



## The Theological Basis of Evangelistic Missions: A Biblical Overview and its Relevance for the Church Today

Sarah Wassar

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kerusso Indonesia di Bekasi

**Corresponding Author:** Sarah Wassar [sarah@sttkerussoindonesia.ac.id](mailto:sarah@sttkerussoindonesia.ac.id)

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Mission, Evangelism, Theological Foundation, Church, Relevance

*Received* : 13, September

*Revised* : 15, October

*Accepted* : 17, November

©2025 Wassar: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This article aims to examine the theological foundation of evangelistic mission through a biblical review and to assess its relevance for the contemporary church. The research method employed is a literature study with a biblical-theological approach, focusing on the analysis of Scripture and missiological theological works. The findings indicate that the foundation of evangelistic mission is rooted in the nature of God as the sending God, the incarnation of Christ as the supreme example, and the work of the Holy Spirit who empowers the church in its mission. Its relevance for today's church lies in the call to proclaim the Good News within a global context marked by secularization, religious pluralism, and the demand for authentic Christian witness.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Missionary mission is the primary mandate Jesus Christ gave to the church (Matthew 28:19–20). A theological understanding of mission is essential because it determines the direction of the church's ministry and witness in the modern world. Bosch, D. J. (1997) emphasizes that mission is not an additional activity of the church, but its essence. The church exists because of mission, and mission exists because God sends His people.

Paul, K. B. (2002). about effective evangelistic principles according to Acts 13:1-12 for the growth of the church today discusses the role of God's servants who are responsible for evaluating the principles of evangelism today. This research is of practical benefit to the church to have principles in evangelism in any situation. In addition, the church also has a strategy in serving the congregation both in fellowship, preaching the gospel and serving the whole spiritual and physical, and even building groups in the church that focus on evangelism.

But the reality is that the church, which is less aware of its calling to sinners, tends to think about how to make the congregation financially blessed or adheres to the theology of prosperity because the measure used to judge a blessed person is someone who has a lot of wealth or money. The congregation comes to worship in the church looking for God so that his efforts may be blessed, his illness cured or those who have problems find a way out. The church is no longer carrying out God's mission so that the mission in the church is experiencing a crisis. Such a church is trapped in an attitude of exclusivity and lives for itself with inward busyness for the benefit of its members. Even the church lacks motivation for its congregation to engage in mission ministry, mission offerings, and sending missionaries. Mission is not a priority in the church. That is why the author raises the basic theological title of mission and evangelism for believers to do mission and evangelism: a biblical review and its relevance to the church today in accordance with God's will, the Bible.

Bosch, D. J. (1997). Etymologically, the word 'mission' comes from the Latin word *missio* which means messenger. The word mission itself is a noun from the Latin verb *Mittere* which can mean to send, send, discard, let go. The church environment is more likely to choose the meaning of sending or sending for the word *mittere*. While the Greek equivalent of the word *mittere* is *apostelein* which means also to send. Meanwhile, the people who are sent are often called *missionarius* (Greek: *apostolos*), and the task they perform is *missio* (Greek: *apostole*). Salim, P. (2006). The term "mission" according to Salim in his writings is a messenger of a country, a group of evangelists, a special task, and a purpose in life; summons.

In the Bible, mission is not only local, but universal. Wright (2006) affirms that the entire Bible is the story of God's mission (*Missio Dei*) who sends His people to bless all nations. Thus, the study of the theological basis of evangelistic missions has profound relevance for the church today living in the context of globalization, pluralism, and social challenges.

## **METHODS**

This article uses a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach. The literature reviewed includes works of classical and contemporary mission theology, including Bosch (1997), Newbigin (1989), and Wright (2006). The data is analyzed with a biblical theological approach, which is by interpreting the mission based on the entire biblical narrative and linking it to modern theological reflection. This analysis seeks to uncover the continuity and transformation of the understanding of mission in the history of the church and its relevance to the present context.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *The Biblical Basis of Evangelistic Missions*

God's mission in the Old Testament begins with God's self-declaration as a sovereign and Almighty Creator (Genesis 1:1). The Lord's sovereignty is evident in His declaration as the Creator, and this is closely related to His mission plan. Yakob, T. (2023) "through the revelation of God's Self in creation, God reveals His missionary essence, nature and actions, where this truth about God is the foundation for His eternal mission. The beginning of God's mission begins with the declaration of God's Self as the Creator who declares His sovereignty and omnipotence in designing His mission, God's creation is the foundation of His mission movement.

Genesis 3:15 is the main mission of the Lord, which is to proclaim the protevangelium. Yakob, T. (2003). Lexically, Protevangelium is explained to be derived from the word Pro (protos meaning first), which is a prefix meaning "before, before or before", and the word Evangelium, which means "good news" or the gospel. So, the meaning of Protevangelium is the first good news, which is about the promise of God's salvation and the basis for the growth of God's mission which summarizes the entire framework of His work of salvation, as well as the framework of God's mission work to declare His promise of salvation to man.

Mission was not an idea that arose in the days of the early church, but it has been in God's plan since the beginning. In the Old Testament, God called Abraham to mark the starting point of mission universality: "By you all the peoples of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Thus, God chose and called Israel not only for himself, but as a means of blessing to the nations.

The prophet Isaiah also prophesied that the servant of God would be a light to the nations (Isa. 49:6). This states that from the beginning God had a global vision for the salvation of mankind. In the New Testament, Jesus as a sinless man carried out this vision through His ministry to Samaritans, Gentiles, and marginalized groups. The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19–20), so that the church is called to continue the work of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Babcock, G.P (2001). The term mission comes from the Latin word "missio" which is taken from the root word "mittere" which means "to send". Jacob. T (2003). "Mission" is God's mission, where mission is mission duties, namely mission tasks carried out by God's people to fulfill God's entire plan and to bring shalom to each of His creations. Vine. W. E. (1981). The equivalent of this word, in Greek is "apostello". The word "apostello" comes from the words apo, from and stello, to send. Vine explains in his writing; The word is used of the Lord Jesus to describe His relation to God. Regarding the word apostello, Tomatala also argued in his writing, in general apostello does not only mean to send/send but "apostello" means to send with authority. Therefore, the term mission according to the word apostello is one who sends or is sent or in other words, sends or is sent by Divine authority. Verkuyl, J. (1978). Mission means the work of salvation from our Father in Heaven, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to all the earth.

The Israelites are God's instruments to carry out His mission, which is to preach His work of salvation for the Israelites which is witnessed for other nations so that the Gentiles become believers in the Lord. The word of God to Israel: "But I will make you a light to the nations, that the salvation that is from me may reach to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6b)". The nation of Israel as a chosen nation, freed from slavery and walking into the promised land (Exodus 3:8) and being God's people is strong evidence of missionary work of salvation for the world. Their missionary task is to tell their descendants (missio interna) and to other nations around them (missio external, Isaiah 49:8) and make themselves the center of testimony that God is

always willing to save all mankind. The Israelites carried out missionary duties by showing and proving God's universal love for other nations. Israel's 'mission' is understood as the task of realizing the universality of God's salvation which is a light to all nations (Isaiah 49:6,8-9).

Tumanggor R.O. (2014). The mission of the Israelites can be understood as the historical pilgrimage of the nation that has been liberated into the promised land. This role lasts during the time waiting for all mankind to reach the coming Zion (Isaiah 60). The glory of the Lord will be revealed (Isaiah 40:5) and all nations who are called to look upon the Lord will be saved (Isaiah 45:22).

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 53). The culmination of God's mission in the New Testament was realized since Christ was sent by the Father in Heaven to save sinful man (John 3:16), by sacrificing Himself on the cross for all nations. Jesus Christ became the executor of the mission to choose, call, prepare, and send forth His disciples. The disciples sent the church (believers) to preach the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:16-17). The essence of the mission in the New Testament is Jesus Christ as the executor of the mission of the Father in Heaven, who was sent to save man from sin by sacrificing himself, and also so that His disciples would be equipped and sent to proclaim His Gospel.

Paul was sent directly by Christ (Galatians 1:15-16; 1Corinthians 9:1; Acts 9:1-19). Paul understood mission as a task to awaken people to sin. For Paul, Jesus' work of salvation was a saving gift from the Father in Heaven. The death of Jesus Christ to save was the death for the salvation of all people, both Jews and Gentiles (Romans 3:21-24, 29-30). Paul did his missionary work to the Gentiles because he was compassionate about their circumstances leading to destruction (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Corinthians 2:15) and in dire need of salvation (Ephesians 2:12).

The apostle Paul preached the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, and the significance of His cross and resurrection. Whenever the Jews rejected this gospel, he sought to "make them jealous" by declaring that God was at work among the Gentiles who responded (Rom. 11:11-14). The gospel was the first target for the Jews. The second underlying goal of Paul's missionary strategy was to establish Messianic houses of worship wherever he found Jews who responded to the Gospel and to establish Gentile congregations wherever the majority of believers were Gentiles. In this era of first-century Christianity was the greatness of Paul's missionary activity. (Matthew 23:15).

Paul was appointed by God to move the growth of the church. "I have been appointed a herald and an apostle (I am saying this is true, I am not lying), and a teacher of the Gentiles, in faith and truth" (1 Tim. 2:7). In fact, he saw it as the primary and irreplaceable task of the church: to preach the gospel to all mankind and to unite all believers into the church and Paul's effort was not through a united church that the world believed in Christ but also through the example of believers, (Jn. 17:21).

Glaser, A. F. (1976). Paul planned his missionary ministry (Romans 15:22), and he wrote a powerful letter to Rome for his missionary strategy. He writes about sin and guilt before God (Romans 1:18-3:20), justification and redemption (Romans 3:21-25), grace and the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1-8:39) and God's decree to redeem the world not just the Jews (Romans 9:1-11:26). Paul told the believers in Rome that they should carry out missions to Spain and the Western Mediterranean (Romans 15:22-24). Through their missionary obedience, these believers in Rome will achieve a new understanding of their identity as God's "messengers" and "sent nation" (Romans 1:11-15). They made a mission strategy so that "the gospel of the kingdom should be preached in all the world, for a witness to all nations; and then the end comes" (Matthew 24:14).

The essence of the gospel is the news of the work of Jesus Christ. Paul uses four key words from the gospel message that must be delivered: First; Christ was born into the earth. Second; Christ lives on earth. Third; Christ died on the cross. Fourth; Christ has risen and ascended to heaven. The three things that Jesus did on the cross for mankind who believed in Him were first, Jesus Christ died to bear the sin, evil, rebellion and guilt of mankind. Second, Jesus Christ died to bear the weakness of mankind. Third, Jesus Christ died to bear the pain of mankind.

The duty of the church today in evangelism must be accompanied by an invitation to personally accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, which is what evangelism is called. The essence of evangelism means doing the work of the Great Commission of the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. In this section, the author biblically describes these two verses which are the duties and responsibilities of the church today. Some of the words that are the main or essence of evangelism according to Acts 1:8, namely *the first is the power of the Holy Spirit*. Bagster, S. (1971). The power that God gives to His disciples is the power of the Holy Spirit. The term power, dynamic (noun, feminine, singular, accusative), from the root word dynamic, which means power, strength, ability, and from the root word *duna*, which means to be able, capable. The accusative case expresses movement to or towards something and continues or extends. The meaning of exegesis of the term power is a power that has a change of direction or extends a deeper direction, namely from to be able, capable, have power (verb) to strength, ability, power, or especially inherent power (noun).

Spiros, Z. (1992). As understood above, The Complete Word Study of the New Testament describes the meaning of *dunamis* as power, especially inherent power. Bagster, S. (1971). Also complementing the meaning of *Dunamis* is a manifestation or instance of power, mighty means the term *dunamis*, also used in Acts 8:10; Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 24. Thus, the theological meaning of the term power in this text is power that comes from within, has a powerful manifestation

power aimed at a greatness, glory, namely the Holy Spirit.

Bagster, S. (1971). The term Spirit, *pneumatos* (noun, neuter, singular, genitive), comes from the root word *pneuma*, and from the root word *pneo*, which means wind, air in motion, breath. Lumintang, S. (2006). The word *pneuma* is used in the New Testament 379 times. And, the case of singular genitive refers to a person, namely the Holy Spirit. The term 'personal' does not refer to a limited human personality, but rather to a metaphysical dimension, not in the physical sense as it is today. The spirit referred to in this text is not a limited human-like person but has an unlimited personality.

Susanto, H (2002). The term *Kudus, Hagiou* (adjective, singular, genitive, neuter, no degree) comes from the root word *Hagios*. The word *Hagios* comes from the root *Hagnos* which means pure, chaste, modest, innocent, blameless, adjective is an adjective to add something. Brooks, J. A. (1979). Regarding the adjective word explains in his writing that: "The idea seems to be that an adjective is a word which is added to a noun in order to modify or distinguish or further describe it". Vine, W. E. (1981). Thus, the exegetical meaning of the term *Hagios* is a pure, holy, humble, innocent, and sinless attribute added to a person (noun), in the sense of further explaining that noun, namely Spirit. With regard to the word *Hagios*, Vine's explains in his writing: "It is predicated of God (as the absolutely Holy one, in His purity, majesty and glory)". So, the word *Hagios* is a title that is addressed only to God and shows His absoluteness, holiness, and glory. Thus, the theological meaning of the term holy in this text is a title that only God possesses that shows God's pure, holy, humble, innocent, and sinless nature.

The power of the Holy Spirit that Christ gave to His disciples after their ascension to heaven is a power that comes from within, which has a person, that is, an infinite or supernatural person with a powerful power of manifestation. The Holy Spirit enables courageous Christians to preach the gospel in all challenges, for the Holy Spirit helps, comforts, empowers, encourages, and sets apart His chosen ones, strengthening, preventing, and exhorting in carrying out mission and evangelistic tasks.

*Second, My Witness (Christ).* The word "witness" (Greek: *Martys*) appears 13 times in Acts. While the verb "*Martyrein*" appears 76 times in the New Testament, 47 times by John, 11 times used by Luke in both the Gospel of Luke and in Acts. Words such as *martys*, *martyrein*, and *martyrion* in the New Testament are often associated with the sending of Jesus and the Apostles. However, Luke and John are known to be the most fond of using these words. Especially in the Acts of the Apostles, *Martys* is often associated with the preaching of the Gospel. Bagster, S. (1971). The word "witness" in Luke's Gospel means that the preaching carried out by the apostles was always related to the event of Christ, His work on earth and His resurrection. The term *witness*, *Martures* (noun, masculine, plural, nominative) comes from the word *martus*, which means *witness*, *deponent*. Nominative case means the subject as the subject of the sentence. So, the term *martures* is a subject.

Being a 'witness' in Acts 1:8 is *first*; The testimony and events of Jesus. Luke was very interested in the news of historical realities. The content of the news is the life and proclamation of the Lord Jesus Christ about the Kingdom of God. The events of Jesus, from His work, suffering, death and resurrection to His ascension to heaven, are objective facts and an important basis for the Gospel. *Second*, the testimony and power of the Holy Ghost. The descent of the power of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles was an absolute requirement for the disciples to be witnesses of the resurrection. It was the Holy Ghost who enabled the apostles to testify. *Third*, the testimony and proclamation of the Good News. Because Jesus' death on the cross and

resurrection was an event of salvation not only for the redemption of Israel, but also as emphasized by Luke 24:47 and Acts 1:8 for the salvation of the nations, the proclamation became of great importance.

Victor, S.S. (2007). The involvement of believers in evangelistic missions is not an option but a necessity. There are two important reasons why believers must carry out evangelistic missions: First, they themselves have been saved through the mission of God. Second, God calls believers to work with Him in this mission (*calling into the mission*).

*Third, Reaching the ends of the earth.* In the case of evangelistic missions in Acts 1:8, the mention of places starting from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria is generally understood in a geographical sense. While the words "to the ends of the earth" according to the interpreters of KS (exeget) are meant to be Rome. George E. L. (2001). Describing Acts 1:8 is that the Holy Spirit will come to them, and by His power they will be witnesses of Christ throughout the world. This verse is a table of contents of the book of Acts, namely in Jerusalem covering chapters 1-7, in Judea covering chapters 8:1-11:18 and to the ends of the earth covering chapters 11:19 until the end of this book.

Bagster, S. (1971). In the book of Acts, mission and evangelism end in Rome. However, the term end of the earth is identified as having a broader meaning. The term end, *esxatou* (*genitive, singular, neuter*) comes from the root word *esxatos*, which means farthest, end, and last. Wesley, J. P. (1995). The genetic case here, refers to the genetics of objects, meaning genetics that have a goal or purpose. The genetic case is changed from a noun to an action. The exegetical meaning of the term *esxatou* is an object that has a goal or goal that is taken the farthest, last, and last.

The term earth, *ges* (*noun, feminine, singular, genitive*), comes from the root word *ge*, which means *earth, soil*. Thus, the theological meaning of the term end of the earth is that mission and evangelism have a wide reach, which will be preached to the farthest, end, and most final destination of the earth. Thus, the power of the Holy Spirit enables the apostles and believers to carry out missions and evangelism, namely to witness the news of salvation to those who do not believe. The news of salvation is witnessed by the wide range of mission services, which reaches the farthest, the end, the most end of the earth.

This biblical basis affirms that the mission of evangelism is an integral part of the biblical narrative. Bosch, D. J. (1997) reminds that mission should not be understood statically, but as a movement that continues to transform according to the historical context.

### ***Contemporary Mission Theology Perspective***

Bosch, D. J. (1997) developed the idea that mission is a transforming process. He rejected the dichotomy between evangelism and diakonia, as well as between spiritual and social missions. For him, mission is total involvement in the world: preaching the gospel, defending justice, loving service, and community renewal. The Church cannot separate spiritual duties from social duties, for they are intertwined in God's calling.

Wright, C. J. H. (2006) offers a narrative approach by emphasizing that the entire Scriptures can be understood as the story of God's mission (*Missio Dei*). God is the Messenger, and the church is only an instrument in His plan. With this perspective, mission is not just church activity, but participation in God's sovereign work. This helps the church not to focus on the "program" alone, but on involvement in the great story of God's salvation.

Newbigin, L. (1989) affirms that Christ is the center of all missions. In a pluralist world, he rejected religious relativism and affirmed the uniqueness of Christ as the only way of salvation. Thus, missions not only convey moral values or perform social service, but also proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

John Stott (1992) emphasized the importance of double listening, which is listening to God's word as well as listening to the world. Thus, the church must be able to convey the Gospel that is faithful to the truth of the Scriptures while being relevant to the needs of contemporary society.

Barrett (2004) adds that a healthy church is one that is aware of its identity as a missional church, not just a religious institution, but a community sent out into the world.

### ***Revision for the Church Today***

#### **a. Mission in a Global Context**

In the era of globalization, the church faces new challenges: religious pluralism, secularization, and social injustice. Bosch, D. J. (1997) reminds that evangelism that only emphasizes conversion without social transformation is incomplete. The Church must deliver the gospel holistically both through preaching and real action in the fields of education, health, and social justice.

#### **b. *The Church as a Missionary Community***

The church today should not be seen only as a place of worship, but as a missionary community. Wright, C. J. H. (2006) emphasizes that every member of the congregation is called to take part in the *Missio Dei*. This means that mission is not just the job of a formal pastor or missionary, but the calling of all believers in their daily lives. Wright (2010) emphasized that God's mission is not only done by professional missionaries, but involves all of God's people. The Church must see itself as a missionary community called to present the signs of the Kingdom of God in the midst of the modern world.

- c. Contextualization and Living Testimony  
Newbigin, L. (1989) emphasizes the importance of contextual testimony. The Church must be able to convey the Gospel in a language that the community can understand, without losing the authenticity of its message. In the Indonesian context, for example, the church is called to embody the love of Christ in cultural and religious diversity, so that the Gospel truly becomes good news that brings peace and unity.

## CONCLUSION

The theological basis of evangelistic missions is firmly rooted in the biblical narrative, beginning with Abraham's call to the mission of the church in the Great Commission. Contemporary theologians provide a framework for reflection that enriches this understanding: Bosch with the idea of mission transformation, Wright with the *Missio Dei* narrative, and Newbigin with the Christology of missions. The relevance for the church today is to live out the mission holistically: to preach the gospel while presenting the signs of the Kingdom of God in justice, love, and peace. Thus, the mission of evangelism does not stop at words, but is manifested in a life that is a real witness of Christ's love for the world.

## REFERENCES

- Babcock, G. P. (1961). *Websters Third New International Dictionary*. Massachusetts: G&C Merriam Company Publisher.
- Barrett, L. Y. (2004). *Missional church: A vision for the sending of the church in North America*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Bosch, D. J. (1997). *Transformasi Misi Kristen. Sejarah Teologi Misi yang Mengubah dan Berubah*, Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Bosch, D. J. (2005). *Transformasi Kristen*, Jakarta: BPK. Gunung Mulia.
- Brooks, J. A. (1979). *Syntax of New Testament Greek*, USA: University Press of America.
- Glasser, A. F. (1976). *Rasul Paulus dan tugas Misionaris (disadur dari Crucial dimension in world Evangelistion*. William carey Library:Pasadena.
- Ladd, G. E. (2001). *Tafsiran Alkitab Wycliffe Volume 3*, Malang: Gandum Mas.
- Lumintang, S. I. (2006). *Theologia & Misiologia Reformed*, Batu:Dep. Literatur YPPII, 2006.
- Newbigin, L. (1995). *Foolishness to the Greeks: The gospel and Western culture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Salim, P. (2006). *The Contemporary English-Indonesia Dictionary (V-II, M-Z)*, Jakarta: Media Eka Pustaka.
- Stott, J. (1992). *The contemporary Christian: An urgent plea for double listening*. Leicester: InterVarsity Press.
- Susanto, H. (2003). *Perjanjian Baru Interlinear dan Konkordasi Perjanjian Baru*.
- Tumanggor, R. O. (2014). *Misi dalam Masyarakat Majemuk*, Jakarta:Genta Pustaka Lestari.
- Verkuyl, J. (1978). *Contemporary Missiology an Introduction*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eardmans Publishing Company.
- Victor S. (2007). *Join The Mission, Share Your Life Message*.
- Vine's, W.E. (18981). *Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testamen Greek*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Flamming H, Revell.
- Wesley J. P. (1995). *New Testament Greek Syntax*, Chicago: Moody Press.
- Wright, C. J. H. (2006). *The mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
- Yakob, T. (2003). *Teologi Misi*, Jakarta: YT Leadership Foundation.