

Mission Ministry Through Social Media During Pandemic

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Abstract—The article is about the mission ministry that can still be done in pandemic era due to the limitation determined by the government of Indonesia. The social media has the facilities that could still connect people to one another. Although the mission is done through the social media, the essence of mission does not change or reduce the meaning it has. There are some obstacles and benefits of doing mission through social media yet the important thing is to adapt to the change that is brought by the pandemic to be able to do mission as believers. The social media that we use to connect with each other, should be used maximally to bring the Good Tidings to the surface that Christians would display contents related to their faith. Research Contribution. The research contributes to the Christians in general who are willing to practice the Great Commission by doing mission ministry. And specifically for those who are called as servants of God or as missionaries.

Keyword—mission; gospel; ministry; pandemic; social media

I. INTRODUCTION

The word mission has a broad meaning that could be comprehended both general or in religious contexts (in Theology). Mission (latin: mittere) defined as a ministry assigned by religious organizations to share the faith or to execute humanitarian works.

In the context of Theology the term mission is found in the Old Testament or the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the word mission comes from the Hebrew word *šālah* : a verb that means to deliver, to send; to release; to put. [1]

Mission comes from the heart of the Lord. The Lord is the source of love delivered to us. It is the deepest source of mission. Although seems impossible to penetrate deeper; mission exists because the Lord loves men. [2]

The mission then comprehended as the mission of the Lord (Latin: *Misio Dei*), meaning that the mission is rooted in the godly initiative and character. In the Bible, “we are facing the Lord that essentially the foundation of the mission today. The mission starts from the Lord Himself, not only because He is the Lord of mission, but because His character is of mission”. [3]

An expert of Missiology of South Africa in the late 20th century, Bosch, explained in his book about the thirteen paradigms of mission. [2]. The thirteen paradigms of mission are related to one another. In this writing, the definition of mission used is in the fifth paradigm: mission as evangelism. This paradigm is certainly a part that cannot be separated from other paradigms.

There are two important aspects that should be noticed to be able to protect mission not to be weakened or becoming too general, the first is that mission should show primary attention toward the glory of the Lord (Matthew 5:16). The second is, mission must have the main priority toward those who are in the darkness. Mission should be seen in the context of the final purpose that finally will lead the lost human race to join other creations in praising and glorifying the living God.

II. METHOD

The research is using qualitative method in its writing. The data used in this research are taken from the literatures in theology, journals, articles, websites and other relevant sources related to the topic of the analysis. [4] The analysis from some theology and web articles which are still related to the topic.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Pandemic Era & Evangelism*

Although we might have known some viruses that has caused some diseases such as influenza, pneumonia, typhoid or other diseases, it has never occurred to our mind that we would come to experience this pandemic. It is not only for some people in some places, but impacted globally to almost every aspect of human lives.

World Health Organization (WHO) had announced Corona Virus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 as a pandemic threat. The KBBI (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia) or the dictionary of Indonesian writes that the definition of pandemic is a plague that spread simultaneously everywhere or covering a wide geography. The first place mentioned as the location the pandemic started is in Wuhan, Tiongkok and then spreading to almost the entire world. The spreading is rapid and no one is able to predict when his COVID-19 pandemic will be over. [5]

It is a reality that we might only see in Hollywood movie scenes, telling about the spread of virus to certain parts of the world that cause people to hunt the antidote, but now actually happening in our real world. The government of many countries in the world are now struggling hard for their citizens to be vaccinated soon.

Even until May 2021, the government of Indonesia is still determining through a decree or instruction of the minister of home affairs about the extension of micro basis activity limitation that includes the limitation in working activities, learning activities, also the usage for religious centers. Health protocols application in holding religious activities is still an important issue to be noticed. Public transportation facilities provided are limited too due to minimize mobilization.[6]

The limitation happened for the usage of public places including the scope of religious activities, meaning that the preaching of the Gospel is being hindered to be able to seek for the chance to utilize meetings happened individually or collectively. And it is not only to begin the preaching of the Gospel but also influencing the follow-up actions applied after the evangelism was done to gain positive responses.

The pandemic which is happening and extending now means that the limitation of holding physical meetings is still applied. The way we used to preach the gospel in physical meetings ought to be accepted as a challenge to face and conquered for the sake of the good tidings will still be preached.

We need to pay attention that the purpose of mission that the Lord is glorified and to prioritize on reaching those in the darkness will still be accomplished although we are now in the midst of the pandemic that we had never imagined before.

B. *Obstacles and Benefits for Mission in Pandemic Era*

The world was stricken by a pandemic for the last two years globally. The impact of this pandemic has made the

leaders of the churches to start running their church services virtually using the electronic and social media as the facilities.

Looking at the pandemic that is still going on will affect the way and purpose of people in doing their mission. The method in mission by scheduling and reaching the purpose directly seems difficult to be done nowadays. To do mission through the social media in this pandemic era is the most appropriate way to do it. We must admit and realize that this digital media and all the virtual ways has become the part of the society in this era. [7]

C. *The Obstacles Of Doing Mission In Pandemic era*

Firstly, the danger and temptation. The most effective facility to preach in mission in this pandemic era is through social media. But the users of the social media should be careful for there are danger and temptation that cannot be limited and avoided in the social media used. The social media could also be used for good or bad things at the same time.

Secondly, the loss of concentration. When the preaching of mission is done, then we should stay focused on the initiative purpose that is the preaching of the Gospel. This needed to be said for there is a tendency that if someone preach the good tidings through social media, they will lack to focus on the main purpose but they focus more on the facilities used.[8]

D. *The Benefits Of The Social Media*

Speaking of the social media in the 21st century is not a new thing, especially by the vast development of technology by the years. As we know, the social media is one of the online media where the users can participate in seeking for information, to communicate and to make friends with all the facilities and its applications. [9]

In a news published by Kompas, it is said that the internet users from 2021 reach the number of 202 million, so there was a 15.5% raise that is of 27 million users compared to the 2020. [10].

Almost all internet users in Indonesia used mobile devices for internet access. The mobile internet users in Indonesia were recorded to reach the number of 171 million or 98 percent of the total internet users. [11] The communication and information center also adds that the producers in the social network are the people who had produced something both writings on a blog, pictures in Instagram or uploading video in YouTube.

This fact is actually a positive benefit for mission, since it is no longer conventional, but getting broader. If the news video abroad can be broadcasted live and accessed by the people of Indonesia, then it is the same as the contents of YouTube are religious videos or specifically mission sphered ministry (the Gospel). The social media nowadays are preferred more than seeking for information, that is to get entertainment and other news and also used more intensively.

It is mentioned that YouTube is still more prominent with the user that reached 94% in the range of 16 – 64 years old. [12]

YouTube users only need their Gmail accounts to be able to access and upload short or long videos. YouTube users could also get live streaming service to be able to be watched directly from any part of the world.

It is good that mission also has access to enter and insert missiological messages in the social media, that the society will not only receive hoax news but able to hear the Gospel of Christ. Making use of the social media intensely in the pandemic era is the right and perfect step, remembering the boundaries or limitations we have to obey for mutual safety of COVID-19.

To adapt in doing mission now is the only way that mission will still be alive and relevant to touch many people from any part of the world.

Some social medias that can be used for mission (Gospel) messages sharing are Facebook, Instagram, Tik-tok, Twitter, YouTube and also from websites. The benefit of using those medias is that a video could be shared to many their platforms to reach more listeners and readers or audience.

The benefits of using social media or virtual facilities to communicate the Good Tidings are: First, broader reach or scope. The community that will become the target of Good Tidings preaching through mission could be reached extensively and the church as believers have a broad access to continue doing mission without hindered by time and space.[13]

Johnston and Mandryk said that the internet is changing the way the world communicates. The preaching of the Good Tidings virtually is a facility that really great gives a tremendous meaning for gospel preaching.[14]

Second, the short time effectivity. Adrianus Pasasa in his writing said that the preaching of the Gospel is as fast as the lightning. Meaning that the Christians could do mission or preaching the Good Tidings in a blink of an eye. Something that stunned us is that the whole world could hear the preaching of the Good Tidings or mission agenda could be done in a glance and this is a far more effective way.

The third, everybody could do mission. Everone could do this without managing strategies and fund raising in a large amount to go into the field. [14]

The fourth, not limited by time. Pasasa added that by the existence of the preaching of the Good Tidings virtually, someone can easily preach the Gospel or do mission during 1 times 24 hours. According to Pasasa, the only way the Christian can take in preaching the Good Tidings or in mission is by using the social media by writing the verses of the Word of God or articles filled with spiritual content and could also be done through live streaming. [14]

IV. CONCLUSION

Mission is related to reaching the lost people and also speaks about glorifying God where men finally are able to know the true God in every time and place. To do mission in pandemic era does not change the essence of Christian mission through the Gospel. The mission in pandemic era could still be done through social media as the facility to preach the Gospel. Social media helps someone to be connected with others widely, therefore the Gospel can reach many people of various backgrounds of different religions, ethnics, language and cultures.

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