



Missiological Study of the Responsibilities of Elders and Deacons to Increase Religiousness in the GMIM Efrata Congregation

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Abstract: This study examines the missiological issue of the responsibilities of elders and deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan congregation in the Tareran Tiga area, where some ministers have not carried out their responsibilities optimally, which has an impact on the growth of the congregation's faith. The purpose of this study is to examine the responsibilities of elders and deacons from a missiological perspective in an effort to increase the religiosity of the congregation, as well as to identify supporting and inhibiting factors. The method used is qualitative research, involving interviews and observations. The results of this study are expected to build understanding and sensitivity to the responsibilities of ministers, which are very important for increasing the religiosity of the congregation. This study also emphasizes the need for continuous training and development for elders and deacons so that they are able to carry out their ministry duties with full dedication and responsibility. It was found that strong spiritual leadership, effective communication, and active involvement in the life of the congregation greatly affect the quality of fellowship. Therefore, synergy between ministers and congregation members is key in building a living and growing church.

Keywords: Missiology; Special Service; Religiosity; Responsibility.

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Introduction

Special ministers are missionary instruments within the context of church ministry, playing a crucial role in spreading the gospel and serving the congregation. A minister is someone whose job is to serve. They are obligated to serve those they are called to serve. Elders and deacons have significant duties and responsibilities as servants of God. They are responsible for serving the congregation and helping those who are suffering, always with a joyful and peaceful spirit.¹ This ministry also requires accountability. As missionary instruments, special ministers must possess significant capabilities to provide value and realize the functions and goals of mission within the context of church ministry. The terms "minister" and "servant" used in Christian theology are taken from the New Testament. Because the early church was situated in a Greek-speaking community, the New Testament was originally written in Greek.

In the New Testament, the term servant or servant is translated from three terms in Greek, namely: *leiturgos*, *doulos* and *diakonos*. What is called *leiturgos* in the New Testament is: the government, as a servant of God, among other things, tasked with managing taxes, is also called a servant of God which is translated from the term *doulos*, which means it can also be equated with slave. Many verbs "to serve" in the New Testament are translated from the word *doulein* which comes from the word *doulos*. Another term that is also used to refer to a servant is *diakonos*. The work or activity of *diakonos* is called diakonia while the verb is *diakonein*.

Servants are those who are entrusted with carrying out ministry. The integrity of church servants is not simple or automatic. However, the ethics of servanthood rests on a true understanding of the calling to ministry.² Servants of God are those who have received authority from God to carry out ministry duties in the church.³ In the life of the church community, there are rules that regulate and discipline the congregation and also servants. Rules are standards created to limit a person's behavior within a certain scope, and if violated, there will be consequences. Within the Evangelical Christian Church in Minahasa (GMIM), there is a term known as Special Servants. They are called Special Servants because, in essence, all GMIM members are servants tasked with carrying out the work of serving and building the body of Christ.⁴ Someone who is called by God to be a leader for the congregation (church) must have a clear and sharp vision of service, be generous, compassionate, humble, courageous, firm, just, honest, and have integrity.⁵ The specialty of Elders and Deacons is that they have a special task to equip all servants. The primary duty

¹ AK Sampeasang, "THE DUTIES OF ELDER AND DEACONS: A Practical Theological Study Regarding the Understanding and Implementation of the Duties of Elders and Deacons in the Simbuang Congregation," *KINAA: Journal of Theology*, 2022, 1-15.

² Joe E. Trull and James E. Carter, *Ethics of Church Servants* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012), 17.

³ Reyne Silfane Tumewu et al., "The Concept of Christian Leadership According to JL CH Abineno and Its Implications for GMIM Special Servants," *Journal of Theology: MUNTEP* 1, no. 1 (2025): 157–74.

⁴ GMIM Synod Assembly Working Body, *Church Order 2021* (Synod Assembly Working Body, 2021), 14.

⁵ Ramli Sarimbangun, *Initiating Reconciliation and Social Transformation, A Mandate of God's Mission for the Church* (Adab Publishers, 2024), 44–45.

of church officials is to serve and build the congregation. ⁶Special servants have a great responsibility of service; they must dedicate themselves fully to serving in response to God's call as servant leaders.⁷

This is because special servants are servants of God and followers of Christ who are called to serve Him. ⁸In many congregations, there are facts that show that special servants, in this case elders and deacons, often do not optimally carry out their duties and responsibilities, which negatively impacts the growth of the congregation's faith. Every living creature grows and develops. Elders and deacons, referred to as Special Servants (PELSUS), play a vital role in church life within the presbyterian-synodal church governance structure adopted by GMIM as a Calvinist church. These two offices are divinely called, and they have a moral and social responsibility to strengthen the congregation's faith. They are not merely organizational structures. Theologically, elders in GMIM are responsible for conducting worship, preaching the word and witnessing, and organizing catechism services. They are also responsible for fostering the congregation's faith and spiritual growth through exemplary behavior in all aspects of life.⁹

Meanwhile, deacons are responsible for diakonia ministry, as well as managing and receiving resources and funds given by God to carry out diakonia duties. Thus, elders and deacons are partners with God in His work of salvation, helping the congregation in the spiritual (spirituality) and social (diakonia) aspects. However, the facts on the ground show that many challenges still exist in understanding and implementing the responsibilities of elders and deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation. Research conducted at GMIM shows that elders and deacons still do not understand their duties and responsibilities from a theological perspective. This includes ignorance of the fundamentals of Calvinism adopted by GMIM, the unavailability of time to carry out ministry, and a lack of understanding in discussions that result in the congregation being underserved. Other research also shows that due to several factors affecting the quality of the ministry of elders and deacons, they are less able to carry out their duties and responsibilities as a commitment to faith.

Furthermore, the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan congregation faced a concerning situation where they were involved in identity politics during the 2020 South Minahasa Regency Regional Head Election. This phenomenon indicates that there are significant problems in the development of Christian faith and the formation of the congregation's character. Those involved in identity politics show that their understanding of the congregation's faith has deviated from the foundation and purpose of politics, namely the

⁶ JLCh. Abineno, *Elder Position and His Work* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2013), 8.

⁷ DJ Maindoka, "Elders and Shamas' Service Commitment and Secular Work," *Educatio Christi*, 2020, 79–101.

⁸ G. D. Dahlenburg, *Who Is That Pastor?* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2022).

⁹ LC Tiho, "The Exemplary of PELSUS in Building the Faith of the Congregation at the GMIM Torsina Tumumpa Congregation. *Educatio Christi*, 3(2).," <https://ejournal.teologi-ukit.ac.id/index.php/educatio-christi/article/view/46>, 2022, 44–61.

common welfare.¹⁰ This raises an important question: to what extent have the elders and deacons carried out their duties to guide the congregation towards true maturity of faith and religiosity? The role of the church as a partner of the government in developing the faith, morals, and welfare of the congregation, on the other hand, is still debated. This shows that the responsibilities of elders and deacons are related to the missiological aspect of the church, namely that God sends His people to know Christ better and be a blessing to the world.

It is crucial to conduct research on the responsibilities of elders and deacons to enhance the religiosity of the congregation at GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan, as follows. As a study of God's mission (*missio Dei*), theology positions the church as God's mission in the world. Previous research has emphasized the role of shepherding or exemplary behavior in enhancing the faith of the congregation as a whole, but has not specifically linked it to a comprehensive missiological framework, encompassing both the spiritual and social dimensions (*diakonia*) of the responsibilities of elders and deacons. Research on "Examples of Special Servants in Building the Faith of the Congregation" at GMIM Torsina Tumumpa emphasizes the importance of the role of special servants in the growth of the faith of the congregation in several GMIM congregations.¹¹ At GMIM Solafide Rasi Satu, research entitled "The Role of Special Servants (Elders and Deacons) in Building Youth Worship Awareness" focuses on the element of youth development.¹²

Based on previous research, studies on the roles and responsibilities of Elders and Deacons in church ministry have been conducted from various perspectives. Sampeasang examines the understanding and implementation of the duties of Elders and Deacons in church ministry. Meanwhile, Tiho highlights the exemplary role of Special Servants in building the faith of the congregation. Research conducted by Ohy, Komaling, and Kalalo focuses on the role of Elders and Deacons in building youth awareness of worship. These studies contribute to broadening understanding of the duties, exemplary role, and role of Special Servants in building the faith of the congregation.

However, previous studies still have limitations, particularly in examining the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons within a comprehensive missiological framework. Previous studies have focused more on the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons within the scope of church duties, exemplary service, shepherding, and the development of specific groups. Meanwhile, the relationship between these responsibilities and the concept of *Missio Dei* has not received adequate attention. However, in David J. Bosch's thinking, mission is

¹⁰ HG Garera, M., & Masambe, "A Theological Study of Identity Politics in the 2020 Regional Head Elections and Its Impact on the Congregation. *Educatio Christi*, 5(1).," <https://ejournal.teologi-ukit.ac.id/index.php/educatio-christi/article/view/117> , 2024, 24–37.

¹¹ Tiho, "The Exemplary PELSUS in Building the Faith of the Congregation at the GMIM Torsina Tumumpa Congregation. *Educatio Christi*, 3(2)."

¹² J. Ohy, TDO, Komaling, ON, & Kalalo, "The Role of Special Servants (Elders and Deacons) in Building Youth Awareness of Worship in the GMIM Solafide Rasi Satu Congregation, Ratahan Region. *Educatio Christi*, 3(1).," <https://ejournal.teologi-ukit.ac.id/index.php/educatio-christi/article/view/73> , 2022, 24–34.

understood not only as evangelism or institutional church activities, but as the church's participation in God's work that encompasses all of human life.

Furthermore, the spiritual and social dimensions of understanding the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons have not been fully integrated in previous research. The responsibilities of Elders extend beyond leading worship, preaching the word, and fostering the faith of the congregation, just as the responsibilities of Deacons extend beyond carrying out diaconal ministry. Both are part of the church's calling to bring God's love, build fellowship, restore broken relationships, and encourage change in the congregation's life. Therefore, various issues related to exemplary behavior, communication, conflict, and collaborative ministry need to be understood not merely as internal issues within the church organization, but as part of the church's struggle to carry out God's mission.

This study offers a novelty by viewing the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons not only as structural functions in church governance, but as concrete forms of participation in *Missio Dei*. This perspective broadens the understanding of the ministry of Special Ministers by placing exemplary living, participatory communication, reconciliation of conflict, and collaborative service as concrete manifestations of the church's involvement in God's mission. Thus, the increase in congregational religiosity is not understood merely as a result of increased religious activities, but as the fruit of the quality of relationships, integrity, life testimony, and shared responsibility between Elders, Deacons, and the congregation. The novelty of this study lies in the use of David J. Bosch's missiological perspective to critically examine the relationship between the quality of the implementation of Special Ministerial responsibilities and the growth of congregational religiosity in the context of GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach, employing a descriptive-analytical approach.¹³ This method was chosen because it aimed to gain a deep understanding of the research subjects' meanings, experiences, and views on the responsibilities of elders and deacons, and how these contribute to the congregation's faith growth from a missiological perspective. This method allows researchers to study ministry practices in the field comprehensively and contextually, in contrast to quantitative research that focuses on numbers. The research was conducted at the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation. To enrich the data, research informants also included pastors and congregation members who received ministry. This was done to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how ministry influences faith growth. Several complementary methods were used to collect data. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with semi-structured guidelines to gauge informants' understanding of missiology, ministry duties, and challenges faced. Second,

¹³ Margono, *Educational Research Methodology* (PT Rineka Cipta, 2007), 36.

participant observation was conducted, where researchers directly observed worship activities, pastoral visits, and interactions between ministers and congregation members.

The process of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing was used to thematically analyze all collected data. Researchers identified important themes or patterns from field notes and interview transcripts, and then interpreted them using a mission theology framework. This study used triangulation, comparing information from various sources (elders, deacons, pastors, and congregation members) as well as interview results with observations and documents to ensure the accuracy of the data. With this methodology, the study is expected to be able to specifically answer how the responsibilities of elders and deacons at GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan are carried out in light of God's mission (*Missio Dei*), as well as provide practical contributions to improving the quality of church services for the growth of the congregation's faith, both spiritually and physically.

Results and Discussion

Mission Theory According to David Bosch

In this study, David J. Bosch's missionary thought is not only used to explain the concept of mission, but also as an analytical framework for reading the reality of the ministry of Elders and Deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation. The *Missio Dei* perspective is used to see the extent to which the ministry of Elders and Deacons is understood as participation in the work of God or is still limited to the implementation of the structural and administrative functions of the church. Mission (in the plural) means *missiones ecclesiae*. It means the missionary efforts of the Church which refer to specific forms, related to a particular time, place, or need, of participation in *missio Dei*. The missionary task is all complete, broad, and deep like the needs and demands of human life. It is the task of the entire Church to bring the message of the Gospel to the whole world.¹⁴ Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, serve, preach, teach, heal, and liberate.¹⁵

The concept of *Missio Dei* is an important foundation because Bosch understands that mission is not essentially the church's, but rather the work of God himself. This means that mission begins with God sending His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world, then sending the Holy Spirit, and finally sending the church to be His extension in the world. Bosch argues that the church exists because of mission, not mission because of the church.¹⁶ Thus, the church exists because God has a mission to carry out. The church lives because it is called to serve and bring God's love to the world. The church, as the body of Christ, acts with the power of the Holy Spirit in carrying out God's mission, because the church not only functions

¹⁴ David J. Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission: A History of Mission Theology that Transforms and is Transformed* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2006), 1.

¹⁵ Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission: a history of mission theology that transforms and is transformed*, 361.

¹⁶ David J. Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 1999), 10.

as an agent of mission but also as a place (*locus*) of mission. ¹⁷In the context of this research, this understanding is used to determine whether the Elders and Deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation have understood their ministry as part of God's calling or still see service more as an obligation inherent in church office.

Missio Dei is used to analyze the commitment, responsibility, and exemplary lives of Elders and Deacons. If church service is participation in God's mission, then the servant's personality cannot be separated from the service he or she performs. Elders and Deacons are not only required to be able to carry out organizational tasks. Commitment to service can be seen through a willingness to serve earnestly, consistency in carrying out responsibilities, and loyalty to entrusted tasks. In the reality of congregational ministry, this aspect can be used to observe various concrete situations that occur in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation. God's mission is a sending that comes from God, so He plays the primary role in every sending. ¹⁸In carrying out this mission, the church cannot simply focus on traditional forms of evangelism but must adopt a contextual approach, namely being able to understand and respond to the social, cultural, and technological contexts of the modern era.¹⁹

Bosch stated that mission is not a static activity, but rather one that constantly changes according to the dynamics of the times. Therefore, the mission approach must continue to evolve with changing times. The church is not enough to simply deliver sermons from the pulpit; it also needs to be directly involved in the lives of its congregations and address the real problems they face. In this context, Bosch emphasized the importance of the church having the ability to "read the times" or understand what is happening in the lives of its congregations. The church is not simply a place for worship or religious activities. The church is a community of believers whose lives reflect the Kingdom of God in this world. The church is called to live a life of service, simplicity, togetherness with those who suffer, and faithfulness to the teachings of Jesus. Therefore, the church not only speaks the truth but also demonstrates that truth through the daily lives of its congregations. For Bosch, the church's mission is not only about going out to preach the Gospel, but also about how the church itself lives as a community that reflects the love and truth of the Gospel. The church acts like salt that prevents moral decay and like light that illuminates darkness and even brings change to all of God's creation. ²⁰In this way, the church bears witness to the world not only through words, but through concrete, everyday life. This understanding is in line with Bosch's view of *the missio Dei*, or God's mission, must be understood holistically, not just as a matter of salvation but also encompassing the total transformation of human life. Mission, according to Bosch, is the church's participation in God's greater work of renewing and restoring all of His creation, in all its spiritual, social, cultural, and economic aspects. The church cannot view mission as an activity focused solely on evangelism or personal

¹⁷ Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Plural Society* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 2019), 167.

¹⁸ Henk Venema, *The Gospel for All People: A Guide into the Science of Missiology, Volume 1* (YKKBK, 1997), 50.

¹⁹ Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission*, 512.

²⁰ DR Maitimoe, *Development of Missionary Congregations* (BPK Gunung Mulia, 1978), 26.

conversion, but must practice ministry that addresses the congregation's needs holistically and contextually.²¹

Based on David Bosch's thinking, the church's mission cannot be understood merely as the activity of preaching the Gospel or carrying out religious activities, but as the church's participation in the *Missio Dei*. In this study, Bosch's thinking is used as a framework for understanding the ministry responsibilities of Elders and Deacons. The concept of *Missio Dei* emphasizes that ministry stems from God's calling and is not merely the implementation of structural duties within the church. Furthermore, Bosch's understanding of the holistic and contextual nature of mission serves as a basis for assessing whether the ministry responsibilities of Elders and Deacons have addressed the needs of the congregation as a whole.

Overall, Bosch's insights into the research problem are not merely additional theories; rather, they are an evaluation framework that allows researchers to delve deeper into whether the ministry of Elders and Deacons remains limited to the routines of office or is rooted in God's calling, contextual, and transformative. This research not only provides information about ministry but also provides clear assessment criteria. Using this framework, we can evaluate the impact of ministry on the faith and religiosity of the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan congregation.

The Reality of Elder-Deacon Ministry and Its Impact on the Religiosity of the Congregation

The ministry carried out by the Elders and Deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation has essentially been carried out through various forms of church service, such as leading column worship, conducting pastoral visits, diaconal services, coaching congregation members, and assisting congregation members experiencing struggles. The presence of special ministers is still seen as an important element in congregational life because they are spiritual leaders trusted to guide the growth of the faith of church members. However, this study found that the implementation of these responsibilities has not been fully implemented optimally, thus affecting the quality of the congregation's religious life. This finding is in line with the research objective to examine how the responsibilities of the Elders and Deacons impact the growth of the congregation's faith.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, several forms of ministry reality indicate that the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons are not yet optimal. First, some special ministers have not been able to prioritize ministry amidst their various work and personal activities. This condition is evident in the fact that some ministers are still late to column services, or even unable to attend services due to work reasons. This situation not only raises issues of service discipline but also shapes the congregation's perception that

²¹ Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission* , 399.

lateness in worship is something normal because it is exemplified by their spiritual leaders. Thus, the example that should be a central part of ministry has decreased, affecting the congregation's religious attitudes in living out their fellowship.²²

Second, the study found that communication between ministers and congregations was not yet dialogical. In some cases, ministry decisions were made unilaterally without involving the congregation, for example, regarding the procurement of column inventory. Although these actions were well-intentioned, the congregation felt that their aspirations were not being valued. As a result, the relationship between ministers and congregations became less harmonious. This situation shows that ministry has not yet fully manifested as participatory service, even though church life demands cooperation, openness, and mutual respect between leaders and congregation members.²³

Third, the research results indicate interpersonal conflicts among special ministers, which subsequently impact the life of the fellowship. Several respondents revealed that some elders expressed disappointment with fellow ministers and the congregation, resulting in the emergence of certain groups within the fellowship. This situation resulted in some congregants losing their enthusiasm for actively participating in church activities and even choosing to withdraw from the congregation's life. Conflicts that were not resolved pastorally ultimately not only affected relationships between ministers but also affected the congregation's religiosity through decreased participation in worship, a weakening of the spirit of fellowship, and a diminished sense of trust in the special ministers.²⁴

Fourth, the study also found that cooperation between elders and deacons was not optimal. Poor ministry coordination resulted in several congregational development programs being ineffective. However, according to the GMIM Church Order, elders and deacons are called to serve together as co-workers with God in building the body of Christ. When this cooperation weakens, ministry becomes individualistic, thus preventing the congregation from achieving its goal of faith development.²⁵

The reality of this ministry has a significant impact on the congregation's religiosity. Religiosity in this study is understood not only as attendance at worship services, but also includes maturity of faith, faithfulness in fellowship, concern for others, and a willingness to live according to Christian values. The results show that when special ministers do not set a good example, some congregants experience decreased motivation to attend worship services, diminished trust in church leaders, and apathy toward ministry activities. Conversely, congregants served by responsible Elders and Deacons demonstrate a better spirit of worship, are more active in church activities, and have closer relationships with fellow congregants.

²²Interview with Congregation RR, CJ, SL, HL On March 7, 2025

²³Interview with congregation ML, IK, A,L On March 8, 2025

²⁴Interview with SP, TL, SK On March 8, 2025

²⁵Interview with congregation AL, RR, ML On March 8, 2025

When examined through David Bosch's missiological perspective, this reality shows that the church's mission has not been fully realized as participation in the *Missio Dei*. Bosch emphasized that the church is called to participate in God's work through service that brings love, reconciliation, and the transformation of lives. Therefore, the duties of Elders and Deacons cannot be understood merely as the implementation of church offices or organizational routines, but rather as a missionary calling to bring God's Kingdom into the life of the congregation. Ministry that is solely oriented towards program implementation without exemplary living will lose its transformative power. Conversely, when Elders and Deacons carry out their ministry with integrity, humility, responsibility, and a spirit of service as exemplified by Christ, then this ministry becomes God's means to build the religiosity of the congregation as a whole.

Thus, the results of data reduction indicate that the primary problem lies not in a lack of ministry activity, but rather in the quality of the implementation of ministry responsibilities. Congregational religiosity is strongly influenced by the exemplary conduct, integrity, communication, and cooperation of the Elders and Deacons. Therefore, increasing congregational religiosity cannot be achieved simply by adding church programs, but must begin with a renewed understanding of the special ministers regarding the nature of their calling as agents of God's mission, bringing transformation to the life of the congregation.

David Bosch's Mission Perspective on Examining the Elder-Deacon Responsibility for Increasing the Religiosity of the Congregation

David J. Bosch, in his book *Transformation of Christian Mission*, explains that mission is not just church activities such as preaching or sending missionaries. Because mission comes from God himself, or is usually called God's mission (*Missio*). *Dei*). This means that the mission begins with God sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world, then sending the Holy Spirit, and finally sending the church to be His extension in the world. Bosch argues that the church exists because of the mission, not the mission because of the church.²⁶ In the perspective of *Missio Dei* according to David J. Bosch, these various problems are not only understood as weaknesses in carrying out ministry duties, but as part of the church's struggle to realize God's mission in the midst of the congregation's life. Bosch emphasizes that the church is not the owner of the mission, but is a community called and sent to take part in God's ongoing work in the world. Therefore, all forms of church service must reflect the character of God who brings love, fellowship, reconciliation, and renewal of life.

The first encounter was the low commitment of some special ministers in prioritizing ministry amidst busy work and personal activities. The finding of low commitment among some Elders and Deacons indicates that the problem is not only related to organizational discipline, but also has a missiological dimension. Within the *Missio Dei* Bosch framework, church ministers are called to be part of God's testimony through the lives they live. Therefore, when ministers do not demonstrate commitment to ministry, the problem is not

²⁶ Bosch, *The Transformation of Christian Mission* , 10.

only that an ecclesiastical task is not fulfilled, but that the church's witness through the lives of its leaders becomes less powerful. Exemplary conduct is an essential part of mission because congregations receive the Gospel message not only through words, but also through the lives of those entrusted to lead them.

The impact on congregational religiosity can be seen through the relationship between ministerial behavior and congregational perceptions of church life. When ministerial absences or tardiness occur repeatedly, some congregants may perceive worship and ministry as less of a priority. Thus, the issue of ministerial commitment has missiological consequences because it can undermine the process of forming the congregation's faith. In this context, the responsibility of elders and deacons goes beyond simply completing ministry tasks, but also to provide a living witness that points the congregation to Christ.

The second finding regarding communication that is not yet dialogic indicates that congregational participation in church life still needs to be strengthened. From the perspective of *Missio Dei*, this is crucial because the church is not simply a collection of individuals who accept decisions from leaders, but rather a community called together to participate in God's mission. Therefore, participatory communication has missiological significance. Through open communication, congregations are given space to share their experiences, needs, and struggles, allowing the church's ministry to be present contextually. Communication issues cannot be understood simply as technical weaknesses in decision-making. When the congregation's voice is not given adequate space, their participation in church life is weakened. This can hinder the church from understanding the context of the congregation's life and responding to their needs. Within Bosch's framework, churches practicing *Missio Dei* are called to be present in the midst of real human life. Therefore, participatory communication is one way the church recognizes context and provides services that are relevant to the congregation's life.

The third finding is that interpersonal conflict among Special Ministers becomes a missiological issue because its impact goes beyond the personal relationships of the ministers and affects the quality of the congregation's fellowship. From Bosch's perspective, the church is called to be a community that presents God's work through love, reconciliation, and the restoration of relationships. Therefore, when conflict among ministers is allowed to persist and escalates into factions within the congregation, the church struggles to bear witness to the love and reconciliation that are part of God's mission. The finding that conflict causes some members of the congregation to withdraw from church activities indicates a direct impact on the congregation's religiosity. In other words, conflict is not only an internal leadership issue but can hinder congregational participation and weaken the church's witness as a community called to bring peace. Therefore, pastoral conflict resolution is part of the implementation of *Missio Dei*. Reconciliation aims not only to improve interpersonal relationships but also to restore the life of the community so that the congregation again has space to grow in faith and participate in the life of the church.

The fourth issue concerns the suboptimal collaboration between elders and deacons. This lack of coordination has resulted in several congregational development programs being

ineffective, leading to individual ministry rather than shared responsibility. Bosch emphasized that God's mission is always carried out by the church as a community. The lack of collaboration between elders and deacons also poses a missiological problem. The differences in duties between elders and deacons should not result in siloed ministries, but should instead allow for mutual complementarity in building the life of the congregation. While each member of the body of Christ possesses distinct gifts, all these gifts are united to achieve the same goal: to bring God's saving work to the world.

In the context of the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan congregation, a lack of coordination has resulted in inconsistent coaching, mentoring, and attention to the congregation's needs. This situation indicates that issues with collaboration impact the church's ability to provide holistic services. Conversely, when elders and deacons coordinate and complement each other, the congregation's various needs can be met more holistically. Thus, collaborative ministry is not merely a strategy to increase organizational effectiveness, but a concrete form of the church's participation in the *Missio Dei* through a community life of mutual service.

Based on these findings, it can be understood that the *Missio Dei theory* according to David J. Bosch has strong relevance to the reality of ministry in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation. Issues regarding service commitment, less participatory communication, conflict between ministers, and weak cooperation are not only administrative or organizational issues of the church, but also show that the implementation of God's mission still requires renewal in the lives of the ministers. Bosch reminded that the church is called to continue to renew itself *ecclesia semper reformanda* in order to remain faithful to the God who sent it. Thus, renewal of the quality of the ministry of Elders and Deacons is not merely aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the church organization, but so that the church is increasingly able to become an instrument of God in building the religiosity of the congregation, presenting a healthy fellowship, and being a witness of Christ who brings peace and renewal to every member of the congregation.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research and analysis through David J. Bosch's missiological perspective, it can be concluded that the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons in the GMIM Efrata Pinamorongan Congregation are not only structural duties of the church, but also part of the call to participate in *Missio Dei*. The research shows that there are still several problems, such as low commitment and exemplary behavior of some ministers, non-participatory communication, interpersonal conflicts, and weak coordination between Elders and Deacons. These conditions have an impact on the religious life of the congregation, especially participation in worship, trust in the ministers, the spirit of fellowship, and involvement in church life. From Bosch's perspective, the responsibilities of Elders and Deacons are a concrete form of the presence of God's mission through the church, which is manifested in exemplary behavior, love, reconciliation, communication,

and cooperation in service. Therefore, increasing the religiosity of the congregation is not enough to be done by adding church activities, but needs to begin with a renewal of the quality of life and spirituality of Special Ministers. The formation of Elders and Deacons needs to be directed at strengthening integrity, exemplary behavior, communication, conflict resolution, and collaboration, so that their service increasingly reflects the church's participation in *Missio Dei* and encourages the holistic growth of the congregation's faith.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Statement

The authors used AI-assisted applications only as supplementary tools during the preparation of this manuscript. Their application was confined to translating portions of the manuscript and supporting the identification of relevant academic references. No AI system was used to produce the study's original scholarly arguments, determine the research methodology, interpret evidence, or formulate the conclusions. The authors carefully reviewed and verified the resulting material and assume full responsibility for the final content and academic integrity of the manuscript.

Author Contributions

Laura Whydia Syallomita Lelet: Contributed to the conception of the study, formulation of the research focus, review of pertinent literature, preparation of the initial manuscript, and subsequent development of the written work.

Sendi Ester Imbar: Contributed to the organization and examination of the literature, theoretical analysis, evaluation of the manuscript's arguments, and critical revision to improve the scholarly quality of the article.

Angelina Majesty Umboh: Contributed to the research approach, synthesis of relevant findings, refinement of the discussion, and final editorial assessment of the manuscript.

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