the Kingdom of God. This holistic approach emphasizes that the Kingdom of God is not limited to spiritual dimensions alone but also includes all aspects of human life. Therefore, mission should also be holistic and comprehensive, not only focusing on spiritual aspects but also on the restoration and transformation of all societal structures.

Thus, there are differing views from Venema, who asserts that holistic missiology expands the mission horizon from mere Gospel proclamation towards a more comprehensive understanding of God's salvific work in bringing about holistic societal change. This includes efforts to improve social, economic, political, and cultural conditions, and to bring about transformations in line with God's will for all humanity. This perspective reflects a deep understanding of the church's role in realizing the Kingdom of God on earth, not only through direct Gospel proclamation but also through concrete efforts to bring about positive changes in the structure and dynamics of society.

Therefore, the emphasis on the holistic dimension of missiology becomes crucial in formulating relevant and effective mission strategies and practices in the complex contemporary context.

The conclusion of Venema's exposition is that evangelism plays a central role in theological studies, encompassing understanding of Gospel proclamation from biblical times to modern missiological developments. There are diverse opinions regarding Gospel proclamation, including discussions on the understanding of missiology that encompasses social aspects and the restoration of societal structures. Despite differences in perspectives, the understanding that Gospel proclamation is good news for everyone remains a consensus among scholars and practitioners of theology. This understanding is rooted in biblical foundations, such as the universalistic principle of God's mission encompassing all nations and the protological and eschatological dimensions reaching past, present, and future. Additionally, it is important to understand the special position of Israel and the mission of Christ as universal grace that encompasses all humanity. In the context of the debate on the holistic dimension of missiology, there is a view emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to achieve holistic societal transformation. In conclusion, a deep and holistic understanding of Gospel proclamation and the mission of the church serves as an important foundation for relevant and effective missiological practices and strategies in fulfilling the church's call to spread the message of salvation to the entire world.

### **Evangelism is a Constant Mission in a Ever-changing World.**

The continuous changes occurring worldwide over time have significantly impacted various aspects of life, including the role of the church and Christianity in the modern context. This phenomenon of change has brought about a new awareness among Christians of the importance of adapting to the ever-changing times, both socially, politically, economically, in the workplace, and in education. Particularly, the phenomenon of modernization that has swept through European countries, America, and the world as a whole has become the main focus in the church's efforts to understand and respond to the challenges of the new era.

In his book, "Christian Mission In The Modern World," John Stott (2013) presents mission principles rooted in biblical teachings yet relevant in the context of the modern age. These principles are detailed into five main points: mission, evangelism, dialogue, salvation, and conversion. Stott emphasizes the urgency and importance of the relationship between Christianity and the church with the modern world, which requires a concept of mission to guide them in fulfilling their calling and tasks amidst the changing times.

Stott's analysis provides a deep understanding of how the church can effectively play a role in spreading the Gospel message in this modern era. By referring to biblical principles, Stott offers a comprehensive view of how the church can adapt and interact with the ever-changing world without losing its identity and fundamental principles of faith. This includes developing relevant evangelism strategies, actively participating in inter-religious and cross-cultural dialogues, and emphasizing salvation and conversion as integral parts of the church's mission.

It is important to acknowledge that in this complex modern context, the church faces various challenges that require thoughtful thinking and wise actions. However, with the foundation of the biblical mission principles outlined by Stott, the church can navigate through the changing times with confidence and integrity, while steadfastly holding onto the call to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to all nations.

In John Stott's view (2013), biblical mission should be comprehensive or holistic, encompassing not only evangelistic activities but also social activities. He believes that there should be no polarization or separation between the two, as they can complement each other. Stott believes that through social activities, the Christian presence in society will have a significant impact. While Stott emphasizes the importance of social activities, the most important call for Christianity remains the proclamation of the Gospel. He strongly emphasizes the authenticity of Christianity involving elements from Gospel events, such as the historical death and resurrection of Christ, the testimony of the apostles, the authority of the Gospel, the promises of Christ, and the demands of the Gospel, such as conversion or repentance. Although conversion or repentance is

considered essential for salvation according to Stott, it is only possible through regeneration, which is a gift from God and the work of the Holy Spirit. This emphasizes that the primary role in the conversion process is divine work and not merely the result of human effort. According to Stott, in the context of the modern era, the church will have a significant impact in its ministry and mission only if it engages in dialogue with followers of other religions through genuine love and witness to the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ for human salvation. This indicates that in the effort to spread the Gospel message, it is important for the church to interact with diverse religious communities with a loving attitude and consistent witness to the teachings and works of Christ.

In his analysis, John Stott (2013, 39) states that connecting evangelism with social action is done in a better way. According to him, this approach does not view social action simply as a tool for evangelism, but as a manifestation of evangelism itself, or at least, as an expression of the good news being proclaimed. This view is based on the understanding that social action should not be reduced solely as a strategy to win souls but should be understood as an integral part of comprehensive Christian mission. Advocates of holistic mission will agree with this view because they consider that social action is not only a tool or means for evangelistic purposes but also a concrete manifestation of Christian love and concern for others. Good deeds and good news should be integrated and performed together, as both are part of the essence of the Gospel. Social action is not just a response to the proclamation of the Gospel but also a response to the blessings of God received by His people. In this context, social action becomes a tangible expression of the Lord's mandate for His people to serve and love one another, as well as a responsibility as those who have been saved by His grace.

Thus, this perspective emphasizes that evangelism and social action are not two separate entities, but are interconnected and complement each other. Through this holistic ministry, the church can be more effective in conveying the gospel message and demonstrating the love of Christ to a needy world, both spiritually and physically.

Furthermore, John Stott (2013, 55-57) asserts that evangelism should not be defined solely within the framework of outcomes and methods. This view is supported by the argument that the results of evangelistic efforts are actually the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, if evangelism yields results, such as someone believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is due to the grace of God and the work of regeneration performed by the Holy Spirit in the heart of that person, leading them to then believe and accept the Gospel presented. Therefore, the primary focus of evangelism should be on the message of the Gospel itself, not merely on measurable outcomes or methods used. Additionally, Stott also emphasizes that evangelism is not just about emphasizing the techniques or skills possessed by evangelists, or even about good communication abilities. It is more than that; evangelism is the good news about the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ who came to save sinful humanity. Therefore, what should be emphasized in evangelism is the essential message of the Gospel itself, which is the core of the church's mission. According to Stott, the methods or approaches used in evangelism are merely tools that can vary according to context and needs, but the message or news of the Gospel itself will never change. In other words, the essence of the Gospel message remains relevant and unaffected by changes in time or culture. This perspective emphasizes the importance of prioritizing the essence of the Gospel message in every evangelistic effort, while the methods or approaches used are secondary and can be adapted to the existing conditions.

According to Stott (2013, 107), dialogue is evidence of genuine Christian love. Dialogue is not just a conversation but also signifies a sincere effort to overcome all prejudices and misconceptions about others. It involves a willingness to listen with open ears and understand the perspectives of others, so that we can understand what obstacles they may face in accepting the Gospel and seeing Christ. This statement is highly relevant in the context of a diverse world, both culturally, religiously, and socially. In a diverse and heterogeneous society like today's, everyone, without exception, needs the Lord Jesus Christ as the Redeemer. However, not everyone understands the Gospel in the same way, especially due to differences in cultural, social, and religious backgrounds. Therefore, dialogue becomes very important in conveying the Gospel message to everyone. Through dialogue, we can present the Lord Jesus Christ as the only Lord

and Savior of the world in a more relevant and understandable way to every individual. In this context, dialogue is not just a tool for conveying the Gospel message but is also a tangible expression of love and respect for others. By listening with open ears and striving to understand the perspectives of others, we can build better relationships and open opportunities to share faith with them. This is a concrete manifestation of the love of Christ that we have received, which invites us to love and serve others sincerely and humbly.

Thus, John Stott's perspective on biblical mission and evangelism in the context of modern times highlights the importance of the church's adaptation to the changes occurring in an ever-changing world. Stott's articulated mission principles, such as holistic mission encompassing evangelism and social action, as well as the importance of dialogue in conveying the Gospel message to diverse communities, provide a solid foundation for the church in fulfilling its mission. Stott emphasizes that evangelism should focus on the message of the Gospel itself, not just on the outcomes or methods used, and that dialogue is an expression of genuine Christian love in the face of human diversity. With these principles, the church can navigate through changing times with confidence and integrity, while steadfastly holding onto the call to proclaim the good news of the Gospel to all nations.

### **Evangelism is Cross-Cultural Communication**

The book "Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally" by David J. Hesselgrave addresses the crucial issue of cross-cultural communication in the context of missions, particularly in evangelism. History shows that Christianity originated from Asia but later spread to Europe, underwent diaspora, and eventually became acculturated in Western culture. Although this process has positive implications for spreading the Gospel, such as the formulation of theology within the framework of Western worldview and missions conducted by Western institutions and missionaries, it also poses challenges in understanding and communicating the word of God relevantly in different cultural contexts. Hesselgrave (2005, 25) emphasizes the importance of communication in carrying out the mission task, and as a key to that, he highlights cross-cultural communication. The concept of contextualization emerges as a solution, which is an effort to communicate the message of the Gospel while considering the cultural framework of a society. Its primary goal is to ensure that the Gospel message can be well-received and relevant to each individual within their respective cultural contexts.

This contextualization method demands communicators to deeply understand the culture of their target audience and deliver the message of the Gospel with high sensitivity. Thus, it is hoped that the message about Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can be well-received in various cultural contexts. This requires a profound appreciation of the local cultural values and the ability to articulate the message of the Gospel in a relevant and easily understandable manner for the targeted mission audience. Therefore, this book highlights the importance of cross-cultural communication in the context of missions and emphasizes the need for a contextual approach in communicating the message of the Gospel to achieve maximum effectiveness in the spread and reception of the Gospel message across different cultures.

In this book, Hesselgrave (2005, 211-212) again refers to H.R. Niebuhr's classic work depicting five views on the relationship between Christ and Culture. First is the concept of Christ against culture, where Christ is seen as the sole authority to be followed, thus claims from culture are to be rejected. Second is the Christ of culture perspective, which states that the Christian system is not essentially different from culture but only in quality; therefore, the best of culture should be chosen to conform to Christ's teachings.

Next, the third view is Christ Above Culture, where it is acknowledged that the grace of Christ can complement and improve culture, although there may not always be perfect harmony between the two. Fourth is the concept of Christ and Culture in Paradox, where both are recognized as authorities to be obeyed, causing tension for believers. Lastly, there is the perspective of Christ as the Transformer of Culture, where culture is seen as a reflection of humanity's fallen condition in sin, but through Christ, humanity is redeemed, and culture can be renewed to glorify God.

In the context of Cross Cultural Evangelism, it is crucial for Gospel messengers to communicate the Gospel message rooted in the Bible while also being able to engage with and empower the culture of the receiving communities. Gospel messengers should not necessarily respond to or reject local culture radically, but should be willing to learn from the culture to which they are sent. Conversely, they should not fully embrace the culture of the community but should be able to discern cultural elements that can be used in Gospel proclamation and discard cultural elements that are inconsistent with Gospel values, by changing their worldview. Thus, cross-cultural evangelism is not only about delivering the Gospel message but also about integrating Biblical teachings and local culture to achieve maximum understanding and acceptance in diverse societies.

The importance of using appropriate methods and media in cross-cultural Gospel communication cannot be overstated; however, at the end of all these efforts, one thing must be remembered: the ever-changing environment, which plays a crucial role in the reception of messages by society, is entirely under the control of sovereign God. God has the power to influence the surrounding environment, whether by allowing contact with primitive cultures open to receiving Christ, building great civilizations that may be built on fragile foundations, or even through natural disasters that change human perceptions and values. In His will, God orchestrates situations that enable previously closed doors to be opened for the delivery of the Gospel to those who have not heard it before. Although often unnoticed, His presence as the overseer of world events plays a significant role in determining opportunities for Gospel teaching to humanity. Thus, according to Hesselgrave (2005, 622), cross-cultural communication efforts depend not only on human skills or strategic wisdom alone but also on divine will and intervention that govern the course of human history and the opening of human hearts to the Gospel message. This indicates that in the endeavor to convey the Gospel message to various cultures, we rely not only on human efforts but also acknowledge the role of God who controls everything according to His perfect plan.

In the book, Hesselgrave (2005, 30) highlights an important concept for every Christian, namely the awareness of the task given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His people. This is reflected in the statement that Christians should not be satisfied with just having knowledge about Christ. Instead, they are given the responsibility to disciple nations, indicating that the process of learning and teaching must be an integral part of their lives. This concept emphasizes that a person's faith experience should not be a reason to stop learning and growing, especially when it comes to cross-cultural Gospel communication. This statement is true because it aligns with the essence of the Christian mission, which mandates His people to bear witness to the teachings and works of Christ's salvation to the whole world. Gospel communication is not a task limited to one specific group or culture but must reach all social and cultural layers. Therefore, it is essential for every Christian to be willing to learn about other cultures to effectively and meaningfully communicate the message of Christ in various cross-cultural contexts. Thus, efforts to minimize cultural barriers become crucial in reaching and influencing communities with relevant and authentic Gospel messages.

In a thorough study of the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian mission, the author depicts the Holy Spirit's position as the chief overseer in carrying out mission tasks. Hesselgrave (2005, 185) asserts that the Holy Spirit is not only a supervisor but also an active Divine communicator influencing the listeners. While not relying on ignorance, the Holy Spirit is capable of inspiring and convincing listeners of the truth of the Gospel even if they may not fully understand it. This statement portrays the essence of spiritual power surpassing human skills and cultural abilities. Although human communication and approaches in delivering the Gospel can be crucial, their success still depends on the divine intervention of the Holy Spirit. This reminds us that, although we may prepare ourselves as best as possible, success in influencing the hearts and minds of others to accept the Gospel remains a result of the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit. Diverse and complex cultural contexts demand an awareness of human limitations in achieving universal understanding. However, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit can surpass these limitations, making each individual an instrument used by Him to bring the message of the Gospel to the world. Therefore, in the context of cultural differences, the role of the Holy Spirit becomes

increasingly important in ensuring that the Gospel message is delivered with the truth and power needed to transform the hearts and minds of people.

Furthermore, Hesselgrave (2005, 506) highlights the responsibility and opportunities held by mission emissaries to not only introduce advancements in modern education, medicine, and agriculture but also to convey a transformational impact Gospel message. Faced with syncretism challenges, Christ's messengers are expected to teach everything according to what He has commanded. This perspective is particularly relevant in the context of serving in remote villages and tribal communities that may still be remote and isolated, in countries where development is relatively stagnant.

It is a fact that communities in remote areas often require assistance to understand and access the developments of the modern world in the fields of education, agriculture, and economy. However, in providing this assistance, Christ's messengers must prioritize the delivery of the message about the person and work of Jesus Christ as the most crucial aspect. They believe that the primary needs of every human are not only related to physical or material needs but deeper, namely the need for salvation from sin and perdition. In this context, Christian ministry is not only about providing material aid or practical knowledge but also about delivering the good news about Jesus Christ that can provide eternal hope and transformation. Christ's messengers are challenged to integrate physical and spiritual ministry in balance, ensuring that every action they take, whether in education, agriculture, or economy, provides an opportunity to clearly and effectively deliver the Gospel to those who receive their assistance.

Overall, the emphasis on the importance of cross-cultural communication in evangelism, as highlighted in David J. Hesselgrave's book "Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally," provides a profound understanding of how the Gospel message can be effectively conveyed in various cultural contexts. By understanding and respecting the local culture, and with the guidance and intervention of the Holy Spirit, mission emissaries are confronted with the challenge of not only providing practical assistance but also delivering transformational message about Jesus Christ, reinforcing the importance of contextual approach and spirituality in spreading the Gospel worldwide.

### **Evangelism is a ministry that is simultaneously simple and complex**

In the book titled "Metode Penginjilan" by D.W. Ellis, the complexity of evangelism is reflected through the span of time, culture, generations, organizations, and sectors it traverses. This book, a compendium on the preaching of the Gospel, systematically delineates various aspects related to the dissemination of the Christian message. Initially, emphasis is placed on the responsibility of every believer to adhere to the great commission of the Lord Jesus Christ (Ellis, 2011, 9-11). Furthermore, it discusses the essence of the Gospel, highlighting the nature of the Triune God, the condition of human sin leading to separation from God, and the pivotal role of Jesus Christ as the pathway to salvation, with a specific emphasis on the role of the cross as the core of Christian doctrine (Ellis, 2011, 45). Additionally, the importance of the work of the Holy Spirit in opening the hearts of people to faith in Christ and the role of the church as a community proclaiming forgiveness of sins in Christ is also clearly emphasized (Ellis, 2011, 75). In this overall context, the ministry of evangelism, although simple in the essence of the message conveyed, requires a deep understanding of the cultural context, social dynamics, and spiritual needs of the targeted community.

The next discussion in Ellis's book focuses on the personality of an evangelist, which demands personal experience of salvation and firm belief in it. Furthermore, the importance of spiritual growth and maturity of an evangelist, based on a close relationship with Christ and supported by the practices of prayer and Bible study, takes center stage. Additionally, emphasis is placed on various methods that can be used in evangelistic ministry, whether through mass evangelism events at churches or through personal testimonies in everyday life. Evangelism also involves visits to homes, schools, and healthcare facilities as efforts to reach various segments of society. Lastly, the author highlights the importance of practical and fundamental teaching of Christian doctrine as an integral part of evangelistic efforts. Throughout this discussion, the focus

is on character formation, spiritual commitment, and practical skills required for an evangelist to effectively convey the Gospel message in various contexts and life situations.

Ellis's significant statement (2011, 13) asserts that the most genuine and pressing need for humanity is the salvation of the soul. This becomes the primary focus, considering that all humans, due to sin, have been separated from God. Life in this world, although temporary, has eternal consequences. Therefore, salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes essential; without it, human life would lose true meaning and significance, even if adorned with worldly wealth and glory. Awareness of the need for spiritual salvation becomes an important foundation in understanding the purpose of human life.

Further, Ellis (2011, 94) highlights the importance of the close relationship between the truth of the Gospel and the personality of an evangelist. According to him, these two elements cannot be separated; God seeks not only through the proclamation of His Word but also through His messengers who communicate that Word. Therefore, it is important to consider the personality traits that someone must possess to be a messenger of the Lord. This aligns with the understanding that while the Word of God has the power to bring about change and understanding of the Gospel, the person delivering that message must also have integrity, character, and trustworthy behavior. An evangelist's inconsistent life, irresponsibility, or actions that are not commendable can diminish the acceptance of the Gospel message they convey. Thus, the personality of an evangelist who genuinely serves God and others becomes crucial in influencing the reception of the Gospel message by others.

Ultimately, Ellis (2011, 160) highlights the importance of reading as a practical way to avoid obsolescence and broaden understanding of the world around us. The author emphasizes that reading religious books, history, biographies, magazines, newspapers, and even secular materials is essential because evangelism must take into account the ever-changing context. With time passing and inevitable changes, evangelistic ministry must be able to adapt to the developments of time and changing generations. Therefore, a servant of God is not only required to have spiritual qualities and strong character but also adequate insight and skills. Reading is one way to enrich insight and knowledge, which in turn will support the growth of faith and more effective ministry in this ever-changing context. Thus, reading is not only a gateway to understanding the world around us but also to enriching faith and alignment with the demands of the times.

The book explicitly discusses the complexity of evangelistic ministry, which encompasses various aspects such as the span of time, culture, generations, organizations, and sectors. Emphasizing the responsibility of believers, the essence of the Gospel highlighting the nature of the Triune God, the role of the Holy Spirit in opening human hearts, and the role of the church in proclaiming forgiveness of sins, underscores the importance of a profound understanding of the cultural and spiritual context of the target community. Furthermore, the discussion on the character and growth of an evangelist, various evangelistic methods, and the importance of practical teaching from Christian doctrine affirm that evangelistic ministry requires spiritual commitment, practical skills, and sustainable growth.

Ellis's statement about spiritual salvation as the most urgent need for humanity emphasizes that without salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, human life will lose its true meaning. Moreover, the emphasis on the close relationship between the truth of the Gospel and the personality of an evangelist highlights that the character and integrity of someone conveying the Gospel greatly influence the reception of that message by others. Finally, the importance of reading in the context of evangelism asserts that insights and knowledge gained through reading are crucial aspects in supporting the growth of faith and effective ministry in facing the changes of time and the dynamic context of life.

## **D. Conclusion**

Through the qualitative research method approach with content analysis, this article explores the complexity of evangelistic ministry within the context of time, culture, generations,

organizations, and intersecting sectors. In the discourse on the substance and existence of evangelism, literature has been a crucial foundation for understanding the essential aspects of this ministry. By referring to various texts and perspectives from scholars, this article successfully provides a profound understanding of contemporary practices and understanding of evangelism. Through the selection of relevant literature and careful content analysis, this research reveals patterns, themes, and essential understandings contained within these texts. This enables interpretations that not only encompass an understanding of the substance and existence of evangelism but also its relevance to the broader theological context and practices of church evangelism.

In the context of evangelism, the role of believing individuals in obeying Christ's great commission and the role of the church in proclaiming forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ are crucial. The research methods used have allowed for systematic data compilation, thus making a significant contribution to the development of relevant and impactful evangelism thoughts and practices. Therefore, through this article, it is hoped that a richer and more comprehensive understanding of the role of evangelism in the church's mission and its relevance in addressing the challenges of modern times can be obtained.

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