Theology of Reformed Spirituality in Disruption Era

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Abstract—**The current disruption era affects all aspects of human life, including the spiritual experience of believers. The influence is the tendency of believers to understand and practice with an anthropological spirit, not with truth (dogma), and not for the kingdom of God. Therefore, this study aims to restore (reform) the understanding and practice of spirituality based on the perspective of theology reformed. This research was conducted with a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis method. Based on this research, spirituality is the same as practical theology. Through theology context, believers experience spirituality, namely intimacy with God as a whole. The experience of spirituality will be actualized in the understanding and practice of the spirituality of believers. The author presents seven practices or spiritual experiences based on reformed theology. They are self-reflection in the light of God's word, prayer, strict self-discipline, and intolerant towards sin, daily life patterns, and living during a battle between God and the world. Research Contribution: This article contributes to the issue of Christian spirituality in the disruption era and restores the understanding and spirituality practice based on a reformed theological perspective.**

Keywords— theology of reformed; spirituality; disruption era

I. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, the term of spirituality was not easily accepted by educated people, including modern theologians. They were fully believing the scientific laws as the standard of truth. Unfortunately, all of this changed drastically, at the beginning of this postmodern era, where the world again became so familiar with spirituality, but spirituality without truth [1][2], and return to the pre-modern world (medieval period). Spirituality in the postmodern era is not related to truth (dogma), but with experience. They tend to deal with miraculous things (miracles), and for the sake of the material world (prosperity theology). Nowadays, religious people become so spiritual, but not for the sake of Allah, but for the external interests (economics), and tend to be seen only as illusions and fantasies (magical realism) [3]. That tendency was then driven by the New Age Movement which entered and was controlling religions, even increasing secularization [4][5]. Many people who believe the Bible and the other books, Holy Spirit and the other spirits, and believe in the power of Jesus Christ and the power that is in himself (the cult of self-worship and selfism as idolatry)[6].

Secularization is becoming more developed along with changes in social phenomena. It can be called the disruption era (industrial revolution)[7][8]. The disruption era requires humans to change all aspects by prioritizing effectiveness and efficiency [9]. When this change was popularized in 2015 [10][11], the impact affected elements of life including the spiritual experience of believers. Nowadays, many spiritual practices are increasingly oriented towards self-interest and self-gratification. The truth is no longer the absolute basis of Christian spirituality. This fact can be seen from one of the research results from the Bilangan Research Center regarding the believer's spirituality showed that from 1137 respondents, 66% of all respondents had a habit of reading the Bible, 33.1% all of the respondents admitted that they were more influenced by faith than the environment, 26.5% of all respondents claimed to work or study for God, 36.4% of all respondents do not behave "Christian" to maintain self-image, 52.3% of all respondents regularly pray personally, 65.6% of all respondents consider that spiritual growth is one of the most important priorities [12]. The truth really gives the basis and pattern of the believer's spirituality, but generally, nowadays spirituality has no basis, thus influencing the believer's actions or the believer's spiritual practice [13][14]. Based on the research results above, there is an unfounded between understanding and practicing Christian spirituality. This is the gap that underlies this research.

The issue of spirituality in the disruption era has been studied previously, either in the general subject of Christian faith and annihilation in the disruption era [15], or as well as specifically discussing practical aspects related to the role of the family [16], and inculcating Christian values for the resilience of family in the disruption era [17], but no one has specifically discussed spirituality in the perspective of theology reformed. Therefore, this article is considered important to restore (reform) the understanding and practice of spirituality that looks very Christian, but just resembles, no more than natural, artificial, and mystical, economic, and political practices, even manipulation practices for any interests.

II. METHOD

Qualitative is the approach of this research and content analysis is the research method of this paper. The content analysis method is research that is an in-depth discussion of the contents of written or printed information in any document

[18]. The content analysis method emphasizes how researchers find the meaning and significance of the truth content. The research procedure carried out by the author in this paper is examining the problem of Christian spirituality in the disruption era based on the theological reformed perspective. And then, the author formulated the problem by tracing literature sources in relevant literature studies, journals, and books. The sources used were analyzed by looking at the relationship with the topic, attributes, characteristics descriptively. The results of the analysis are used to develop a theological understanding and practice of spirituality based on a reformed perspective that can be applied in the disruption era.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Definition, characteristic, goals, and sources of Christian spirituality

Spirituality is a term about the experience of the relationship with the transcendent and its relation to religion (doctrine and institutions), personal, religious practice, and experience. Three dimensions and forms of spirituality are via the institutional (concrete), via the intellectual (research, reflection, and criticism of experience), and via the mystical (dimension of spiritual experience) [19].

Basically, Christian spirituality relates to a person's intimate personal relationship and experience with the God he believes in and/or with fellow believers with the aim of enjoying and glorifying God (the highest goal of humanity according to the Reformed)[20][21], processed become fully mature (Eph. 4:13), hold firm faith (Eph. 4:14), grow toward Christ (Eph. 4:15), so that they can become harmonious, namely "tidily arranged and bound together" (Eph. 4:15-16), and all of them start from theology that is "the true knowledge of God" (Eph. 4:13). The characteristic of relationship and experience with God is alive, dynamic, and intimate (deep), and personal. Therefore, spirituality is growing.

The term "growing", it can be called something that Allah desire. Christ is the center of a believer's spiritual growth, as Paul refers to in Colossians 2:7. Furthermore, spirituality aims to strengthen faith and deepen the experience with God [22][23]. Deepening the Christian's experience with God will result in the Christian's personal growth. For that, it will be grown in the actual Christian life. Thus, real-life and service is the spiritual actualization of believers or church servants.

Based on the definition, characteristics, and goals of spirituality above, the author concludes that spirituality is the same as doing theology practically. There is no spiritual experience without theology. There is no growth of faith without theology. Theology roles in addition to underlying all understanding and actions of believers [24], theology is also material to deepen understanding, accelerate faith growth and strengthen the character of Christ in believers in the world [24]. Therefore, spirituality is part of theology and doing theology. The theologian and the theology in question is a fully intimate experience, namely knowing God, having fellowship with God,

becoming like God, and doing God's desire [25]. These four elements which explain the theological-practical meaning of theology can be understood more easily through the picture below [24],
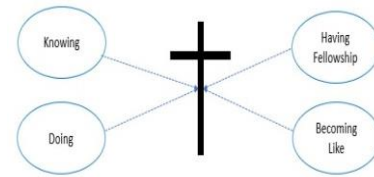

Fig. 1. Theology based on theological-practical

The four elements of theology above are a unified whole, systematic, coherent, correspondent, and comprehensive (totality). There is nothing lacking and contradicting between them. Christ is the center (heart) of theology (spirituality). The experience that the author means is not a mystical experience, but an experience of spirituality through studying the Bible, which is believers know and have fellowship with God. This fellowship produces a transformative experience, so that he becomes like God (Christ), thus having the desire and ability to do God's desire.

B. Christian spirituality and intellectual

Christian spirituality certainly cannot be separated from the church basic trait, as well as the trait of God. Spirituality cannot be separated from talking about the relationship between humans and God as their creator, even an understanding of this relationship will be the basis for understanding and applying spirituality itself [26][27]. Therefore, knowing God is the main and fundamental element in the spirituality of the church. There is no spirituality without knowing God. The trait of the believer's spirituality is revealed in Paul's prayer to the Colossians, namely that the people should do theology. Doing theology that he means is "to receive all true wisdom and understanding" (Col. 1:9). Wisdom and true understanding are the unity between spiritual and intellectual capacity [22]. Intellectual without spirituality is a formality, rationality, and dry (people who are intelligent, but empty). Spirituality without intellect is subjective, mystical, and superficial (people who are enterprising, but shallow). Intellectual and spiritual capacities cannot be separated, they are in balance (wholeness). Therefore, believers can theology, namely "to know God's will perfectly" (verse 9), without any interests. Pure spirituality is selfless.

With theology, the living of believers will be closed with God and grow in all good deeds and theology or in the true knowledge of God (verse 12). It also means that with theology, believers are strengthened so that they become diligent, patient, and grateful people. There is no spirituality without theology and doing theology. All understandings and experiences of spirituality without theology are only natural (natural) or spiritual (psychic) knowledge and experiences. The loss of theology in spirituality is the same as the loss of

transformative power. There is no permanent and passive spirituality, but it will always and continue to change and turn people towards Allah and his truth [28].

C. *Theology and practice of Christian spirituality in the disruption era*

Spirituality in the disruption era was strongly dominated by the anthropological spirit rather than the theological one. It likes God can be controlled by man through his spirituality, like changing God's heart with prayer; prayer that is full of human interests, the prayer of Jabez (1Chro. 4:10) is made universal, reference and absolute; the phenomenon of experience spirituality in certain places such as prayer hills; and the practice of artificial spirituality (made for the sake of interest) such as praise and worship, which is full of entertainment. About this fact, we are reminded of the motives of prayer, namely: (1). Physiological and psychological prayer (praying for biological and psychological needs): (2). Cultural and sociological prayer (praying becomes a culture before anything is done, such as before eating, going to bed, deciding. Our prayer becomes a sociological requirement like collective prayer is powerful, being prayed for by others, praying aloud, and so on; (3). Political (power) and economic (profit) prayer. For this reason, many people fall into the practice of political and economic interest prayer (4) Religious and mystical prayer (merging with God to become a people have power and authority (5). Holiness prayer (by studying the Bible) [29].

The last prayer above is artificial because the prayer motive is not found in the Bible, and it is not theological. Everything that is not theological is displeasing to God. Spirituality that is not theological is rejected by God and destroyed (Hos. 4:6). God rejects spirituality that is not theological (Isa. 1:11, 15). God rejects spirituality without repentance and without theology (knowing God). With theology, people do repent, and by repenting, people experience and enjoy the spirit. Furthermore, with theology, believers can relate to God. The language of the believer's relationship with God is theological language. No other language is possible like psychological, anthropological, sociological language. In other words, theology is the language of human communication to God. Theology relates to the highest goal of humans, which is to glorify and enjoy God (spirituality). Theology is a basic human need and even becomes a human perspective to know God, oneself, others, and the world. Finally, theology is human's intimate relationship with God [24].

Human intimacy relationship with God will be actualized in the practice of spirituality which can be described as follows.
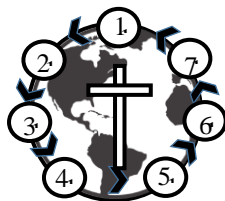

Fig. 2. Spiritual practice or experience

The seven practices or spirituality experiences are:

1. Self-reflection in the clear of God's word (meditation). Reformed or puritans always make solitude (meditation) by studying God's word for themselves in solitude (Lectio). The more people enjoy God through meditation and Lectio, the less will they desire worldly pleasures, the greater will be their interest in things from above (heavenly), namely knowing God [30].

2. Pray (*oratio*). Starting from knowing God and examining oneself in the clear of God's word theologically, praying is the experience that follows. It can be caused that reading the Bible, then praying; because they know God, they pray to the known God. God's Word precedes, moves, underlies prayer. Prayer can fuel our desire to seek, love, and serve God; prayer exercises our desire for Him until we feel destitute of self-desire before Him; prayer reminds us that everything comes from Him, we should be grateful and not complain; prayer facilitates us to seek and believe that God has answered (the practice of faith); prayer is confirming God's providence. When we pray, we know that God is in control of us, takes care of us, and protects us [28].

3. Strict self-discipline (contemplation). The puritans strongly emphasize the lifestyle of "self-denial by avoiding worldly things (not playing with temptation), including the media and facilities that are very likely to cause them to think and live worldly. This is done by word contemplation. In this case, they really do what Jesus Christ said, which is to deny themselves, take up their cross every day and follow God (Luk. 9:23). Their spirituality is not trying to isolate themselves from the world, but in their daily life, they do not want to live in a worldly way. They are really involved in all fields, including social, economic, political, and cultural. They do all by holding the principle of bringing the kingdom of God into life as the initial sentence of the Lord Jesus' prayer, namely "Come to His kingdom. Be your desire in this earth like a heaven" (Matt. 6:10).

4. Intolerance of any sin. By realizing God's absolute grace, appreciating the redemptive work of Jesus Christ by means of the forgiveness of sins and sanctification by the Holy Spirit through God's word, the Reformed intolerant (not compromising) with any sin [31]. Intolerance with sin is the result of their spirituality which is built on the theology of the God Trinity. A firm attitude of rejecting sin that accompanied by a humble attitude of heart and fear of God. Not giving "the slightest place to sin" out of awe of God and awareness of his powerlessness.

5. Daily life pattern. The spirituality of the Reformed is seen in the pattern of their daily life. Starting from the relationship of husband and wife, parents, and their children, even in working life. They realize and believe that there is God's sovereign hand and themselves own broken hearts, demand their full dependence on God [32]. All of this can be seen in their family worship activities like the role of parents in teaching God's word as life instructions and living examples to their children and housemaids. It also can be seen in the

commitment of all family members to worship on Sundays and not missing even just a day. They also emphasize the hierarchy in the family, but this hierarchy is solely related to roles and responsibilities, such as husband or father, wife or mother, and children.

6. Life for struggling. Reformed/puritans realize that living in the world is a fight between God and the world, good and evil, the desires of the spirit and the flesh within the believer [22][33].

7. Yearning for taking the souls. Reformed or puritans are encouraged to preach the gospel because of a "thirst" desire, namely yearning for the repentance and salvation of sinners [34]. Christians who do not have such yearning, then his spirituality is unreal. Therefore, true Christians are Christians who give gospel trusting for many unbelievers. True spirituality is yearning for the salvation of the lost. Without that, we are lost ourselves

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the description above, this study concludes that the spirit of Christian education in the pandemic era can internalize in online learning. One strategy that Christian religious institutions can use is to provide personal assistance to parents. It is doing so that parents can get the core value of the spirit of Christian education, making it easier for them to accompany children who are studying Christian religious education from home. In addition, another strategy is that Christian religious education teachers can package their learning in the form of games. Finally, teachers can use Kahoot, Quizizz, and Word Wall applications in making online games so that Christian religious learning during the pandemic can still maintain its spirit. This study aims to encourage parents to accompany their children in online learning at home and teachers to use play applications in delivering their learning materials.

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