

Calling as a Caregiver in Gospel Preaching (SMTPI) at the GPM Ebenhaezer SKIP Congregation



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ABSTRACT

Caregivers' roles within formal church education are pivotal for the spiritual and character development of Sunday school children, with parents and church members, particularly caregivers, holding significant influence in this process. The Sunday Morning Teaching Program Institute (SM-TPI) stands as a vital platform for continuing children's education within the GPM EBENHEZER Congregation. However, a notable lack of awareness among caregivers in Sector XIII has been observed, hindering their ability to fulfill their duties and responsibilities and subsequently resulting in adverse effects on Sunday school children. The primary issue identified lies in caregivers' busyness and lack of awareness, which leads to the neglect of their duties in Sunday school. Various factors such as health concerns, economic constraints, and educational limitations contribute to these challenges, thereby impacting the effectiveness of the education process within Sunday school settings. In response to these challenges, this study employs a qualitative approach to delve into the duties and responsibilities of caregivers as servants within the Sunday school context. Through the collection and analysis of data, this article aims to propose a Christian education response that addresses these challenges and offers insights into understanding the role of caregivers as servants within the church community. The findings of this research contribute to enhancing awareness among caregivers regarding their roles and responsibilities, thereby fostering a more conducive environment for the spiritual and character development of Sunday school children. Additionally, this study provides a valuable perspective on the calling of caregivers as servants within the church, thereby enriching discussions surrounding formal church education practices.

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1. Introduction

Education serves as the foundational cornerstone for all individuals, representing a concerted effort to elevate human beings by nurturing their innate humanity through the optimal cultivation of their faculties, thereby fully actualizing their human identity [1]. Children, bestowed as a divine gift from God through the union of parents within holy matrimony, hold exceptional significance in the lives of their guardians [2], also being regarded as the backbone of the church and future stewards of spreading the Gospel [3]. Hence, it is imperative that children are afforded a special place within both the family and the church, receiving formal education that imparts essential moral values, including those intrinsic to Christianity [4]. Formal church education assumes paramount importance in professionally fostering the holistic development of children and adolescents, thereby fortifying the congregation's tri-resilience encompassing faith, social, economic, and scientific aspects [5]. Consequently, Sunday school and missionary education (SM-TPI) warrant earnest attention from various

stakeholders, including parents, congregational leaders, and caregivers, who bear the primary responsibility for nurturing and instructing children within these religious settings [6].

Sunday School and Gospel Preaching Tasks (SM-TPI) serve as the focal point of church service, given their pivotal role in shaping the future generation of the church. Thus, the church must diligently prepare children to assume leadership roles in the future, equipped with the requisite understanding and conviction to perpetuate the church's mission [7]. In the context of Sunday school, pedagogy is tailored to align with children's developmental stages, ensuring that teachings are comprehensible and age-appropriate, thereby facilitating optimal understanding and assimilation [8]. However, in the GMP EBENHAEZER Skip congregation, Sector XIII, the scarcity of caregivers significantly hampers the worship process, adversely impacting the children under their care. This shortage and reluctance among caregivers result in suboptimal provision of educational material and an amalgamation of children across various age groups during worship sessions. The research underscores a deficiency in caregiver engagement within Sunday school services, attributable to reasons such as caregivers relocating or being preoccupied with personal matters. Consequently, the absence of active caregiver involvement impedes the Sunday school service process, depriving children of proper guidance and instruction. Despite an initial contingent of 15 caregivers, only a fraction actively fulfill their duties, exacerbating the challenges faced by the Sunday school service.

Previous research conducted by Nurlaila Tuanany et al. focused on "Improving the Quality of Education and Service Through the Essence of Christian Spirituality and Skills." The aim of this research was to enhance congregational servants' understanding of the significance of possessing and manifesting good spirituality in their roles of serving both the family and congregation. Additionally, it aimed to train church ministers in pastoral care techniques, sermon/reflection design, as well as keyboard players, cantoria, procantors, trumpeters, and choirs in enriching worship liturgy. It also emphasized the importance of providing teaching aids for the Sunday School learning process [9]. Furthermore, research conducted by Sjeny Liza Souisa regarding the "Transformation of Free Sunday School Learning in the Church in the New Normal Era" aimed to illustrate the evolution of Sunday School learning practices in the contemporary era. This research advocated for a pedagogical approach in the "new normal" characterized by attributes such as fun, effectiveness, recreation, democracy, empathy, creativity, and activity, abbreviated as "MERDEKA" [10]. In addition, research by Yosefo Gule et al. explored the "Analysis of the Role of Caregivers in Loving and Educating Children through Their Personality." This study elucidated the pivotal role of caregivers in nurturing and educating children, emphasizing the importance of genuine affection and wholehearted dedication in educational settings [11]. While these studies addressed the dynamics of formal church education, focusing on spirituality, skills, transformative learning, and caregiver roles, there remains a gap in literature regarding the "Calling as a Caregiver of the Gospel Preacher (SMTPI)." Hence, the author is motivated to undertake research to explore this aspect.

2. Method

The research presented in this paper utilizes qualitative methodology, which is commonly employed for various research objectives. In qualitative research, theory often serves as a framework for explaining behaviors and attitudes [12]. This particular study was conducted within the context of the GPM EBENHAEZER Skip congregation, Sector XIII. Data collection involved multiple techniques including observation, interviews, and literature review. Furthermore, the research employed various data analysis techniques. Data analysis encompasses the process of organizing data to facilitate interpretation [13]. This entails arranging words into coherent patterns, themes, or categories [14]. Categorization or classification of data is essential to prevent confusion during interpretation and to derive meaningful analyses [15]. Additionally, data analysis involves elucidating patterns or categories and exploring relationships between phenomena [16]. The validity of research findings necessitates assessment by individuals and testing in diverse contexts [17]. To ensure rigor in analysis, several steps are undertaken. As per Chi, the initial step involves Data Reduction, wherein data is systematically compiled from the field and transcribed into detailed

descriptions or reports. Subsequently, Data Display occurs, followed by the final step of drawing conclusions and verification [18].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Definition of Teacher in the Bible

Teachers play a vital role in the lives of their students, often working tirelessly and without recognition. This concept mirrors the relationship between the Lord Jesus and his disciples, where Jesus served as a great teacher to his twelve disciples and others who followed him, unparalleled in his ability to impart knowledge [19]. In the New Testament, Jesus is frequently referred to as "*rabbi*" by his disciples, the Pharisees, and all those who followed him. During that time, the title "*rabbi*" denoted an honorary distinction reserved for esteemed teachers, particularly those who instructed on Jewish religious teachings or the Torah [20]. Given the significance of teachers in shaping the lives of their students, it is imperative for educators, especially those in Sunday schools, to possess qualities and expertise in teaching. Effective teaching in Sunday school necessitates employing diverse methodologies to ensure comprehension and understanding of the teachings conveyed by caregivers. Teaching transcends being merely a profession; rather, it embodies the transformative impact of guiding students towards becoming valuable contributors to society. A truly exceptional teacher not only imparts knowledge but also embodies the qualities of the ultimate teacher, Jesus Christ. Such teachers reflect mature attitudes and values, particularly in matters of faith, grounded in the truth of God's word. In essence, biblical teaching entails more than just imparting knowledge; it involves guiding students towards living in accordance with the teachings of Christ. In summary, a biblical teacher mirrors the character and soul of Jesus Christ, encouraging students not only to learn but also to apply the teachings in their lives based on the truth of God's word [21].

3.2. Caregiver Leadership

Christian leadership should be grounded in the teachings of God's word, as emphasized by the Lord Jesus to His disciples. According to David Roads, disciples exhibit both positive and negative traits; while they demonstrate loyalty in assisting Jesus, they also harbor aspirations for status, power, and worldly recognition. Leadership entails motivating and empowering followers to grow collectively, fostering mutual support, motivation, and reinforcement. A leader must set a positive example and display exemplary character for others to emulate. Christian leadership has been evident throughout the history of salvation, with leaders such as Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Aaron serving as biblical exemplars who guided God's people. However, the ultimate focus of leadership remains on Jesus Christ. Teaching is integral to Christian leadership, and teachers must possess qualities that leave a lasting impression on their students. According to Rohani, there are three models of teacher leadership: Authoritarian, laissez-faire, and democratic. The democratic model, characterized by mutual understanding and trust between teachers and students, is most conducive for effective leadership in the classroom. Teachers play a pivotal role in nurturing this relationship, as their success hinges on the progress of their students. True teachers prioritize service to their students over personal gain, exemplifying sincerity and dedication in their vocation [21].

3.3. School Caregiver Responsibilities Min

The Maluku Protestant Church delineates the role and function of the Sunday School, encompassing education, development, and empowerment of children and teenagers to foster their professional competencies, evangelical-ethical values, and dedication. Additionally, the Sunday School serves as a beacon of "Salt and Light" in the world and as living stones within the Church's mission. These roles and functions are intended to be realized through the renewal of the mind, the formation of Christian identity, and the enhancement of knowledge and skills. The Maluku Protestant Church recognizes caregivers, known as Penganuh, as essential caretakers within its framework. Caregivers are appointed by the Congregation Council based on a decision letter, considering specific criteria: first, they must be members of the GPM sidi; second, they should not be undergoing Church disciplinary action or violating state laws and regulations;

third, they must demonstrate loyalty to Church teachings; fourth, they should be aged between 18 and 60 years; and fifth, they must reside within the congregation. Caregivers in ministry are tasked with ensuring the smooth operation of the Tunas Pessaging Sunday School. Hence, it is imperative for SM-TPI to have a comprehensive understanding of caregivers' identities, duties, responsibilities, and how to foster harmonious relationships with them.

An SM-TPI caregiver is defined as follows: (1) They are church servants who profess belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, indicating exclusive worship of the Lord Allah; (2) They are disciples of Jesus, demonstrating obedience and loyalty to their teacher and willingly executing his directives selflessly; (3) They act as good shepherds for the young members of the congregation, exemplifying qualities such as diligence, patience, and dedication in serving the children involved in SM-TPI; (4) They are individuals appointed by Jesus, the Great Teacher, to serve as teachers or caretakers for his followers; (5) They serve as role models for the children under their care, consistently participating in SM-TPI services and setting an example of active involvement in church activities. As an SM-TPI caregiver, you are responsible for: (1) Accepting the appointment of the Lord Jesus as a caregiver for His followers; (2) Nurturing children entrusted to your care by parents, enabling them to know the Lord Jesus as their Savior through the preaching of the Word, thereby fostering improved mental and spiritual well-being; (3) Fulfilling the appointment by the congregation council as a caretaker; (5) Acknowledging your role and demonstrating willingness to be an effective caregiver.

The responsibilities outlined for caregivers emphasize that they must fulfill their ministry duties responsibly to the Lord Jesus, parents, the congregation, and themselves as partners in ministry. This entails recognizing and comprehending the significance of serving as a manifestation of the duties and responsibilities bestowed by the Lord Jesus for the ministry process of the Tunas Pekabaran Gospel Sunday School (SM-TPI). Caregivers, in their role as servants, must consistently strive to maintain the smooth functioning of SM-TPI's services, as Sunday School serves as a platform for nurturing children's faith in the Lord Jesus. It is evident from this discussion that caregivers play a crucial role in the formal church education of Sunday school children. Interviews with informants yielded the following insights: Mrs. C.U emphasized the importance of caregivers diligently fulfilling their calling duties. Failure to do so indicates a lack of awareness regarding their duties and calling as servants. Similarly, C.T.'s sister highlighted the positive role of caregivers in children's lives but lamented the lack of differentiation in age groups, leading to monotonous worship services. These informant statements underscore the significance of caregivers' roles in the GPM EBENHAEZER Skip Congregation, Sector XIII. Caregivers must possess a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to mitigate obstacles such as delays in providing materials at different age levels.

3.4. The Role of the Church

The church plays a pivotal role in introducing the Lord Jesus Christ to all individuals, serving as a place for people to gather for worship, listen to God's Word, and apply it in their lives. Sunday school children are regarded as the church's priority, with the church focusing on nurturing their spiritual growth and character development, aiming to instill in them the same character as Christ. Additionally, the church recognizes the crucial role of caregivers in this process. Consciously, the Church establishes Sunday school as an educational platform for children and teenagers, emphasizing Christian religious education centered on teaching and spreading the message of Jesus Christ as the Savior. Through Sunday school, the church imparts spiritual and moral guidance to students, fostering a deep-rooted belief in Jesus Christ from an early age. Interview results from informant Mrs. A.T. highlight the church's commitment to instilling strong spiritual values in every child through formal church education. Pastors effectively fulfill their role by entrusting teachers with teaching duties and providing them with motivation and support to carry out their service responsibilities in alignment with biblical teachings. Caregivers are expected to embody these teachings in their daily lives, serving as role models for children. However, in certain instances, the author observed a shortage of caregivers and insufficient support from the church in facilitating Sunday School services. This shortage underscores the church's failure to provide pastoral care, resulting in caregivers lacking awareness of their duties and responsibilities in serving the congregation.

4. Conclusion

Caregivers in the Maluku Protestant Church, often referred to as nannies, have a calling to serve children. Within this calling, caregivers must fulfill their duties and functions in guiding, developing, and educating children. The objective of this coaching and education process is to nurture the child's character and spirituality, enabling them to have a comprehensive understanding of Jesus and embody his teachings in their lives. The extent to which a child comprehends and knows about Jesus is greatly influenced by the caregiver or carer. While children primarily receive Christian religious education within the family, the church also plays a significant role as a venue for such education. Sunday school, facilitated by caregivers, serves as a platform for imparting this education. Caring for children is a faith-based calling aimed at shaping their character and spirituality. Therefore, caregivers must approach their role with utmost joy and responsibility, avoiding negligence or arbitrary actions. As caregivers distribute and provide Christian religious education to children, they play a crucial role in preparing children to become valuable members of the church, society, and nation.

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