e-ISSN: 3063-699X; p-ISSN: 3063-7279, p 27-33
Philosophy Global: International Journal of Christian and Catholic Philosophy
Volume 2 Nomor 3 Tahun 2025
e-ISSN: 3063-699X; p-ISSN: 3063-7279, p 27-33
DOI: https://doi.org/10.70062/philosophyglobal.v1i3.39
Available on line at : https://philosophy.ifrel.org/index.php/PhilosophyGlobal

Christian Leadership Management: Building Christ-Centered Leaders

Merianti Atakameng
Institut Agama Kristen Negeri Manado

Author Correspondence : meriantiatakameng92@gmail.com

Abstract. *This article discusses the concept of Christian leadership management centered on Christ as the foundation for forming spiritual leaders who are characterized by integrity and service. In today's modern context, which is often driven by power orientation and human-centered success, Christian leadership offers an alternative paradigm rooted in love, humility, and servanthood. Through a literature review of various thinkers such as Daniel Ronda, Yohanes Nuban Timo, Hendrik Senduk, and John C. Maxwell, this paper emphasizes that the essence of Christian leadership is not position but a calling to serve and to make disciples of Christ. Christian leadership management encompasses theological, spiritual, and practical dimensions, ranging from personal transformation, spiritual discipline, and the formation of Christlike character, to ministry management based on servant leadership principles. This article also integrates relevant secular leadership theories such as servant leadership, transformational leadership, and situational leadership with biblical values. In conclusion, effective Christian leadership can only be realized when leaders follow the example of Christ, depend on God's wisdom, and produce new leaders who are able to bring spiritual and social impact to the world.*

Keywords: *Christian leadership, ministry management, Christlike character, servant leadership, spiritual transformation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial element in human life. In the Christian context, leadership is not only about the ability to organize, but also about being a role model that reflects the character of Christ. Today's modern world requires leaders who are not only intellectually competent but also possess a solid spiritual foundation. Such leaders lead not simply with strategy, but with hearts shaped by the love of Christ (Ronda, 2022).

Churches often face challenges in developing leaders who are not only active in ministry but also live lives of integrity and are centered on Christ. Many leaders ultimately fall into spiritual exhaustion or lose direction because their leadership is more oriented towards human success than divine calling (Timo, 2021). Therefore, Christian leadership management needs to be directed towards building a leader development system rooted in spiritual values, not just organizational skills (Timo, 2021).

Christ-centered leadership means making Jesus the ultimate example in all things. He came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life for many (Mark 10:45). Therefore, a true Christian leader does not view office as a personal honor, but as an opportunity to demonstrate God's love through concrete actions in the community and in service (Timo, 2021).

Furthermore, management in Christian leadership cannot be separated from the principle of servant leadership. This principle places the leader not at the top of a pyramid of power, but at the base of a structure that supports others (Greenleaf, 2018). This is the fundamental difference between worldly leadership and Christian leadership: one pursues power, the other surrenders to service Thefore, it is crucial for churches and

Christian institutions to review the leadership models they have developed. Christian leaders must be formed with a strong spiritual foundation, a deep theological understanding, and managerial skills oriented toward God's calling. This article will discuss the theological foundations of Christian leadership, a management model aligned with biblical values, and practical steps in developing Christ-centered leaders.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. The entire research process was conducted through an in-depth review of various relevant Christian theology and leadership literature, including the works of Daniel Ronda, Yohanes Nuban Timo, Hendrik Senduk, John C. Maxwell, and other academic books and journals. Data were collected through systematic reading, noting important points, and grouping themes related to Christian leadership management, such as the character of Christ, servant leadership, spiritual disciplines, and leader formation. Data analysis was conducted using content analysis to interpret theological concepts and management principles in the literature, then synthesized into a complete and integrated understanding with a biblical perspective. The validity of the research was maintained through source triangulation, namely comparing various reliable literature to ensure consistent and accurate study results. Thus, this method allows researchers to comprehensively explore the theological and practical foundations of Christ-centered Christian leadership management.

3. DISCUSSION

The Nature of Management in Christian Leadership

In the Christian context, management does not merely mean the management of human and material resources, but rather the management of all aspects of life and ministry in accordance with God's will. Christian management serves as a tool for organizing ministry life in an orderly and effective manner, with a primary focus on glorifying Christ (Daun, 2020).

A Christian leader is not only an administrator, but also a servant and shepherd. He does not lead based on personal power, but through the wisdom that comes from God. Therefore, management in Christian leadership must be theocentric, centered on God, not on humans.

A Christ-centered leader will view every responsibility as an act of worship. He or she recognizes that successful ministry is not the result of strategy or human ability alone, but rather the work of God's grace. This principle guides leaders to always rely on God in every decision they make. "For without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5) This verse serves as the spiritual foundation for Christian leadership management, emphasizing that the effectiveness of ministry lies not in systems, but in dependence on Christ.

Theological Perspectives on Christian Leadership

From a theological perspective, Christian leadership cannot be separated from the concept of Imago Dei, that humans are created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). This means that every Christian leader is called to reflect God's character in every act of leadership (McGrath, 2011).

Jesus Christ is central to Christian leadership theology. He rejected the world's power-oriented leadership style and replaced it with a servant leadership model (Mark 10:42–45). In the context of church management, Christ-centered leaders must prioritize love, humility, and obedience to God's will.

Joas Adiprasetya emphasized that Christian leadership is not based on hierarchical relationships, but on mutually sustaining fellowship (Adiprasetya, 2011). Leaders are called not only to direct but also to walk together in the community of faith, shaping a collective spirituality that emulates Christ.

Personal Transformation as the Basis for Leadership

True Christian leaders must first experience inner transformation. Paul emphasizes in Romans 12:2 that believers should not be conformed to this world, but should be renewed in their minds. This principle also applies to leadership: leaders must allow the Holy Spirit to work to transform the way they think, act, and serve.

Daniel Ronda (2022) states that the formation of Christian leaders is inseparable from the process of discipleship. True leaders are disciples of Christ who continually grow in His word and character. Discipleship is the primary means of developing a personality that is humble and obedient to God.

Personal transformation is also evident in a leader's ability to manage ego and ambition. Many leaders fail because they prioritize self over God. In Christian leadership, success is not measured by the number of followers a leader has, but by the extent to which Christ is glorified through the leader's life and ministry.

The Character of Christ as a Model of Leadership

The character of Christ is the highest standard for every Christian leader. In Matthew 11:29, Jesus said, “Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart.” This shows that the essence of leadership is not domination, but rather gentleness and love.

Yohanes Nuban Timo (2021) emphasized that character is the most important foundation of leadership. Without the right character, all managerial skills will be in vain. Therefore, developing Christ-like character must be a priority in all church leadership training and management.

Christian leaders are called to emulate five key aspects of Christ's character: love, humility, perseverance, justice, and forgiveness. These characteristics form the moral foundation that distinguishes Christian leaders from secular leaders. Marthen Ndoen (2020) adds that a Christian leader must demonstrate real love through acts of service, not just words.

The Bible provides many examples of leaders who succeeded because of their obedience and dependence on God. Moses is an example of a humble leader who depended on God in leading the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 3-14). Although he felt incompetent, God used him as an instrument to liberate His people. Joshua succeeded Moses with courage and obedience to God's Word. He demonstrated solid leadership based on God's commands (Joshua 1:7-9). David is known as a leader with a heart that pleased God (1 Samuel 13:14). Despite his weaknesses, David demonstrated leadership that stemmed from a personal relationship

with God. Nehemiah demonstrated effective managerial leadership in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem through strategy, prayer, and steadfast faith (Nehemiah 1-6). Jesus Christ himself is the ultimate example of leadership. He led with love, taught with authority, and was willing to die for humanity (Philippians 2:5-11). The leadership of these biblical figures demonstrates that a leader's success is not determined by personal strength, but by obedience, faith, and total dependence on God.

Leadership Management Based on the Principle of Service

The concept of "servant leadership" is at the heart of Christian management. Jesus himself said, "Whoever wants to be greatest among you must be your servant" (Matthew 20:26). This principle reverses the world's paradigm of viewing power as a tool of domination, into a tool of service.

In the context of the church, Christian leadership management means managing the ministry with a servant's heart. Leaders not only set strategies but also have a spiritual presence in the lives of congregation members. Hendrik Senduk (2019) explains that healthy church management must place love and service at the heart of every administrative decision.

Christian leaders must also be able to effectively manage ministry teams with principles of transparency and fairness. Decisions should be made through prayer, spiritual consideration, and with the goal of glorifying God, not personal gain. Thus, Christian leadership management serves as a character-building tool, not merely program management.

In the contemporary context, Christian leadership management principles can be found in various ministry institutions, churches, and social organizations. For example, Billy Graham is known as a spiritual leader who implemented high-integrity leadership, maintained personal and financial accountability, and rejected the abuse of power (Martin, 1991). Mother Teresa is also a true example of servant leadership. She led not only with words, but also lived a life serving the poor in Calcutta. In every action, she emphasized the love of Christ manifested in compassionate service (Spink, 1997). Furthermore, Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in California, practices transformational leadership through his vision of a Purpose-Driven Church. He emphasizes the importance of mission-based leadership and divine calling, not just organizational growth (Waren, 1995).

These examples show that Christian leadership management can be applied in the real world without losing its spiritual dimension, as long as the leader remains centered on Christ as the source of wisdom and direction.

Spiritual Discipline as a Source of Leader Strength

There is no strong Christian leadership without regular spiritual discipline. Prayer, reading the Word, and fellowship are the primary sources of spiritual strength for a leader. In Mark 1:35, Jesus set the example by setting aside time to pray in a quiet place. This demonstrates that successful ministry must begin at the altar of prayer.

Elijah Tambur (2023) states that spiritual discipline fosters sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's guidance in decision-making. Without a strong prayer life, a leader is vulnerable to stress and discouragement. Christ-

centered leaders rely on the power of prayer, not just human strategies.

Besides prayer, it is also crucial for leaders to live lives continually filled with God's Word. The Word is a moral guide and a source of wisdom in navigating the dynamics of ministry. Yonatan Saragih (2021) adds that leaders who live by the Word will have clear direction and decisions aligned with God's will.

Leaders Who Produce Leaders

True Christian leadership is not only leading, but also producing new leaders. Paul set this example for Timothy when he said, “The things you have heard from me... entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Christ-centered leaders will focus on edification, not dominance. He is not afraid to give birth to new leaders because his purpose is not to maintain power, but to expand the kingdom of God. In the context of management, this means creating a healthy mentoring system, where senior leaders guide the younger generation with love and humility.

Rannu Manongga (2020) emphasized that leadership regeneration in the church must be a top priority so that God's mission can continue across generations. Without regeneration, the church will lose direction and vitality.

Socially Impactful Leadership

Christian leaders are not only responsible internally within the church, but must also have an impact on society. Andreas Yewangoe (2019) wrote that Christian leadership must be light and salt to the world, by displaying the values of justice, love, and solidarity.

Christ-centered leadership will demonstrate God's love in a real way in a world that is thirsty for justice and hope. Leaders like this not only talk about faith, but live it in real actions: helping the weak, fighting for justice, and being witnesses of Christ in society.

Secular Leadership Theories Relevant to Christian Leadership

In the modern world of management, various leadership theories have been developed to explain how a leader can influence, direct, and motivate others. Although derived from secular approaches, some of these theories have value that can be refined and integrated with Christian principles.

1. The Servant Leadership theory, popularized by Robert K. Greenleaf, emphasizes that true leaders are servants before leaders. Such leaders prioritize the needs of others, develop the potential of their followers, and put the welfare of the community above personal interests (Greenleaf, 1977). This principle aligns with Jesus' teaching, who washed the feet of His disciples as a symbol of humble service (John 13:1-17).
2. The Transformational Leadership Theory of James MacGregor Burns and Bernard M. Bass emphasizes changing the values and motivations of followers through inspiration, vision, and moral

example (Burns, 1985). In the Christian context, this is reflected in the leadership of Jesus who transformed the lives of his disciples through consistent teaching, love, and example.

3. The Situational Leadership Theory of Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard teaches that leadership style must be adapted to the maturity level and needs of followers (Hersey&Blanchard, 1998). In Christian ministry, this theory can be applied through spiritual sensitivity to the conditions of the congregation, just as Paul adapted his approach when serving both Jews and Gentiles (1 Corinthians 9:20-22).

Thus, even though these theories were born from the secular world, their principles can be refined through the lens of faith, as long as their basic values do not conflict with biblical truth.

4. Conclusion

Christian leadership positions Christ at the center of all aspects of leadership, including vision, character, and actions. Christian leaders focus not on power, but on service grounded in love and humility. The effectiveness of Christian leadership is measured not by worldly accomplishments, but by the extent to which Christ is glorified in a leader's life and ministry.

The process of forming Christian leaders must begin with personal transformation through discipleship, prayer, and obedience to God's Word. Christ-centered leaders are those who live out Christ's character of love, justice, humility, and forgiveness and who make service a concrete expression of their faith. Furthermore, Christian leaders are called to build a system of development and regeneration that produces new leaders rooted in gospel values.

Thus, Christian leadership management is a combination of managerial competence and spiritual depth. When leadership is exercised with a strong theological foundation and a motivation for service, the church and society will experience genuine spiritual and social transformation in accordance with God's will.

REFERENCE

Adiprasetya, Joas. Christian Theology and Leadership. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020.

Bass, Bernard M., and James MacGregor Burns. Transformational Leadership. New York: Harper & Row, 2018.

Blanchard, Kenneth, and Paul Hersey. Management of Organizational Behavior: Utilizing Human Resources. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2015.

Greenleaf, Robert K. Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness. New York: Paulist Press, 2018.

Manongga, Rannu SP Transformative Church Leadership. Jakarta: Andi Offset, 2020.

Maxwell, John C. The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You.

Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2020.

Ndoen, Marthen. Character of Christian Leaders. Kupang: UKAW Press, 2020.

Ronda, Daniel. Christian Leadership: Principles, Spirituality, and Practice. Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2022.

Saragih, Yonatan. Leadership Based on the Word. Medan: STT Abdiel Press, 2021.

Senduk, Hendrik. Effective Church Management. Jakarta: Metanoia Publishing, 2019.

Tambur, Elijah. Spiritual Disciplines of Christian Leaders. Manado: Southeast Asia Bible Seminary, 2023.

Timo, Yohanes Nuban. The Ethics of Christian Leadership. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2021.

Warren, Rick. The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message & Mission. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2019.

Yewangoe, Andreas A. Christian Leadership and Social Transformation. Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019.