

Mission Transformation in the Millennial Era

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ABSTRACT: Christians generally understand mission as an attempt to preach the gospel to people who do not yet believe in Jesus. If someone has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, then the mission to that person is considered complete. With this understanding, some Christians then possibly misrepresent Christianity, they are trapped by religious worship traditions and put aside the essence of self as the “image” and “likeness” of God. Using a qualitative descriptive method this study raises facts in the lives of Christians In Jakarta, Indonesia. Through this study’s results, Christians are expected to understand their essence as followers of Jesus. Changing the paradigm of Christianity and salvation is very important for transforming every Christian’s mission definition. In this millennial era, the church must focus on mature faith to teach the purpose of human life in the world and eternity..

KEYWORDS: transformation, mission, millennial era, mature faith

I. INTRODUCTION

Generally, Christian Missions are understood as a way to reach souls who do not yet know Christ by sending missionaries to certain regions. The word “mission” itself comes from the Latin word “*missum*,” meaning “sending” (Peters, 2018). Based on agreement of church leaders and mission agencies incorporated in the Advancing Church Mission Commitment (ACMC), “mission” is defined as any effort reaching beyond the church’s needs to conduct the great commission by declaring the good news from Jesus Christ, by gathering disciples, and by being associated with inherent human needs, both physical and spiritual (Mays, 2008). Many missionary churches conduct efforts to spread the gospel by actively sending messengers to certain regions or to communities of unbelievers. This aligns with Jesus’s command in John 20:21: “...As the Father has sent me, I am sending you” (Biblica, 2011)

1) As instructed by Jesus, the mission movement has been manifested in various ways for thousands of years. Its effectiveness has been demonstrated by the number of people who heard the gospel, came to believe in Jesus, and became Christians. At the beginning of the 21st century, there were 21 billion Christians in the world, half of whom were Catholics (Miller, 2015). Some 23.5 million are Indonesians, specifically 16.5 million Protestants and 7 million Catholics (Winardi, 2020). This figure is an adequately large number for a country in Southeast Asia, but it is ironic when the mission’s focus is on numbers alone, so that many are satisfied just claiming Christianity but not truly converting to it. Today, indeed, many churches do not understand the calling of Christ’s great commission to make disciples of all nations. Such churches are busy with many ecclesiastical activities that appear active and spiritual and have tendencies toward God’s work but actually miss the mark. These churches do not carry out God’s mission, but do their work from ecclesiastical visions that do not bring their members into discipleship projects.

2) When the mission focuses only on reaching out to souls who have not yet become believers, the most important things omitted: helping believers become true disciples of Jesus. John 2:6 declares, “Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did” (Biblica, 2011). This is a call to godliness in character, a demand to live like Jesus, to aim for perfection like the Father (Matthew 5:48), and to inculcate His thoughts and feelings.

3) In each human historical era, including in today’s millennial era, exemplifying the life of Christ presents varying challenges. According to Karl Mannheim’s 1923 Generation Theory, today’s millennial generation was born between 1980 and 2000 (Mannheim, 2017), that is, the turn of the millennium, the time Christians face today. However, their limited understanding of the Christian mission means that many are satisfied with being Christian in name only. They expect guarantee of salvation, justification by faith, and becoming children of God without changing their lifestyle as Jesus intended. These Circumstances are equal to or worse than unbelief and arose from misunderstandings caused by cessation of mission in making disciples at church. This research’s method is descriptive qualitative, that is, the study includes facts that appear as they are in the lives of today’s believers. The research assumes that believers in this millennial era need a mission transformation: mission should not stop with helping someone believing in Jesus as God and then becoming stuck in religious rituals. Mission should instead help believers adopt a life of godliness, like that of Jesus, and emulate God’s thoughts and feelings.

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II. RELATIONAL MISSION AND CALLING

Mission involves continuing the work of God's salvation for humans who have fallen into sin. Edmund Woga (2002) quoted D. Senir, analyzing Matthew's division of the history of God's salvation into three periods: first, "the time of Israel," the period from the life of Abraham to that of John the Baptist. The second period is central because it is "the time of Jesus" in the world. The third is the "period of the Church" when the evangelical movement begins to shift from salvation only of Israel (Jews) to salvation for all people (non-Jews) (Woga, 2002). According to the early church records, early Christians carried out the mission of conversion. Indeed, throughout the world, the number of Christians has increased significantly, but these efforts are generally conducted without systematic reflection. Serious and systematic thinking about mission develops only after the church experiences various contexts and challenges (Bavinck, 1993). Basic reflections on missionary action can be found in many writings, books, and journals. However, written mission reflections cannot replace real action. The church must have praxis and volunteers. Mission theology must provide biblical information and global mission action that is appropriate and contextual.

Mission comes from the Latin word "*mission*" related to "*missum*," meaning "sending" (Buma, 2019), the same as the Greek word "*apostello*". Actually, Greek uses two words: "*apostello*" (sending) and "*pempo*" (sending). In John 20:21, these two words are used in one verse, "As the Father has sent (*apostello*) me, I am sending (*pempo*) you." In Dutch, the word "mission" is translated as "*zending*," usually also used in Indonesian (Venema, 1997). Narrowly, mission, in the context of Christianity, means sending a missionary or a gospel teacher to those in a particular area or location who do not know the gospel. From a broader and deeper meaning, a "complete" mission is oriented to more than just preaching or retelling the gospel; it reveals the whole and complete truth so that God's truth in the Bible is expressed or translated into human life. This means that the gospel is not just an old story or some verbal explanation. Every Christian should exhibit the gospel through concrete behavior. This mission comes from the great commission in Matthew 28:19–20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Biblica, 2011). Piper said that Christ embodies the power to carry out God's mission, so every believer receive the power and strength to preach the gospel to all nations, at all times, and in all places (Piper, 2014). Harianto (2012) also declares, "every believer who has faith in Christ means having the same mission as Christ, and Christian faith essentially contains missionaries" (G.P, 2012). However, the call to conduct the mission departs from Christ's great commission: it not only contains a command that all believers must leave home to go certain places but also one that wherever believers are, they must also make disciples.

In the original Greek text of Matthew 28:19, the word "disciples" is "*mathetes (μαθητής)*," a verb, and the sentence "*πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*" is imperative. The word "disciples" directly points to a status with rights and responsibilities as well as to a learning process. The word "*matheteusate*" shows that being a disciple of God is not merely a status or identity from which a person obtains various rights but refers to process, activity, and movement in life. Just as disciples have the right to receive teaching and education, they must also receive teachings and educate others obediently. A disciple is not just a learner but a doer of the teachings received, with uncommon loyalty and heartfelt commitment to them (SalvationCall, 2019). As Sabdono (Sabdono, 2017) said:

It is important to emphasize the fact that being a disciple is a process, an activity of life. The Bible often tells about the Christian life as a process. Likening one's growth to that of a plant (1Cor. 3:6–9; Col. 2:6–7), the Bible talks about fruit. The fruit is the result of a process of growth (Gal. 5:22). Growing toward Jesus (Eph. 4:15), the intention is to grow in the perfection of character through Jesus. This is an important point in discipleship and a subject struggled with throughout discipleship. Growing in grace and knowing God (2Pet. 3:18). Knowledge of God speaks about believers' understanding of God. This is what determines a person's quality of life (John 17: 3; 2Pet. 1: 3–4). The Apostle Paul advised believers to grow in a true knowledge of God (Col. 1:10). Grow in faith (2Cor. 10:15; Heb. 4:2). Growth is like the process of building a building (Eph. 2:21). Lastly, growth is like the growth of the human body (Col. 2:19).

Thousands, even millions, of Christians have been deceived by a wrong philosophy about their Christian life. They are satisfied with shallow Christian faithfulness. They are satisfied that they did not convert to other beliefs. They remain Christians and conduct various spiritual activities. Yet what God wants is true loyalty. Christian faithfulness involves not only doing church work and conducting spiritual activities but also mandates consistent spiritual growth (1 Cor. 9:26; Phil. 3:1–14).

Christian life is a process that involves the believer's entire life journey, so accepting everything that happens in believers' lives is part of the discipleship process (Rom. 8:28). Every 24-hour day throughout the lifespan is the believer's period of education. Thus, believers must really use every second, minute, and hour to learn to be a good disciple of God (Ps. 90: 9–12). In the discipleship process, time is a very important means.

As mentioned, the essence of Lord Jesus' Great Commission is a call for those who accept Him as their personal Lord and Savior to be disciples of God. The "soul" or content of this great message must be properly understood and accepted as "to live like Jesus." Jesus calls humans to do more than be openly religious, attend church, and follow the rituals. Instead, every Christian must be a mature or perfected disciple because by carrying out good deeds, the congregation radiates Christ's love and exemplifies joy in Christian life as good examples for the world (Reimer, 2004). If Christians do less than this, their faith is weak, they do not hit the

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target, and they do not know the truth. Such discord results in poor, shallow Christianity, a dead religion lacking the true nature of worship. If this happens, God's great plan is not realized in believers' lives.

Christianity that does not recognize true discipleship will not grow but stagnate. The call to true discipleship and growth must not be viewed as pressure or a heavy burden but be welcomed with a positive attitude toward a glorious and beautiful opportunity. The honor to serve as a disciple of the Lord Jesus far exceeds any other because through it, believers receive from God the opportunity to inherit all that is noble and beautiful for human abundance (1 Cor. 2: 9).

The missionary church is the core of His plan as part of self-expression and His whole work for and through His people. The missionary church has a primary purpose, to bring the grace of shalom, thus operating through holistic dynamics and realizing God in all aspects of life (Tomatala, 2003). Today, some churches do not understand His calling to carry out the great commission to make disciples of all nations. These churches are busy with many ecclesiastical activities that appear spiritual and tend toward God's work. Actually, however, such churches do not really conduct God's mission but work from ecclesiastical visions that do not bring their members to discipleship.

With the ecclesiastical conditions described above, the church becomes increasingly earthly and only superficially religious. A surfeit of activities sinks congregations and activists into futile busyness and useless exhaustion. Of course, since discipleship is not carried out as it should be, eventually, such superficial Christianity bores potential disciples. Certainly, what distinguishes the true church from merely "practicing" religious activities or outward sharia law is discipleship. Indeed, religious values are common to all religions in general, but the process of discipleship through Lord Jesus exists only in true Christianity. This process differentiates the church from the world, making it brilliant. With the maturity of each saved individual, the believer is confirmed as the inheritance of God and will never be an apostate. This is cultivation of the soul.

As mentioned, discipleship calls those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior without discrimination. As Lord Jesus mentioned in that great commission, all nations have the same opportunity to receive the honor of being disciples of God. This means no more separation and differentiation among human beings. In Christ, all believers become an inseparable nation (Col. 3:5-11), and faithful believers give themselves to be guided by His Word and Spirit, served and enabled to be disciples of God.

Believers' wrong way of thinking results from a wrong church ministry pattern. All believers should be disciplined, educated, taught, and equipped with a variety of good spiritual equipment so that later believers can serve God's work. The church should be a Bible school, a school of service, a theological school, and a place of building character for the maturity to be like Jesus.

The church must accept the discipleship process that equips it, namely, saints for service work and for building the body of Christ. This means that all congregants will eventually become servants of God (Whittington, 2015). For this great project, the church was equipped by God with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers (Eph. 4:11-13). Seeing this reality, the end-time church of God must arise to discipline its members, to complete its discipleship activities, and to realize God's great commission to all members without exception. The church must not separate and discriminate among its members. Rich or poor, educated or not, or from any tribe for that matter, all members must receive the same service that brings them to perfection. As future church leaders who will teach and preach, theology school students must be equipped with this understanding of discipleship. This is the mission task.

Of course, the mission task in making Christian disciples must be based on true belief in Jesus as Lord and Savior; from this will emerge a heartfelt attitude of respecting the Lord and obeying all His commandments. Of course, the biblical basis is very important for helping Christians grow in true faith, just as the student obeys the master and practices his teachings. Therefore, the author discusses Christ's Finality and salvation therefrom, to dismiss the notion of salvation through good deeds. True trust in Christ will bring potential disciples to love His teachings and grow in them to become perfect like Him.

III. THE FINALITY OF GOD'S SALVATION

Final assertiveness means unchangeable attitudes, views, or principles; salvation by Jesus Christ on the Mount of Calvary is the only salvation (Sabdon, 2017). God's work of salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way for humans to obtain what God has provided through the gospel, which is the power of God (Rom. 1: 16-17). The work of salvation brings at least four blessings. First, through restoration of broken human relations with God, the lost can be found. This is an exclusive relationship with the Creator not found in any other religions or teachings (John 17:20-21). Second is restoration of God's corrupted image (*restitution imaginis Dei*), so that humans become perfect, not only making a person "like Jesus" but "working out salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12) to the stage of "wearing the life of Jesus" or attaining the character of Jesus (Gal. 2:19-20; Col. 3:1-4). This is the goal of discipleship. Third comes humankind's avoidance of eternal fire but approval by Heaven (John 3:16; Rom. 6:23). Surely, this is not salvation itself but the fruit of salvation. Salvation is God's effort to restore people to be the persons He wants them to be (restoration of God's image). And believers' salvation must not lead only to the life to come but also to being glorified along with the Lord Jesus. Fourth, for the elect who enter the process of perfection or maturity, the fruit of salvation is more than avoiding eternal fire but is also being glorified with Jesus or reigning with Jesus in His Kingdom (Matt. 20:23; Luke 22:29; Rom. 8:17, 30, etc.).

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In John 14:6, Jesus declares: “I am the way and the truth and the life,” emphasizing that He is not just the one way but the road itself, the only way. In this statement, Jesus dismisses all possibilities from other various philosophies and religions of salvation outside Himself. In this text’s last phrase, “if not through me (*Eimeoi emou; εἰμὴ δι’ ἐμοῦ*),” He indicates that there is only one way to God.

In another statement, Jesus says, “I am the door” (John 10:7), meaning not just any door but the only door to God. This is confirmed by Peter’s statement in Acts 4:12: “And salvation is not in anyone but Him, because under heaven there is no other name given to man by whom we can be saved.” For this truth, every believer must dare intolerance toward other philosophies and religions’ views. In a pluralistic Indonesian nation, however, this belief must be understood through mature appreciation, and intolerance of others’ beliefs must be lived as inner truth. In translating faith into life concretely, believers must adopt the attitude taught by Lord Jesus: “be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16). Believers’ tolerance must be clearly and internally marginalized. Here, the integrity of the believer’s faith is tested. Tolerance, for the sake of creating harmony in a pluralistic society, must not sacrifice the Christian faith’s purity.

In John 14:6, the word “road” is “*hodos*,” which can be translated by implication as “progress (a route, an act, or a distance)”; figuratively, it means “a mode or means, a journey, a (high) way.” *Hodos* indicates access that must be taken, such as a road or a long way to go. The word “*hodos* (*ὁδός*)” means “road with respect to distance” (Sutanto, 2014). In His statement, Jesus Christ emphasizes that access to the Father is only through Himself.

Access to the Father is not an automatic process but an endeavor through which every believer must struggle. In various statements, Jesus also said that following Him would be an arduous journey (Luke 14: 25–35). Thus, the believer can understand why Jesus said that the door to (Christian) life is narrow (Matt. 7:13–14; Luke 13:24). There is no easy way to enter His glory, and Christianity taught as “easy” is veiled deception.

Additionally in this text, “*alitheia* (*ἀλήθεια*)” is translated as “truth.” In Greek, besides *alitheia* meaning truth, there is the word “*dikaioisune* (*δικαιοσύνη*)” (Matt. 5:20), also translated as truth, but in English, as “righteousness” and in the new Indonesian Bible, as “religious life.” Besides meaning righteousness, *dikaioisune* can be translated as “equity (of character or act)”; especially (Christian) justification. So *dikaioisune* emphasizes truth in behavior (Matt. 5:20) (Sutanto, 2014).

In contrast, *alitheia* refers to truth related to understanding God’s existence. Please note that when the Gospel of John was written, during the Hellenistic era, Christianity was struggling violently to face heresy. At that time, the church was damaged by the “Gnostic Spirit” because Greek philosophy’s influence gave the impression that Gnostics were parallel to the gospel. Even then, wrong theological practice arose, namely, an attempt to understand the gospel’s truth with Greek philosophy as its “tool.”

Now, in John 14:6, “*zoe* (*ζωή*)” is translated as “life,” referring to life in terms of quality. In contrast, the Greek word “*bios*” is translated as “alive.” Even though the difference between the two words is relative, *bios* more often refers to living creatures in general, and *zoe* refers to life in the sense of high quality (Sutanto, 2014). When the Lord Jesus said, “I am to give life” (John 10:10), the word used was *zoe*, indicating a life of high value.

Furthermore, in John 14:6, Jesus says, “No one will come to the Father, if not through me” (Biblica, 2011). In the original text, the word “come” is written “*erchomai* (*ἔρχομαι*),” which also means “accompany” (Sutanto, 2014). In other words, “coming to the Father” means being with the Father in beautiful personal fellowship, so in this text, the notion of “coming” should not be interpreted as simply entering heaven. Believers should understand and accept that salvation through Jesus is not just acceptable entry into Heaven but includes being glorified with Jesus in His Kingdom (Matt. 20:23; Luke 22:29; Rom. 8:17, 30, etc.).

For being glorified with Jesus, believers must mature or perfect themselves to become like Jesus in character or, even better, as “wearing His life” (Gal. 2:19–20; Col. 3:4). This process brings believers to share in His holiness (Heb. 12:1–10) because God wants holy believers like He is holy (1 Pet. 1:16).

Because salvation is God’s effort to bring people back into His own image, the salvation process cannot occur without acceptance of Jesus Christ. The reasons are as follows. First, only by having faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can one receive the power to become a child of God (John 1:12–13). Here, power is the potential to be perfect, like Jesus (Matt 5:48), so perfection is not impossible in the life of a believer. Second, only the Lord Jesus exemplifies the faith that can bring a believer’s faith to perfection. And Jesus, as the example of faith, means that He is the only human model God wants (Heb. 5:8–9; 12:1–5). Without modeling the self after Jesus, a believer cannot receive salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the point of salvation (*aitios; αἴτιος*), which also means “composer” (Sutanto, 2014). Third, only Lord Jesus can train or educate someone to reach perfection through His Word (Matt. 28: 18–20; 2 Pet. 1:3–4), and Jesus gave not only His teachings but Himself. Through true discipleship, the Heavenly Father will find in believers the person of His Son on the day of judgment. Fourth, only those who suffer for Christ will be glorified with Christ in His Kingdom (Matt. 20:23; Luke 22:29; Rom. 8:17, 30, etc.). The gospel must change a person from a corrupt sinner to a disciplined model of Jesus, who carried the cross in his bosom. According to this explanation, the paradigm of thinking about evangelical mission must be revised.

IV. MISSION TRANSFORMATION IN THE MILLENNIAL ERA

The English word “transformation” means “an act, process, or instance of making a thorough change in form or character” (Soanes & Angus, 2004). The words commensurate with “transformation” in the New Testament are “*allaso* (ἀλλάσσω)” and “*metamorphosthe*.” First, *allaso* appears in several New Testament verses (Acts 6:14; 1 Cor. 15:51–52), meaning “to change or make different” (Sutanto, 2014). Based on Acts 6:14, transformation can mean a process of change resulting from hard work. The extraordinary changes in Europe and parts of Asia in Paul’s time resulted not just from the struggle of prayer and hope but from his tireless evangelism. Historically, change comes through a process mechanism, not in an instant. This is demonstrated by understanding of the word transformation itself — a complete change, usually into something with improved appearance or usefulness. Found in several New Testament verses including in Romans 12:2, the second word “*metamorphosthe*” is from “*μεταμορφοῦσθε*,” in turn from the root word “*μεταμορφόω* (*metamorphoo*),” which means “to change or transfigure; a process of gradual transformation” (Sutanto, 2014). In this case, mission transformation pattern, and the transformation must be connected with the changing times, especially in this millennial era.

An era is a period of time in history, usually several years between important historical events (Soanes & Angus, 2004). Here, the era is the millennium, relating to generations born from the 1980s to the 2000s. The millennial generation or Generation Y is also familiarly called “generation me” or “echo boomers” (Said, 2018). Literally, no specific demographic exists for determining this generation. However, experts classify it based on the beginning and end of the year. Generation Y classifications are for those born from 1980 to 1990, or in early 2000, and so on (Said, 2018). William Strauss and Neil Howe, who wrote *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (2000), first coined the term “millennial” in 1987, when children born in 1982 entered preschool (Said, 2018). At that time, the media began to refer to this generation as connected to the new millennium because they would graduate from high school in 2000. In *The Lucky Few: Between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boom* (2008), Elwood Carlson defines millennials as those born from 1983 to 2001 (Said, 2018). Based on Karl Mannheim’s Generation Theory of 1923, the millennial generation was born from 1980 to 2000 (Mannheim, 2017). In August 1993, editorials of major United States newspapers began referring to the millennial generation as Generation Y. In a study of the theory of generational differences, Putra presents a grouping of generations (one of which is the millennial generation) originating from researchers’ opinions in various countries (Putra, 2016). Considering our purposes here, the transformation of mission work must be considered in light of our era’s specific challenges, but reexamining what the Bible means by that mission is of paramount importance.

Christianity is a process of teaching and learning; God teaches and we are educated (Heb. 12: 5-11). As a result, humankind returns to God’s original plan. This is the same as taking part in God’s holiness (Heb. 12:10) or as wearing the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:3–4). Therefore, a person must undergo the process of being a disciple, that is, through continuous renewal and a gradual, strict maturation to achieve perfection like the Father (Matt. 5:48). The perfection of life or faith must refer to the only role model in the Gospel, the Lord Jesus (Rom. 8:28–29). Having Christ’s thoughts and feelings (Phil. 2:5–7) enables believers to live in holiness, not in the shadow of laws or regulations, but in making God their law. In other words, “the Lord is my law, and this is life led by the Spirit.” This process of salvation is the same as finding the glory of the lost God. In the original text of Romans 3:23, “*hustereo* (ὕστερέω)” is translated as “loss,” but it also means “lack or need.” Thus, humans must find what is lacking or missing, what is needed more than anything (Sabdon, 2017). Paul called it work of salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). The content of working out salvation is trying to have Christ’s thoughts and feelings (Phil. 2:5–7). In the original text, the words “thoughts” and “feelings” or “thinking” and “feeling” are the same phrase as “way of thinking” or “*phroneo* (φρονέω)”. To be Christ-like, every individual must experience a gradual and deliberate process of salvation. This cannot occur automatically. Thus, true and perfect salvation must be drawn as long lines, not as a mere dot in time, and the process continues until disciples return to the Father’s house.

To realize human salvation, God grants power to those who accept Him so that they become children of God (John 1:12). In this text, “*exousia* (ἐξουσία)” is translated as “power” but could be more precisely translated as “right” or “privilege”. The word “power” in John 1:12 differs from that in Acts 1: 8, where “*dunamis* (δύναμις)” is translated as “power” but is more precisely translated (since it is the origin of the word “dynamite”) in the sense of “something that moves” (Sutanto, 2014). Thus, this word is more precise when translated “Only believers have the power (*dunamis*) to become children of God.”

In this right or power, there is redemption through the blood of Jesus; believers are allowed to return to God’s original design because God bought humans with Jesus’s blood (1 Cor. 6:19–20). Also included is grace, the Holy Spirit that guides believers to all truth (John 16:13). In that power, furthermore, God gave the saving gospel (Rom. 1:16–17) and brought faith (Rom. 10:17). And finally, in that power is cultivation of God through all events in this life so that believers can be similar to the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28). All of these are safety provisions that exist only in the lives of people who believe in the Lord Jesus. When the New Testament speaks of salvation, what is meant is true and perfect salvation.

If used, this right or power (*exousia*) will lead a person to perfection (Sutanto, 2014). That is why the Lord Jesus said that believers must be perfect like the Father in heaven (Matt. 5:48). Because the Father is not visible, the Lord Jesus, Son of God, embodied the perfection God desires, thus setting an example. Therefore, every believer must imitate the attitude of life or the lifestyle of Jesus (Rom. 8:28–29). This can happen or be fulfilled in the lives of believers who use the *exousia*, which is not found in any other teachings or religions.

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Because this right exists only through the work of Christ on the cross, salvation outside Christ and Christianity cannot exist. Nor does there exist, strictly speaking, restoration of character or self-image as God intended. Besides, in other religions, no figure like Jesus has become a prototype to be emulated, so no other human salvation has the figure of Jesus as a “role model.” The Lord Jesus is the “point of salvation” for those who obey Him (Heb. 5:9). In the original text, the point of salvation is “*aitios (αἴτιος)*,” which can mean “composer” and also “author, creator, or writer” (Sutanto, 2014). By becoming like the Lord Jesus, one can have fellowship with the Lord Jesus and the Father (John 17:21). Believers can balance the sanctity of the character of the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In this case, only Christians have the potential to have fellowship with God the Father, who is the owner of all power, glory, and kingdom, and the Lord Jesus Christ, His Only Begotten Son. Understandably then, only the saved can “reach the Father” (John 14:6), which means not just entering heaven or the life to come but also having exclusive fellowship with the Triune God. Such believers enter the family of the Kingdom of the Father and are glorified together with God.

Lack of salvation outside Christ and Christianity occurs not only because there is no salvation provision but also because there is no standard of perfection of character that must be achieved. Thus, if Christians feel and claim redemption in Jesus but do not make Him their standard of moral perfection and do not struggle to achieve it, they will never experience perfect salvation. Sometimes, Christians are equated with people who do not know God (Matt. 24:45–51; 7:21–23). In theory, they are godly (theoretical theists), but practically, they are godless (practical atheists).

For Christianity not to be theoretical, believers must truly live in the struggle for perfect salvation. On the human side, salvation must be understood as a struggle against the nature of sin itself. In this case, the sin is *hamartia (ἁμαρτία)*, meaning “imprecision or slippage (Sutanto, 2014), not appropriate or exactly right,” as God intended. So, imprecision or sin here means not only breaking the law or general norms, but actions not following the thoughts and feelings of God.

The nature of sin does not make all humans morally depraved, so as not to do any good, but results in humans’ inability to reach the behavioral perfection of God’s image. This is what the loss of God’s glory means. Salvation is deliverance from sin, which here is not just sin in a general sense, namely, actions contrary to the law and all the consequences. But deliverance means release from the nature of sin in humans, in turn meaning that human failure to reach perfection is replaced by the possibility or ability to reach perfection. In such cases, humans can rediscover the lost glory of God. Of course, this cannot happen automatically but by working on safety or through struggling against imprecision.

The struggle against imprecision is based on human failure to understand God’s will and to fulfill it perfectly. Falling into sin results in humans being unable to think, speak, and act according to God’s thoughts and feelings. The Lord Jesus was first to fulfill God’s plan to create humans in His image. In the age of grace or the age of fulfillment, believers are called to have the same quality of life as Lord Jesus. This is a hard struggle. But it is intended that believers take part in God’s holiness or the divine nature, become perfect like the Father, or have Christ’s thoughts and feelings so that in all actions, believers can follow God’s thoughts and feelings. This is the same as making God the law.

On the part of humans, salvation involves the struggle to be perfect. Perfect salvation is not automatically received by the elect but demands an active, proportional response. The Lord Jesus stated that to be saved, one must fight in a narrow way (Luke 13:23–24). This is a struggle against the nature of sin (sinful nature) inherent in humans and the possibility of committing sin in the future. Successful escape from the nature of sin makes a person a child of God. The struggle to become a child of God, as exemplified by the Lord Jesus Christ, continues throughout life. But the struggle is not considered merit, as if human salvation results from good deeds. The struggle is only a response to God’s Grace. Without the cross, even the greatest human struggle is futile.

In Philippians 2:12, Paul stated that believers must work out salvation with fear and trembling. In the original text, the word “work” is “*katēgazesthe (κατεργάζεσθε)*,” which has the present imperative middle second plural verb form. It comes from the word “*katēgazomai (κατεργάζομαι)*” or “do it,” a command word meaning also “to finish, work out, achieve, or accomplish” (Sutanto, 2014). In the next verse, Philippians 2:13, the word “work” is not *katēgazesthe (κατεργάζεσθε)* but “*energon (ἐνεργῶν)*,” which has the form of the present active nominative masculine singular participle nominative (*ἐνεργέω*). The word “*energeo*” can mean “to be operative (can be used), put forth power (put or give power), to work for one, aid one (to work or help someone)” (Sutanto, 2014). The difference in “work” words in Philippians 2:12 and 2:13 must be considered carefully. These two verses evidence that God gives power in the process of salvation to each individual and that humans must achieve its completion.

The mission task for this era is to focus on making disciples of Christians. With the salvation given by Christ, millennial Christians must strive to reach His standard of perfection. The struggle to achieve perfect salvation is a mission that requires Christians to pursue holiness and to understand God’s thoughts and feelings so that they are truly people who believe in God in their hearts and thoughts and who manifest Him in their words and deeds.

CONCLUSIONS

Christians are lulled by and drown in churches’ large number of communities and religious preoccupations. Religious activities and certainty of salvation causes Christians to be careless and daily life to run aimlessly. In the millennial era of today’s Christians, the mission cannot be understood as just sending missionaries to deliver the gospel to non believers. Instead, it must be understood

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more deeply. The real mission field is the life of Christians in the millennial era, which brings various complex challenges to their discipleship for perfect salvation.

God's salvation work through Jesus Christ is the only way humans can obtain what God has provided in the gospel's salvation process, which is God's power. It mends broken human relations with God. Restoration of the corrupted not only makes a person "like Jesus" but enters the work of salvation with fear and trembling, to the stage of "wearing the life of Jesus". Approval by Heaven is the fruit of salvation. For those who enter the process of perfection or maturity, the fruit of salvation is glorified by being with Jesus in His Kingdom. For this to occur, a process of perfection must be carried out so that believers become similar to Jesus, but this is actually better understood as "wearing His life". This process brings believers to share in His holiness because God wants holy believers, just as He is holy.

The Christian missions success should no longer be measured by the number of people becoming Christians but by the transformation of Christians' attitude in their piety. Mission cannot be separated from the kingdom of God. Mission is the church's presence, meant to change the world according to the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Every individual believer — wherever, whenever, and through all actions — must be the light and salt of the community. The mission is not only an effort to deliver the message of salvation as conversation or preaching but also to bring the kingdom of God to the world in a concrete way. The kingdom of God means the reign of God in individual lives, and the person who brings and presents God's government also presents His kingdom. This will be the life of people who change their sinful nature to a divine nature.

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