

Integration Of Special Ministry Management And Leadership Theology In Improving The Effectiveness And Ethics Of Ministry In The Church

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		Abstract
Received:	07 July 2025	<p><i>This study examines the application of management theology in church ministry with a focus on special ministers as spiritual leaders as well as administrative in the Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM). This research aims to explore how the principles of management theology can be applied contextually to improve the performance of church ministry while strengthening the integrity of special ministers. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods and phenomenological analysis. The results of the study show that the application of management theology that is integrated with Christian values and the contextualization of local culture is able to increase the effectiveness of ministry, especially in the management of church resources and strategic decision-making. An ethics of service based on love, justice, and integrity is an important foundation in building the congregation's trust in the leadership of the church. The application of principles such as strategic planning, stewardship-based resource management, and transformational leadership allows the church to carry out its mission more holistically and relevant to the challenges of the times. This research makes a new contribution by offering a model of application of management theology that is holistic, adaptive, and responsive to the dynamics of contemporary ecclesiastical ministry. Thus, management theology is not only a tool of administrative management, but also a means of spiritual and social transformation that strengthens the role of the church as an agent of change in society.</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

In this era of increasingly rapid globalization, the church is expected to be able to keep up with the times, one of which is supportive, namely the effectiveness of the service is not only determined by the spiritual aspect, but also by the ability to manage the church organization professionally. In this case, the special minister plays a strategic role in maintaining a balance between the spiritual and administrative dimensions of the church's ministry. The scope of ministry highlighted in this study is the Evangelical Church in Minahasa (GMIM), where the term special minister is commonly used in the tradition of Protestant churches in Indonesia, including GMIM. The term usually refers to those who give themselves

and have gone through the process of selection, determination and confirmation to carry out the ministry duties specifically set by the church. Special servants at the GMIM level are Pastors, Religious Teachers, Elders and Deacons (Ngantung, 2020). In simple terms, the role of a special minister can be understood as serving as a spiritual leader in the church, guiding the congregation in their faith journey and helping the congregation grow closer to God (Kossoh, 2024). Additionally, the role of a dedicated minister involves strategic decision-making that influences the church's system of governance and direction (Tumiwa & Kaparang, 2024). GMIM must have a positive influence in the industrial era, not only the involvement of congregation members but also the active role of special ministers (Tarumingi, 2024).

However, in the reality in the field, the role of special servants at the GMIM level is often faced with complex challenges. For example, although special ministers are expected to be inspirational spiritual leaders, many are burdened by heavy administrative demands, such as managing congregation finances, preparing work programs, and strategic decision-making that often involves conflicts of interest among congregations (Mosey, et al., 2024). On the other hand, the problem of the quality of human resources, where not all servants have an adequate educational background. There are also still special ministers who do not understand the management of modern organizations so that some decisions become ineffective or even cause new problems in the governance of the church. Another challenge is the increasingly diverse demands of the congregation, where special ministers must respond wisely to issues such as social welfare, economic dynamics, and the integration of technology in the ministry.

The effectiveness of special service providers at the GMIM level is greatly influenced by how they integrate service ethics with professional competence. From an ethical perspective, special ministers are expected to demonstrate high integrity and serve with love regardless of the social status of the congregation. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of the ministry is determined by the ability of the special minister to understand, plan, implement, and evaluate the church's programs systematically. Previous research results have shown that churches whose ministers in particular have a good understanding of management, such as time management, data-driven decision-making, and effective communication, tend to have higher levels of congregation satisfaction (Siswanto, et al., 2024). In addition, service ethics also play an important role in building the trust of the congregation, because through an attitude full of integrity, honesty, and love, a minister can reflect the example of Christ. When ministers show respect, responsibility, and sincerity in serving, the congregation will feel valued and cared for, so that a strong, trusting relationship can be built.

Subsequent research on special ministers at GMIM found that the integrity of special ministers contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the ministry, especially in dealing with conflicts of interest and maintaining the harmony of the congregation. On the other hand, research conducted at the GMIM level by Runtuwene (Runtuwene, 2022), revealed that special ministers who are able to

manage the dynamics of ministry professionally can increase the active participation of the congregation by up to 30%, especially in the church's socio-economic programs. Thus, effectiveness and ministry ethics are two aspects that cannot be separated in ensuring relevant and impactful church ministry in the midst of the challenges of the globalization era. The application of management theology in improving the effectiveness and ethics of special minister services presents a novelty in this research, especially in the context of church ministry in the modern era full of globalization challenges. Previously, research often focused on aspects of professional competence and service ethics separately, without integrating theological principles with holistic service management.

This article seeks to address the urgent need for a holistic and contextual approach to church management. Using a management theological approach, special ministers can synergistically integrate the spiritual and administrative dimensions. This approach not only helps to increase the effectiveness of the ministry, but it also strengthens leadership ethics based on biblical principles. Specifically, this article aims to answer two main questions: 1) How can the theological principles of management be applied contextually by special servants? 2) How this implementation affects the effectiveness and ethics of the service.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods and phenomenological analysis. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences and challenges that special ministers face in applying the theological principles of management in the church (Ardayan, et al., 2023). Descriptive methods are used to provide a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of ecclesiastical ministry, while phenomenological analysis is applied to understand the subjective experience of special ministers in integrating the spiritual and administrative aspects of ministry.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management is a means of service that functions to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of service tasks (Lay, 2021). Management helps the church carry out its functions optimally, ensures that the service is in accordance with the provisions, and manages time, thoughts, and energy so that activities run smoothly (Wijiati, 2020). In line with that, management theology in the church focuses not only on operational management, but also on the deep integration of theological principles to create a holistic and impactful framework. According to George Terry, the management function consists of four aspects known as POAC: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. In the context of ministry, special ministers have a strategic role in directing the church toward a biblical vision, managing resources wisely, and leading with high moral values. This approach connects the church's transformative mission with the implementation of management practices that focus on effective and ethical ministry.

Principles of management theology, such as strategic planning, resource management, and transformational leadership, are the primary foundation in ensuring that every aspect of ministry in the church reflects a profound spiritual calling. The special minister is not only responsible for administrative tasks, but also a leader who creates harmony between the goals of the church and the implementation of day-to-day operations. Through theological integration, they help create a culture of ministry that includes a biblical vision and a significant impact in the lives of congregations. Service ethics play a central role in maintaining the integrity of church ministry (Ton & Naklui, 2024). In the face of challenges such as abuse of power, conflicts of interest, and transparency, special servants are responsible for ensuring that all actions and decisions are based on strong moral principles. This work ethic rooted in love, justice, and integrity creates a solid foundation for special ministers to build trust and establish healthy relationships among congregations.

The effectiveness of ministry is the main indicator of the success of management theology in the church. Special ministers have the responsibility to manage the church's resources efficiently, with the aim of achieving maximum results in spiritual and social aspects. This includes the continued spiritual growth of the congregation, increased active participation, and long-term oriented management. By paying attention to this aspect, management theology not only pursues momentary success, but also creates a lasting impact in the lives of the congregation and the communities served. In this context, the special servant is not only a manager, but as a leader who establishes a balance between a theological vision and a high-quality daily practice. By using the principles of deep management theology, the church can achieve excellence in ministry that impacts not only internally but also externally, impacting the lives of the congregation and community in a more holistic and transformative way.

1. Application of Management Theology in Ecclesiastical Ministry

a. Value-Based Strategic Planning

In the context of modern ecclesiastical ministry, strategic planning based on theological values must be relevant to the challenges and needs facing the congregation today. Such rapid social, technological, and cultural changes require churches to adapt to the increasingly complex needs of the church (Tarigan, 2024). The principle of Proverbs 29:18 that states "without a vision, the people perish" remains relevant, but in the current context, it needs to include the influence of digitalization, social inclusion, and efforts to address issues such as inequality, discrimination, and spiritual disparities.

Strategic planning in ecclesiastical ministry includes not only spiritual aspects, but also the integration of values such as hope, love, and social justice with global challenges such as climate change, economic inequality and shifting social norms. Special ministers are required to develop strategies that are able to respond to the needs of the congregation holistically, with a focus on spiritual transformation oriented towards social solutions. In designing the ecclesiastical vision, it is important to pay attention to the local context, demographics, and evolving issues

such as the impact of the pandemic, migration, and the challenges of digitalization, which have brought about significant changes in the way congregations interact with church ministry. Therefore, strategic planning needs to be adaptive, inclusive, and responsive to the changing times in order to remain relevant and have a positive impact on the lives of the congregation.

b. Inclusive and Adaptive Organizing

An effective ecclesiastical ministry organizational structure must be designed in an inclusive and adaptive manner, so as to accommodate the diversity of local cultures, social backgrounds, and ever-evolving congregation dynamics. This principle has its roots in 1 Corinthians 14:40, where everything should be done in an orderly and respectful manner. This verse not only emphasizes the importance of regularity in service, but also calls for respect for diversity and creating a comfortable space for all members of the community to be actively involved (Pato, 2023). Inclusion in the organization of ecclesiastical ministry means ensuring that every individual, regardless of age, gender, social status, or cultural background, has the opportunity to be involved in church life. Inclusive ministry reflects the diversity of the congregation, both in leadership and in decision-making, so that each group feels valued and represented. It also involves the church's efforts to open access to ministry to all groups, including marginalized groups or those with special needs, so that they can feel the togetherness in Christ.

Adaptive ministry organization also requires sensitivity to the social changes that occur around the church. As a community of faith, the church is not only called to maintain its theological integrity but also to remain relevant in responding to the challenges of the times. This adaptation can be realized by utilizing modern technology to expand the reach of services, such as using digital platforms to hold online worship or virtual small groups. Special ministers also need to be responsive to social issues such as injustice, poverty, or climate change, which are real struggles for the church today. In this context, inclusive and adaptive organizing requires dedicated servants to formulate a vision and mission that reflects partiality to all congregations, without discrimination. This vision must be oriented towards empowering the congregation in various aspects of life, while still providing space for local cultural expressions in the ministry, such as the use of regional languages, traditional music, or cultural symbols that enrich worship. In addition, ecclesiastical ministry structures need to be structured with flexibility to deal with changing social dynamics, ensuring that the church remains a relevant, impactful, and respectful community of diversity.

c. Resource Management with Stewardship Principles

The management of resources in ecclesiastical ministry based on the principle of stewardship requires a deep understanding of the responsibilities given by God (Pasoloran, 2023). This principle refers to the realization that everything the church has, whether time, energy, or finances, is a trust that must be accountable to God. As affirmed in 1 Peter 4:10, everyone is called to use the gifts he or she receives to serve one another as good stewards of God's grace. Stewardship-based ministry not

only manages resources wisely but also ensures that it reflects the values of faith that bring prosperity to the congregation.

In ecclesiastical ministry, time and energy are often a great challenge for special ministers. Busy service schedules, congregational expectations, and personal responsibilities often keep the minister stuck in a grueling rhythm. The principle of stewardship teaches that time is a gift from God that must be used strategically. Ministers need to prioritize ministry that has a long-term impact, such as pastoring and building the congregation, while maintaining a balance with their personal lives. Wise management of personnel also includes the division of responsibilities to the congregation, so that the ministry rests not only on a few individuals but involves the whole community as the body of Christ.

Financial management in the church is also one of the important aspects of stewardship. The funds received by the church through church offerings are a form of worship to God and must be managed with transparency, accountability, and a clear vision of service. Special ministers are responsible for ensuring that church finances are used effectively to support the church's mission, such as charitable ministry, education, and social missions. In addition, the congregation needs to be educated to understand the importance of giving as part of their faith responsibility. Thus, good financial management not only supports the ministry of the church but also builds a culture of giving among the congregation. Stewardship also involves empowering the congregation as part of holistic resource management. Special ministers have a responsibility to build congregational capacity through education, training, and providing opportunities to engage in ministry. Through this approach, the congregation becomes not only a beneficiary of the ministry but also an active partner in the work of the church. By harnessing their talents and gifts, the congregation can help create greater spiritual and social well-being, both within the church and in the surrounding community. Stewardship-oriented services must also be relevant to the context of the times. The Church needs to respond to social change with innovation and sustainable strategies. In the digital era, for example, technology can be used to expand the reach of services, such as through online worship or virtual training. Special ministers are called to be faithful ministers, not only in the administrative aspect but also in bringing about spiritual and social transformations for the congregation.

2. Ethics of Service as a Pillar of Management Theology

Ministerial ethics is the moral and spiritual foundation for managing ecclesiastical responsibilities, ensuring that every act of ministry is in line with biblical principles (Yohanes, et al., 2023). In the context of management theology, this ethics is an important pillar to maintain a balance between the church's responsibility to God and society.

a. Integrity in Leadership

Church leaders have a great responsibility to maintain personal and institutional integrity (Misahapsari & Stevanus, 2022). Transparency, accountability, conflict of interest avoidance, and the application of justice are important aspects of church leadership that have a direct impact on the life of the congregation community.

First, transparency is an important foundation in the decision-making process in the church. An open leader allows the congregation to understand the reasons behind the decisions made. This builds trust and avoids feelings of indecision or suspicion among the congregation. In addition, accountability is a key component that is inseparable from leadership. Every action taken by a church leader must be accountable to God, the church, and fellow church leaders. Leaders are not only accountable to people, but also to God, who demands integrity and seriousness in carrying out their duties. Furthermore, avoiding conflicts of interest is a principle that keeps leaders from abusing their positions for personal or group gain. In the context of the church, it is important for leaders to emphasize that ministry should be directed to the broader interest, namely the glory of God and the welfare of the congregation as a whole, not to the interests of any particular individual or group. Finally, the application of justice, as affirmed in James 2:1-9, is essential in the ministry of the church. These verses remind us that the church should serve each individual fairly, without discrimination based on social or economic status. All people, without exception, deserve equal respect and service as part of the body of Christ (Suhartono, et al., 2023).

The above important aspects provide a solid foundation for effective and moral leadership, where transparency, accountability, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and fairness work together to build a healthy and harmonious congregational community and improve the effectiveness and ethics of the ministry of special ministers in the church.

b. Love as a Basic Motivation

Love is at the heart of every service activity in the church, which should be the primary motivation for every step taken (Situmorang & Hermanto, 2022). A strong biblical foundation, as found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, affirms that without love, all our service, gifts, and sacrifices are in vain. This shows that love is not just an additional element, but the central foundation that moves the entire life of ministry. Love for God is the main motivation in every one of our ministry. Loving God with all your heart, soul, and strength is a fundamental calling for every believer. From the love of Allah, we are called to flow that love to our fellow human beings. Love for others is manifested by sincere concern for the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of others. This includes empathetic, supportive, and helpful service to others without expecting recognition or personal gain. Real love is love that shows deep and unconditional care.

The practical relevance of love in service is to encourage the church to serve with a sincere heart. Service based on pure love is not motivated by seeking recognition, popularity, or personal gain, but rather simply to glorify God and serve others sincerely. In every action, love creates a space where service can be a means of transformation for the individual and the community as a whole. True love is the main driver of the church's ministry, which moves the congregation to carry out their duties with dedication and love, in order to strive for the common good according to God's will.

c. Social Justice as a Practical Implementation

The Church has a prophetic calling to voice and promote social justice in society. Just as His disciples in the Old Testament were a voice for the oppressed, the church today is called to play a similar role (Kadarmanto, 2018). Through this responsibility, the church becomes an agent of change that brings God's love and truth to life. The practical implementation of social justice can be realized in various ways. Programs such as humanitarian assistance, education, human rights advocacy, and church economic empowerment are important means of realizing justice for all levels of society. Thus, the church not only speaks of justice, but also acts as a doer of justice that empowers the weak and marginalized.

When the church practices social justice, it bears a real witness to the living gospel. God's love becomes manifest through tangible actions that respond to human needs. By taking an active role in the fight for social justice, the church shows that the gospel is not only a spiritual message, but also a transformative force that brings peace to the world.

CONCLUSION

Management in church ministry is not just a tool to improve operational efficiency, but also a means to integrate deep theological principles. With a holistic approach, management helps the church perform its functions optimally, ensure that the ministry runs according to the biblical vision, and create a significant impact on the congregation and society. In its application, management functions such as planning, organizing, mobilizing, and controlling become an effective framework to support special servants in carrying out their duties with high moral and ethical values.

A special servant has a strategic role as a leader who not only manages the administrative aspects but also integrates the spiritual vocation with management practices relevant to the needs of the times. With a clear vision and transformational leadership, special ministers can create harmony between the goals of the church and the execution of day-to-day operations. Furthermore, ministerial ethics are an important element that guarantees that all the actions of the church are based on the principles of love and justice. This ethic not only maintains the integrity of the leader but also encourages the church to become an inclusive community that is responsive to social change. Motivated by love, the service carried out by the church becomes a means of profound spiritual and social transformation. The implementation of social justice is also a tangible manifestation of the church's prophetic call to be an agent of change in society, bringing God's love and truth in every aspect of life.

With the integration of management theology, ministry ethics, and social justice, the church can carry out its transformation mission holistically. This not only ensures effective ministry internally, but also has a strong external impact in responding to the needs of the congregation and community. Through this approach, the church functions not only as a spiritual institution, but also as an agent of change that brings the love of Christ to the world in real terms.

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