

A Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model Based on John 18:37 for Christian Religious Education in the Post-Truth Era

Fazar Yeshekiel Sinaga¹, Afrina Jeliyanti Sirait¹

¹ Sekolah Tinggi Teologi HKBP, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Participatory Pedagogical Model;
Biblical Truth;
John 18:37;
Christian Religious Education

Article history:

Received 2026-04-27

Revised 2026-05-27

Accepted 2026-07-02

ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model based on Jesus' testimony in John 18:37 as a pedagogical response to the *Post-Truth* phenomenon in Christian Religious Education (CRE). The main problem addressed is the crisis of truth literacy among young Christians, where emotions and subjective opinions often override objective facts and biblical truth, rendering one-way doctrinal teaching models inadequate. This research employs a qualitative approach using comparative study and content analysis methods, comparing the concept of truth in the exegesis of John 18:37 with the characteristics of the Post-Truth phenomenon, then synthesizing them into an applicable pedagogical framework. The findings formulate the 4P-Participatory Model, consisting of four pillars: (1) Encounter through dialogical relationships with truth; (2) Deepening through critical thinking and digital literacy training; (3) Practice through actualizing truth in concrete actions; and (4) Mentoring within a reflective faith community. This model offers a holistic approach integrating the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of learners. The conclusion affirms that CRE in the Post-Truth era requires a paradigm shift from instructional-passive teaching toward participatory-dialogical pedagogy. This research recommends implementing this model in church and Sunday school curricula, as well as facilitator training to guide contextual and sustainable truth learning processes.

This is an open access article under the CC BY SA license.



Corresponding Author:

Fazar Yeshekiel Sinaga

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi HKBP, Indonesia; fazaryeshekielsinaga@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The crisis of truth in the contemporary era has become a fundamental challenge for education, particularly for Christian Religious Education (CRE). The phenomenon of *Post-Truth*—defined by McIntyre (2018) as a condition where objective facts have less influence in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief—has eroded the very foundation upon which faith-based education is built. McIntyre traces the development of this phenomenon from science denial through

the rise of "fake news," from our psychological blind spots to the public's retreat into "information silos." He contends that post-truth represents an assertion of ideological supremacy by which practitioners attempt to compel belief regardless of the evidence (McIntyre, 2018). In the Indonesian context, this crisis is particularly acute: Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital (2025) reported that approximately 800,000 websites are indicated as sources of disinformation, signaling the massive scale of the challenge facing educational institutions in cultivating truth-seeking among the younger generation.

The impact of the Post-Truth phenomenon on Christian communities is profound and multifaceted. Research by Mbuilima and Pasaribu (2022) reveals that misinformation spreading within religious communities has become one of the primary challenges facing the church in the Post-Truth era, often leading to internal conflicts that can divide congregations. The church, as an organism that has been saved and as a spiritual organization, is called to contribute the truth it has received from the Triune God and Scripture, providing a counterbalance between uncertainty and truth in a broken world (Mbuilima & Pasaribu, 2022). Yet the challenge extends beyond mere misinformation. Ressa (2021) demonstrates that many people today tend to view truth through a personal perspective, even considering truth as something relative and different for each person, creating a blurring of vision that ultimately leads to an inability to establish a standard of genuine truth in daily life. This condition reflects a broader cultural shift where individuals increasingly seek information that confirms their existing biases, creating an ecosystem in which facts can be distorted or ignored to support particular narratives (Pebrianto & Mulyono, 2024).

The relationship between Post-Truth and postmodern thought provides crucial insight into the contemporary crisis of truth. McIntyre (2018) contends that the postmodernist idea that "there is no such thing as objective truth" has been borrowed by various movements in their attacks on science and facts. This philosophical foundation has significant implications for Christian education. Zaluchu (2019) offers a nuanced perspective, arguing that the postmodern current actually presents opportunities for Christianity, which had previously been eroded in the modernist era. He suggests that the emergence of postmodernism with its radical-relativist philosophy supports the recognition of the truth contained in Christianity. Moreover, postmodern society deeply longs for authentic fellowship with an emphasis on community, presenting the church with opportunities to employ strategies that highlight Christian brotherhood as a pathway to knowing Christ. However, Zaluchu (2019) also demonstrates that the presence of postmodernism brings significant challenges to Christianity, potentially even more risky than the modernist era. This dual reality—both opportunity and threat—demands a sophisticated pedagogical response from Christian educators.

Despite the growing body of research on Post-Truth and the church, significant gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding concrete pedagogical models that can be implemented in congregational and educational settings. Existing studies, such as those by Mbuilima and Pasaribu (2022) and Samosir (2024), have focused primarily on theological and apologetic responses at a macro level, addressing how the church should position itself doctrinally in the face of postmodern challenges. While these contributions are valuable, they remain largely theoretical and abstract, failing to specify the actual foundation of truth and how to ground that foundation in the specific contexts of congregations and society. What has been missing is a pedagogical framework that translates biblical truth into practical, participatory learning experiences that equip believers—particularly the younger generation—to navigate the complexities of the Post-Truth era with both critical discernment and faithful conviction. This gap is particularly pressing given that, as Pebrianto and Mulyono (2024) demonstrate, individuals in the Post-Truth era often seek information that aligns with their pre-existing views, creating an environment where facts can be distorted or ignored to support particular narratives.

The present study addresses this gap by proposing a Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model grounded in the testimony of Jesus in John 18:37. The Johannine narrative of Jesus' trial before Pilate offers rich pedagogical resources that have been largely overlooked in educational discourse. In John 18:37, Jesus declares: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (New

International Version). This statement is not merely a doctrinal claim but a pedagogical model in itself. As Ford (2021) observes in his theological commentary, Jesus' kingship lies in His uniquely absolute authority to represent truth in the world; His birth and coming have no other purpose than to bear witness to the truth in the absolute sense that the Gospel of John consistently speaks of truth. Ford further notes that Jesus bears witness to what He has "seen and heard from the Father" (cf. John 3:31-36), even to the truth about Himself (John 14:6), which He answers with His life, person, and work. The resonance of truth with trustworthiness, faithful possession, and fully reliable and authoritative witness is especially present in Jesus' testimony about truth (Ford, 2021). This passage thus provides not only a theological foundation for truth but also a pedagogical paradigm—one that emphasizes witness, dialogue, invitation, and the formation of a listening community.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to develop and articulate a Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model based on Jesus' testimony in John 18:37 as a pedagogical response to the Post-Truth phenomenon in Christian Religious Education. Drawing on comparative analysis between the biblical concept of truth—rooted in the Hebrew *emet* (faithfulness, reliability) and the Greek *alētheia* (unconcealedness, openness) (Baker, 2008; Bultmann, 1964)—and the characteristics of Post-Truth, this research synthesizes theological insight with educational theory to produce a practical framework for faith formation. The model offers a holistic approach that moves beyond one-way instructional teaching toward participatory learning that engages the whole person: cognitive understanding, affective encounter, and practical embodiment of truth within a mentoring community. This research contributes to the field of Christian Religious Education by providing educators, pastors, and church leaders with a concrete pedagogical tool for forming disciples who are not only knowledgeable about truth but who live in truth amidst the uncertainties of the Post-Truth era. The significance of this contribution is amplified by the urgent need for educational responses to the crisis of truth literacy among young Christians, who are particularly vulnerable to the seductions of misinformation and the relativism of digital culture (Tamukun et al., 2025). By integrating the witness of Jesus into a participatory pedagogical framework, this study offers a pathway for Christian education to fulfill its transformative mission in a world that has increasingly lost its way in the search for truth.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach with a library research design, integrating comparative study and content analysis methods. This approach was chosen to construct a deep, contextual understanding of the John 18:37 text alongside the Post-Truth phenomenon, ultimately synthesizing them into an applicable pedagogical framework (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The comparative method is used to systematically contrast the concept of truth derived from the exegesis of John 18:37—including lexical analysis of the Hebrew term *emet* and the Greek term *alētheia*—with the phenomenological characteristics of the Post-Truth era, such as the dominance of emotion over objective facts and the prevalence of digital disinformation (McIntyre, 2018; Pebrianto & Mulyono, 2024). Data sources consist of primary sources (the biblical text of John 18:37 and its immediate pericope) and secondary sources, including theological textbooks, educational journals, scholarly articles, and official reports from the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (Komdigi, 2025) regarding the widespread dissemination of hoaxes in Indonesia. Data collection was conducted through a systematic documentation study using specific keywords such as "truth in John 18:37," "Post-Truth religious education," "participatory pedagogy," and "Christian digital literacy" across reputable academic databases (Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Garuda). All collected materials were subsequently selected based on thematic relevance, source credibility, and publication recency (within the last decade) to ensure the internal validity of the study.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), encompassing three systematic stages: (1) Data Reduction—summarizing, selecting, and focusing on crucial information derived from the exegesis and the phenomenological study of Post-Truth; (2) Data Display—organizing findings into descriptive narratives and comparative matrices that juxtapose the

truth concept in John 18:37 against the characteristics of Post-Truth; and (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification—conducting in-depth interpretation to formulate the 4P-Participatory Model (Encounter, Deepening, Practice, and Mentoring) as the primary research output. The pedagogical synthesis process integrated biblical truth principles with character education theory (Lickona, 1991) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) to produce a model that is both theologically grounded and practically measurable. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation by comparing diverse perspectives from theological, pedagogical, and sociological literature, alongside informal peer debriefing with academics in Christian Religious Education. This rigorous process was undertaken to confirm that the developed model possesses contextual relevance and practical applicability within both congregational and broader societal settings.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Pedagogical Foundation of Jesus' Testimony in John 18:37

The dialogue between Jesus and Pilate in John 18:37 presents a profound pedagogical paradigm that has remained largely unexplored in Christian Religious Education discourse. Jesus declares: "For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37, ESV). This statement, as Ford (2021) observes, reveals that Jesus' kingship lies in His uniquely absolute authority to represent truth in the world. His birth and coming have no other purpose than to bear witness to the truth in the absolute sense that the Gospel of John consistently speaks of truth. This is not merely a doctrinal affirmation but a pedagogical model in itself—one that prioritizes witness over coercion, dialogue over monologue, and invitation over imposition. The pedagogical significance of this passage lies in its emphasis on the relational and participatory nature of truth, which stands in stark contrast to the passive reception of doctrinal content that often characterizes contemporary religious education. Jesus does not force Pilate to accept the truth; rather, He presents it and invites a response, demonstrating that genuine truth engagement requires active participation from the learner.

The lexical foundations of truth in both the Hebrew and Greek traditions further illuminate the pedagogical implications of Jesus' testimony. The Hebrew term *emet*, appearing 126 times in the Old Testament, signifies stability, reliability, faithfulness, and integrity (Jepsen, 1990). Quell (1964) explains that *emet* describes someone whose behavior aligns with the norm of truth, thus designating a person of integrity. This understanding of truth as *faithfulness* and *reliability* has direct pedagogical implications: truth in Christian education cannot be reduced to the transmission of propositional statements; it must be embodied in the character and actions of both the educator and the learner. Similarly, the Greek term *alētheia* means "unconcealedness" or "openness," indicating a reality that is fully revealed and shown (Bultmann, 1964). Hubner (1990) notes that in the Johannine context, *alētheia* denotes divine reality that reveals itself substantially, in contrast to the material world that merely appears. This understanding of truth as *revealed reality* suggests that Christian education must create spaces where truth is not only taught but encountered, experienced, and lived. The pedagogical model derived from John 18:37 thus integrates both the Hebrew emphasis on faithful embodiment and the Greek emphasis on revealed reality, creating a holistic framework for truth formation.

The Johannine narrative context of Jesus' trial before Pilate provides additional pedagogical insights that are particularly relevant for contemporary Christian education. As Marsh (1968) observes, John's Gospel consistently presents Jesus as the one who reveals the truth about God and about humanity's relationship to God. In John 18:37, Jesus' statement about bearing witness to truth occurs within a setting of political power and injustice, where truth is being distorted and manipulated for personal and institutional gain. Bieringer (2000) notes that Jesus' kingship is fundamentally different from worldly power structures precisely because it is grounded in truth rather than coercion. This context offers a powerful pedagogical lesson for Christian educators: the pursuit and proclamation of truth often occurs in environments hostile to truth, requiring courage, integrity, and unwavering

commitment to one's mission. Jesus' response to Pilate models how educators should engage with learners who may be skeptical, indifferent, or even hostile to the truth. Rather than becoming defensive or aggressive, Jesus calmly presents the truth and leaves the response to the hearer. This pedagogical stance of patient witness, grounded in confidence in the truth itself, provides a model for Christian educators navigating the skeptical and often hostile environment of the Post-Truth era.

The pedagogical themes embedded in John 18:37 can be synthesized into four foundational principles that inform the Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model. First, truth is relational—it is encountered in the person of Jesus and through His witness, not merely as abstract propositions. Second, truth is transformative—it calls for a response and forms a community of those who "listen to His voice." Third, truth is embodied—Jesus' entire life, death, and resurrection serve as the ultimate testimony to truth, demonstrating that truth must be lived, not just spoken. Fourth, truth is participatory—Jesus invites all who "are of the truth" to listen, implying that truth engagement requires active participation and openness. These principles, drawn directly from the text of John 18:37, provide the theological and pedagogical foundation for the model proposed in this study. They challenge the dominant instructional paradigm in Christian education, which often prioritizes information delivery over relational formation, and they call for a reorientation of educational practice toward participatory, embodied, and transformative learning experiences that genuinely engage learners with the truth that is found in Jesus Christ.

The Challenge of Post-Truth for Christian Religious Education

The Post-Truth phenomenon presents unprecedented challenges for Christian Religious Education, fundamentally threatening its mission to form disciples grounded in truth. McIntyre (2018) defines Post-Truth as a condition in which objective facts have less influence on shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief. This phenomenon has been exacerbated by the proliferation of digital media, where algorithms create "information silos" that reinforce existing biases and shield users from alternative perspectives (McIntyre, 2018). For Christian education, this means that learners are increasingly formed by echo chambers that validate their existing beliefs rather than challenging them with the transformative truth of the Gospel. Ressa (2021) demonstrates that many people today tend to view truth through a personal perspective, even considering truth as something relative and different for each person. This relativistic stance is antithetical to the Christian understanding of truth as objective, universal, and revealed in Jesus Christ. The challenge for Christian educators, then, is not merely to teach Christian doctrine but to cultivate in learners the capacity to discern, embrace, and live by truth in a culture that actively undermines the very concept of objective truth. This requires a fundamental rethinking of pedagogical approaches to equip learners for truth engagement in a Post-Truth world.

The impact of Post-Truth extends beyond the broader culture to affect the church and its educational ministries directly. Mbuilima and Pasaribu (2022) reveal that misinformation spreading within religious communities has become one of the primary challenges facing the church in the Post-Truth era, often leading to internal conflicts that can divide congregations. This is particularly concerning because the church is called to be "a pillar and buttress of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15, ESV). When congregations are susceptible to misinformation and disinformation, their witness to the world is compromised, and their internal unity is threatened. Jameson (2018) emphasizes that the church must always remember God's Word and truth: "As God's speech is pure and free from falsehood, so should our words be. Surrounded by so many false truths, we need to ensure that we are committed to the truth of God." This commitment to divine truth must be reflected not only in the church's proclamation but also in its educational practices. However, Samosir (2024) notes that churches often struggle to respond effectively to Post-Truth challenges, particularly when truth issues intersect with politics, finances, or institutional reputation. The pedagogical implications are clear: Christian education must intentionally equip learners with the skills and dispositions to discern truth in an environment where

falsehoods proliferate and where institutional pressures may tempt leaders to compromise truth for expediency.

The failures of traditional instructional approaches to Christian education in addressing Post-Truth challenges are increasingly evident. Traditional models, which often prioritize the transmission of doctrinal content through lectures and memorization, are ill-equipped to prepare learners for the complex information environment of the digital age. Purwonugroho and Susanti (2024) argue that the current understanding of truth among believers is often superficial, leading to doubt and confusion when confronted with competing truth claims. This superficiality stems in part from educational approaches that emphasize cognitive knowledge without adequately addressing affective and practical dimensions of truth formation. Sigarlaki and Tendean (2025) note that pastoral leadership in the digital age must move beyond merely defending doctrine to cultivating critical thinking and discernment among congregants. This requires pedagogical approaches that actively engage learners in evaluating information sources, comparing truth claims, and practicing truth-telling in authentic contexts. The participatory pedagogical model proposed in this study responds directly to these identified deficiencies by emphasizing active engagement with truth, critical evaluation of information, and practical embodiment of truth in daily life. This represents a significant departure from traditional instructional approaches and offers a more robust response to the challenges of the Post-Truth era.

Despite the challenges, the Post-Truth era also presents opportunities for Christian education to fulfill its mission more effectively. Zaluchu (2019) offers a nuanced perspective, arguing that the postmodern current actually presents opportunities for Christianity, which had previously been eroded in the modernist era. The postmodern emphasis on community and authentic relationships aligns with the Christian emphasis on the church as a fellowship of believers, providing openings for Christian education to offer what the broader culture lacks: genuine community grounded in truth. Moreover, Wela (2020) suggests that the crisis of truth in the broader culture creates a deep hunger for authenticity and integrity that the church is uniquely positioned to address. When the culture celebrates the manipulation of truth for ideological purposes, the church's commitment to truth as revealed in Christ becomes a powerful counter-witness. However, this opportunity requires Christian educators to present truth in ways that are compelling, credible, and contextual. Manaransyah (2022) emphasizes that theology in the Post-Truth era must engage with cultural questions and demonstrate the relevance of biblical truth to contemporary challenges. This means Christian education cannot retreat from cultural engagement but must engage actively and winsomely with the questions and concerns of the broader society. The Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model, with its emphasis on dialogue, critical engagement, and practical application, positions Christian education to respond to these opportunities while addressing the challenges of the Post-Truth era.

The Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model: A Response to the Post-Truth Era

The Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model (4P Model) developed in this study offers a comprehensive framework for Christian Religious Education in the Post-Truth era, integrating theological foundations with educational theory and practice. The model comprises four interconnected pillars: Encounter (Perjumpaan), Deepening (Pendalaman), Practice (Pengamalan), and Mentoring (Pendampingan). These pillars are drawn directly from the pedagogical principles embedded in John 18:37 and synthesized with insights from character education theory (Lickona, 1991) and critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970). The model represents a paradigm shift from instruction-oriented to participation-oriented education, where learners are active agents in their formation rather than passive recipients of doctrine. This shift is essential for addressing the challenges of the Post-Truth era, where passive reception of information is particularly vulnerable to manipulation and distortion. The model's participatory nature reflects Jesus' own pedagogical approach in John 18:37, where He presents truth in a dialogical context and invites response rather than demanding compliance. This pedagogical stance honors the dignity of the learner and recognizes that genuine truth engagement requires the active participation of the whole person—intellect, emotions, and actions.

The first pillar, Encounter, emphasizes that truth is fundamentally relational and must be experienced through personal engagement with the person of Jesus Christ and His Word. Drawing on the Johannine emphasis on Jesus as the revelation of truth (Ford, 2021), this pillar recognizes that truth cannot be reduced to propositional statements but must be encountered in relationship. This aligns with Thiselton's (2006) understanding of truth in the Hebrew tradition as faithful relational engagement rather than mere factual correspondence. In educational practice, the Encounter pillar moves beyond information delivery to create spaces where learners can personally engage with Scripture, encounter Christ through various means (worship, prayer, community), and experience the transformative power of truth. This is consistent with Smith's (2009) emphasis on "desiring the kingdom," where Christian education forms desires and imaginations through embodied practices rather than merely transmitting cognitive content. Implementation strategies for the Encounter pillar include creating reflective spaces in educational settings, facilitating personal engagement with Scripture through journaling and meditation, and incorporating worship and prayer into learning experiences. These practices respond to the Post-Truth culture's tendency to reduce truth to mere information by recovering the personal, relational dimension of truth as encounter with the living God.

The second pillar, Deepening, focuses on developing critical understanding and discernment skills essential for navigating the complex information landscape of the Post-Truth era. This pillar responds directly to the challenge of misinformation and disinformation by equipping learners to evaluate truth claims critically and biblically. Building on Freire's (1970) concept of critical consciousness and Lickona's (1991) emphasis on moral knowing, the Deepening pillar emphasizes the development of intellectual virtues such as intellectual humility, curiosity, and discernment. This pedagogical approach is particularly crucial for young Christians who are navigating social media environments saturated with misleading information (Tamukun et al., 2025). Strategies for implementing this pillar include teaching learners to evaluate information sources, analyze media messages, identify logical fallacies, and compare truth claims with biblical standards. Importantly, the Deepening pillar recognizes that critical thinking in Christian education must be grounded in the biblical understanding of truth as revealed in Christ. This means that critical engagement is not a matter of skepticism but of faithful discernment—learning to distinguish truth from falsehood in service of deeper faith. This approach addresses a significant deficiency in traditional Christian education, which often emphasizes doctrinal content without adequately developing critical thinking skills. By integrating critical discernment with biblical truth, the Deepening pillar equips learners to engage confidently and competently with competing truth claims.

The third pillar, Practice, emphasizes that truth must be embodied and lived out in daily life, consistent with the Hebrew understanding of truth as faithful action (Jepsen, 1990) and Jesus' own embodiment of truth in His life and mission (Ford, 2021). In John 18:37, Jesus does not merely speak truth but bears witness to truth through His entire life, culminating in His death and resurrection. This demonstrates that genuine truth engagement extends beyond cognitive understanding to practical embodiment. Lickona's (1991) character education framework similarly emphasizes that moral character involves not only knowing the good but also desiring and doing the good. The Practice pillar moves Christian education from theory to application, challenging learners to translate their understanding of truth into concrete actions. Implementation strategies include service-learning projects that apply truth principles to social challenges, ethical reflection on practical dilemmas, and habits of truth-telling in daily interactions. This approach responds to the Post-Truth culture's disconnect between rhetoric and action by emphasizing integrity—the alignment of belief with behavior. Moreover, the Practice pillar addresses the criticism that Christian education too often remains abstract and disconnected from life. By embedding truth formation in practical action, this pillar ensures that learners experience the transformative power of truth in their lived experience, reinforcing cognitive understanding with embodied practice. The integration of practice with the other pillars creates a holistic approach to truth formation that engages the whole person and prepares learners to live truth authentically in all areas of life.

The fourth pillar, Mentoring, emphasizes the communal nature of truth formation, recognizing that the journey of seeking and living truth is not solitary but occurs within a community of faith. In John 18:37, Jesus' statement that "everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice" implies that those who embrace truth are formed by a relationship with Him and, by extension, with His community. This communal dimension is consistent with MacIntyre's (2007) understanding that human lives are embedded in narratives and traditions that shape identity and understanding. In the Hebrew tradition, truth is intimately connected to covenant community, where faithfulness to God is demonstrated through faithful relationships with others (Baker, 2008). The Mentoring pillar recognizes that truth formation requires ongoing guidance, accountability, and support within a community of practitioners. Implementation strategies include small group discipleship, mentoring relationships between older and younger believers, and community-based learning experiences where truth is explored collectively. This approach is particularly effective in the Post-Truth era, where individuals are increasingly isolated and subject to algorithmic echo chambers. The faith community provides a counter-cultural context where truth can be tested and lived out in relationship. Moreover, mentoring relationships provide the personalized guidance that is essential for navigating the complex challenges of truth in the digital age. By integrating mentoring into the pedagogical model, Christian education acknowledges that formation in truth is a lifelong journey that requires sustained community support. The Mentoring pillar thus completes the holistic framework, ensuring that learners are not only encountered by truth, deepened in understanding, and trained in practice but also supported through ongoing relationships that sustain faithful truth engagement throughout their lives.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has developed a Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model based on Jesus' testimony in John 18:37 as a comprehensive response to the challenges posed by the Post Truth phenomenon in Christian Religious Education. Through a comparative analysis of the biblical concept of truth rooted in the Hebrew *emet* (faithfulness, reliability) and the Greek *alētheia* (unconcealedness, openness) and the characteristics of the Post Truth era, this research has demonstrated that the pedagogical principles embedded in Jesus' witness offer a robust foundation for forming disciples who can navigate the complexities of the contemporary information landscape. The Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model comprising the four pillars of Encounter, Deepening, Practice, and Mentoring, provides a holistic framework that integrates biblical truth with critical thinking skills and practical application.

The Encounter pillar emphasizes that truth is fundamentally relational, encountered in personal engagement with Jesus Christ and His Word. The Deepening pillar develops critical understanding and discernment skills essential for navigating the complex information landscape. The Practice pillar emphasizes that truth must be embodied and lived out in daily life. The Mentoring pillar recognizes the communal nature of truth formation, providing sustained guidance and support. Together, these pillars create an integrated educational approach that engages the whole person—cognitive, affective, and practical—within a supportive community of faith, addressing a significant gap in the existing literature that has largely focused on theological and apologetic responses to Post-Truth without developing concrete pedagogical models (Mbulima & Pasaribu, 2022; Samosir, 2024). This research contributes to Christian Religious Education by providing a biblically grounded pedagogical framework that responds to the specific challenges of the Post-Truth era, including the proliferation of misinformation and the erosion of objective truth (McIntyre, 2018; Tamukun et al., 2025). The study's contributions are threefold: first, it demonstrates that Scripture offers not only theological content but also pedagogical wisdom for contemporary educational challenges; second, it integrates truth formation with digital literacy and critical thinking skills, addressing a critical need in contemporary Christian education; and third, it offers practical, implementable strategies that move beyond theoretical analysis to provide concrete guidance for educational practice. Based on these findings, several recommendations emerge: educators and church leaders should integrate the four pillars of the Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model into educational planning and practice; curriculum developers

should create instructional materials that incorporate critical thinking and digital literacy skills alongside biblical content; parents and families should establish "truth spaces" in the home for open discussion and evaluation of information; and theological educators should incorporate pedagogical formation into ministerial training. Future research should empirically test the effectiveness of this model through classroom-based action research and longitudinal studies. In conclusion, Jesus' testimony in John 18:37 presents a crucial way of thinking in the search for truth amidst uncertainty within both the church community and broader society. The Participatory Truth Pedagogical Model provides Christian educators with a practical tool for forming disciples who are not only knowledgeable about truth but who live in truth—who encounter truth personally, deepen their understanding critically, practice truth faithfully, and mentor others in the journey of truth formation. In a Post-Truth world that celebrates the manipulation of facts for ideological purposes, the church's commitment to truth as revealed in Christ and embodied in faithful community becomes a powerful counter-witness and a beacon of hope.

REFERENCES

- Baker, J. P. (2008). Adil, keadilan dan kebenaran. In J. D. Douglas (Ed.), *Ensiklopedi Alkitab masa kini jilid 1 A-L* (pp. 11–13). Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih.
- Beasley-Murray, G. R. (1987). *Word Biblical Commentary Volume 36: John*. Word Books Publisher.
- Bieringer, R. (2000). *My kingship is not of this world (John 18:36): The kingship of Jesus and politics*. Leuven University Press.
- Bultmann, R. (1964). ἀλήθεια. In G. Kittel (Ed.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 1, pp. 238–251). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Ford, D. F. (2021). *The Gospel of John: A theological commentary*. Baker Publishing Group.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Hubner, H. (1990). αλήθεια. In H. Balz & G. Schneider (Eds.), *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 1, pp. 58–62). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Jepsen, A. (1990). אֱמֻנָה. In G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren (Eds.), *Theological dictionary of the Old Testament* (Vol. 1, pp. 292–323). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.
- Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital. (2025). *Ada 800.000 situs penyebar hoax di Indonesia*. <https://www.komdigi.go.id/berita/pengumuman/detail/ada-800-000-situs-penyebar-hoax-di-indonesia>
- Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility*. Bantam Books.
- MacIntyre, A. (2007). *After virtue: A study in moral theory* (3rd ed.). University of Notre Dame Press.
- Marsh, J. (1968). *The Pelican New Testament commentaries: The Gospel of St. John*. Penguin Books Ltd.
- Mbuilima, A., & Pasaribu, F. (2022). Gereja di tengah pusaran era Post-Truth. *SCRIPTA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kontekstual*, 13(1), 75–89.
- MacIntyre, L. (2018). *Post-Truth*. MIT Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Nicole, R. (1992). The biblical concept of truth. In D. A. Carson & J. D. Woodbridge (Eds.), *Scripture and truth* (pp. 287–298). Baker Publisher.
- Pebrianto, M., & Mulyono, Y. (2024). Pasca-kebenaran (Post-Truth) dalam kehidupan sosial. *Berajah Journal: Jurnal Pembelajaran dan Pengembangan Diri*, 4(3), 717–725.
- Quell, G. (1964). אֱמֻנָה. In G. Kittel (Ed.), *Theological dictionary of the New Testament* (Vol. 1, pp. 233–238). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- Ressa, Y. P. (2021). Kebenaran dan media sosial di era Post-Truth dalam perspektif Post-Truth McIntyre dan linguistik kultural George A. Lindbeck. *Loko Kada: Jurnal Teologi Kontekstual & Oikumenis*, 1(2), 43–57.
- Samosir, D. H. (2024). Analisis sikap teologis dan pedagogis gereja menghadapi Post-Truth. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen, Teologi & Konseling*, 1(1), 45–58.
- Smith, J. K. A. (2009). *Desiring the kingdom: Worship, worldview, and cultural formation*. Baker Academic.
- Tamukun, A., Labatar, D., Bria, Z., & Firman, K. (2025). Teologi di era Post-Truth dan tantangan gereja dalam menyampaikan kebenaran di tengah hoaks dan disinformasi. *Jurnal JUMPA*, 8(1), 30–45.
- Thiselton, A. (2006). *Thiselton on hermeneutics: The collected works and new essays of Anthony Thiselton*. Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Zaluchu, J. (2019). Gereja menghadapi arus postmodern dalam konteks Indonesia masa kini. *Geneva-Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 17(1), 23–35.