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Balaam and Motivation of Contemporary Church Leaders

Yonatan Alex Arifianto*

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Sangkakala Salatiga

arifianto.alex@sttsangkakala.ac.id*Daniel Supriyadi**

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Indonesia Semarang

Kharisda Mueleni Waruwu

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Indonesia Semarang

Johanes Paryono

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kristus Alfa Omega

Abstract

The life of a pagan prophet from Moab named Balaam is an exciting lesson about leadership to study. This prophet represents a materialistic lifestyle, disobedience to God, and disobedience of service in the name of God. His ministry was in a historical setting where Israel also experienced severe moral decadence as God's people. This article will reveal and analyze how Balaam's role as a reflection of contemporary leadership in the church is strongly influenced by the concepts of materialism, hedonic lifestyle, and highly pay-oriented leadership. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this study uses some works of literature as the main study. Through Balaam's life, contemporary church leaders could learn about the importance of integrity and genuine ministry motivation. The exemplary aspect is an essential factor that leaders must own. We also found that leaders need to serve with a servant spirit, as Jesus had shown. Only in this way can a leader have an honorable and consistent life in the values of the truth of God's word.

Research Contribution:

This research contributes to theological values in pastoral practice and church leadership disciplines.

Keywords:

Balaam, hired worker, leadership, pastor, church leader.

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Bileam dan Motivasi Pelayanan Rohani Pemimpin Gereja Masa Kini

Yonatan Alex Arifianto*

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Sangkakala Salatiga

*arifianto.alex@sttsangkakala.ac.id

Daniel Supriyadi

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Indonesia Semarang

Kharisda Mueleni Waruwu

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Baptis Indonesia Semarang

Johanes Paryono

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Kristus Alfa Omega

Abstrak

Kehidupan nabi kafir dari Moab bernama Bileam merupakan pembelajaran tentang kepemimpinan yang menarik untuk dikaji. Nabi ini mempresentasikan gaya hidup materialistis, ketidaktaatan kepada Tuhan dan penyelewengan pelayanan atas nama Tuhan. Pelayanannya berada di dalam setting sejarah dimana Israel sebagai umat Allah juga mengalami dekadensi moral yang sangat parah. Melalui artikel ini akan diungkap dan dianalisis bagaimana peran Bileam sebagai cerminan kepemimpinan kontemporer di dalam gereja yang sangat terpengaruh oleh konsep-konsep materialisme, gaya hidup hedonis dan kepemimpinan yang sangat berorientasi pada upah. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menggunakan sejumlah literatur sebagai kajian utama. Diperoleh kesimpulan bahwa melalui kehidupan Bileam, para pemimpin gereja kontemporer dapat belajar mengenai pentingnya integritas dan motivasi pelayanan yang murni. Aspek keteladanan menjadi faktor penting yang harus dimiliki oleh para pemimpin. Juga ditemukan bahwa pemimpin perlu melayani dengan jiwa kehambaan sebagaimana yang telah Yesus tampilkan. Hanya dengan cara tersebut seorang pemimpin dapat memiliki hidup yang terhormat dan konsisten di dalam nilai-nilai kebenaran firman Tuhan.

Kontribusi Riset:

Penelitian ini berkontribusi untuk menyumbangkan nilai-nilai teologi di dalam praksis pastoral dan disiplin ilmu kepemimpinan gereja

Kata-kata kunci:

Balaam, orang upahan, kepemimpinan, pendeta, pemimpin gereja.

Introduction

Various conflicts happening within organizations, including religious ones, often involve leaders considered 'unworthy' due to their deviant acts, such as immoral acts pertaining to sexual or principal matters. Specifically, in the age of ever-increasing technology and information advancements such as today, committing inhumane acts like corruption, infidelity, and

material greed continue to be reported, indicating a crisis of leadership in modern times. This problem happens in many sectors, such as government, community organizations, and even churches. Leadership crises within churches are notable for not only involving immoralities of church leaders, but also their hedonism and deception of gullible congregations for their own gain by acting on behalf of God and/or the church. Yeniretnowati and Perangin-Angin stated that the deviated integrity of these kind of leaders have brought

their leadership to deviate from the examples and truth taught in the Bible.¹ Even if their leadership credibility is tarnished, they are eager to maintain their status as religious leaders,² by taking refuge in two 'magic words': 'God's calling'.³

It is undeniable that consumerism and hedonism color this age of modernity, in which people who embrace these achieve personal satisfaction in the fulfillment of their needs. These people also make satisfaction, or pleasure, their main goal. The many seductive needs of life often offered by this world make one interested in those things. Like other humans, these needs also shadow the lives of church stewards or pastors. Hence, pastors not living in righteousness or 'hirelings' (referring to the terms in John 10:13) will only do their pastoral duties by motivation of personal gain.⁴

The fact that nowadays, organizational leadership of many churches nearly depends heavily on principles of secular leadership increases the worry that churches, spiritual by nature, are organized in worldly ways far from the truth.⁵ Another concerning fact is the existence of people calling themselves 'pastors' and making church stewardship a business opportunity, which makes their stewardship efforts essentially for profit.⁶ These pastors or religious leaders whose stewardship only

prioritizes profit for living or personal honor are classifiable as 'hirelings'.⁷

Previous research on Balaam, son of Beor, have been conducted. Research on this matter by Sulistiana discuss Balaam as one of God's instruments to fulfill His plans. This research compares the act of God using Balaam with His act using the Pharaoh in the Exodus of Israelites out of Egypt. In the second instance, God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that He could show His powers for the Israelites and all the earth.⁸ The research concludes that God used Balaam with a similar purpose: to demonstrate His presence in the middle of Israelites and to reaffirm His promise to Abraham. Research by Gunadi entitled *The Test of Balaam* based on Numbers 22:7-12; 23:1-6; 31:8⁹ concludes that Balaam proved himself to live by the flesh. The research mentioned above has not discussed Balaam, son of Beor, in his role as a hired seer as an object of learning to prevent the spiritual distortion of church leaders. Therefore, this topic was to better understand this pagan seer as a warning story for God's servants not to be dragged into the currents of carnality and lustful desire. In addition, this paper also provides an understanding of Christ's leadership as an effort to distort hedonism and greed with a life that is an example of servant leadership and character according to the values of God's Word.

¹ Tri Astuti Yeniretnowati and Yakub Hendrawan Perangin Angin, "Implikasi Dari Kepemimpinan Yang Berintegritas Bagi Pendidikan Pemimpin Kristen," *Veritas Lux Mea (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen)* 4, no. 2 (2022): 45-58.

² John Stott, *Isu-Isu Global Penilaian Atas Masalah Sosial Dan Moral Kontemporer Menurut Perspektif Kristiani* (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2015).

³ Dapot Tua Simanjuntak and Joseph Christ Santo, "Kepemimpinan Gembala Sidang Dalam Meningkatkan Pertumbuhan Jemaat: Sebuah Refleksi 1 Petrus 5," *Paria* 6, no. 1 (2019): 66-76.

⁴ Calvin Sholla Rupa, "Ciri Khas Seorang Gembala Berdasarkan Perspektif 1 Petrus 5: 1-4," *Jurnal Jaffray* 14, no. 2 (2016): 165-88.

⁵ Fred Smith, *Memimpin Dengan Ingritas* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pekabaran Injil Imanuel, 2002), 11.

⁶ Rupa, "Ciri Khas Seorang Gembala Berdasarkan Perspektif 1 Petrus 5: 1-4."

⁷ Herlince Rumahorbo, "Keteladanan Tanggung Jawab Yesus Sebagai Gembala Menjadi Dasar Pelayanan Hamba Tuhan Masa Kini," *Phronesis: Jurnal Teologi Dan Misi* 3, no. 2 (2020): 130-46, <https://doi.org/10.47457/phr.v3i2.68>.

⁸ Reni Sulistiana, "Studi Teologis Terhadap Problematika Tindakan Allah Memakai Balaam Untuk Memberkati Israel Dalam Bilangan 22-24," *Jurnal Handayani PGSD FIP UNIMED* 8, no. 1 (2017): 64-74.

⁹ Paul Gunadi, "Ujian Tokoh Balaam (Bilangan 22:7-12; 23:1-6; 31:8)," *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 6, no. 1 (April 1, 2005): 153-59, <https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v6i1.138>.

Method

This research is a qualitative descriptive¹⁰ study with a literature study approach. Using a literature study, the author collects data related to the theoretical basis of hired servants and Christian leadership. The author describes Balaam's profile as a hired servant in preventing spiritual distortions. There are several systematic steps in this paper. First, the author presents a brief history of Balaam and his behavior. Second, the author describes the leadership qualities exemplified by Jesus. In the next step, the author describes the principle of servant character in Christian leadership, based on living honorably in the values of God's word. The data used in this study is based on theoretical, conceptual, and research studies published in trusted books, journal reports, and others.

Result & Discussion

The Exodus of Israel out of Egypt

The Exodus experience is inseparable to the nations Israelites had to pass. They – whether they want it or not – had to encounter these nations. During the Israelites' journey to the Promised Land, the nations around them heard the frightening and horror-inducing stories of the Israelite God's powers in guiding His people out of Egypt. One of the kings of these nations was Balak, the king of Moab and Midianites. In his fear, he invited his prophet, Balaam, son of Beor to consult on the ways to destroy Israelites through curses. In the Moabite culture, it seemed that Balaam, the heathen prophet, was considered as someone with supernatural powers whose effectiveness and power were unquestionable. This contributed to the high degree of belief in his curses becoming a reality. It is in this sense of belief that King Balak intended to involve him

in destroying Israelites¹¹ for his nation's safety and prosperity.

Balaam, son of Beor and the problem of 'hiredlings' in Christian leadership

A prophet had an important role in the history of Israel. They commanded great influence, not only in spiritual government but also the temporal one. The acts of mercy and justice which become the Israel God's tools to express Himself to His chosen people would not achieve their purpose if not revealed to Israelites by the prophets.¹² Similarly, other nations such as Moabites had Balaam as their sorcerer whose words were greatly admired and who was considered powerful by virtue of their gods, especially Baal, as indicated by Balak believing Balaam's words (Numbers 22:6). The story of Balaam began when Israelites set up their camps in the plains of Moab, east of Jordan river near Jericho, after 40 years of journey out of Egypt to the land of Canaan, and before the death of Moses. The Israelites would cross over Jordan to go the Promised Land. At this time, they just defeated two kings: Sihon, King Sihon of the Amorites, and Og, the king of Basan. Faced with this fact, Balak, son of Zippor, the king of Moab and his people were frightened (Numbers 22:2), and therefore he sent messengers consisting of Moabite and Midianite elders and gave them rewards of divination to summon Balaam to come and curse the Israelites to destroy them (Numbers 22:4-5). Balak's fear of the Israelites caused him to involve Balaam to curse them.¹³ However, God showed His sovereignty to Moabites and Balak by using them as the media to express His power. By using Balaam and transforming his curse to Israelites as blessings, God intended to show His sovereignty, whether it was to Balaam himself, Balak and the Moabites, or especially His

¹⁰ Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Strategi Penelitian Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif Di Dalam Penelitian Agama," *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 4, no. 1 (2020): 28, <https://doi.org/10.46445/ejti.v4i1.167>.

¹¹ Gunadi, "Ujian Tokoh Balaam (Bilangan 22:7-12; 23:1-6; 31:8)."

¹² Sulistiana, "Studi Teologis Terhadap Problematika Tindakan Allah Memakai Balaam Untuk Memberkati Israel Dalam Bilangan 22-24."

¹³ Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, *Alkitab Penuntun Hidup Berkelimpahan*, 2012, 305-6.

chosen people, Israel.¹⁴ This encouraged Israelites to keep relying on God and believe in His protection.

Balaam was a heathen prophet who come and observed from the mountains to curse Israelites. He was sent by Balak as the reaction of Balak's fear of Israelites who had been victorious against his neighboring nations. With Balaam's curses, this Moabite king believed that Israelites could be defeated.¹⁵ Balaam's lack of understanding and sensitivity towards Elohim caused him to fall into Balak's sweet promises of material reward by obeying his orders; the orders which Elohim clearly forbade. Yet, his greed and insensitivity were seen by the third time he cursed Israelites, until God sent a donkey to warn him. Finally, Balaam's curses designed by Balak to Israelites were changed into heavenly blessings¹⁶ and protection.

Balaam failed to curse Israelites, since the Israelite God is a God who has the power over humans. Even when the prophets of God met Him, they could only say the things put in their mouths.¹⁷ From these failures Balaam did not give up. If he could not bring God's curse on the Israelites from the outside, Balaam resolved to destroy Israel from within. Balaam devised a plot with Israel's enemies to cause the Israelites to rebel against God's word. Balaam's cunning ideas and methods were aimed at causing the Israelites to harm themselves through sin against God¹⁸ by way of deceit, attacking the Israelites, the chosen people of God through

temptation and sin.¹⁹ It was a surefire way because Balaam knew there was a weakness in the Israelites, namely by bringing the Israelites to join themselves in idolatry which was the beginning of the spiritual and physical harlotry that hit Israel.²⁰ This was done by enticing them to have sexual relationships with Moabite women who made the Israelites cut off their faith in God and became Baal worshipers in Peor.²¹ In Revelation 2:14 it is revealed that Balaam succeeded in misleading the Israelites into eating and living with Baal and living in adultery.

In the New Testament, Balaam is cited as an example of a false prophet who went astray because of his behavior as a prophet in the name of God but whose behavior was full of greed and desire for personal gain (Jude 11).²² Balaam who was known to be a cheater used an outward spiritual guise to cover his depraved spiritual life.²³ The emphasis in Balaam's story is a servant who obeys God's commands as long as his ministry can benefit himself,²⁴ while a person called by God to be His prophet must give him/herself up according to His will even though sometimes the command is difficult to accept by common sense and looks odd. She also has to sacrifice both material, time and life for the sake of service.

In 2 Peter 2:15 it explains that unrighteous shepherds or false teachers leave the right path and follow the wrong path as did Balaam, the son of Beor who likes to receive rewards for evil deeds, since hirelings are always worried in his life about what they want to eat and wear.²⁵

¹⁴ Sulistiana, "Studi Teologis Terhadap Problematika Tindakan Allah Memakai Balaam Untuk Memberkati Israel Dalam Bilangan 22-24."

¹⁵ Sulistiana.

¹⁶ Naomi Sapan, "Ucapan Bahagia Dan Hubungannya Dengan Khotbah Di Bukit Secara Keseluruhan," *CARAKA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika Dan Praktika* 1, no. 1 (2020): 86–103.

¹⁷ Lasor W.S, Hubbard D.A, and Bush FW, *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 1 Taurat Dan Sejarah* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2014), 243.

¹⁸ Gary Edward Schnittjer, *The Torah Story: An Apprenticeship On The Pentateuch*, ed. Emma Maspaitella (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2015), 458-459.

¹⁹ Schnittjer Garry Edward, *The Torah Story* (Malang: gandum mas, 2015), 459.

²⁰ W.S, D.A, and Bush FW, *Pengantar Perjanjian Lama 1 Taurat Dan Sejarah*, 244.

²¹ *Handbook to the Bible* (Bandung Jawa Barat: kalam hidup, 2016), 219.

²² Hill Andrew and Walton John, *Survei Perjanjian Lama* (Malang: gandum mas, 2013), 160.

²³ Indonesia, *Alkitab Penuntun Hidup Berkelimpahan*, 307.

²⁴ Sulistiana, "Studi Teologis Terhadap Problematika Tindakan Allah Memakai Balaam Untuk Memberkati Israel Dalam Bilangan 22-24."

²⁵ Rupa, "Ciri Khas Seorang Gembala Berdasarkan Perspektif 1 Petrus 5: 1-4."

Hirelings carry out their ministry simply because they want a lot of wealth. They seem to be doing their ministry right, but with the wrong motivation to serve their stomachs.²⁶

Balaam is a reflection of service based on material. Which is currently in church leadership is also not far from what Balaam did. The hedonism and greed lifestyle that was practiced in the past is also present in the church in this modern era. So that the leadership of the Church that should live in sincerity of service must be distorted with the wrong attitude and integrity. For this reason, efforts to return to the essence of Christian leadership in the church need to look at and imitate the Servant leadership that Jesus did. Which leadership is able to harmonize service with humility. with the intention of the name of God is glorified.

The nature of Christian leadership

The church is inseparable to pastoral leadership, since in her calling to become blessing to others as a religious organization, church always need leadership of one who can actualize Biblical values and exemplify them to the congregation.²⁷ Therefore, a leader capable in his/her calling to fulfill responsibility becomes a driving force of his/her institution, which in this case is a religious organization.²⁸ Christian leadership is identifiable by duty and responsibility driven by a motive of love and servitude.²⁹ In this leadership style, the leader's spirituality is a key aspect that forms his/her world view in leadership process, since it is a main motive in actualizing his/her role and is

manifested in the various ideas and policies.³⁰ This means that Christian leaders are spiritually-reliant to God. Especially in Christian leadership, it is a ministry task that is entrusted with placing other people's priorities first.

In Christian leadership, humility and willingness to serve are the main qualifications. If these qualifications are aligned with the general principles of leadership, then Christian leadership is an effort to influence, move, and be able to make other people move to achieve the goals set with the intervention of God. It is accompanied by a servant's mentality³¹ and a sense of responsibility which clearly signifies a leader's maturity, characterized by not looking for excuses, not shifting responsibilities to others or blaming circumstances, and by doing the responsibility to the best of his/her ability.³² These characteristics are the hallmarks of Christian leadership, since in a Christian leader's spirituality, one need to stress integration between essence (being) and praxis (doing) in all aspects of his/her life.³³ Therefore, Christian leadership is centered in the values of norms of Biblical spirituality of humility. In prioritizing obligations for service and character as servants, Christian leaders can also express their faith visibly in the lives of all believers and others as a form of accountability to God for their calling.

Efforts to prevent Church leaders' spiritual distortion

A leader who has a service work ethos should dedicate him/herself to bear fruit as an act of

²⁶ Rupa.

²⁷ J Oswald Sanders, "Kepemimpinan Rohani," *Bandung: Kalam Hidup*, 2017.

²⁸ Simanjuntak and Santo, "Kepemimpinan Gembala Sidang Dalam Meningkatkan Pertumbuhan Jemaat: Sebuah Refleksi 1 Petrus 5."

²⁹ Ted Engstrom and Edward Dayton, *Seni Manajemen Bagi Pemimpin Kristen* (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 1998), 20.

³⁰ Yosep Belay, Yanto Paulus Hermanto, and Rivosia Rivosia, "Spiritualitas Alkitabiah Sebagai Hakikat Kepemimpinan Kristen Masa Kini," *Fidei: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis Dan Praktika* 4, no. 2 (2021): 183–205.

³¹ Johannis Siahaya, "Kepemimpinan Kristen Dalam Pluralitas Indonesia," *Jurnal Teruna Bhakti* 1, no. 1 (2019): 1, <https://doi.org/10.47131/jtb.v1i1.8>.

³² Daniel Ginting, Yudhy Sanjaya, and Fransiskus Irwan Widjaja, "Kepemimpinan Kristen: Leader Sebagai Kualifikasi Kepemimpinan Nehemia," *Real Didache* 5, no. 1 (2020): 71–79.

³³ Yornan Masinambow and Yosef Nasrani, "Pendidikan Kristiani Sebagai Sarana Pembentukan Spiritualitas Generasi Milenial," *PASCA: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 17, no. 1 (2021): 64–81, <https://doi.org/10.46494/psc.v17i1.114>.

fulfillment to his/her calling as leaders. If the leader in his/her work focuses him/herself in fulfilling his/her rights, it would impact his/her totality to work, in which s/he would not have a maximum work ethos which, in turn, would create a less-than-maximum fruits of work and service. This was illustrated by Jesus in His discourse, in which a hireling, whenever faced with obstacles and adversities – especially to himself – will flee his responsibility.³⁴ Likewise, a Christian leader when entrusted with responsibility of congregation, yet focusing him/herself to material things or wages and not to the congregation, s/he will flee his/her responsibility whenever challenges come and encounter him/her, leaving his/her congregation disunited.³⁵ Thus, this style of leadership is a distorted version of Christian leadership style which becomes bad influence – or yeast, so to say – to the congregation. As Zaluchu stated, a hireling's values of loyalty and commitment are measured based on the remuneration received.³⁶ Hence, it is evident that quality of leadership, in turn, is largely determined by motivation, as stated by Eka Darmaputera in that only good motivation can produce good leaders.³⁷

Following Jesus' leadership example in serving others

As shown by Biblical texts, Jesus' leadership in serving others was imitated by His disciples.

³⁴ Bartholomeus Nainggolan, "Ajaran Alkitab Tentang Dedikasi Hamba Tuhan Berdasarkan I Korintus 9:13-16 Terhadap Etos Kerja," *Jurnal Koinonia* 7, no. 2 (2016): 1–25.

³⁵ Edwin Gandaputra Yen, "Yesus Kristus Sang Hamba Tuhan: Kriteria Dan Refleksi Seorang Hamba Tuhan," *TE DEUM (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pengembangan Pelayanan)* 2, no. 1 (2021): 235–51.

³⁶ Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Komitmen Organisasi Dalam Perspektif Alkitabiah: Sebuah Studi Kuantitatif Di Yayasan C Surabaya," *KHARISMATA: Jurnal Teologi Pantekosta* 1, no. 2 (2019): 75–88.

³⁷ Eka Darmaputera, *Kepemimpinan Dalam Perspektif Alkitab*, 2nd ed. (Yogyakarta: Kairos, 2005), 27.

³⁸ Yonatan Alex Arifianto, "Makna Sosio-Teologis Melayani Menurut Roma 12 : 7" 2, no. 2

The examples of Jesus influenced his leadership, such as His obedience to His Father's will (John 4:34). Furthermore, in each of His teaching and act, He gave Himself as an example. He was consistent, His words and deeds were uniform, and He became a Person of integrity and applied obedience to the Father. He also lived simply and was unafraid to press on immoral acts violating ethics in society life. The simple life rid bad prejudice to hedonism and consumerism and was a manifestation of His teaching of different concept of servitude to the world, which was servitude of simplicity and integrity.³⁸ This aimed at bringing change in all stations of life, including spirituality to be suited to Biblical principles.³⁹

By following examples of Jesus' leadership, Church leaders or pastors are expected to actualize servant principles, prioritize Jesus-like obedience, and understand that in its concept, a servant should deny oneself, will oneself, and give one's life to serve others.⁴⁰ This means that a servant leader must be someone who is called by God and aware that his/her leadership comes from God & not the result of ambition or of leadership-seizing effort, so that s/he has a responsibility to God as his/her Master first and then carries out service to his/her followers by following what Jesus has done.⁴¹

(2020): 184–97, <https://doi.org/10.37364/jireh.v2i2.43>.

³⁹ Selvianti Selvianti, "Menerapkan Prinsip Pelayanan Konseling Berdasarkan Injil Yohanes," *BIA': Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen Kontekstual* 1, no. 2 (December 30, 2018): 253–66, <https://doi.org/10.34307/b.v1i2.48>.

⁴⁰ Ezra Tari and Talizaro Tafonao, "Konsep Hamba Berdasarkan Markus 10:44," *KENOSIS: Jurnal Kajian Teologi* 5, no. 1 (2019): 77–91, <https://doi.org/10.37196/kenosis.v5i1.57>.

⁴¹ Natanael S Prajogo, "Implementasi Kepemimpinan Gembala Yang Melayani Berdasarkan 1 Petrus 5: 2-10 Di Kalangan Gembala Jemaat Gereja Bethel Indonesia Se-Jawa Tengah," *HARVESTER: Jurnal Teologi Dan Kepemimpinan Kristen* 4, no. 1 (2019): 1–21.

Applying Christian servant leadership

The values of the Kingdom of God manifested in Biblical truth are ethical guides compulsory for Christian leaders to follow, especially in pastoring efforts.⁴² In this set of values, the first characteristic a Christian leader needs to realize is servant leadership, since this kind of leadership was actualized by Jesus. In this leadership style, one must show open-heartedness and willingness not to use what s/he owns. A leader of this kind is willing to give his/her share to others. This act was initiated by Jesus through the emptying of Himself to become a slave (Philippians 2:5-7).⁴³ The act exposed Jesus to a life of suffering, both physical and psychological, which is an expression of willingness to lose His rights⁴⁴ in order to maximize His scope of service in this world. By following this example, a Christian leader will keep becoming an inspiration to his/her congregation. Nevertheless, the servant character is not only a matter of personal sacrifice, but also a matter of total dependence to God's help and guidance and of prioritizing services to people within a servant's community.⁴⁵

Christian leadership carrying servanthship values is also a kind of leadership based on the Christian belief system systematically developed from Biblical truth. The role of

leadership is not to be enforced by violence and authoritarianism, but to be applied by humility, fear to sin, charity, truth- and peace- seeking heart, and readiness to suffer.⁴⁶ These characteristics are also based on the motivation to glorify God in servicing others, similar to Jesus whose motivation did not arise from his own interest, but others. Jesus led others based on compassion. Therefore, His leadership impacted not only the community life, but also the personal life of each of His followers.⁴⁷ Since Christian leadership is servanthship-based which is greatly needed by the church, Christian leaders are absolutely required to learn humbly from the Lord Himself.⁴⁸

Living honorably by the values of God's word

One of the elements of honorable living is credibility, a life quality one owns, produced by his/her personal qualities, and usually speaks volumes of his/her good character.⁴⁹ A Christian owns credibility by showing a way of life oriented to absolute obedience to will, sovereignty, and truth of God as those of Christ's life ethics also oriented to the Kingdom of God.⁵⁰ This orientation makes Christian leaders mobilize all resources s/he is entrusted to, to be led with compassion and responsibility in a Christian way,⁵¹ since essentially Christian leadership is a process to achieve goals carried

⁴² Arozatulo Telaumbanua, "Peran Gembala Sidang Sebagai Pendidik Dalam Pertumbuhan Rohani Jemaat," *FIDEI: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis Dan Praktika* 2, no. 2 (December 10, 2019): 362–87, <https://doi.org/10.34081/fidei.v2i2.45>.

⁴³ Bimo Setyo Utomo, "Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Hamba Yesus Kristus Menurut Filipi 2: 5-8," *DIEGESIS: Jurnal Teologi Kharismatika* 3, no. 2 (2020): 107–19.

⁴⁴ R. Soedarmo, *Ikhtisar Dogmatika* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2015), 136.

⁴⁵ Yanto Paulus Hermanto, "The Role of Pastors to Care for Their Congregations Both During Covid-19 Outbreak and After," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* 4, no. 12 (2021): 433–35.

⁴⁶ Kuncoro Condro, "Kepemimpinan Kerajaan Allah Berdasarkan Ucapan Bahagia

Ajaran Yesus Kristus Matius 5: 3-12," *Sanctum Domine: Jurnal Teologi* 8, no. 2 (2019): 65–94.

⁴⁷ Yahya Wijaya, "Kepemimpinan Yesus Sebagai Acuan Bagi Kepemimpinan Gereja Masa Kini," *Jurnal Jaffray* 16, no. 2 (2018): 129–30, <https://doi.org/10.25278/jj71.v16i2.287>.

⁴⁸ Bob Jokiman, "Dasar-Dasar Alkitabiah Pengembangan Kepemimpinan," *Veritas: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 4, no. 1 (2003): 87–106, <https://doi.org/10.36421/veritas.v4i1.102>.

⁴⁹ Simanjuntak and Santo, "Kepemimpinan Gembala Sidang Dalam Meningkatkan Pertumbuhan Jemaat: Sebuah Refleksi 1 Petrus 5."

⁵⁰ Henk Ten Nepel, *Jalan Yang Lebih Utama Lagi: Etika Perjanjian Baru* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 9.

⁵¹ I Putu Ayub Darmawan and Ruat Diana, "Keterampilan Kepala Sekolah Sebagai Manajer Dalam Perspektif Kepemimpinan Alkitabiah," *KINAA: Jurnal Kepemimpinan Kristen Dan Pemberdayaan Jemaat* 1, no. 1 (2020): 40–55.

out by Christian principles founded in the Bible.⁵² It is from that foundation that honorable living coming from obedience to the Word is exemplifiable to the congregation or people a Christian leader lead.

In the New Testament, Paul gave his advice to Timothy, the young leader, to think “whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise...” (Philippians 4:8) and to do “those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me...” (Philippians 4:9) as the bases of honorable living, so that “...the God of peace shall be with you” (Philippians 4:9). Paul also set the criteria for honorable living of Christians to bring the values of Christianity in communal life in his first pastoral letter to Timothy. In 1 Timothy 3:1-3, 7 the qualifications for church leaders are “blameless, ... vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;” and “...have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”

Lastly, in his correspondence to the churches, Paul stated that Jesus had exemplified a faithful and maximum service. In His life of service, Jesus gave His best, which is His life for sinful humans. All believers who have spiritual maturity will surely try to emulate Christ by serving with maximum effort and faithfulness.⁵³

Conclusion

The life of Balaam becomes a cautionary story for today’s leaders that living in motivation of obedience to the Word of God becomes the main condition to be in God’s calling. Christian leadership should be responsible in

exemplifying simple life and staying away from greed & money-oriented service as the primary means of serving God. Thus, Christian leaders can imitate Christ’s leadership by applying servant characteristics in Christian leadership and upholding holiness as an effort to live honorably in the values of the Word of God.

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⁵² Darmawan and Diana.

⁵³ Agung Gunawan, “Pemuridan Dan Kedewasaan Rohani,” *SOLA GRATIA: Jurnal*

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