How Can the Church Reclaim Backsliders? Analysis of Church Education to Reclaim Backsliders

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Abstract
Backsliding is a problem occurring among Christians in Myanmar. The author focuses this research on seeking several solutions to the issue of backsliding among Christians in Myanmar by comparing it with the Reformed worldview. The analytical focus is on the educational aspect of the church to address backsliding based on the Reformed worldview. This research was conducted in several stages, including problem identification and its causes, proposing problem-solving ideas. The researcher conducted interviews with Christians and elaborated on various other literary sources. The research findings reveal that the church needs to teach sound doctrines that can help its members grow in their faith and withstand difficult times. Political and religious issues are inseparable, but the fundamental problem is the need for contextual churches. The church needs to love and care for its flock. Additionally, the research finds that contextual churches require influence in every public area. Church leaders in urban areas need to be more educated and aware of the views and sensitivities of various ethnic, class, race, and religious groups. The church, as the body of Christ, should be able to communicate the Word of God honestly and accurately to its members and ensure that they are engaged in Bible classes or groups where they can learn and enjoy fellowship with fellow believers to strengthen their faith.

Keywords: backsliders, theological education, church education, reclaim backsliders

Introduction

Yangon is a city located in Myanmar. It is the capital of the Yangon Region. It served as the capital of Myanmar until 2006. The population of the metropolitan area is 7,360,703 people. If we include the population in the suburban areas, the total population can exceed 8,000,000 (Soe, 2014). Amidst all the challenges present in urban areas, there are traffic jams, pollution, noise, high cost of living, overcrowded and often substandard living conditions. Issues such as economic disparities, stress, excessive psychological burdens, long commutes, and violence occur in Myanmar. This city offers the best hope for people in developing countries to access education and income. People continue to be drawn to the city through migration and immigration. Just as the heart pumps blood throughout the body, the city pumps lifeblood throughout, both in the short and long term. This makes it harder to develop stable churches in the city, but it also creates opportunities for evangelism as people move from one city to another.

Missionary work has begun in urban areas, such as Yangon. Challenges in carrying out missions in urban areas include laws that hinder the establishment of churches in the city, gangster threats, fraud, and robbery. Despite various challenges, Christians in Myanmar continue to spread the Gospel, and many people believe in Jesus. When conducting missions in urban areas, many Christians are found but have backslide due to their inability to keep their faith. This is because of the pressure and need to find employment, the high cost of living, and inadequate understanding of the Christian faith and doctrine. They are people who need to have their faith restored so that they can grow in their Christian life. Some of them are kind-hearted but spiritually down and muddled due to the difficulties they face in the city because of their Christian beliefs. Based on initial identification, some have reasoned because they live far from the church, some due to poverty issues, and there are also those who convert because of political threats. Although there are many reasons, based on my analysis, the most dangerous among them are those who misunderstand God's doctrine and the church. The church needs to handle the backsliders wisely and help bring them back to the church.

From a scholarly perspective, this research is necessary as previous researchers have not thoroughly examined this issue. Reclaiming the backsliders living in urban areas presents unique challenges for the church. The urban

environment brings various social, economic, and political dynamics that can influence religious practices and beliefs. Previous research related to this study includes the work of Han et al. (2018). In their study, Han et al. (2018) focused on understanding why urban Christians choose specific places for religious activities with regard to meeting the needs of the backsliders in urban areas. Then, the research by Yip et al. (2020) suggested that transforming urban churches from traditional religious spaces to more community-oriented places is crucial in engaging the backsliders in the urban environment. Other research conducted by Swart and Beer (2014) highlighted the complexity of engaging with the backsliders in urban areas in relation to the challenges of urban public theology and the need for a new agenda in addressing urban church issues.

Research related to reclaiming backslides in urban environments has also been conducted by Gobster (2010). Gobster (2010) advocates for broader restoration projects in urban areas, especially in gaining public acceptance and addressing sustainability goals. Further research by Isaac (2005) regarding the role of the church in adult education and community outreach programs in urban areas is crucial in addressing the needs of backsliders and promoting their recovery. Several previous studies indicate that reclaiming backsliders living in urban areas requires a multifaceted approach that considers the unique dynamics of the urban environment, the evolving nature of religious spaces, and broader social, economic, and political challenges. The church's engagement with backsliders in urban areas should be informed by an understanding of urban religious practices, societal dynamics, and the need for sustainable and inclusive restoration efforts.

Based on the previous research conducted by several researchers, the author deems it necessary to conduct a study to find solutions to the problem. The author focuses this research on finding several solutions to the issue of backsliding among Christians in Myanmar by comparing it with the Reformed worldview. A question of the research is how the church can reclaim backsliders living in urban areas. The analysis focuses on the educational aspect in the church to reclaim backsliding based on the Reformed worldview.

Method

This research was conducted in several stages. Firstly, the identification of problems and their causes was carried out. Subsequently, the researcher proposed a problem-solving idea. Several explored solutions were compared

with the Reformed worldview. Before discussing the question of the research in more detail, it is essential to understand the importance of comprehending worldview issues for contemporary Christians and definition of the worldview. The worldview consists of ideas, beliefs, and commitments that shape one's view of life. It is pre-theoretical and fundamental to what is believed, and it is understood that this worldview actually precedes conscious thinking. It determines which ideas are considered most important. This fundamental assumption is more than just abstract and useless ideas. One's worldview encompasses all aspects of life, essentially being religious (Hoffecker, 1986). For example, when mentioning the term "religious," it might be immediately understood as a representation of someone who believes in God, becomes a member of a church (denomination), practices piety, or recognizable worship. However, such an understanding is not sufficient to translate it accurately. The religious implies people who do not believe in God or belong to a church or practice specific piety or worship. The term "religion" actually comes from the word *religare*, meaning "to bind or bind oneself." In reality, people may be viewed as non-religious, yet they do not understand transcendent values; they adhere to a different religion (Hoffecker, 1986). The Christian worldview begins to open up the implications of scriptural insight for the Christian approach to cultural societal life because the Gospel conveys something about the entire human life (Goheen & Bartolomew, 2008). Therefore, the worldview is a comprehensive framework of one's fundamental beliefs about various things that serve as a life guide to determine what is right and wrong in a particular community. Similarly, urban missiology also seeks the right hermeneutical proportion in a blend that connects urban anthropology and urban sociology.

The data sources in this research are several interview data collected among Christians and elaborated with various other literary sources. In order to provide proposed solutions, the author utilizes information from various international publications for synthesis.

Result and Discussion

Problems and Causes

Regarding the decline in Christian ministry in Myanmar, one might consider that the problem began with a political crisis at the initial stage. This

increasingly damages the mindset and character of Myanmar's society. Understanding the meaning of politics is deceitful. However, Christians in Myanmar, still struggle under a dictatorial government.

In order to get a picture of the political situation in Myanmar, one must go back to the political situation in 1962. During U Nu's government, Buddhism was made the state religion, despite strong protests from minority religions. It was because Buddhism is the primary ethnic and cultural religion of the Burmese people, covering 90% of the entire population. That was the beginning of political turmoil in Myanmar. This is the first fact of the decline of the Christian faith.

Then, in 1962, the army leadership under General Ne Win took over political power to address the political chaos in Myanmar. After the military coup, General Ne Win replaced the parliamentary government with a military government. Ne Win established the Burma Socialist Party to rule (Habib, 2021). The Myanmar government then shifted towards authoritarianism under General Ne Win's rule. The military junta began to rule in Myanmar and initiated a campaign against individuals of different origins (Rahman & Sakib, 2021). However, it did not turn out as expected by the people. When the military regime under the leadership of General Ne Win took over the government, he introduced the new policy "The Burmese Way to Socialism" under the Burma Socialist Party program, which did not recognize the state religion. Under the one-party state, all organizations including Christian organizations were required to register with the government. All Christian schools and hospitals were nationalized in 1965-1966. The government refused to renew permits for foreign missionaries. Missionaries and all Christian workers were expelled from the country. Christian literature, journals, and magazines could not be printed without official censorship. The supply of printing paper was controlled by the government, and permission was required to purchase paper for books and magazines. This is the second reason for the decline of the Christian faith. There were many tensions between Christians and Buddhists in each state in Myanmar.

On September 18, 1988, General Saw Maung led a military coup that seized power and declared a harsh military emergency. Since then, every movement of the church has been monitored, affecting the growth of the church and the spirit of its members to this day. The military junta has taken actions against the church and its members, including civilian groups considered pro-democracy. There has been severe persecution of Christians, and even now they do not possess the full

rights and benefits enjoyed by Buddhists in the country. It is easier for a Buddhist to find employment and promotions in the workplace compared to a Christian. This has led many Christians to abandon their faith and commitment to the Christian belief. This has resulted in regression due to job opportunities and pressure from some family members and friends, especially when young believers move from their small communities to the city. Most church members are scattered, and thereafter, the church struggles to gather for worship and fellowship. It seems that they are disappearing in the urban areas. This situation has led the church to fail in proclaiming the Gospel but working for denominations.

These are considered the source of the problem for Christians in Myanmar. As a result of this issue, Christians have not been able to rise above it to this day. Consequently, the Christian community is fading away from generation to generation, especially in bustling urban areas.

Views on Backslider

In the Christian context, the terms "backslider" and "apostate" carry significant theological implications. The term "backslider" signifies moving away from Christ rather than towards Him. Backslider, on the other hand, is someone who takes a wrong spiritual path. He experiences a regression in spiritual growth rather than progress (Mantsinen & Tervo-Niemelä, 2020). A backslider may have once shown commitment to Christ or upheld certain behavioral standards, but their sins have reverted them to their old ways. Regression in spiritual growth is evidenced by returning to sinful lifestyles as before following Jesus (Mantsinen & Tervo-Niemelä, 2020). The concept of regression stems from the Christian vision of striving to become spiritually mature Christians (Keck, 2023). A backslider is someone who, after declaring himself a true follower of Jesus, falls away from Him.

Backslider often assumes a life as a true religious person. Such figures include Saul and Ahitofel. Many individuals, to a certain extent, reject religious practices. They boldly test God (Fuller, 1840, pp. 15–16). They are rejected and labeled as unfaithful and deceivers. Based on collected data, there is a tendency to reject backsliders. They are viewed as unfaithful and deceitful individuals. This issue poses difficulties in ministering to backsliders. The more someone is rejected, the harder it becomes to build good relationships and communication.

This issue is prevalent in Myanmar. Based on the researcher's observations, considering a backslider as unfaithful and deceitful does not solve the problem, it creates larger issues instead. The action of distancing oneself and viewing backsliders as deceivers can hinder bringing them back to Christ. A true Christian is one who shows hospitality and acceptance to all (Jatmiko et al., 2024). Someone experiencing spiritual regression needs help to strengthen their faith.

The Backslider's View of God

The views of those who repent to the Lord are according to the results of the house-to-house evangelism program. The results of interviews with backsliders indicate that Christians tend to favor certain groups. They are good to others rather than those who withdraw from the church. Sometimes they say, "I love Jesus but I hate Christians." This notion then creates the perception that God is partial. Why do they see God as partial? Based on the collected information, participants explained that they feel discriminated against. Nothing changed in their Christian life before and after. It does not show the degree of God's love. Consequently, they feel their faith sinking and feel expelled. As referred to in the political situation paragraph above, many Christians are scattered to various places. No church members return to their church, nor does the church pay attention to members who have gone far from the church. Although the results are not good for the Church and Christianity. For those who do not want to fall under the Church, this is a good privilege. For example, there are church singers who sing in nightclubs, there are those who work in the dark business, and there are those who become addicted to cocaine, illegal drugs, and alcohol. Some feel ashamed to be Christians because of the predominance of the Buddhist environment. These are various issues that occur among Christians in Myanmar.

When the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the question, "How do they understand God when they believe in the Buddhist religion?" The informants do not believe in God the creator. Buddhists believe that nothing is permanent and change is always possible. Buddhist teachings do not believe in the existence of gods or souls in the theistic sense. It is essentially a religion of mind, advocating present awareness, inner purity, ethical behavior, freedom from the problems of change, impermanence and suffering, and reliance on self-experience and wisdom on the eightfold path as a teacher and guide rather than external authority other than Dhamma. Buddhism even does not support the

idea of an eternal and unchanging soul residing within the body. They focus on Nirvana and the permanent end of suffering without disturbance and futile discussions. They do not believe in hidden causes but in real, sensible causes. They accept karma and reincarnation as governing laws. Karma is a hidden process of cause and effect, but with awareness practice, its workings can be viewed and experienced in the world by everyone (Jayaram V, 2019). Even if they accept Jesus Christ as their Savior, their return to their old religion symbolizes that the nature of sin is total depravity (Calvin, 2011).

A View of the Decline of the Church in Urban Areas

There are diverse views about the church. Some adhere to their own definition of the church rather than the biblical definition. The reason they accept it is because their faith is built upon denominational teachings. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists are the first missions and have become widespread church activities. They teach church doctrines according to their worldview. Likewise, Baptist churches and others also do the same. Afterward, the church becomes a mere building in the minds of Christians. The understanding of the church cannot reach the point that the Bible teaches the body of Jesus Christ.

Similarly, from the perspective of Buddhism, Burmese society considers Christianity as a foreign religion as it arrived in Myanmar much later than Buddhism. Myanmar was a British colony for over a hundred years (Kam, 1997). Therefore, in the understanding of Burmese society, Westerners apply the 3-M policy: merchants, missionaries, and military. They send merchants first, then missionaries, and finally the military to occupy the land. This policy still exists in some areas of Burma, suspicious of Christian missions and evangelism (Dorp, 2022). Although Christianity has existed since the beginning, this plant is still considered a "potted plant" that has not been successfully transplanted into Myanmar's soil. They state that the church is just a gathering place for Christians to do business. The first American Baptist missionary, Adoniram Judson, said it was easier to pull teeth from a tiger's mouth than to convert a Burmese Buddhist to Christianity (Anderson, 1968).

The body of Christ has been misunderstood among civil and social life in urban areas, cultures, and particularly in the views of other religions such as Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and other cultural or religious groups. Although

their views on the church may seem like a storm blowing from outside, they must understand the true meaning of the church as taught in the Bible.

The Church Returns Backsliders Living in Urban Areas

Building a Correct World View of the Church

I have read that Roman Catholics sometimes regard Luther, Melanchthon, and Calvin as atheists (Bavinck, 2004). Often in Christian life, the body of Christ is looked down upon by those without special revelation. The church is Catholic. There is the Spirit of God and grace in the church. There is only one God and one Lord, and there are true members of the church outside the church who appear like angels, those who were slain on the wood of the cross who only received the baptism of blood, and all non-Israelites who were saved before the coming of Christ for the Lord. Christianity is as old as the world (Bavinck, 2004; Milner, 2022). The church is like a communion of saints. Luther, who proclaimed the freedom of Christian people, saw the church as an assembly of believers, a "communion of saints" as acknowledged as the object of faith in the Apostles' Creed (Bavinck, 2008).

The distinction between the visible church and the invisible church visibly refers to the object of faith, not because the church has a spiritual side but because it cannot distinguish for certain its true circle of members. The visible church becomes a term, rather than a manifestation of believers in their confession and conduct, but for unbelievers (Bavinck, 2008; Milner, 2022). Furthermore, the Reformed doctrine of the church also states that the church seeks its unity and holiness in the objective institutions of office, word, and sacrament rather than in the subjective fellowship of believers, which often leaves a lot of undesirable things (Williamson, 2020). The invisible church can be understood simply as a gathering of chosen people, an object of faith, as in the Apostles' Creed, which will only become visible at the parousia Christi (Bavinck, 2008).

Thus, the church is responsible for caring for its members because all Christians are made in the image of God, and each Christian's relationship with God flows into other humans. Religion cannot be purely individual and private. Although there have been efforts to enforce unity through state power, the church must be served with its unvarying character according to His will in the modern world.

A correct worldview of the church is needed to address the backsliders. The act of abandoning the Christian faith has been a challenge throughout Church history (Marina, 2022). The view of the church as a physical building has evolved over centuries, leading to the loss of its original purpose and eventually becoming secular (Zarns, 2023). This poses a problem for the Christian community. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a correct perspective on the church. Every member of the church needs to understand its basic values, functions, and who or what constitutes the church. The church is a community of faith that builds each other up. In the church, every believer is guided to grow spiritually and have strong faith.

In the worldview of Reformed theology, the unity within the church is essential. According to de Beer (2020), Ephesians emphasizes the importance of the church's testimony in the world. The unity of the church is closely related to its role in the Community Center, which brings about peace and prosperity (Labobar, 2024; Toryough & Okanlawon, 2014). According to Dreyer (2020), the church functions to build unity to address collective trauma. This is relevant to the situation in Myanmar. Myanmar Christians who are under pressure need support so that they remain united in faith. In a political crisis that can lead to backsliding, the church essentially needs to build theological awareness and mobilization that enables every believer to face political crises more robustly (Elsner, 2023; Wambugu et al., 2022).

Sound Doctrines

The church needs to teach sound doctrines that can help members grow in their faith and persevere even in difficult times. The need for contextual churches is paramount, as politics and religion are inseparable issues; true religious believers will lose their influence under poor leadership. Due to politics, many hypocrisies emerge. There is no good identity, and there is no strong faith.

The Church, as the body of Christ, must be able to communicate the word of God honestly and accurately to its members. As the body of Christ, the Church plays a vital role in communicating God's word honestly and accurately to its members. This involves shaping church participation in God's mission to faithfully embody the teachings of Christ (Zscheile, 2014). The ecclesiology of the church, as a local body and identifiable believers, is crucial in contextualizing the church's message in different cultural settings (Bennett, 2020). Furthermore, the

church functions as a transformative communication system, creating space for symbols that facilitate encounters between God and humans, as well as among individuals within the church (Van Rheede van Oudtshoorn, 2015). The church's identity is characterized by its roots in the present reality while being centered on God, enabling it to engage in work aligned with its mission (East, 2015). Additionally, the church's commitment to God's highest revelation in Christ allows for dialogue and learning from other religious traditions while maintaining its core beliefs (Van Den Toren, 2012).

The church also ensures that congregation members are assigned to classes or Bible study groups where they can learn and enjoy fellowship with fellow Christians to strengthen their faith. Effective evangelism must be based on strong doctrinal statements and church teachings. Even though the city has more obstacles and challenges, the church must prioritize who becomes the source of temptation.

Understanding and teaching the word of God is crucial to guide believers to live according to His will and serve His kingdom. The text from Hebrews 11:1-3 emphasizes the need for believers to understand the word of God in every aspect of life. Furthermore, teachings that emphasize successful living and empowering women through skills and hard work are in line with the concept of serving the kingdom of God (Tarugarira & Moyo, 2020). Additionally, the uniqueness of the Bible and archaeological evidence, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, provide external evidence that the Bible is the word of God (Montang et al., 2023). This supports the importance of teaching and upholding biblical principles. The living word of God, as viewed in Jesus Christ, serves as a source of inspiration, encouragement, and guidance for believers (le Roux et al., 2022). This underscores the importance of teaching and understanding the Word of God for spiritual growth and guidance.

In the context of backsliding and returning to the Church, there are material incentives for those who return to the Church, indicating the value placed on guiding backsliders back to the faith community (Kursa, 2016). Furthermore, discrimination and job displacement due to racial laws have profound impacts, emphasizing the need for compassion and understanding in addressing issues related to backsliding and returning to the Church (Patriarca et al., 2022).

Understanding and teaching the word of God is crucial to guide believers to live according to His will, serve His kingdom, and overcome challenges like

backsliding. The teachings and evidence from the Bible, as well as historical and social contexts, provide a comprehensive framework for approaching the task of teaching the word of God and humbly serving His kingdom. Understanding the word of God means finding the best way to live in the world according to His will. Teaching the word of God and humbly serving His kingdom are pathways for backsliders to return to the Church and confess to the Lord.

The Church also teaches the congregation to know God well. According to Herman Bavinck (2004), the knowledge of God only begins with revelation. If God does not reveal Himself to His creatures, then there can be no knowledge of Him. God's self-revelation in and through His creatures is so rich and profound that it can never be fully known by any human being. The wealth of God surpasses all knowledge. In fact, the essential and indispensable component of our knowledge of God is that humans can only know that God reveals Himself to His creatures (Bavinck, 2004). God is the creator who made the world (Acts 17:23-24), whose power and divinity can be clearly seen by the human mind in everything that has been created (Romans 1:19-20), who primarily created human beings in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26), (Darmawan & Purnamawati, 2023). Humans are created by God as offspring who live and move in Him (Acts 17:28), (Mary et al., 2022). He has spoken to them through the prophets and apostles, especially through His own Son (Hebrews 1:1), and continues to reveal Himself to humans (Matthew 16:17, John 14:22-23) (Bavinck, 2004).

The advantageous perspective from the Reformed worldview is the faith given by God to those who accept the Scriptures as the revelation of God Himself. In the scriptures, His plan for creation and history is written, as well as His will for His chosen people, who are redeemed and born again in the world. One of the ancient great catechisms stated, "God is spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth" (The Shorter Catechism of the Western Pastor, question four). This is the God we love. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable. There is no one like God. No one can compare to God. The more you know Him, the more you want to know Him. The more you know Him, love Him, and trust Him, the more you long to know Him. What is the ultimate purpose of humanity? The answer to the ultimate purpose of humanity is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever (Bavinck, 2004).

Christians may understand that false doctrines and teachings can destroy entire human lives. The difference between the Reformed perspective and

Bavinck's teachings is as vast as heaven and earth. This is not just a discussion over the table; this is a matter of everyday life. The church needs to love and care for its sheep. I have found that the fear of the Lord is important in the Christian life. For those who fear the Lord will receive wisdom from Him.

Development of the Quality of Urban Church Leaders

Contextual churches require influence in every public sphere. Church leaders in urban areas must be much more educated and aware of the perspectives and sensitivities of various ethnic, class, racial, and religious groups. In order to ensure that urban church leaders are better educated and aware of the perspectives and sensitivities of various ethnic, class, racial, and religious groups, it is important to consider the influence of Faith-Based Organizations (FBO) in different cultural contexts (Teizazu et al., 2023). Research has shown that interventions in FBO are often adapted by leaders to fit the local context and complement the values of each church's religion, indicating the potential of FBO to play a significant role in addressing the diverse needs of urban communities (Teizazu et al., 2023). Additionally, there is a need for urban church leaders to understand the evolving dynamics of religion in urban spaces (Glendinning, 2013). This underscores the importance of urban church leaders being aware of the changing role of religion in public life and its impact on diverse religious constituents.

Furthermore, urban Christians' choice of religious practice sites, such as home churches, as viewed in China reflects the need for church leaders to understand the factors influencing religious preferences in diverse urban environments (Han et al., 2018). This appears to be relevant to the issues occurring in Myanmar. Church development requires the growth of participatory communities that affirm ethnic cultures and promote egalitarian relationships, emphasizing the importance of inclusive church environments and cultural sensitivity (Gushiken, 2015). Additionally, the concept of religious super-diversity emphasizes the lively religious experiences of young people in urban spaces, highlighting the need for urban church leaders to address issues such as racial oppression and religious diversity in their communities (van den Bogert, 2018). The individual considerations among church leaders regarding church performance underscore the importance of church leadership development in addressing the diverse needs of urban congregations (Demesi et

al., 2022). Urban church leaders need to be equipped to navigate the complexities of urban religious diversity, social reconciliation, and the evolving role of religion in public life. This requires a deep understanding of the cultural, racial, and religious dynamics in urban society.

Building an Incarnational Approach to the Church

The urban church cares about the surrounding community. The church's engagement with backsliders in urban areas is closely related to its involvement in the surrounding community (Anierobi & Obasi, 2021). Urban churches need to pay attention to the church's relationship with the local community in addressing backsliding in urban areas. The church's role in social mobilization, adult education, social media engagement, and community activism highlights the importance of community-centered approaches in addressing backsliders (Chandler, 2017; Han et al., 2018; Isaac, 2005; Ribbens & De Beer, 2017).

The church also needs to see itself as a church for the community, understanding what the community needs, and providing services based on perceived needs. The role of the church in the community and the provision of its services based on perceived needs are crucial for understanding the dynamics of community involvement and social capital (Herwinesastra et al., 2023). Research has shown that churches play a vital role in providing welfare services independent of the government, focusing on local initiatives (Leonard & Bellamy, 2010). However, it should be noted that many churches tend to be more focused on the congregation rather than community-oriented, which can affect their ability to effectively meet the broader community's needs. Additionally, individual involvement and commitment in the church are associated with the belief that the church community will provide care and support when needed (Silton et al., 2011). This highlights the importance of the church as a source of support and care in society. The church's involvement in the community, providing services based on perceived needs, and its role as a source of support are crucial for understanding the dynamics of community involvement and social capital. The diverse contributions of the church to society underline its significance as a key institution in addressing various community needs.

The church must also act alongside the community. The church plays a crucial role in society, as it can act as a catalyst for social change and community engagement. The church can influence societal transformation by engaging in

social actions aimed at improving the quality of life and changing social structures (Giudici & Selvam, 2023). Additionally, the church can serve as a platform to mobilize communities to address emerging urgent issues (Nche, 2020; Sanicki & Mannell, 2015). The church's involvement in civil society is not limited to addressing specific issues but extends to promoting communal ecclesiology and engaging with other sectors of society (Shin, 2023). Furthermore, the separation of church and state can lead to innovative social practices aligned with changes in the church's social role (Nahnfeldt & Lindberg, 2017). The church's role in society is diverse. Its ability to foster social capital, engage in social actions, and mobilize communities makes it a key actor in societal transformation and well-being.

The above three principles are referred to as the incarnational approach of the church in the city. The church becomes the flesh of the people and the bones of the people (Guarino, 2022). It becomes a listening and learning church when it identifies itself with its people. It becomes a partner in the community (van Engen & Tiersma, 1994). The church must work diligently in line with its purpose to nurture and enhance the church of God in the city.

Implication

The theoretical implication of this research is that the Reformed view provides a concept to resolve the problem of decline in faith. This view pays attention to aspects of education in the church as a solution to overcome decline. The practical implications of this review are that churches need to teach correct doctrine, pay attention to political and religious aspects in every public setting, and ensure church members are involved in Bible study and training.

Recommendation for Future Research

It is necessary to conduct research with an action research approach to ascertain whether teaching can help someone who is an apostate. More research is needed to find more factors that cause a Christian to abandon his faith in Jesus. Research with a social approach is needed to examine the problem in depth.

Conclusion

The church needs to teach sound doctrines that can help members grow in their faith and persevere even in difficult times, and the need for contextual

churches comes first; politics and religion are inseparable issues; true religious followers will lose their influence under bad leadership. Because of politics, many hypocrisies emerge. There is no good identity and no strong faith. Second, Christians may understand false doctrines and teachings can destroy the entire human life. When we look at the Reformed view and Bavinck's teachings, the gap is as vast as heaven and earth. This is not a conversation over the table; this is a daily life event. The church needs to love and care for its flock. I have found that the fear of God is important in the Christian life. For those who fear God receive wisdom from God. Third, contextual churches need influence in every public field. Church leaders in urban areas must be much more educated and aware of the views and sensitivities of various ethnic, class, race, and religious groups. The church, which is the body of Christ, must be able to communicate God's word honestly and truthfully to its members and also ensure that they are assigned to Bible classes or groups where they can learn and enjoy fellowship with fellow Christians to strengthen their faith. Effective evangelism must be based on strong doctrinal statements and church teachings. Even though this city has more barriers and obstacles, the church must prioritize who is the source of temptation. Lastly, understanding the word of God means finding the best way to live in the world according to His will; teaching the word of God and humbly serving His kingdom is the same as paving the way for backsliders to return to the Church and confess to the Lord.

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