

GMIM's Mission as God's Mission and Its Reflection in Improving the Quality of Education at GMIM Schools Post COVID-19 Pandemic

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7012115>

Received: 24 November 2023; Revised: 06 December 2023; Accepted: 12 December 2023; Published: 13 January 2024

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explain the understanding of the mission of the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) as God's mission and explain the reflection of God's mission in improving the quality of GMIM school education post COVID-19 Pandemic. This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study research method. Locus of research on the Mission of God carried out by the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa in education. The information collected was analyzed descriptively. The research results show that GMIM's mission in education is holistic service to humans, both through the GMIM Congregation/Church and GMIM's schools. Holistic service is reflected in the three tasks of the GMIM Church, namely testimony, fellowship, and Diakonia. Education teaches the values of service, love, and caring for others. As a social and spiritual entity, the Church (GMIM) has an important role in influencing and supporting improvements in the quality of education in schools post COVID-19 Pandemic. The Church (GMIM) must realize its mission to improve the quality of school education with full commitment and dedication, by adhering to theological principles that include moral, spiritual, inclusiveness, and social responsibility dimensions. Churches can be valuable partners in joint efforts to create a better and more equitable education system for future generations.

Keywords: God's Mission, GMIM, Missiological Reflection, Quality of Education, COVID-19 Pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The Church is present in the world as an envoy of Jesus Christ to carry out God's mission. The church exists because there is a mission and not the other way around. Just as fire appears through combustion. Where there is no mission there is no church to serve (Gorman, 2015). Therefore, the church has a very important role in all forms of service in this world as a form of obedience to Christ as sender.

Education is not only about the transfer of knowledge but also about the formation of individual character and ethics, which is a strong moral foundation for society. In this case, the church, as an institution with religious foundations, has an invaluable role in supporting education that focuses on the development of moral values.

Churches function as promoters of moral and ethical values, as providers of educational assistance, and as active community centers. The church is a place for quality religious education (the formation of spirituality,

morality, and ethics). The GMIM Church as an institution builds schools that integrate Christian religious values into the educational curriculum and practice them in their daily lives.

In the era of COVID-19 Pandemic with social restrictions, learning from home has resulted in a decline in the quality of graduates, which resulted in decreased learning outcomes and character formation decline (Septiad et al., 2021), increased school dropouts (UNICEF, 2021), violence against children and external risks as well as psychology for students (Khairwati et al., 2021). Entering post-COVID-19 Pandemic era, when learning is carried out offline, it is found that many students come late to school thereby disrupting the learning process which ultimately harms education quality. For this reason, the Church and Schools must pay special attention to improving the character and improving the quality of graduates.

The Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) is a church that carries out God's Mission in education. GMIM as an institution has 1049 congregations which are members of 151 service areas that provide non-formal education for character formation. Education is carried out through worship services in church houses, family homes (columns), and through the Categorical Commission for Fathers, Mothers, Youth, Teenagers, and Children. Apart from that, GMIM has 1037 primary and secondary level schools, 1 (one) High School, and 1 (one) University which provides formal education. This is a manifestation of GMIM's concern for carrying out God's mission in the field of educational services.

Based on the problem formulation, this research aims: (i) to explain the understanding of God's Mission as GMIM's Mission and (ii) to explain the reflection of God's Mission as GMIM's mission in improving the quality of education in GMIM schools post COVID-19 Pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method (Sugiyono, 2007). The research locus is the Mission of God carried out by the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) in education. Information-gathering techniques using documentation and participatory observation (Satori & Komariah, 2012). Documentation of materials from books and research results through assistance and internet and library services. The information collected was analyzed descriptively and continued with understanding the results of the analysis (Kaelan, 2012).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

God's Mission

The mission comes from the Latin word *missio*. In Greek, *apostello*, means sending (Aritonang, 2018). In English, the singular form is Mission, which means the work of God (God's Mission), the work of God can also be called the task given to us by God, which involves us humans. The mission is everything that God is doing for His purposes for all creation, and He calls us to collaborate in achieving His purposes (Wright, 2010). Mission denotes an overall term that explains God's mission for the world (Sunquist, 2013).

Missions (plural) which means practical reality or how the work is carried out (De Kuiper, 1999). Missions also means sending from God, Missions go from God's heart into the world. The word mission refers to the biblical task of the church of Jesus Christ. *Missio Dei* or God's Mission means the revelation of God, the nature and activities of Him who loves the world, God embraces the church and the world when the church has a special opportunity to participate. The church must bridge the gap between Christ and humanity. The church is a terminal, where the church stands between Christ and the world because it is indirectly connected to both (Van Engen, 1991). The plural form of mission is from church missionary but refers to special forms and has a relationship regarding time, existence, or place, as well as certain needs, in participation in mission Dei (Bosh, 2018). Plural missions are the activities of evangelists, and church

founders who reach people who do not yet believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Nikkijuluw & Arischtrachus, 2014).

Missions will continue to exist among Christians (Kirk, 2018). Mission is a gift that originates only from God's work in the world in planning His eternal plans. Mission cannot be separated from God, because it is related to *Missio Dei*. Mission is the activity and action of God in Jesus Christ (Flemming, 2009). God lives and has a purpose involved in world history (De Kuiper, 1999). Church mission, it is the involvement of the church in the mission of the kingdom of God, because what the church creates in this world is part of God's will, namely the news about the presence of the Kingdom of God. Mission can be interpreted as a task that comes from God himself to save the world and is mandated to the church, which is also the task and calling of the church in this world (Artanto, 2010). The essence of mission includes proclamation, testimony, and service. Of these three aspects, it is the revelation of Christ to the world that cannot be separated (Ellis, 2005).

The mission of God does not come from us humans. Missionary God is God who sends. Through the word and the gift of His Spirit, God created men and women in His own image and sent them to rule over nature according to His will with justice and love. The missionary God has chosen to be involved, that is, to act in history. The Gospel of John writes "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." from John, although he goes on to say that this world is hostile to God and His will.

God's love for the world is always expressed in His purpose to change the world, a transformation that can be seen in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is meant to cover all of God's actions in creation and redemption, humans as God's responsible co-workers, and participating in His position as Lord of all creation in justice and peace. Christ has created a new human being. So this mission aims to include everyone in it. The view that mission belongs to God sharpens our focus on the gospel which is the good news of human renewal in Christ.

The purpose of God in His work, the goal in God's Mission is to bring shalom, namely peace. This includes realizing the relationship of the full potentials of all creation and the ultimate reconciliation and unity that exist in Christ (Thomas, 1998). God's people are called to continue and convey the good news. And it is based on God's mission, therefore God's people with the power of the Holy Spirit are sent to realize God's will in every task of their calling (Bosh, 2018).

God's mission is not only limited to preaching the Gospel but also humanitarian actions and solidarity actions. When Jesus was incarnated as a human, He did service to everyone; feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and casting out demons. His presence provides answers to all human conditions. Jesus socialized with the poor and sided with the weak, marginalized, and neglected. Jesus not only gave an example of His ministry in this world, but Jesus demanded that the church do the same as a form of participation in God's Mission.

Talking about mission means talking about participation. Indeed, God is working in this world to restore His damaged creation. Damaged due to natural disasters, war, and irresponsible human practices. These things result in loss of life, poverty, dropping out of school, violence, crime, disease, and so on. The church is obliged to take part or participate in recovery because the church is a co-worker and partner of God. One of the church's participations is education for the community.

GMIM Service Forms as a Manifestation of God's Mission

The church, as a community of God's people, presented by God in this world, is called and sent to present signs of the Kingdom of God and God's peace. In light of this understanding, the identity of the church must be different from other worldly institutions in its work and all activities. In realizing this call, the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM) has duties and responsibilities, namely *Koinonia*,

Marturia, and Diakonia (Triple Duties of the Church).

- **Koinonia**

Koinonia comes from the Greek word “koinon” which consists of the words “koinonein” meaning alliance, “koinonos” meaning friend, ally, and “Koinonia” meaning alliance. It means being together, having something together, sharing something with others, and participating in something (Susanto, 2006). Fellowship or “oneness” with the Lord Jesus Christ describes the Koinonia between churches and between people (Soedarmo, 1986).

Koinonia refers to the fellowship of believers in God in the Lord Jesus Christ. Koinonia means taking part in everything together, mutual participation which includes a sense of mutual friendship (Milnea, 2002). Koinonia is closely related to the church that glorifies God. Koinonia in the church creates an environment where members can support and motivate each other.

Christian education must aim to produce graduates who are more than just intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals and are full of love. Koinonia and the church’s mission in the field of education are two aspects that support each other. While the mission of the church provides purpose and direction for that education. When these two aspects work together, the church can have a positive impact in improving education and forming a generation that is strong in faith.

- **Marturia**

Marturia (Greek) means testimony or defense. Nowadays Marturia is usually used for the task of the church and believers to testify to the grace of Christ to the world (Soedarmo, 1986). The word witness in martureo means stating (announcing) what the congregation believes and confesses to and confesses to other people with the intention of that person coming to Christ (Prodjiwijono, 2008).

Marturia in church education means conveying Christian values to students. This includes teaching about morality, ethics, love, and other values that underlie the Christian faith. Marturia is a way to introduce students to the Christian faith and help them understand how to live in accordance with that faith. Through church education, students can better understand the mission of the church in preaching the Gospel to the world. Marturia can be an integral part of this educational process, by teaching students how important it is to share their faith with others and how to do it well. Marturia plays an important role in the church’s mission in the field of education. It helps students understand Christian values, strengthens their faith, and prepares them to serve and bear witness in the world. When Marturia is well integrated into a church’s educational program, it can be a powerful tool in forming students who are spiritually stronger and better prepared to live out the church’s mission in the world.

- **Diakonia**

According to Soedarmo, Diakonia is generally used for church activities to help economically weak church members (Soedarmo, 1986). In carrying out its duties and responsibilities, the Church must not stop only paying attention to people of the same faith (Gal. 6:10) but also those outside of the same faith (Rom. 5:6-8). According to Noordegraaf, Diakonia is something that can occur with a moved attitude, genuine concern for others, and an attitude of solidarity, when not being above, but next to others to give them (women or men) their natural place (Noordegraaf, 2011). He explained that the words douleo and service mean like a slave, and leitorgos denotes service in the church.

The word Diakonia has a special quality in showing specific service, in Diakonia there is a stronger idea of the concept of loving service, which is a word that shows the loving service of believers in Jesus Christ to others (Noordegraaf, 2011). For Riemer, diaconal is the same as loving service (Riemer, 2005). Diakonia is service to poor people,

sick people, condemned people, people who have no place to live and so on (Abineno, 2006). These acts of love and justice that God assigned to His people as His service to humanity in the New Testament are called Diakonia (service). This word is mentioned together with other words derived from the same root, namely “diakonein” (serve) and “diakonos” (service) (Abineno, 2006). Service (Greek. Diakonia) The Church presents signs of the Kingdom of God in its service, namely influencing the style and atmosphere in society (Milnea, 2002).

Diakonia in church education includes practical service to students, teachers, and families. This could take the form of providing material assistance, providing educational equipment or resources, or even organizing special educational programs for children who need additional help. This Diakonia aims to increase students’ access to quality education. Diakonia and the church’s mission in education are interrelated. Diakonia is a concrete way to implement the church’s mission in education by providing practical services to students, teachers, and families. Through this ministry, churches can positively influence education and help students grow spiritually, intellectually, and socially.

In the GMIM Basic Rules, Article 5 “Forms of Church Vocations”, is stated: GMIM members are called to fellowship, witness, and serve (Badan Pekerja Majelis Sinode GMIM, 2021). This section is a manifestation of GMIM’s consistency as part of God’s church which is presented in the world to carry out God’s mission. Therefore, both as an institution and as individuals, GMIM must be involved in carrying out its calling as God’s witness, fellowship, and serve. For GMIM, the call of the church is a unified whole, inseparable although it can be differentiated. Realizing the importance of the three duties of the church, GMIM then stated in its basic rules: “GMIM is called to equip its members through Church Community Development (PWG) and is responsible for the education and equipping of Special Ministers, both formally, non-formally and informally.”

In awareness of the importance of the three tasks of the church in realizing God’s mission for the world, GMIM is not only called to carry it out, but more than that, GMIM feels the need to equip its members to know, understand this call, and be able to be actively involved in it, carry it out, so that the church’s call will become a movement of church faith to realize God’s mission.

In realizing this call, GMIM declares its commitment and faith to be based on the pattern of service and government of Christ whose implementation is reflected at all levels of service and in the world, where GMIM, both as an organization and as an individual, is present and present. As God’s Church which is presented to be involved in the procession of God’s people to carry out God’s mission, GMIM always maintains and organizes the movement of its ministry by maintaining the balance and continuity of its vocation as God’s church in the world, in the areas of Koinonia, Marturia and Diakonia.

GMIM as an institution that oversees educational institutions, as part of implementing the church’s call, continues to be committed to providing diakonia or serving in improving the quality of education in various educational units. According to open systems theory, it is important to see where an organization or institution exists and is present and how it focuses on inputs and outputs, as well as how the transformation of the organization or institution is for the common good, by emphasizing the impact on the organization or institution (Papadimitriou, 2021). That is what then becomes GMIM’s educational mission to improve the quality of education which will certainly have positive impacts not only for GMIM as an institution but also by improving the quality of education it will have a positive impact on many people around the institution itself. This is the significance of the GMIM church’s mission to improve the quality of education.

Missiological Reflections

Theologically, education can be seen as a call to serve and shape the younger generation. The church has a moral responsibility to provide quality education to its congregation members as a form of love and concern

for the younger generation. Christian education must be more than just the transfer of knowledge. This is an opportunity to equip students with Christian values, morality, and ethics that will help them grow as responsible individuals and play a positive role in society.

GMIM encourages integration between faith and knowledge. This means not only providing an academic education but also helping students understand how their faith is relevant in everyday life and how this faith can guide them in making decisions. The Church is also committed to inclusive education, where every student, regardless of social, economic, or ability background, has the opportunity to receive a quality education. It reflects the principles of equality and justice found in Christianity.

Education in GMIM schools is seen as GMIM's mission effort in its role as a servant to the congregation and community. Improving the quality of education in GMIM schools also helps improve the quality of life of the surrounding community. This can include community service programs, support for disadvantaged children, and efforts to improve the quality of education throughout the region. Therefore, education in GMIM schools integrates GMIM's vision and mission into the school's vision and mission. One of the church's main missions in education in Christian schools is to shape the character of students according to Christian teachings. This includes teaching values such as honesty, justice, humility, sincerity, and love. This is also the main principle that guides teaching and interactions in schools. Christian education should help students grow as better individuals in their faith.

Theologically, it is understood that humans are God's creation and have a moral responsibility to care for and advance His creation. Therefore, GMIM through GMIM schools can teach students about social responsibility, sustainability, and ethics in work and everyday life.

From the perspective of mission theology, education is mission work in service to others. Christianity teaches the values of service, love, and caring for others. From a theological perspective, education can be considered as a way to serve and help individuals achieve their best potential. Therefore, theologically it can be understood that the educational process which continues to develop its quality in GMIM schools, is part of the mission work that just as through Abram all nations received blessings, so through improving the quality in GMIM schools there will be many people who feel thanks to various advances including students as learners. This is also seen as part of implementing the Great Commission in the context of discipleship and teaching. As a social and spiritual entity, the Church has an important role in influencing and supporting improvements in the quality of education in schools. Theological reflection on this topic leads us to a deep understanding of the Church's call to serve society, especially through the field of education:

1. Theological context, the Church is considered as a moral and ethical agent responsible for the formation of individual character and morals. Therefore, the Church's mission to improve the quality of school education can be understood as an integral part of its moral calling. Churches must play an active role in promoting moral and ethical values in school curricula, helping students understand the importance of integrity, empathy, and social responsibility.
2. Spiritual aspect. The church can facilitate the development of the spiritual dimension in education by providing support in the form of religious teaching, spiritual formation, and developing awareness of spiritual values. This helps students understand the meaning of life, goodness, and a higher purpose, which in turn can motivate them to contribute positively to society.
3. Inclusivity and social justice. The Church, as a messenger of love and justice, must play an active role in ensuring that quality education is accessible to all levels of society without discrimination. This means supporting inclusive education programs and seeking to address socioeconomic disparities that can impact equitable access to education.

4. Social responsibility. The church, as a social institution, has a moral responsibility to invite society as a whole to participate in efforts to improve education. This could involve financial support, volunteer assistance, or policy advocacy that supports improving the education system.

To improve the quality of school education, the Church must realize this mission with full commitment and dedication, by adhering to theological principles that include moral, spiritual, inclusiveness, and social responsibility dimensions. In this way, the Church can be a valuable partner in joint efforts to create a better and fairer educational system for future generations.

CONCLUSION

GMIM's mission as God's mission in education is holistic service to humans, both through churches within GMIM and schools owned by GMIM. Holistic service is reflected in the three tasks of the GMIM Church, namely testimony, fellowship, and Diakonia. Christianity teaches the values of service, love, and caring for others. Education can be thought of as a way to serve and help individuals achieve their best potential.

In implementing the Great Commission in discipleship and teaching, GMIM as a social and spiritual entity has an important role in influencing and supporting improvements in the quality of education in schools. As through Abram, all nations received blessings, the presence of GMIM and GMIM schools will bring blessings to many people in the land of Minahasa and its surroundings through quality educational services.

To improve the quality of school education, the Church (GMIM) must realize this mission with full commitment and dedication, by adhering to theological principles that include moral, spiritual, inclusiveness, and social responsibility dimensions. In this way, the Church can be a valuable partner in joint efforts to create a better and fairer educational system for future generations.

SUGGESTIONS

It is necessary to conduct a study on the role of schools in improving the quality of education post the COVID-19 Pandemic in GMIM schools.

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