

## Research Article

# The Church as a Divine Instrument in Advancing God's Mission through the Implementation of Pastoral Counseling

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**Abstract.**

This research uses a qualitative content analysis approach. The data collection technique is done by looking at books and journal articles related to the topic discussed. The data analysis technique was carried out with qualitative content analysis as the main method for discussing the central role of the church as an instrument for carrying out God's mission, with a particular focus on the effective implementation of pastoral counseling. This research aims to find out what is meant by the church as an instrument of God's mission. Furthermore, the research aims to determine the implementation of pastoral counseling in the mission of the church and through the church as an instrument of God's mission. As a result, the church is sent to proclaim the message in and through Jesus Christ, which must be responded to with true faith and repentance. The pastoral function is an operational goal of God's mission that can be achieved through pastoral services provided to others. Pastors and counselors should learn counseling approaches and techniques to provide more inclusive and relational ministry by exploring forms of collaboration that can be developed through the use of existing resources within the community or through partnerships with mental health professionals and outreach services. Finally, this integrative collaboration enables the church to do mission service through pastoral care with a holistic approach as a dynamic expression of the church's commitment to fulfill God's mission on earth.

**Keywords:** empowering, the church, instrument, God's mission, implementation, pastoral counseling

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

God's mission is the act of God revealing or presenting Himself to His people, so that man can know Him, connect with Him and become His instrument to rule over all of God's creation. God's work comes to man and is revealed to man through general revelation, which is universal, for all people, while special revelation is particular, only for God's people.[1] The mission is a picture of God's work that illustrates who God is and what He does. The marvelous fact of God's gift is at the heart of Jesus' mission and ministry, transcending creed, religion, economic status, gender, ethnicity, race, and

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class.[2] This is an example of God's mission to "bring good news to the oppressed, proclaim deliverance from mortal sins, heal the sick, and proclaim the grace of the Lord."

Moreover, the basic theology of Christian ministry is based on God. Mission comes from the heart of God. God is the source of love. Because of God's great love for mankind, the mission must be carried out.[3] This is consistent with the Latin-derived expression "Missio Dei", which means "divine mission". This meaning refers to the work of the church as part of God's work. The Church is a community that serves and bears witness in and for the world. Static ecclesiology is being replaced by a dynamic ecclesiology is missionary and eschatological. The church is the people of God called out of the world, placed in the world planted and sent into the world and sent into the world.[4]

The Church's mission is therefore part of a larger mission, which is part of God's mission to the world, not the whole of God's mission.[4] The leitmotif of the mission is God's mercy and love for His creatures, and the culmination of the mission is the Kingdom, God's rule over His people.[5] Thus, the mission comes from God and returns to God Himself. This Missio Dei shapes the motives and attitudes in the mission of the Church. Because the church is motivated by the love of God, Do not dominate other people, organizations, or individual church groups or organizations, or force them to exercise their rights to the detriment of another person's or God's mission. Guder argues that God's rule cannot be reduced to the level of humans or interpreted for human purposes.[5] The mission as an act is based on the love of the Father and becomes the God-given mission to be fulfilled by all believers worldwide.

Based on this theological understanding of her mission, the Church can never stand still or be satisfied. the special way God's word is revealed in the world through God's Church.[6] God's message must be proclaimed regarding the good news of salvation and deliverance[5] In other words, The church must be able to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom of God to many people. Because the church's mandate to preach the gospel comes from God. So that both church organizations and individuals always preach the gospel to unbelievers, so that people who believe and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior are God's chosen people.[7] The Church becomes a place of theological and missionary research and pursuit and of continuous pastoral care and accompaniment in preaching, mission, and evangelizing the community.

## 2. METHOD

Content analysis is a qualitative research technique that systematically analyzes and interprets the content of various forms of communication, such as written text. This method examines the characteristics, themes, patterns, and meanings of content to generate insights and draw conclusions.[8] This research uses the Content analysis method described as the scientific study of the content of communication. It is the study of content with reference to the meaning, context, and intent contained in the message.[9] The main steps for conducting content analysis are as follows: Clearly define the purpose and scope of the analysis. In this study, the researcher intends to describe the existence of the church as an instrument of God's mission through the implementation of pastoral counseling. And draw conclusions from the results of the content analysis and interpret the results in relation to the research questions and objectives.

### 2.1. Research Focus

This research is focused on "The Church as an Instrument of God's Mission: Implementation of Pastoral Counseling", with the research unit of analysis being books and articles, which are related to the research focus.

### 2.2. Data Collection Technique

The data collected in this study were obtained directly by documenting articles and books that have a close link to The Church as an Instrument of God's Mission: Implementation of Pastoral Counseling.

### 2.3. Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique used is the Qualitative content analysis technique. The reason researchers use qualitative content analysis is that qualitative content analysis does not only focus its research on the content of the communication that is explicit (visible or manifest), but can also be used to determine the content of the communication that is implied (hidden or latent message).[10] This qualitative content analysis technique is used by researchers with the aim of finding, identifying, processing, and analyzing texts

to know and understand The Church as an Instrument of God's Mission: Implementation of Pastoral Counseling. In its application, the data is then analyzed using the qualitative content analysis method to obtain and determine the implementation that can be the church through pastoral counseling.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Result

#### 3.1.1. The Church as an Instrument of God's Mission

The church, whose existence was created and built to bless the world, must always pursue its missionary responsibilities through fellowship, service, witness, proclamation and human development by bringing shalom (John 17:18).[11] Then also not for the sake of the world itself, but so that God's royal kingdom can come into the world through the ministry of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A missionary church is not an end in itself, but a means in God's hands to enable His kingdom to come into the world. As long as the church is faithful to this essential calling, it will be a true and useful church for God. When such dynamism is absent in the world, then the church ceases to be a true church. Such a church is useless to God.[12] The primary duty of the church is to encourage its members to be witnesses to Christ. For someone to become an active witness of Christ, the grace of God in Jesus Christ must first work in him. The church must be freed from its self-centeredness. The church must change from asking what the church can do for them to pastors asking what they can do to serve God with their gifts and talents. Personal transformation, repentance, self-redemption, and the desire to take up the cross for Christ is a very important process in sinful human nature. It is also the only way for a follower of Jesus Christ (Luke 9:23-26). The witness of the Church is never without sacrifice and obedience. Through the obedience of the church, Christ is with her congregation, and the importance of her obedience is particularly emphasized.

The church, fulfilling its missionary task as a church, must now reconnect with foundational truths to proclaim and teach the foundational truths of God's word (worship); encourage discipleship of one another (witness); and (prove); and equip members for service as servants of Christ to engage in practices that affect people's lives (pastoral care).

## 3.2. Implementation of Pastoral Counseling in the Church's Mission

The mission of the church is to go out into the world, make disciples, preach the gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and gather disciples into churches to worship God, It is to keep the commandments of God in The world to come for the glory of God the Father.[13] The church not only has a mission, but also the whole existence of the church is a mission, or in other words, the identity of the church itself is a mission. A church is only truly a church when it is on a mission.[14] The church can respond to each person's needs such as warmth, care, support, and shepherding through pastoral care. This need peaks at times of personal stress and social turmoil.[15] With this in mind, Christian Counseling Ministries use serious gospel-based Christian content and make extensive use of psychological and psycho-psychological techniques to address everyday human problems and emotional difficulties, or It is defined as working to solve or alleviate a need.[16] As church leaders, pastors have a significant influence on their congregations. In this case, William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jackle in their summary of sources from church history, suggest four functions of pastoral ministry throughout the centuries.[17] What is meant by function is the usefulness or benefit that can be obtained from the work of assistance. It is through the pastoral function that the operational goals of God's mission can be achieved in the pastoral care given to others. The four functions are:

### 3.2.1. Guiding

In brief, guiding means helping a confused person make concrete choices among various alternative thoughts and actions when those choices affect his soul's present and future state.[15] A person who has experienced suffering, such as loss of limbs, loss of family, or loss of property, is often in a difficult position to decide what to do next. Most sufferers do not want to accept the changes that occur, which makes them confused. This function can also be said to be a teaching function because there are many opportunities to teach everything related to life, especially about faith and hope in Jesus Christ.

The task of pastoral counseling is to help those under care, whether the congregation themselves or others (including non-believers), develop their theological understanding in such a way as to encourage them to seek answers in Scripture. Present and share

your faith. In turn, they will be able to find God's guidance for themselves. [18] This should be a church concern so that the congregation can experience the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, if the church does not yet have a strong faith, counselors need to guide and guide the church and the people around them to choose and live in the most appropriate direction for the situation. At the "soul level" more change can happen to them without making rules or judging what is good or bad. The interpretation and application of biblical truth must be through the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

### 3.2.2. Sustaining

Support refers to helping people who are "suffering" cope and deal with situations where recovery from an illness or condition is not possible.[17] This supporting function is carried out so that people who experience great suffering do not easily lose faith, especially in God. The counselor's work can be done for those who are suffering, supporting them, keeping them alive, and maintaining their hope that God will never leave or forget them, but will always be with them.

A clear understanding of the meaning of pastoral care concludes that an essential part of good pastoral care is the ability to listen to, remember, verify, and affirm the stories of congregants and unbelievers. to give substance to.[18] In this way, those seeking community and advice are encouraged to gain a deeper understanding of their spirituality and integrate all aspects of life. Ideally, the result is a satisfying overall experience.

### 3.2.3. C. Healing

Healing is a pastoral function aimed at overcoming some damage, bringing the person back to wholeness, and bringing the problem to a better state than before.[19] The Church today is witnessing the emergence of a paradigm of missionary work of peace and reconciliation. The task of mediation must be appropriate for the particular context. Reconciliation is also very important Because it is not one of the most compelling ways to express the meaning of the gospel today..[20] Under the pressure of painful memories that bind, hurt, mourn and burden people, the Church must proclaim and act to bring about reconciliation and healing. [21]

In the quarter century since Ralph Winter's pivotal speech at the Lausanne Congress in 1974, the purpose of the mission has increasingly come to be seen as evangelizing

unreached peoples.[22] Today many are refining and expanding (rather than weakening or abandoning) that view. Through missionaries, the church will free itself to seek truly fresh understandings to be applied in each local context of a globalizing world. This will be crucial in bringing new life to people who are suffering.[23] Everyone who suffers cannot accept what is happening especially the change of life function. Mental wounds and bodily damage often do not allow a person to accept their situation well, they feel useless with the circumstances experienced. The function of healing is to reassure that there is still new hope in physical, psychological, or spiritual damage.

The parable of the woman who bled for 12 years in Luke 8:43-48 had many physical problems such as irregular bleeding, anemia, weakness, and infertility. Her social problems were compounded because she was considered unclean (Leviticus 15:19-30). She was certainly dealing with social, psychological, physical problems and perhaps also disappointment with God. Since the unclean person could not go to the temple to worship or seek healing, she became spiritually cut off from God. However, upon hearing about Jesus, the woman decided to come to Him despite the stares of those who considered her unclean. But Jesus said to her: "My daughter, your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 8:48). Luther called this simulation "Justus et peccator" (declaring the saint and the sinner at the same time). Types of healing include: Touching human suffering and furthering its healing through words and deeds.[24]. This is an example of how healing requires a change of life in context and environment and transcends cultural and religious boundaries. In this regard, the Church must recognize that its mission is responsive to the gift of healing that empowers it and enables it to fulfill its role.

### 3.2.4. Reconciling

Reconciliation aims to restore the relationship between man and himself, with his fellow man, and between man and God. In the historical tradition, penance takes two forms, namely forgiveness and punishment, of course, preceded by confession. [17] This atoning function guides human beings back to finding purpose in their relationships with themselves, with others, and with God so that they can again function as human beings at large.

Another role of pastoral care is that of nurturing which is aimed at empowering those who seek counsel to explore the opportunities that God gives people, including the emotional aspects, ways of thinking, motivation and will, behavior, spiritual life,

interactions, etc. to develop to grow and develop their lives as a force that he can rely on to continue his life.[19] The pastoral ministry that must be carried out is a process of accompaniment that not only solves problems but also brings change or life change and spiritual growth, with the main goal of making people live like Christ and imitate Him.

Innovative, creative, and more effective forms of mission through pastoral care and dialog, die praxis must be explored.[25] God in Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, has a mission to bring healing, reconciliation, wholeness, liberation, and salvation to the world through the Church.[26] The Holy Spirit is the predominant figure in all counseling activities and only the Holy Spirit can bring about radical change in people. If the Holy Spirit is not working in the person being counseled, the change in the person being counseled will be temporary and will soon cause similar or even worse problems.[27]

A Christian's passion for unity, justice, peace, and the mission of healing should be expressed in appropriate deeds toward others. This understanding of Christian mission and ministry means that God has come into the world, inviting people to share in the creative and liberating dynamics of love in history and His mission.[28] Human efforts cannot banish sin from the world, but God incorporates sin into the impetus of mission and builds up the spirituality of believers as a sign of His rulership on earth.

This gospel application and contextualization show Christians that loving God and loving others is the same act, not a sequential act.[29] God gives two commandments in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. At the same time, he uses and gives them the same weight. So Jesus combined the two commandments into one. Therefore, when believers profess to love God, they must also love their neighbors. Because loving God means nothing more than sacrificing others, or allowing them to suffer or continue to live in darkness.

The practical implication is that the church recognizes, through the power of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the essence of the mission is witness or community witnessing, ministering, and reconciling.[30] God created the church and sustained it with the power of the Spirit, the gift of the Word, and the sacraments.[31] Therefore, missionary existence and the missionary practice of the Church are inseparable. The Church, as a Christian community, is an expression of God's intention to bring reconciliation and healing to all people everywhere. Any attempt to separate belief from practice must be avoided. There is no division between Orthodoxy and Orthodoxy.



From a biblical perspective, redemption is essentially the work of the triune God to fulfill God's eternal purpose of creation and salvation through Jesus Christ. (Colossians 1:19-20) Reconciliation between man and God occurs by God's grace given to man. The Bible contains stories of reconciliation that Christians can refer to. In the Old Testament, it repeatedly speaks of the estrangement between God and His people, and of God's initiative to repair the relationship broken by human pride and rebellion against God. Likewise in the New Testament, the idea of reconciliation is described by Paul that those who have been reconciled through Christ will not be divided. Living together as God's chosen people should be the first expression of God's plan to unite all things. (Galatians 3:28). Paul expressed the content of the gospel as good news, described ministry as good news, and used the term "redemption" to describe the ministry and mission of the apostles and the universal church..[32] Reconciliation is one of the most powerful ways to express the meaning of the gospel today. In the midst of the violence, suffering, and lasting wounds that people remember, the Church, as God's servant of reconciliation, proclaims that recovery is possible through Jesus Christ and his communion.[33] An understanding of reconciliation as a program for people to reconcile with God.

### **3.2.5. Implementation of Pastoral Counseling through the Church as God's Mission Instrument**

The Christian church has been involved in pastoral counseling since its inception. With this tradition, believers are called to reaffirm the integrated ministry of mission and pastoral care. In pastoral ministry, pastors must understand the cultural context of their congregation to preach and teach effectively. Pastors must understand their worldviews, beliefs, and values to reach out to people from different cultures. Being missional equips pastors with the knowledge and tools to overcome cultural barriers, promote intercultural understanding, and communicate the gospel message effectively and holistically.

Missionary churches and missionary activities contextualize their participation in the *Missio Dei* and respond comprehensively and holistically to the challenges of the ever-changing and complex situation. Missions are contextualized in terms of purpose, practice, and location. Its purpose encompasses all creation, and all life, as an ecological concern. Spiritual, social, political, and life and humanity as a whole. Its practice requires the participation of the entire Church, men, and women of all ages. The church is situational and therefore works for reconciliation and healing.[34] According to Darrell

Guder, We must learn to speak of God as God in our ministry and to understand the Church as a sent people.[35] This is the Church's mission and missionary existence. In synergy between God and humans, God chose to work through humans. Jesus Christ is Jesus Christ, the Savior, the Overcomer, the Deliverer, and believers are involved in building a Church that reflects God's rulership on earth and speaks a prophetic voice that reaches and reconciles many souls. increase.[36] A missionary church must have faith, courage, humility, and a desire to reach lost souls by engaging in the practice of prophecy through the proclamation of God's Word.

The theme of the World Missions Conference was not only an intensive analysis of the mission of the Church today. The theme of this conference is not only the Church in its institutional form but also the reality of its existence as a community praying for and open to the healing, reconciliation, renewal, and revitalization of humanity. The world as a community is called by Christ to radiate a missionary activity that becomes the light and salt of the neighborhood.[37] In other words, the church must not only protect itself but reach out to the world in search of God. The missionary church must therefore strengthen and develop the Christian community so that it "becomes a good example in society, progresses, and enjoys human dignity." Pastoral care becomes part of the witness and essential mission of the Church when it is organized to ensure proper accountability to God.

### 3.3. Discussion

The church as an instrument of God's missionary work is a concept related to the role of the church in doing missionary work in the world. God's mission usually includes Bible teaching, evangelism, growing spiritually, and serving and uplifting people. The church as an instrument of God's mission means that the church has a duty to be an extension of Christ in this world. An important aspect of fulfilling the mission of the church is pastoral counseling. Counseling is a counseling approach used by church leaders or pastoral people to help individuals or groups in the areas of their spiritual and emotional lives. With increasing diversity in the congregation, an innovative approach is to focus on diversity competency in pastoral counseling. This involves developing an understanding of different cultural backgrounds, values, and worldviews to better meet the needs of diverse communities. The pastoral goal of counseling is to empowering people overcome difficulties, live meaningful lives, and build healthy relationships with God and others. In the context of the church, the implementation of pastoral counseling

is about blending the principles of professional counseling with religious values and beliefs. This approach enables the church to offer comprehensive help and support to its members for issues such as personal relationships, depression, anxiety, loss, and spiritual concerns.

In practice, churches may involve Pastors or priests as well as counselors. churches may use various counseling methods, such as therapeutic approaches, family counseling, or personal counseling, to help church members overcome problems and grow spiritually. However, it is important to note that the implementation of pastoral care may differ from church to church. The approach used, the resources available, and the philosophy of the church may influence pastoral practices. Therefore, it is important for churches to have clear policies and guidelines in the implementation of pastoral care to ensure the success and integrity of this ministry.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The goal of counseling is to achieve mental, emotional, physical, and intellectual perfection. This is most effectively achieved by carers finding solutions and understanding specific situations in a way that achieves wholeness on a truly inner level. A personal encounter between man and the Creator. The person served by the pastor or shepherd can surrender to the Lord Jesus as his/her personal Lord and Savior by accepting, believing, and acknowledging the redemptive work that the Lord Jesus has done for him as a sinful human being. The wholeness achieved in this way provides an overall sense of well-being that cannot be produced through the imposition of a belief system and worldview. In this way, the church, for example existing congregations that are open to the work of the Holy Spirit, becomes an instrument and carrier of God's mission in guiding the person whom God entrusts to be served to understand his existence as a sinful human being. God's mission must be fulfilled. For God Himself desires to call all nations to Himself. The mission is the means or God-given grace by which all mankind is appointed by God to fulfill God's call to become a nation and family of God. Supporting other people's lives is a struggle to keep them always dependent on God. The church is sent to preach a message in and through Jesus Christ that it must respond by faith and by the faith of true repentance. The church becomes God's instrument for healing the sick physically, mentally, and spiritually. The existence of the Church becomes God's instrument for reconciling people to God, to others, to themselves, and to this nature. As an instrument of God's mission, the Church serves,

heals, and reconciles mankind and God, others and the wounded world, and humanity and the wounded world. Pastors and counselors should learn counseling approaches and techniques to provide a more inclusive and relational ministry. Churches explore forms of collaboration that can be developed through the use of existing resources within the community or through partnerships with mental health professionals, outreach services, or other community organizations. By forming partnerships, the community can tap into expertise and resources available in the wider community to enhance counseling services. This collaboration allows for a holistic approach that includes both spiritual and psychological perspectives. Researchers have limited time so it has an impact on the ability to scrutinize data. This research can be continued using Qualitative research methods by conducting interviews with certain churches.

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