



## Pastoral Counseling As A Mission Strategy In Holistic Healing of The Church

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the important role of pastoral counseling as a church mission strategy in healing the congregation holistically, including physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects. Pastoral counseling is understood as a form of service that bridges between faith teaching and real assistance in facing life crises. With a relational and therapeutic approach, the counselor helps the counselee experience comprehensive recovery and grow into a person who is able to empower others. This article emphasizes that pastoral counseling is not only accompanying, but also transforming and sending, and should be an integral part of the evangelistic mission of the church. Through a descriptive-qualitative method, this article invites the church to place pastoral counseling as an important part of the church's calling in presenting God's love visibly and thoroughly in the life of the congregation.

## INTRODUCTION

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) Pastoral Counseling is a reciprocal relationship between a servant of God as a counselor and a person who asks for guidance or council. Pastoral Counseling when viewed from its definition plays a very important role in the Church. Because in holistic healing every member of the congregation needs a counselor, therefore the Church needs to pay attention to every member of the congregation in it.

The role of a minister in the church in caring for each member of the congregation is very

clear. If we look from the point of view of the function or task of the church's mission, one of which is to guide members of the congregation, it is clear that one of the mission strategies is pastoral counseling. Because in the development of the church, especially the holistic healing of the congregation, it really needs a companion who understands counseling. Happening in churches now after making initial observations, what happens is the lack of the role of the counselor and the placement of the mission as one of the mission strategies implemented in the church. So that the development of the Church is not effective because one of the causes is the lack of understanding of each church about one of the church's missions is pastoral counseling.

From the background, it is clear that one of the mission strategies, Pastoral Counseling, is still lacking or has not been implemented by churches today. Actually, the impact is very large for the healing of each holistic congregation. What is called holistic is physical, mental, social and human spirituality. Therefore, researchers are interested in examining how the church positions this pastoral counseling mission in holistic healing of the congregation by raising the title Pastoral Counseling as a Mission Strategy in Holistic Healing.

This article arises with the idea that it is very important for the church to know and interpret one of the mission strategies in the church is pastoral counseling so that it can build the church and heal the holistic congregation. With the concept of thought from Yohan Brek in the book Pastoral Counseling Theory and Application, the researcher tries to present how the pastoral counseling mission strategy in healing the holistic congregation and also the theories used by missionaries and pastoral counseling experts.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **A. ETYMOLOGY OF PASTORAL COUNSELING**

A psychospiritual counseling expert Totok Wiryasaputra in his book Pastoral Counseling in the Millennial Era describes the meaning of the word Counseling comes from the old English verb "conseil" or "conseil" in French. In Latin "consillium" or "consulere" which means "to negotiate". In its further development, the word counseling means guiding, assisting, leading and directing. It is also understood that counseling is a service that helps the congregation in the form of mutual communication. Therefore Yakub Susabda, defines the word counseling as a reciprocal relationship between two individuals, namely the counselor who seeks to help or guide and the client who needs guidance in a harmonious/appropriate conversational atmosphere, which allows the client to recognize himself, understand what is going on with himself, and have the ability to see and achieve his life goals in his relationship and responsibility to God, according to the abilities and talents God

has given him.

According to Art V. Beek, the word pastoral comes from the Latin pastor or in Greek called poimen which means shepherd. Traditionally in ecclesiastical life this is the task of the pastor who must be a shepherd for his congregation or sheep. This terminology is associated with Jesus in His work as the "True Pastor" or Good Shepherd. In the testimony of the gospel (John 10:1-21), this expression refers to Jesus' selfless service, willing to provide help, care for and nurture his people, even willing to sacrifice his life. he knows his sheep and his sheep know him. This is clear as Richard Gutzwiller puts it as follows:

"The true and good shepherd always passes through the door. He opens it and calls his sheep by name and leads them out. He knows each one of His sheep. He walks in front and on the contrary the unauthorized shepherd will enter the fold not by the door but by climbing over the wall like a thief and a robber who wants to steal the sheep" (Gutzwiller, 1972:392). Shepherds and sheep who know each other will show a close and good relationship. The shepherd will walk ahead setting the example and the sheep will follow him, hearing his voice and imitating him. "Both of them trust each other or there is a very era relationship between the true shepherd and the true sheep, which no one can break. The ministry of His followers is expected to take this attitude and ministry of Jesus in practical life. Pastoral care is therefore not only the task of Pastors, Elders, Deacons but also everyone who is His follower.

Pastoral counseling is essentially seen as a process of spiritual help that touches on the physical, mental and social aspects. For Christians, pastoral counseling is based on and rooted in the pastoral duties of a pastor, as these duties have developed over several centuries and continue to evolve in reaction to the demands of the Word of God and the needs of man. To better understand the meaning of "Pastoral Counseling", we need to consider the term "counseling" and the term "pastoral". Pastoral counseling can scientifically be a field of science that develops specialized activities using approaches and techniques of intensive help services to individuals or groups in their complex life problems because the main core expected in pastoral counseling is holistic recovery both physically, psychologically, socially and spiritually. So that the recovery process is obtained and starts from himself.

## **B. PASTORAL COUNSELING FUNCTION**

Yohan Brek describes ten functions of pastoral counseling including the following:

### **1. Guiding Function**

The guiding function is very important in the pastoral counseling framework because it is to help and assist someone. The counselor performs accompanying services to the counselee with the

aim that the person who is experiencing a life crisis can act to choose, especially make decisions about what he is going to do and what is his future.

## 2. Reconciling / Repairing Relationship Function

This function can be used by pastoral counselors in order to help counselees when experiencing inner conflict with other parties that have an impact on the breakup or destruction of relationships. The function of pastoral counseling can act as a mediator to prevent the parties involved in the conflict and facilitate to talk openly, fairly and honestly so that they can find a solution that mutually fosters and re-establishes relationships. So that the role of reconciliation becomes one of the noble tasks in organizing human life. This role has been carried out by the Lord Jesus when He came to the world to become a peacemaker. He was given the noble title of the Prince of Peace.

## 3. Supporting Function

This support function is used to help the counselee accept his new situation, the goal is that he stands on his own feet, grows fully and completely so that he functions optimally. This support function is used to help the counselee through the harsh reality so as to reach the point of acceptance, survive, and find the meaning of values so that the supari aims for a new life. Support in the form of our presence who is willing to sit truly sincere beside someone who is experiencing a life crisis means a lot to him. Clearly seen in the Book of Hebrews 1:3, the Lord Jesus is described as the radiance of God's glory and the express image of God and sustains all things by His powerful word.

## 4. Healing/Restoring Function

This function is important in the sense that through companionship that contains love, willingness to listen to all inner complaints, and high care will make someone who is suffering experience a sense of security and relief as a doorway to healing. This function is very important for everyone who is experiencing grief and inner wounds. It is considered helpful because the pastoral counselor through his approach seeks the sufferer to express his repressed inner feelings.

## 5. Nurturing Function

This function aims to enable the counselee to develop the potentials given to him by God. Because with the awareness of the potential of the counselee, it will be a means for the counselee to organize a better life and will lead the counselee to become a blessing for others who experience the same crisis. Therefore, the counselee can make his life experience a testimony to strengthen each other. This function is one of the educational processes so that the counselee has God-given abilities, which can be developed for his future good.

## 6. Needing Function

This function is called the central function, because it is also the main goal, namely the wholeness of human life in all aspects of life including: Physical, social, mental, and spiritual. If a person experiences problems or suffering, these aspects are torn apart. Therefore, the needy function is needed within the needy framework to produce a holistic recovery process.

## 7. Empowering function

This function aims to help counselees become helpers for themselves in the future when facing difficulties. This function is used to help counselees become helpful to others who get into trouble. In essence, the empowering function is a strengthening function that contains determination, intention and future plans that will be carried out by the counselee. So that in pastoral counseling services the empowerment function is needed, where the counselee becomes a resource that empowers others who need help.

## 8. Transforming Function

The function of transforming is when an individual counselee has recovered, the problem has been resolved, maximally useful for others and the environment. This goal is related to the value, meaning of life, purpose of life both individually, family couples, groups, communities and the wider social system. For example, the role of the community, or the role of the church in the task of pastoral assistance in its congregation, of course, must experience the service indefinitely.

## 9. Preventive Function

This function is indispensable for prevention efforts, so that the recovery process is truly complete. This function is also carried out to become pastoral counseling efforts in dealing with human life activities with deviant tendencies. The preventive function is needed in pastoral counseling services because there are other cases such as suicide that are the target of the preventive function. Someone who commits suicide because within him there is emotional turmoil and pressure holistically that grows unformable and finally explodes. However, the preventive function is not to free or help people from existing problems but preventive pastoral counseling such as premarital counseling tries to provide an overview of the problems that arise in marriage and their prevention.

## 10. Missional Function (Mission)

This function is part of the testimony for pastoral counseling services. This missional function means one's willingness to be a blessing to others. The experience of life in the past that has been changed will be the fruit of testimony for a transformed counselee to be sent as a traveling companion for others who need help.

### **C. PASTORAL COUNSELING GOALS**

Yohan Brek cites Totok's ten goals of pastoral counseling as follows:

1. Helps the counselee experience and accept the reality that exists

This first goal helps the counselee or the person being served to understand, understand and realize by himself where the resolution of the crisis faced depends on himself to experience and accept it. This goal requires a serious role from a counselor in conducting pastoral counseling services to the counselee.

2. Helps the counselee to reveal themselves fully and completely

This goal serves so that the counselee or person served quickly and spontaneously, effectively and creatively expresses true feelings that help for a complete recovery process. This disclosure process is one of the openness processes supported by the mutual confidence of each counselor and counselee.

3. Helping counselees change, grow and function optimally

This goal is expected so that the counselee experiences change, grows and functions optimally and well for fellow humans, especially the environment. This process is an integral part of the stages of the existing stages. maximally functional counselees are that counselees are willing to make the life crisis that has been experienced as a basis for strength and become an opportunity to function optimally.

4. Helping counselees create healthy communication

This fourth goal is expected to create a healthy atmosphere in the pastoral counseling process so that it is focused on avoiding the emergence of conversations that are not in accordance with the goals of a pastoral counselor. This goal is also a means of creating a reciprocal relationship that has a balanced value of trust and produces the goals achieved.

5. Helping the counselee adopt new behaviors

It is expected from this goal that the atmosphere of pastoral counseling conversations can occur with a sense of comfort with no mutual suspicion and the person served experiences new actions in the sense that if at the beginning he continues to be silent then the next he will be cheerful, at the beginning he experiences a crisis then the counselee experiences a new life with hope.

6. Helping counselees survive in new situations

What is expected in this goal is that the counselee or person served will experience a life crisis and be willing to willingly accept the real reality. A new situation is a situation where it is

time for the counselee to enter and run his new life.

#### 7. Helping the counselee eliminate dysfunctional symptoms

It is hoped that this goal is the ability of a pastoral counselor to be able to guide the counselee to eliminate dysfunctional, so that the pastoral counseling process can run normally as expected. In cases like this, an important role is needed to be carried out by the counselor to overcome these symptoms.

#### 8. Helping the counselee to start a new life and make preventive efforts against the emergence of new symptoms of crisis in life.

What is expected from this goal is that the counselee carries out a new lifestyle that has passed the crisis process and is in the process of accepting all the realities of life that exist. In this goal, the counselee not only behaves and acts in a new way, but how the counselee is able to deal with the emergence of new crisis symptoms.

#### 9. Helping the counselee experience the total in all aspects of life (holistic health)

In this goal, the counselee really experiences total recovery from all aspects of life including physical aspects, mental aspects, social aspects and spiritual aspects. It should be realized that in humans there are these four aspects. Therefore, in achieving this goal, the role of a counselor in handling it is highly expected.

#### 10. Helping the counselee to become a person who is ready to be sent, positively impacting everyone.

In this last goal where the counselee experiences a transformative experience and is then willing to reflect on life experiences into a life that has an impact on many people. To be able to achieve a counselor acts as a shepherd who always pays attention to his sheep and is ready to become a traveling companion of the counselee so that the purpose of pastoral counseling services can be carried out properly.

### **D. PASTORAL COUNSELING AS A MISSION STRATEGY**

Susabda in his book entitled Pastoral Counseling defines pastoral counseling as an interpersonal relationship, namely the relationship between servants of God (pastors, evangelists, etc.) and their counselees (people who ask for guidance). Florentina quoting from Gitings also explains the definition of counseling, which is a discussion, negotiation held together or with others to find a solution or decision that saves or liberates so that counseling does not mean a helpful advice to others. Pastoral Counseling according to Yohan Brek is a therapeutic conversation between counselors in which the counselor tries to guide his counselor into an ideal counseling



conversation atmosphere that allows the counselor to know and understand what is happening to him where the problem he is facing. Webster's Dictionary explains Strategy is skill in doing a job and coordinating various tactics.

Yohan Brek in his book *Pastoral Counseling Theory and Application* explains that pastoral counseling is one of the forms of service which is very influential in the development of the theology of contemporary evangelistic mission. Yohan Brek sees that many churches today have institutionally developed pastoral counseling services as one of the evangelistic mission strategies. Basically, pastoral counseling services for the church are one of the most important services. However, in today's church services, the term pastoral counseling is still not well known. It seems that the church now names pastoral counseling as a shepherding service carried out by the pastors of the congregation. So if you hear the term shepherding in the congregation then it is the same as what the church means as a pastoral counseling service. Pastoral counseling as an evangelistic mission strategy actually has a very strong explanation. Because it should be realized that every church service work contains pastoral values. Because basically pastoral care is a direct command from the Lord Jesus, the true Pastor as in God's command in the book of John 21: 15-29, namely Shepherd My sheep.

When associated with pastoral counseling as an evangelistic mission strategy, it is understood as an invitation in word and deed towards individual conversion to experience reconciliation with God. The reconciliation referred to here contains a social dimension because he is called to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God who is involved in bringing love, justice, peace and integrity to creation. It also seems important that the church should carry out evangelization by paying attention to the joints of human life through an effort to fight social and societal injustice. The church must be involved or the visible involvement of the church intended here is how the church's ability to create a style of service that touches the needs of the people as a collection of sheep that need the presence of a shepherd.

Reconciliation with God means a real encounter of faith in body and spirit, word and deed. Pastoral counseling is one of the evangelistic mission strategies that is relevant to be developed in realizing reconciliation between humans and God. In pastoral counseling, there are pastoral functions that become the way of reconciliation.

Evangelism is the story of God's forgiveness of sins, evangelism leads to a response of accepting the gospel by faith and becoming a disciple of Jesus. The term evangelism encompasses efforts to share the good news of Jesus Christ. The goal is for people to understand that God offers salvation, for them to accept that salvation by faith, and then live as disciples of Jesus. Likewise, the



church does not carry out evangelism, Yohan Brek quoted from Graham, while for the church that carries out the mission, it means that the church is alive and can be an example to its surroundings. Therefore, Yohan Brek understands that pastoral counseling as a strategy for the church's evangelistic mission has three basic objectives, namely:

a. As a way of preaching the gospel

Making pastoral counseling a strategy of evangelistic mission is a new thing in the course of today's church ministry. However, if we carefully understand the tasks of evangelistic mission, it must be recognized that pastoral counseling is part of the work of evangelistic mission. Indeed, pastoral counseling activities are basically part of evangelistic mission work. Indeed, pastoral counseling activities usually focus on the activities of handling pastoral counseling services to the counselees or congregations we serve, both individually and in groups. We do not connect pastoral counseling with evangelistic mission. So that the two terms in this field of science become distant, and seem to have no correlation with each other.

In fact, if we pay attention, pastoral counseling with all its activities can be an evangelistic mission strategy, and has a very significant correlation in realizing the mission task that has been mandated by God as the owner of the mission to His human creation, namely to create God's shalom for the world.

b. As a direction towards holistic conversion

We tend to understand repentance only as a spiritual activity in a worship service through fellowship both communally and pastorally. Repentance is only seen as one of the fulfillments of the elements in the church liturgy, namely the element of confession, which liturgically members of the congregation repent through confession. Then feelings and sometimes ignore other aspects. Spiritual repentance is important because it is the driver of other aspects. Someone who has experienced spiritual repentance must automatically experience physical, mental and social repentance. Thus, conversion must be holistic. Pastoral counseling is a direction towards repentance towards holistic repentance, meaning that every person has experienced acceptance of the reality of life and has experienced transformation and is willing to accept the mission of being a counselor for others, then that person has experienced holistic repentance.

c. as an application of the Mission function

In the application of pastoral counseling science, we know the functions of pastoral counseling that have been discovered and developed by several pastoral counseling experts

throughout time. Further discussion on the functions of pastoral counseling is presented in full in chapter VII of this paper. However, the important highlight of this point is that pastoral counseling as a strategy of the church's evangelistic mission is the application of the function of sending. One of the known functions is the function of sending. This function occurs when a person who has gone through a period of crisis and says himself that he is healed and ready to transform then he is ready to accept the mission. Acceptance of mission needs to be done by pastoral counselors as a form of response to the full awareness of a person who has recovered and received recovery, then is sincerely willing to carry out the task of pastoral counseling services to others as well.

## **E. HOLISTICS**

A holistic approach to counseling is one that looks at a person as a whole by considering the various interconnected aspects of life, including physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and energetic. It stems from the notion that human beings should not be broken down into separate parts, but should be understood as an interconnected whole, where each aspect contributes to the total state of the individual. Specifically, in holistic counseling, the attention to Physical aspects include the client's physical health, such as diet, physical activity and adequate sleep. Good physical health is crucial as it is directly related to one's mental and emotional health. For example, sleep problems or poor eating habits can exacerbate stress and anxiety, so holistic counseling encourages lifestyle changes as part of the healing process.

The mental and emotional aspect is to help clients understand and manage their thought patterns and emotions. Holistic counseling seeks to change irrational attitudes, perceptions and beliefs into more rational and adaptive ones. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is often applied to help clients realize and change negative thought patterns that can lead to psychological disorders. In addition, healthy emotional management is also very important so that clients can express and deal with stress, trauma and anxiety in a constructive way.

The social aspect of this approach highlights the importance of community support and interpersonal relationships. Holistic counseling helps clients restore social relationships that may have been disrupted due to the problem at hand, while encouraging them to take an active role in the social environment as a source of support and motivation. Social workers and support groups are often involved to strengthen the client's social network, so that the recovery process is carried out in the context of support from the surrounding environment. In addition, the spiritual aspect is also an important element that distinguishes the holistic approach from other approaches.

Spiritual aspects such as prayer, meditation and spiritual reflection to increase faith and provide inner peace. This approach recognizes that spirituality can be a source of strength and hope which is helpful in dealing with life's challenges and accelerates the process of psychological recovery. In pastoral counseling, religious values and sacred teachings are also used as guidelines during healing. The energy aspect, which is often neglected in traditional counseling, is also part of the holistic approach. The body's energy balance is considered key to physical and emotional health. Energy-focused therapies such as yoga, Reiki, and acupuncture are often applied to improve the overall well-being of clients. The holistic approach to counseling does not emphasize only one technique, but uses a flexible integrative method, combining various therapeutic methods according to the client's needs. The counselor serves as a guide who understands the client's unique condition and selects the most appropriate technique cognitively, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Collaboration with other professionals such as psychologists, doctors, and social workers is also essential for a comprehensive and efficient treatment. The benefits of a holistic approach are immense, especially for the younger generation who face various challenges in modern life.

Holistic counseling helps them achieve life balance, increase self-awareness, improve social relationships, and maintain physical and mental health. As such, this approach does not only focus on solving existing problems, but also empowers individuals to develop optimally in various areas of their lives. Overall, holistic counseling is a comprehensive and integrative method, viewing the client as a whole consisting of various interconnected dimensions. By considering physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and energetic elements, holistic counseling offers a complete and sustainable solution to support clients in achieving well-being and a better quality of life.

## CONCLUSION

Pastoral counseling is a fundamental and strategic form of church service in responding to the various challenges of congregational life today. In the context of holistic healing, pastoral counseling is not only a medium for listening and advising, but also as a means of healing and total recovery from various aspects of human life: physical, mental, social, and spiritual. In a world full of pressure, anxiety, and various emotional turmoil and complex life crises, the church is expected to appear as a healing community through a counseling approach that is not only centered on words, but also on relationships, love, and sincerity.

Historically and theologically, pastoral care is rooted in the example of Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In His ministry, Jesus provided comprehensive shepherding: He cared for, healed, reconciled, and guided His people towards a meaningful and hopeful life. Therefore, the church as

the body of Christ is called to continue this ministry through pastoral care that is relevant to the needs of today. This can be realized by making pastoral counseling an integral part of the church's mission strategy. This article underlines that pastoral counseling is a strategic approach in the evangelistic mission of the church because it touches people as a whole. It is not just preaching from the pulpit, but being present in life crises, speaking through empathy, and touching people's inner wounds with the love of Christ. Pastoral counseling bridges the gap between the teaching of faith and its application in the daily lives of people who often struggle with despair, broken relationships, inner conflicts, and even psychological disorders.

The functions of pastoral counseling outlined by Yohan Brek - such as guiding, sustaining, restoring, nurturing, strengthening, empowering, transforming, and sending - are not additional functions, but the essence of a vibrant and relevant church ministry. Each of these functions provides space for the congregation to know themselves, face their crises, receive help, and grow as whole individuals and impact others. This function also leads the counselee to not only be restored, but also ready to be sent out to be a helper for others, which illustrates true and thorough transformation.

Similarly, the goals of pastoral counseling emphasize that this service is not merely reactive, but also preventive and proactive. It helps the counselee accept the reality of life, express themselves, overcome dysfunctionality, and reach readiness to live a new and meaningful life. The ultimate goal of this process is to achieve reconciliation with God, self, and others, which is the essence of the good news of the gospel. When the church makes pastoral counseling a mission strategy, then the church does not only fill the worship space, but is present in the reality of people's lives as a whole. The church becomes a place of healing not only spiritually, but also emotionally, socially, and physically. In this case, a holistic approach is very important. Healing does not only target one aspect, but the entire human existence. Physical, mental, social, and spiritual aspects are inseparable. So in counseling practice, it is important to pay attention to one's physical health, emotional stability, social support, and the depth of one's spiritual faith.

Thus, it can be concluded that pastoral counseling is an essential and contextual form of ministry for the church today. It not only accompanies individuals through crisis, but also prepares them to be agents of healing for others. Pastoral counseling is not an additional ministry, but the heart of the church's mission strategy. Through it, the church can truly answer Christ's call to shepherd His sheep, heal the wounds of His people, and present the Kingdom of God that touches and transforms all dimensions of human life holistically.

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