

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSITIONAL TRUTHS¹ IN CHRISTIAN FAITH

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ABSTRAK: Filsafat postmodern telah memberikan dampak yang serius terhadap cara pandang pemikir-pemikir Kristen terhadap kebenaran. Beberapa dasawarsa yang lalu, teolog-teolog Kristen telah memformulasikan dan mempertahankan teologi Kristen sebagai system kebenaran propositional. Namun di beberapa dekade belakangan, kebenaran – sebagai proposisi yang seharusnya menjadi kebenaran yang kekal – telah ditolak oleh beberapa pemikir seperti Leslie Newbiggin dan Stanley Grenz. Menurut mereka salah satu alasan utama menolak proposisi dalam diskursus teologi dikarenakan ini merupakan hasil masa pencerahan dan karenanya tidak dapat diaplikasikan di konteks postmodern. Tetapi, pandangan ini memiliki problem yang signifikan dan karenanya tujuan dari arti kelini adalah untuk mendalami permasalahan yang ada dan mempertahankan pentingnya kebenaran-kebenaran proposisi di dalam iman Kristen.

KATA KUNCI: kebenaran-kebenaran proposisi, proposisi, postmodernisme, dekonstruksi, narasi biblika.

ABSTRACT: Postmodernism philosophy has made a serious impact to some Christian thinkers on how they view the truth. During many decades

¹ In this essay, the phrase “the propositional truths” refers to the statements of truth that have objective meaning in the statements themselves. For instance, a statement such as “Jesus Christ is the only redeemer of sinners” is a Christian propositional truth which is based on the Scripture.

ago, Christian theologians had formulated and defended the Christian theology as a system of propositional truths. However, in some recent decades the truth - as propositions which are expected to become timeless truths - has been declined by some thinkers like Leslie Newbigin and Stanley Grenz. One of the primary reasons to reject propositions in theological discourse, according to them, that it is a product of the enlightenment and therefore cannot be applied in the postmodern context. Yet, this view has a significant problem and therefore the aim of this article is to elaborate the problem and to maintain the significance of the propositional truths in Christian faith.

KEYWORDS: *Propositional truths, proposition, postmodernism, deconstruction, biblical narrative*

Introduction

The postmodern world in recent decades leads to there sistance to understanding truth as a set of propositions and makes a considerable impact on how believers conceive the truth. For example, William Willimon implies that Christians who argue for the objective truth of Jesus are making a tactical error because Jesus did not arrive among us enunciating a set of propositions that we are to affirm.² However, postmodern philosophers and some postmodern Christian thinkers who share the same relativistic presupposition do not realize that they are using propositional explication to reject the propositional truths. Indeed this is a self defeating factor in their perspective.

With this context as a background, this essay will discuss two issues, first, the problem of the relativistic view on truth of some postmodern

² Douglas Groothuis, *Truth Decay: Defending Christianity against the Challenges of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2000), 21.

Christian thinkers who decline the propositional truths, and second, the significance of the propositional truths in the biblical narrative. A few questions are needed to guide this writing: How do postmodern Christian thinkers deny the theological propositions and what is the problem? Why is the propositional explication important in comprehending Scripture? Base on these research questions we will evaluate the views of Lesslie Newbigin and Stanley J. Grenz, some of the most influential “postmodern Christian”³ thinkers. However, a brief discussion on deconstruction theory is necessary, because it is one of the primary characteristics of the postmodern philosophy which at least leaves its impact on some postmodern Christian thinkers. Furthermore, a study on related topics, particularly, the significance of the propositional truths in the Christian Scripture will need to be addressed.

Resistance to the Propositional truths in The Postmodern World

Groothuis describes the task of the Christian theology as identifying and articulating the revealed truths of the Scripture in a logical, coherent, and compelling manner.⁴ Indeed, disputing this statement could lead to an illogical comprehension to the biblical narrative because comprehending its text requires an interpretation from a proper and rational way of reading. First, how to understand the biblical words, category, and language is substantial, for instance, readers cannot make their own categories and apply them to interpret the text. To put it another way, the Scripture should be understood in the language and the categories of the scriptural text itself. Second, using words in digging and understanding the biblical text must be

³ The term “postmodern Christian” here is not used because Newbigin and Grenz have made a claim that they are postmodernists, but it is used only to show that similar to postmodern thinkers, they basically tend to or have rejected the propositional truths. R. Scott Smith calls Stanley Grenz as postmodern Christian; see R. Scott Smith, “Language, Theological Knowledge, and the Postmodern Paradigm” in *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, eds. Millard J. Erickson, et al., (Illinois: Crossway, 2004), 109.

⁴ Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 112.

rational and coherence because the text must have a certain inherent meaning. Regarding the use of words in a logical and coherent way, Zacharias has a relevance illustration:

Some months ago I was lecturing at one of the universities in the country when a student stormed up to the microphone and bellowed, "Who told you culture is a search for coherence? Where do you get that idea from? This idea of coherence is a western idea." I replied by reminding her that all I had done in that instance was to present a sociologist's definition that culture sought coherence. "Ah! Words! Just words!" she shouted back.

"Let me ask you this then," I pleaded. "Do you want my answer to be coherent?" Some laughter rippled through the auditorium. She herself was stymied for a few moments. "But that's language, isn't it?" she retorted.

I asked her if language has anything to do with reality. "Must words not point to a referent? If you seeking an answer that must be coherent, but culture itself does not have to be, from whence do you get this disjunction?" One could sense the turmoil within her.⁵

Deconstruction Theory

Before dealing with the perspective of Leslie Newbigin and Stanley Grenz, it is fundamental to know how postmodern philosophy has changed perspective on how people use words and language. Since deconstruction theory plays an important role in postmodern view to make a shift on how people use words and language, it is reasonable to begin the discussion with this theory. What is deconstruction? Jacques Derrida says:

The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things – texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and sort you need –do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. What is really going on things, what is really happening, is always to come. Every time you try to stabilize the meaning of a thing, to fix it in its missionary position, the thing itself, if there

⁵ Ravi Zacharias, "An Ancient Message, Through Modern Means, to A Postmodern Mind," in *Telling Truth: Evangelizing Postmoderns*, ed. D.A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 19.

is anything at all to it, slips away.⁶

Deconstruction initially emerges as an extension of a theory in literature called structuralism.⁷ Its proponents argue that literature provides categories which help reader in organizing and comprehending their experience of reality.⁸ They also maintain that societies and cultures have a common, invariant structure.⁹ At this point, deconstructionists express their rejection to structuralism¹⁰ and emphasize that the meaning of a text is not inherent in the text itself. Stanley Grenz describes:

Meaning is not inherent in a text itself, they argue, but emerges only as the interpreter enters into dialogue with the text. And because the meaning of a text is dependent on the perspective of the one who enters into dialogue with it, it has as many meanings as it has readers (or readings).¹¹

Indeed, this theory has a self defeating factor. A brief investigation will expose its inconsistency. Deconstructionists asserting a text, "... because the meaning of a text is dependent on the perspective of the one who enters into dialogue with it, it has as many meanings as it has readers (or readings)," which indicates that this text also has a lot of meanings, a question emerges: Do deconstructionists want the readers comprehend this text according to the meaning in which they give to it? Two potential options arise: 1) they want the readers apprehend the text according to the meaning they give to it. 2) They leave the readers apprehending the text according to the readers' interpretation. If the first is the recommended answer, the conclusion is that the text has a singular meaning. On the contrary, if the second is the option, the text itself is not significant to communicate because

⁶ John D. Caputo, ed., *Deconstruction in A Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 31.

⁷ Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

it does not have an objective meaning. Consequently, whatever answer is given; it will uncover the contradiction of the text.

Afterwards, postmodern philosophers apply this deconstruction theory in literature to the reality in the world as a whole.¹² Consequently, this perspective has not only influenced on how postmodern Christian thinkers interpret the Scriptural text but has also influenced the whole contemporary Christian's life such as academic, ethics, worship, etc.¹³ Concerning the Christian academic life, today people could easily feel the spirit of rejection to the propositional truths in Christian theology. For example, A.B. Caneday describes that post-conservative people, led by Grenz and Franke, have discarded viewing Scripture as *propositional* in favor of viewing Scripture as *functional*, as if the two were incompatible.¹⁴

Lesslie Newbigin

Lesslie Newbigin is a Christian missionary and writer who served nearly forty years in India. Groothuis says that although Newbigin's critique of non-Christian worldviews and attitudes was often insightful, his concept of truth was unsteady. In some ways his thinking was postmodernist.¹⁵ Furthermore Groothuis describes several problems concerning Newbigin's view: 1) His view of truth appears to be inconsistent. Although he seems as if he supports the correspondence view,¹⁶ he also apparently denies it.¹⁷ 2)

¹² Ibid.

¹³ In ethics, for example, the spirit of rejection to the absolute moral values in this postmodern era has lead many churches to become more tolerant to homosexuality. In worship, there is a relativizing in music in many evangelical and charismatic churches which accommodate contemporary music such as rock and rap in Sunday service.

¹⁴ A.B. Caneday, "Is Theological Truth Functional or Propositional? Post-conservatism's Use of Language Games and Speech-Act Theory," in *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, eds. Millard J. Erickson, et al., (Illinois: Crossway Books, 2004), 140.

¹⁵ Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 152.

¹⁶ Correspondence view states that words and language have objective meaning that exactly connects to the fact (reality). Postmodernists like Derrida, rejects this view by denying that

Similar to the postmodernists, he emphasizes the dominance of perspectives and interpretations over verifiable facts.¹⁸

In his book "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society," in a chapter entitled "No Other Name," Newbiggin defends the absoluteness of the Christian truth in Jesus Christ against those who hold pluralism view like Paul Knitter (the author of the popular book "No Other Name?"), John Hick, Stanley Samartha, and Diana Eck.¹⁹ Indeed, he makes note worthy points in the book, such as:1) He argues against the view that nothing absolute in history. At this point, Newbiggin attempts to maintain the absoluteness of the incarnation of Christ.²⁰ 2) He criticizes Samartha who objects when Christian missionaries, who convert people, do not create a vertical movement toward God but employ a horizontal movement from one community to others. Newbiggin says, "A true relation to God cannot be independent of our relation with other people, and allegiance to Christ must necessarily be expressed in relationship with those who share that allegiance."²¹ 3) He maintains that the uniqueness of the Christian truth is in the person of Jesus Christ.²² Nonetheless, the last point about the uniqueness of the Christian truth in the person of Christ leads him to an anticlimax by rejecting the truth as doctrine. He states:

That truth is not a doctrine or a worldview or even a religious experience; it is certainly not to be found by repeating abstract nouns like justice and love; it is the man Jesus Christ in whom God was reconciling the world. The truth is personal, concrete, [and] historical.²³

language has a fixed meaning connected to a fixed reality, see Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 141.

¹⁷ Groothuis, *Truth Decay*, 152-3.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 153.

¹⁹ Lesslie Newbiggin, *The Gospel in A Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 156.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 163-4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 164-5.

²² *Ibid.*, 169-70.

²³ *Ibid.*, 170.

This concept is probably overemphasized and declines the significance of the biblical doctrine that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rm. 10:17). To elaborate Newbigin's problem: 1) the gospel comes to the non-Christian by preaching and the preachers deal with the words and the language of the Scripture. Afterward, the Holy Spirit applies these words in the unbelievers' inner soul,²⁴ and subsequently faith emerges. The word of God which is preached to unbelievers concerning the redemptive works of Christ is generally called as doctrine of salvation. Therefore the Christian truth is also about doctrine. 2) Indeed, Christian truth has a personal characteristic, concrete, and historical in Jesus Christ. But, the fact that he comes to people through words is a considerable fact: a) that he speaks to the Christians through the Bible,²⁵ b) that he repeatedly quotes the Old Testament texts while teaching in the gospels.²⁶ Moreover, he is the Word (*Logos*) of God (cf. John 1:1). Consequently, when people encounter the truth, they will encounter Jesus as personal as well as his words.

Although in the statement above his resistance to the propositional truths is implicitly, yet it still implies a rejection because the "truth as doctrine" which he declines basically consists of propositions. Nonetheless, readers still find in "The Gospel in a Pluralist Society" a positive rejection toward the propositional truths. He states that the Christian dogma (the thing given for our acceptance in faith) is not a set of timeless proposition, conversely it is a story.²⁷ Furthermore, he criticizes the eighteenth century theologians who defend the faith as a system of timeless metaphysical truths

²⁴ Cf. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Combined Edition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 469.

²⁵ Despite the fact that those who are in Charismatic churches claim that Jesus Christ or Holy Spirit is able to speak directly to them today, historical conservative Christians (for instance, Reformed Christians) believe that Jesus speaks to us through the Scripture.

²⁶ To understand there mark able fact son how Jesus uses the OT texts, see Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Our Lord's Use of Scripture," in *Revelation and the Bible*, ed. Carl F. H. Henry (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 121-34.

²⁷ Newbigin, *The Gospel in A Pluralist Society*, 12-13.

about God, nature, and man. According to him, the Christian faith is an interpretation to the human story.²⁸ However, a question will expose his contradictory assumption: how can he make a claim about the uniqueness of Christ against the view that nothing absolute in history (see the significant points he makes above), if he does not maintain that claim as a timeless confession?

To avoid giving a detail critique on his “postmodernism” idea about the Christian dogma is a considerable option for this brief essay. Nevertheless, exposing the inconsistent factors of the book is necessary. Interestingly, several contrary points against Newbigin’s idea of rejection toward the propositional truths are implicitly stated. For instance: 1) the initial sentence of the first chapter describes: “It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a pluralist society – ...,”²⁹ precisely, this is a proposition. 2) Newbigin often utilizes bullet points as is generally made in the propositional explanations of the confessions of faith.³⁰ 3) The composition of this book is very systematic with a lot of arduous propositions. Furthermore, while describing the truth as not about worldview, but presumably he wants to give the readers a new worldview (which he must claim as true) on how they should understand the uniqueness of Christ in a pluralist society. At least, this assumption implicitly states by Christopher Duraisingh who gave a foreword to the book. He says:

During recent years, however, new perceptions of this milieu have emerged, and pluralism is fast assuming the character of an ideology. Hence the need to understand afresh the nature and role of the church’s mission in today’s pluralistic world. Lesslie Newbigin’s book is an important contribution to the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 1.

³⁰ Ibid., pp. 8-13, 19-22, 30-32, and so forth.

ongoing search ...³¹

Stanley J. Grenz

He is an evangelical thinker who writes several books that reject foundationalism including those who base their theological position on the propositional truths. Caneday describes Grenz's position:

Against evangelical theological method grounded in Scripture as God's inerrant Word – a method that he perceives as grounded in Enlightenment and modernist foundationalism – Grenz, recently joined by John Franke, advocates a method that is non-foundational and that rejects a propositional view of Scripture in favor of a functional view that centers upon experience rather than doctrine.³²

However, the term “non-foundational” is a chaotic term for some reasons: 1) no one can build a theory, knowledge, or an argument without any presupposition. 2) The “non-foundational” principle itself is a foundation in which Grenz and Franke base on their perspective. Similarly, the term “postmodern” shares the same absurdity if the term “modern” has to be defined as present or recent time. 3) In order to be a real “non-foundationalist,” Grenz and Franke have to start their discourse from the null hypothesis³³ which means that any discussion about modernism, enlightenment, foundationalism, etc. should be removed from their discourse, because incorporating these subjects in their discourse will preconditioning a certain base (foundation). Indeed it is absurd.

One of Grenz's books, “Revisioning Evangelical Today,” criticizes people who argue for the propositional truths like Carl Henry,³⁴ yet

³¹ Ibid., vii.

³² Caneday, “Is Theological Truth Functional or Propositional,” 138.

³³ Null hypothesis is a default position which people have to take when they studying a subject until evidence or some evidences emerge to confirm a conclusion. Indeed, this is an impossible position because in studying a subject people always start with their ready presupposition.

³⁴ Carl Henry probably becomes the most prominent proponent who stands for the

Caneday doubts the accuracy of Grenz's argument regarding Henry's position.³⁵ It is important also to note that in this book Grenz basically uses propositional approach/explanation.³⁶ For example, after severely criticizing Henry and others, Grenz closes his argument with a proposition:

We must view theology in terms of its proper context within the narrative of God's action in history. This means that the theological task can be properly pursued only "from within" – that is, only from the vantage point of the faith community in which the theologian stands.³⁷

In other book, while speaking on theological approach, Grenz apparently moderate in his critique by describing that although the concordance understanding of theology (which formed by propositions) has its positive contribution, it has one decisive flaw, that is, it does not give adequate attention to the contextual nature of theology.³⁸ However Grenz's conclusion is inaccurate when he sees theology just from the aspect of its contextual nature. Speaking about the nature of the theology, in the first place, it is a system of Christian truths. While discussing on the relationship between systematic theology and apologetics, Cornelius Van Til is correct when he says, "In it [systematic theology] we have the system of truth that we are to defend."³⁹ Similarly, after saying that theology is the science of God, Bavinck argues, "... and there is no objection whatever to gathering this knowledge of God in a system."⁴⁰ Since Christian theology is a system of truth, using propositions in dogma, dogmatic, and theological writings are fundamental. The second place of the nature of the theology is its

propositional truths in Christian theology.

³⁵ Caneday, "Is Theological Truth Functional or Propositional," 141.

³⁶ See Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisoning Evangelical Today* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁸ Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 8. For a discussion about the context of his view on this subject see page 6-7.

³⁹ Cornelius Van Til, *Christian Apologetics*, ed. William Edgar (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2003), 23.

⁴⁰ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, vol. 1* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 43.

contextual character. In its history, Christian theology has been contextualized automatically because its emergence is always in the context of its time. Hence, the question is not how do Christians reevaluate the function of the irtheological propositions (e.g. confessions of faith) in order to be in harmony with the contemporary context, but how believers communicate the truth as plainly as possible. Burger is correct when he says:

..., the critical moment of systematic-theological reflection lies in the aim of theology: that the gospel of Jesus Christ is communicated as clearly as possible and that the members of the church in Christ and in the Spirit live in communion with God and as a result with each other to the glory of God.⁴¹

Therefore, instead of rejecting the propositional truths in theological efforts base on an inaccurate assumption that it lacks of the context, believers in this era should communicate the truth in a contextual way, and when the context requires a shift, they should rearrange their belief system which is based on the propositional truths, in order that their theological system be in harmony with the contemporary context. In other words, the substance of the Christian propositional truths cannot be changed, but its arrangement can be changed according to its context.

Another challenge of Grenz to the propositional truths is in "A primer on Postmodernism," a book which introduces postmodern philosophy. He states:

Central to our task in thinking through the faith in a postmodern context is an obligation to rethink the function of assertions of truth or propositions. We must continue to acknowledge the fundamental importance of rational discourse, but our understanding of the faith must not remain fixated on the propositionalist approach that views Christian truth as nothing more than correct doctrine or doctrinal truth.⁴²

⁴¹ Hans Burger, *Being in Christ* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2008), 24.

⁴² Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*, 170.

Although Grenz acknowledges the benefit of the rational discourse, yet in the same time he obscures its significance by arguing that our understanding of faith should not remain in fixated position base on the propositionalist approach. To elaborate the problem, if the rational discourse is fundamental according to him, it indicates that the Christian faith should be employed in a rational way, and the only procedure is to deal with it from the propositional elucidation. Consequently, on one hand Grenz acknowledges the significance of the rational discourse and on the other hand he obscures its procedure: the propositional manner in doing rational discourse.

The Significance of the Propositional Truths in the Biblical Narrative

It is evident that the Christian Bible is a narrative and not a set of theological propositions. A question emerges: Why are the propositional truths crucial in the Scripture? Groothuis is convincing when he describes, "The Bible does not relate a technical view of truth but it does implicitly and consistently advance the correspondence view in both Testaments."⁴³ In the following we will discuss two fundamental reasons why propositional truths are significant in the Scripture.

The Biblical Narrative Contains Many Propositions

Although the Scripture expresses God's grand story, the propositions in it are very striking. In the Old Testament, for instance, the five books of Moses, especially the parts which deal with the ordinances of God are composed by propositions. Moreover, the opening line of the Scripture is

⁴³ Douglas Groothuis, "Truth Defined and Defended" in *Reclaiming the Center: Confronting Evangelical Accommodation in Postmodern Times*, eds. Millard J. Erickson, et al., (Illinois: Crossway, 2004), 68.

essentially a propositional statement (an axiom), “In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1 –KJV).” In the New Testament, the gospels state many propositions and most of them are asserted by Christ, (e.g. Matt. 24:35; John 14:6 etc.). Interestingly, the opening line of the gospel of John which deals with the divinity of Christ philosophically is an incredible statement, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God (John 1:1 – KJV).” Similarly, the New Testament letters also emphasize the significant of the propositional truths when they proclaim and maintain the fundamental of the Christian doctrines as timeless truths such as reconciliation with God through the cross of Christ, justification through faith, etc.

The Meaning of the Biblical Texts is Only Discovered Throughlight of Propositional Explanation

We have discussed how significant the propositions in the scripture. Moreover, another fundamental principle to mention is that the meaning of the scriptural text is only apprehended from the propositional explications. To elaborate it, some passages of the biblical narrative in John 1:45-51 could be a good example. This story shows the encountering of Nathanael with Jesus Christ who reveals Himself to Nathanael in a remarkable way. Zacharias describes, “He [Nathanael] had come to ‘check out’ this person [Jesus] and instead, his own character was revealed for what it really was.”⁴⁴

At first Nathanael was skeptical and investigated, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” (v. 46). To respond the question, instead of giving an elucidation, Philip said, “Come and see.” An extraordinary event occurs when Jesus uncovered Nathanael’s character and called him as an honest man (v. 47). Nathanael asked, “How do you know me?” Jesus said to

⁴⁴ Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 30.

Him, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." (v. 48). After hearing this, he immediately said, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel" (v. 49).

What does Nathanael's response mean? He probably sunk in his skepticism towards Jesus while he was standing under a fig tree before Phillips called him, and now Jesus' words resuscitate him. Zacharias says that Jesus jarred Nathanael's skepticism by a gentle uncovering of the thoughts and intents of Nathanael's own heart.⁴⁵ The next words of Jesus is astonishing, "Very truly I tell you, you will see 'heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on' the Son of Man." What does it mean to Nathanael? Zacharias describes:

Jesus, in short, said, "You are shocked because I revealed you to yourself? Wait until you see the full disclosure of who I am and from whence I come." He took Nathanael from explaining the puzzlement of lesser things to a destination of glorious insights.⁴⁶

Apparently, the significance of this narrative is only apprehended by utilizing propositional explications. For instance:

1. Jesus revealed himself as the Messiah who was prophesied in the Old Testament, first, to Nathanael, a skeptic person, second, to all disciples, third, to those who read the gospel (see the whole context of John chapter 1; see also chapter 20:30-31).
2. Jesus is omniscient. This conclusion is inferred from the fact that Jesus precisely knew what was in the heart and mind of Nathanael (vs. 47, 48).
3. Jesus is the Son of God. This is conformable with the confession of Nathanael (v. 49), and the fact that Jesus' original residence is from heaven. It can be proved by the description of John's gospel that

⁴⁵ Ibid. 31.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man (v. 51; cf. Gen. 28:12 where Jacob saw heaven in his dream).

4. Jesus certainly will make himself to be revealed to those who really seek him and his truth (vs. 45-51). This will occur with the assistance of the Holy Spirit who works in regeneration (cf. John 3:5) and who makes sinners repent (cf. John 16:8).
5. Jesus loves Nathanael. It can be inferred from the fact that Jesus disclosure himself to Nathanael.

Conclusion

In the present postmodern world, rejection to the propositional truths occurs because postmodern thinkers conceive the truth as relative, and this situation is compounded by deconstructionists who describe that the meaning of a text is not inherent in it. These paradigms affect postmodern Christian thinkers in understanding the truth, which is expressed in their denial toward the truth as a set of theological propositions. Ironically, they describe their rejection by using propositional explanations and indeed, this is an inevitable contradiction.

The Christian truth has been exclusively revealed through the person of Christ and also through his words, namely the Bible. Regarding the Scripture, it is a God's narrative, yet propositions in it are crucial. Moreover, this narrative should be apprehended from the propositional explication in order to grasp valuable meanings.

Instead of participating in Newbigin's perspective which views truth as solely in the person of Christ and declines his words, or adopting Grenz's position that overlooks the propositional approach in theological discourse, Christians should return to the Bible which instructs us that the truth is in the person of Christ as well as in his words, which we apprehend through the theological propositions.