

The Role of Professionals in the Leadership of the Local Church Through Empowerment of Christian Education

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ABSTRACT

The role of church members in local church leadership will give maximum results if Christian education's empowerment is carried out seriously. A local church will grow optimally if all its components are empowered according to their respective capacities. Church members who are known as church members with professional abilities in their world of work; can contribute to the development of employment services to the world. This contribution will be even better if the empowerment of Christian education supports it. The local church has a responsibility for self-development and needs to recognize the tremendous potential in every member of its church. Church members who are professionals in the world of work can be empowered for leadership in the local church. However, sometimes people don't realize this even though the strengthening of church members' role can be beneficial if it is carried out properly through efforts to empower Christian education. That is why leaders need to give space for strengthening the position of church members in the local church's leadership. Maintaining the role referred to as empowering Christian education is carried out effectively.

Keywords: *role, church members, a local church, leadership and Christian education*

1. INTRODUCTION

The role of church members in local church leadership has become a phenomenon in recent years. It must be admitted that church members who have the ability in their work field become professional individuals in their work field. There are special abilities in their field, such as management, health, business, engineering, etc. They become professionals because they have the fundamental education that is fit for where they are present in their work field. These people are using the skills for their own lives, and now the thought arises if they have skills used for the church. It means the use of expertise for the development of the church of which they are members.

People who attend church have declared themselves believing in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and live according to God's laws. (Rome 5:8; Acts. 2:37-47). Apart from pastors, many believers are active in church ministry activities. They are spread out as administrators or church council members and regular church members. Even with different social and educational backgrounds, but it is not denied that some of them are people who have the potential to be used for church development. They are

professional people with professionalism in their world of work. If these professionals are empowered in church leadership roles properly, it will make the church, especially the local church, experience significant growth.

The involvement of professionals in local church leadership is considered necessary because of their strengths. There are church members who are leaders in companies and other institutions. In their field of work, they have reliable managerial skills. That is why, if we empower them in local church leadership, this can be a strength for the church to grow.

A local church is understood as the church where they belong. As it is known that the church is a group of people who believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and they gathered together to serve Him. This group of believers continues to grow and develop, along with the various activities it carries out. In theological studies, the term "ecclesiology" appears to discuss the church. Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia stated that: Ecclesiology is a branch of theology that systematically studies the origin, nature, unique characteristics, and church mission. During its development from time to time, the term "ecclesiology" was used for church buildings and now

started to be used as a theological term concerning the church's ins and outs. The church is a place for believers' fellowship, where a group of believers have been baptized and bound together by faith and fellowship in Christ. The church keeps the commandments of Christ and His laws; the church uses God's gifts and uses the opportunities available to share the gospel.

2. THEORY

The word professional comes from the word profession, defined as a job that requires further education in science and technology used as a fundamental tool to be implemented in various practical activities. In the Indonesian Dictionary, a profession's definition is a field of work based on specific skill education (skills, vocational, etc.). The term profession comes from Latin, *proffessio* which has two meanings: promise/pledge and job. In a narrow sense, profession means activities that are carried out based on particular expertise, and at the same time, it demands an exemplary implementation of social norms. The broader meaning of profession is anyone or any activity to earn a living that used a specific skill. In conclusion, professionals have more capacity than other people because they have particular skills to carry out a more maximal job.

They are related to strengthening the role of professionals, understanding the reinforcement as a consequence that reinforces behaviour or frequency. Reinforcement can be defined as a reward or appreciation. The term reinforcement can also mean strengthening an army. Efforts to involve professionals in the church environment in local church leadership are essential, and by enhancing this role, the local church leadership will be maximized.

The church is understood as the unity of believers in Jesus Christ, with Jesus at the head. Berkhof sees the church's essence from a metaphysical perspective, from believers' unity, namely the *Communio Sanctorum*. As a community, the church must be able to present God's grace to humans. This is consistent with what J. Andrew Kirk said, that the church is a community in response to *Missio Dei* that testifies to God's activities in the world through the preaching of the good news about Jesus Christ in words and actions.

A brief understanding of the word leadership can be found in a dictionary. The word leadership is a noun that comes from the verb with many meanings, including to cause, to demand, to lead, to herd, to direct, and to win. Concerning a leader's personality, leadership can influence other parties through communication, either directly or indirectly, to move

people with understanding, awareness, and pleasure; they are willing to follow the leader's will. The ability to influence other people is meant to achieve something that is determined or something that is to be completed. So, it is precisely what Gary A. Yulk said in *Leadership in Organization*: leadership includes influencing in determining organizational goals, motivating follower behaviour to achieve goals, and influencing to improve groups and culture.

Leadership in the local church is appropriate because the church is an organization that must have good governance; this is why managerial leadership is essential. J. I. Packer states that every believer has the mandate to dedicate himself to make the gospel the attention of all humankind; this is a responsibility that can't be ignored. Leadership is defined as an initiative to act that produces a consistent pattern to find a way to solve a common problem. By maximizing the involvement of professionals in local church leadership, it is hoped that it will make a meaningful contribution to the church's ministry.

3. METHOD

This research is qualitative and is conducted using a descriptive form approach and tends to use analysis. Sources of data in this study through literature review. This research begins by describing the strengthening of the role of professionals in local church leadership. Qualitative data collection is obtained by a series of stages which include: data collection and processing. The qualitative research method used is phenomenology.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The involvement of professionals in the church is currently the concern of many parties because professionals can demonstrate knowledge and skills in their respective fields. There are church members who work as doctors or other medical personnel. Some are lawyers, construction experts, management experts, politicians, teachers and lecturers, etc. People in their respective expertise live a simple life in the world of work and live a spiritual life in the church community. When a person goes through his profession, he is a person who is trained for a particular job. Kunandar, in his book titled *Professional Teachers*, highlights a basic understanding of the word profession, namely as a job or position that demands specific expertise. It means that a job or a profession cannot be held by just anyone but requires preparation through special education and training. If a church member is assessed for his professionalism in corporate leadership, he certainly can lead. In the context of the

church, he can be involved in the administration of the church organization.

The local church needs people who have competence in their respective fields to support the pastoral services to the people. These professionals' roles can be described based on their competencies so that empowerment can be carried out correctly. Every believer should feel called to develop God's work through His church. For example, in the field of evangelism, it is said that: every believer, whether old or young, male or female, learned or uneducated, whether old Christian, as well as all-new Christians, should participate in spreading the gospel. Likewise, with self-involvement in the field of church leadership. Of course, it will be maximized if church members have competence in the field of administration. This empowerment of managerial abilities makes the writer prefer to use the term "Professionals" rather than familiar people.

A common obstacle currently faced is the inability of local pastors to empower professionals in their churches. Imagine if the church finances were not held by someone who had a good understanding of finances. Church's finances may be a source of problems and the other fields that should be occupied by people who can do so.

Strengthening the Role of Professionals

The use of the term "Professionals" would refer to the abilities possessed by a Christian who attends a local church. The ability mentioned is the general ability that exists in him as a professional. For example, a company manager, of course, has managerial skills. For such a person, it is appropriate to be empowered in the area of local church leadership. Regarding leadership in the local church, it reminded how surveillance is understood how to leaders influence, teach, convince, organize, and empower people to understand, respond, and share a shared vision and mission, so the entire ranks are excited and motivated to participate as well as giving the best for the realization of the same vision and mission based on the philosophy and value system adopted. If a leader carries out his leadership duties well, then one aspect that must be done is how he empowers the people he leads.

External local church leadership also refers to the participation of other supporters, such as a doctor who can contribute to the congregation's health and the community around the church. His involvement will be more evident if he sits in church management. To maximize these professionals' participation, local church pastors need to make breakthroughs to empower these professionals. Strengthening the role

of professionals in the local church by utilizing church leadership needs to be increased by providing a broader but controlled role. The efforts to empower professionals in a local church can be made through special education and training. That is why the ability of pastors to designing and working on the program is needed. The most common education for church members is catechism. Unfortunately, most churches only developed catechism programs for baptism and wedding preparations.

A catechism is a form of Christian education ministry carried out by the church. The word *catechesis* comes from the Greek verb, namely *katechein*, which means communicating, sharing information, and teaching faith matters. Therefore, catechesis is often understood as a communication of faith and not primarily teaching religion. Church members who take this special education will gain knowledge about faith in God. If professionals who already have professional expertise and understanding of the Christian faith through catechisms are added, they have their advantages. They are not only scientifically capable in their professional world but also grow in faith. Gary L. McIntosh shares why pastors should equip other people in ministry tasks because the most significant resource in a church is its people.

Efforts to strengthen the role of professionals are considered urgent. George W. Peters emphasized that the mobilization and training of the laity should take place at several levels. Some lay workers appear to be making excellent contributions in leadership, administration, and communications service. Peters' statement was reinforced by Rick Warren, who stated that every church needs a well-ordered planned system to find, direct, and encourage talented members. The urge to push professional involvement needs to be done because some are hesitant to participate in church services; as Rick Warren stated, one of the most common reasons people give for not being involved in ministry is that they have nothing to offer. In fact, with their existing abilities, these professionals should be maximally empowered and equipped with stewardship per their fields and interests so that they will be ready to work in God's work. Gary L. McIntosh proposes that the church commits four things to develop professional service in it, namely: First, people must know and support the vision of the church. Second, the congregation must have a biblical view of duty and ministry to be motivated. Third, churches must have systems to help people discover and use their spiritual gifts, and fourth, growing churches involve people from the very beginning in ministry. This church commitment will open wider

possible opportunities for professionals in a local church to be involved in the leadership ministry in question.

Local Church Leadership

George W. Peters, in the book *'Teologi Pertumbuhan Gereja'*, says: Church growth takes place under conditions at the local level. This is where membership has increased and decreased. Here the members live to learn, serve, fellowship, develop, suffer and die. Here, they make contributions, share their joys, celebrate their victories or become burdens and responsibilities for their congregation and God.¹ It is clear how church members make a significant contribution to the growth of a local church. It will be good when they are given the opportunity and the appropriate roles. Church members who professionals represent will find certainly valuable if they got the chance and the right portion in a local church's leadership.

Leadership is always a key element in the growth of God's Kingdom. Pastors are spiritual leaders. He is not just a spiritual section in the church whose only job is to pray for the congregation and share God's words. The task is much more complex and requires a gift of God's inclusion and competence as a leader. As a local church leader, a pastor needs colleagues who can help develop the local church. Church members need to be involved in this, and professionals can be empowered to create a local church.

Local church leaders are often the cause of the lack of their church's growth, especially when they cannot empower the role of professionals in their congregational communities. As quoted by Peter C. Wagner, Ted Engstrom stated that there are five reasons why leaders fail to delegate tasks; First, they believe that their subordinates are incapable of doing their job. Second, they are worried about the competition from their subsidiaries. Third, they are afraid of losing their respect. Fourth, they are scared that their weaknesses will be exposed, and Fifth, they do not have time to give up their work and provide appropriate training.

Even though the pastor is in charge of leadership in a local church, he cannot work alone. That is why it takes the role of church members to help, and the involvement of professionals in local church leadership should be done because it can help the pastor greatly. To support efforts to involve professionals in local church leadership, a pastor needs to properly understand the potential within a person who is to be given leadership responsibilities in a local church.

5. CONCLUSION

The local church has a responsibility to grow. To achieve maximum growth, it requires the involvement of all components available in the leadership to carry out their duties and carry out the existing vision. Local church pastors need to be wise to pay attention to the potential that exists in each member of their church. Professionals with their professional abilities are sufficient capital for the development of a church ministry.

Strengthening the laity's role in the local church's leadership is needed to achieve the expectations set. These professionals need to be appropriately empowered so they can maximize the local church's leadership. If a church member, professionalism assessed in the field that they do; then given role reinforcement by the current needs of church leadership, it will have a pretty good impact on the church itself. The local church needs professionals with competencies in their respective fields to support church services to the people.

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