



## Effective Pastoral Leadership in Church Growth and Renewal

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### Abstract

Pastoral leadership has a crucial role in supporting the growth and renewal of the church. In the modern era, social and technological changes require church leaders to adapt to more innovative strategies that are relevant to the needs of the congregation. Many churches are stagnant due to a lack of visionary, ministry-based leadership. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the characteristics of effective pastoral leadership as well as explore strategies that can be applied to build a dynamic and responsive church to change. This research uses a literature review method with a qualitative approach, analyzing various academic sources such as journals, books, and research reports related to church leadership. Thematic analysis techniques are used to identify patterns in pastoral leadership that have a positive impact on congregational growth and church revitalization. The results of the study show that effective pastoral leadership is characterized by the characteristics of servant leadership, visionary communication, strong spiritual discipline, and the ability to adapt to the times. In addition, strategies such as strengthening small group-based communities, digitizing ministries, and collaborative leadership have proven to be able to increase congregational engagement and strengthen the spiritual foundation of the church.



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### INTRODUCTION

In the development of the modern church, pastoral leadership plays a central role in ensuring the sustainable growth and renewal of the church (Gultom, 2022). The church is not only a religious institution but also a community that needs leaders who are able to direct and inspire the congregation to continue to grow in faith and be relevant to the changing times (Telaumbanua, 2019). Thus, effective pastoral leadership is a key element in creating a dynamic and mission-oriented church (Silaban et al., 2024).

Church growth is a concept that includes both quantitative and qualitative aspects of church development. According to research by Latif et al. (2022), church growth is not only related to an increase in the number of congregations, but also to the spiritual growth of individuals within the church community (Latif et al., 2022). Factors such as effective leadership and good pastoral strategies are key determinants in church growth. In the modern context, digitalization has become a challenge as well as an opportunity in pastoral ministry and church growth (Latif et al., 2022).

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Pastoral care in the church is an inseparable aspect of leadership. Belay et al. (2021) explain that Christian leadership has a service nature and should be based on Biblical spirituality. A pastor of the congregation is responsible for guiding, advising, and maintaining the spiritual growth of the congregation. However, in practice, there is often a gap between the concept of biblical leadership and its application in the local church (Belay et al., 2021).

In the context of church growth, leadership based on example is a crucial factor. Saint & Simanjuntak (2019) emphasizes that the growth of the church will be greatly influenced by the life example of spiritual leaders (Simanjuntak et al., 2020). Pastors who have strong leadership character and good examples will be better able to guide the congregation towards healthy growth, both spiritually and organizationally.

In addition, the leadership aspect in the church must include a holistic approach. Telaumbanua (2019) in his journal states that the leadership of the pastor of the congregation is not only as a spiritual guide, but also as an educator who builds theological and ethical insights for his congregation (Telaumbanua, 2019). Therefore, a church leader must have skills in teaching, guiding, and managing the dynamics of the congregation effectively.

In today's digital age, new challenges have emerged in church pastoring. Simanjuntak et al. (2020) highlight how virtual spaces can be an effective means of grazing if used well (Simanjuntak et al., 2020). The digital approach in church leadership allows for a wider reach, but it also demands adaptation in teaching methods and spiritual guidance.

The main challenge in pastoral leadership lies in how a leader can balance the pastoral duties and the management of the church as an organization (Sonya et al., 2022). Many churches are experiencing stagnation due to a lack of innovative and transformational leadership (Harianto, 2021). Therefore, pastoral leadership must be able to adapt to social, cultural, and technological changes in order to reach the congregation more effectively (Gultom et al., 2022).

In recent decades, the church has faced major changes due to globalization and the advancement of digital technology. Church leaders are expected not only to be teachers of God's word but also managers who can manage church resources well (Silaban et al., 2024). The digital era requires church leaders to use technology in pastoral ministry, such as social media and digital platforms as a tool to reach out to congregations and increase their involvement in ecclesiastical activities (Ipaq & Wijaya, 2019).

The success of pastoral leadership in church growth also depends on the strategies used in building relationships with the congregation. A study by Suhadi and Arifianto (2022) shows that service-based and exemplary leadership has a significant impact on congregational loyalty and engagement (Sonya et al., 2022). Therefore, this study is important to explore effective pastoral leadership strategies in building strong and missionary church communities.

This research is important to fill in the gaps in the literature on effective pastoral leadership in the context of the modern church. With more and more churches stagnating in growth, a leadership strategy is needed that is able to build spiritual and structural renewal in the church community (Gultom, 2022). In addition, this study also provides guidance for church leaders in adopting approaches that are relevant to the challenges of the times, especially in the use of technology and ministry-based leadership strategies (Hamu, 2024).

Several studies have highlighted pastoral leadership in the context of church growth and renewal. Sasue (2023) examines the balance of sabbaths and pastoral responsibilities in maintaining the mental well-being of church leaders (Sasue, 2023), while Gultom, Novalina, and Joshua (2022) discuss pastoral ministry resilience in the digital age (Gultom et al., 2022). Tambunan and Setyobekti (2021) explore the transformation of ministry in Pentecostal churches (Tambunan & Setyobekti, 2021), and Wahyuni (2021) emphasizes the role of visionary church leaders in facing social change

(Wahyuni, 2021). In addition, Simanjuntak, Purnomo, and Gultom (2021) examined the readiness of theological educational institutions in facing digital transformation, as well as Palopak et al. (2024) examined the relationship between theological understanding and leadership practices in the modern church (Palopak et al., 2024). However, these studies are still limited in comprehensively linking pastoral leadership to church renewal strategies, so this research aims to fill this gap with a more integrative approach.

This study aims to analyze the characteristics of effective pastoral leadership in supporting church growth, as well as explore leadership strategies that can be applied to build a more dynamic and innovative church community. In addition, this research also seeks to identify challenges and opportunities for pastoral leadership in dealing with social change and technological developments in the digital era. In the end, this research is expected to provide applicable recommendations for church leaders in developing a ministry-based leadership model that is able to encourage church renewal in a sustainable manner.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach, which aims to explore and analyze the concept of effective pastoral leadership in church growth and renewal based on relevant academic sources. The literature study was chosen because it allows researchers to examine various theories, concepts, and results of previous research that have been developed by experts in the field of ecclesiastical leadership and congregational growth (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained through scientific literature, including books, academic journals, dissertations, research reports, and ecclesiastical documents related to pastoral leadership. The selection of sources is carried out purposively based on relevance to the research theme, publisher credibility, and academic validity. Some of the main sources that are referenced in this study include the work of John C. Maxwell (1995) on transformational leadership (Maxwell, 1993), research on church growth by Donald A. McGavran (1990), and various recent studies published in journals of ecclesiastical theology and leadership (McGavran, 1990).

Data is collected through document studies by searching literature from various academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, ProQuest, and trusted theological journals. The content analysis technique is used to examine the content of the literature sources that have been collected. In addition, this study also uses the source triangulation method, which is to compare various theories and previous research results to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data (Bowen, 2009).

The data obtained were analyzed using the thematic analysis method, which aims to identify thematic patterns in the studied literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was carried out in several stages, namely (1) data reduction, namely selecting, sorting, and grouping data according to its relevance to the research; (2) data presentation, namely organizing the results of analysis in a systematic narrative form; and (3) drawing conclusions, which is done by interpreting findings based on theories of church leadership and growth.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The following is a table that presents the findings of the ten articles that have been selected in this study. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the theme of effective pastoral leadership in the growth and renewal of the church. This literature study highlights various aspects of pastoral leadership, ranging from leadership transformation, ministry-based approaches, roles in church revitalization, to the impact of digitalization in pastoral ministry.

**Table 1.** Literature Review

No	Author	Title	Findings
1	Powell, R., Pepper, M., Hancock, N.	Models of Church Vitality: A Literature Review	Effective pastoral leadership models in church growth
2	Sironen, R.J.	The Relationship Between Pastoral Servant Leadership and Congregational Spiritual Formation	The relationship between ministry-based pastoral leadership and congregational spiritual formation
3	Gregory, T.	Transformational Pastoral Leadership	The role of transformational pastoral leadership in building the church's mission
4	Jibiliza, X.	The Evolution of Pastoral Care Ministry Through the Ages	History and development of pastoral leadership in church ministry
5	Aiken, C.M.	Church Revitalization and the Role of Pastoral Leadership	Pastoral leadership strategies in church revitalization
6	Sanders, D.	Transforming the Leadership Development Culture in Church Revitalizations	Leadership model in ministry-based church revitalization and congregation development
7	Omogo, P.O.	Pastoral Leadership: An Application of Servant Leadership Characteristics for Effective Ministry	Characteristics of ministry-based pastoral leadership in the context of the Catholic church
8	Letsoin, Y.S., Silpanus, S., & Donobakti, Y.A	The Dynamics of the Parish Pastoral Council Members in Ecclesiastical Service	The role of pastoral leadership in ecclesiastical councils and ecclesiology ministries
9	White, P., & Pondani, S.	Church-Franchise: Missional Innovation for Church Planting and Leadership Mentorship	Pastoral leadership innovations in the development of new churches
10	Keita, Y.	Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Church Growth	Analysis of leadership styles and their impact on church growth

In this study, various literature studies have been identified to better understand effective pastoral leadership in church growth and renewal. These studies reflect the various perspectives and approaches that have been used in ecclesiastical leadership as well as the strategies implemented to build dynamic and thriving communities spiritually and structurally.

One of the main studies in this study is the work of Powell, Pepper, and Hancock (2019) which discusses the church vitality model in the context of pastoral leadership. This study highlights how leadership that is oriented towards a clear vision and mission has a significant impact on the growth of the church. They found that churches that had inspirational, service-based leadership tended to be more developed and attractive to new congregations. Factors such as social engagement, visionary leadership, and flexibility in responding to environmental changes are key in maintaining the vitality of the church (Powell et al., 2019).

Sironen's (2020) research focuses on the relationship between ministry-based pastoral leadership and congregational spiritual formation. This study shows that a ministry-oriented leadership style has a positive impact on increasing congregational engagement and their spiritual

growth. Church leaders who apply the principles of servant leadership tend to create a more inclusive and supportive church environment, where congregations feel valued and encouraged to contribute to the life of the church (Sironen, 2020).

Meanwhile, Gregory (2019) in his study on transformational pastoral leadership emphasized the importance of the role of church leaders in building a church culture that is innovative and relevant to the times. Transformational leadership in the context of the church not only serves to maintain the organizational structure of the church, but also aims to instill strong Christian values in the congregation and update the church's mindset in facing the challenges of modern times. The study highlights how visionary, change-oriented leadership can revive a stagnant church (Gregory, 2019).

On the other hand, Jibiliza's research (2021) traces the evolution of pastoral ministry from time to time. In his study, he revealed how the pastoral approach has evolved from a traditional hierarchical model to a more inclusive and participatory model. This study illustrates how modern church leaders must be able to adapt to the times without losing the spiritual and theological essence of pastoral ministry. Jibiliza also highlights how constant theological reflection is necessary for church leaders to maintain their relevance in an ever-changing context (Jibiliza, 2021).

Furthermore, Aiken (2019) discusses the role of pastoral leadership in church revitalization. According to this study, many churches are experiencing stagnation or even a decline in the number of congregations due to a lack of innovative and strategic leadership. Aiken emphasized that successful church leadership must have a holistic approach, including spiritual, managerial, and social aspects in leading the congregation. The study also underscores the importance of church leaders embracing social, cultural, and technological change in order to keep the church relevant and engaging for the congregation (Aiken, 2019).

In line with these findings, Sanders (2019) in his study on the development of leadership culture in church revitalization highlighted the importance of developing leadership capacity within the church. According to him, a church that is able to survive and develop in the long term is a church that has a well-structured leadership system and can train and nurture new leaders on an ongoing basis. This study emphasizes that the church should not rely only on one leadership figure, but must build a strong leadership community so that the sustainability of the church can be maintained (Sanders, 2019).

In addition, Omogo's research (2019) examines pastoral leadership in the Catholic church and highlights the application of servant leadership as an effective leadership model. This study shows that churches that apply the values of ministry in their pastoral leadership tend to have congregations that are more active and involved in church life. Omogo also highlighted the importance of balancing pastoral authority and congregational participation in ecclesiastical decision-making to ensure the church remains an inclusive place for all members (Omogo, 2019).

A study conducted by Letsoin, Silpanus, and Donobakti (2023) examined the dynamics of leadership in ecclesiastical pastoral councils. They found that the effectiveness of pastoral leadership is highly dependent on the synergy between church leaders and pastoral councils. The study reveals that churches that have a clear organizational structure and effective communication between leaders and congregations are more likely to experience healthy and sustainable growth (Letsoin et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, White and Pondani (2022) raised the issue of leadership innovation in the formation of new churches. This study reviews how the church's approach as a franchise mission can help in the development of new, more independent and growth-oriented churches. They emphasized that church leaders must have a broad insight into organizational management as well as evangelistic strategies to ensure that the church they lead can develop well (White & Pondani, 2022).



Finally, Keita (2019) analyzes various leadership styles and their impact on church growth. This study shows that there is no one model of leadership that can be universally applied in all ecclesiastical contexts. In contrast, the success of pastoral leadership depends on how a leader is able to read the situation and needs of the congregation and adapt his leadership style according to existing dynamics (Keita, 2019).

From all the studies that have been reviewed, there is a common finding that effective pastoral leadership must integrate spiritual, managerial, and social aspects in its ministry. Leadership that is service-oriented, has a clear vision, and is able to embrace social and technological change, tends to be more successful in leading the church towards sustainable growth and renewal. Therefore, this research provides deeper insights into how church leaders can adapt and develop effective strategies in facing current and future challenges.

## **Discossion**

### **Characteristics of Effective Pastoral Leadership in Supporting Church Growth**

#### **1. Pastoral Leadership as a Pillar of Church Growth**

Pastoral leadership has a very significant role in shaping the direction, culture, and sustainability of church growth. Pastoral leaders are not only responsible for the spiritual aspects of the congregation, but also act as agents of change who are able to direct the church community to remain relevant and thriving in the midst of changing times. In the context of ecclesiastical ministry, the success of church growth is greatly influenced by the quality of pastoral leadership applied.

Effective pastoral leadership is not just about managing church organizations, but also creating an environment that encourages spiritual growth, congregational involvement, and innovation in ministry. To achieve these goals, pastoral leaders must have strong leadership characteristics, be based on Christian values, and be able to navigate various social and technological challenges in the modern era.

Various ecclesiastical studies and practices show that there are several key characteristics that must be possessed by an effective pastoral leader in supporting the growth of the church. These characteristics include service-based leadership, visionary communication, strong spiritual discipline, capacity to adapt to change, and the ability to build teams and empower congregations.

#### **2. Servant Leadership**

One of the main characteristics of effective pastoral leadership is service-oriented leadership or servant leadership. This model of leadership is based on the example of Jesus Christ that emphasizes the importance of serving rather than simply leading. In Mark 10:45, Jesus affirmed: "The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." This principle is the basis for pastoral leaders in carrying out their duties in the midst of the congregation.

Service-based leadership means that a church leader not only acts as the highest authority in the church organization, but also as a servant who humbly and sincerely seeks to meet the spiritual and social needs of his congregation. Effective pastoral leaders must be able to show deep concern for the congregation, provide spiritual guidance, and build loving relationships with the entire church community.

In practice, service-based leadership is reflected in concrete actions such as caring for individuals in the church community, assisting the congregation in dealing with life struggles, and actively engaging in social and humanitarian services. By instilling a spirit of ministry in his

leadership, a pastoral leader will not only gain the trust of the congregation, but will also be able to create a solid and loving church community.

3. Visionary and Inspirational Communication

Effective pastoral leadership is also characterized by the ability to convey a clear and inspiring vision to the congregation. A good church leader must have a strong vision of how the church should grow and develop, and be able to communicate that vision in a way that can motivate and inspire the congregation to be actively involved in the life of the church.

Effective communication in pastoral leadership involves using relevant, clear language and building a spirit of togetherness. A church leader must be able to deliver an inspiring message through preaching, teaching, and daily interaction with the congregation. In addition, transparency in communication is also very important so that the congregation can understand the direction that the church is taking and feel involved in every process of church growth.

Pastoral leaders who have good communication skills are also able to create closer relationships with the congregation, build open dialogue, and encourage active participation in church activities. With visionary and inspiring communication, church leaders can move the congregation toward a common goal and strengthen a sense of community in the church community.

4. Focus on Spiritual Discipline and Character Building

Effective pastoral leadership depends not only on managerial and communication skills, but also on strong spiritual discipline and unwavering character. A church leader must have a deep prayer life, a commitment to reading and teaching God's Word, and be an example in his spiritual life.

Strong spiritual discipline helps pastoral leaders to remain steadfast in the face of challenges and temptations that may arise in the ministry. Perseverance in prayer, Bible meditation, and consistent worship will build the spiritual resilience necessary in carrying out leadership duties.

In addition, character building is also an important aspect of pastoral leadership. A church leader must show high integrity, sincere love for the congregation, and perseverance in facing various dynamics of ministry. A strong and consistent character will be a solid foundation in building leadership that can be trusted and respected by the congregation.

5. Capacity to Adapt to Change

In an ever-evolving social and technological context, effective pastoral leadership must have a high adaptive capacity. Changes in society, culture, and technology require the church to continue to adapt without losing the essence of the gospel. Church leaders must be able to read the signs of the times, understand the needs of the congregation in the modern era, and develop ministry strategies that are relevant to the context of the times.

Churches that are stagnant and closed off to change tend to experience a decline in the number of congregations and a loss of relevance in society. Therefore, pastoral leaders must be open to innovation, both in teaching methods, worship models, and ministry strategies. For example, the use of digital technology in spreading the gospel, managing the church community online, and a more flexible approach in serving congregations who have different lifestyles.

The capacity to adapt to change also includes the ability to establish relationships with various communities, both inside and outside the church. Churches that are open to collaboration and dialogue with the wider community will be better able to face the challenges of the times and expand the impact of their ministry.

6. Ability to Build Teams and Empower Congregations

Effective pastoral leadership depends not only on the individual abilities of a leader, but also on his ability to build a solid work team and empower the congregation. A church leader must realize that church growth is not the result of the efforts of one person alone, but the work of the entire community.

Team-building skills involve the process of selecting, training, and developing new leaders in the church. Pastoral leaders must be able to identify potential in the congregation and provide them with opportunities to develop and take a role in the ministry of the church.

In addition, congregation empowerment is also an important factor in church growth. Congregations that feel empowered and valued will be more motivated to contribute to the life of the church. Therefore, pastoral leaders need to create an environment that supports the active participation of congregations in various fields of ministry, both in worship, social activities, and church community development.

### **Leadership Strategies for Building a Dynamic and Innovative Church Community**

In building a dynamic and innovative church community, pastoral leaders need to implement various strategies that allow the church to grow, remain relevant to the needs of the congregation, and adapt to changing times. Stagnant churches tend to lose their appeal and are unable to reach new generations, while dynamic and innovative churches will be more effective in building the growth of the congregation's faith and have a positive impact on the wider community.

Some of the strategies that can be implemented by pastoral leadership include the implementation of a community-based church model, digitization of ministry, collaborative leadership, strengthening the ministry of the younger generation, and orientation to missions and social action. By adopting these strategies, churches can not only increase congregational involvement in various activities, but also build a more inclusive and effective service ecosystem in the face of modern challenges.

#### **1. Implementation of Community-Based Church Model**

One of the key strategies in building a dynamic church community is the implementation of a community-based church model. Fast-growing churches usually have a strong system of small communities, where congregations can interact in a closer, more personal environment. These small groups play an important role in creating a sense of community, strengthening bonds between congregations, and being a means to support the growth of faith and social care.

Pastoral leaders should encourage the formation and strengthening of small groups in the church, such as discipleship groups, prayer groups, and Bible discussion groups. These groups can be a place for congregations to share life experiences, deepen their spiritual understanding, and strengthen each other in facing various challenges. In addition, the community-based church system also allows churches to reach out to congregants more effectively, especially in providing attention and guidance to individuals in need. With a strong small community, the church not only functions as a weekly place of worship, but also as a spiritual family that supports each other and grows together in the love of Christ.

#### **2. Digitalization and Utilization of Technology in Services**

In today's digital age, churches cannot ignore the role of technology in ministry. The use of digital technology can help churches to reach more people, increase congregation participation, and convey the gospel message in a more effective way. Therefore, an innovative pastoral leadership strategy must include the digitization of ministries as well as the optimization of various technology platforms.

Churches can use social media as a means to share spiritual messages, deliver announcements, and build interactions with congregations. Platforms such as YouTube,



Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok can be used to broadcast sermons, share daily devotionals, and provide inspirational content that is relevant to different age groups. In addition, spiritual podcasts can also be an effective medium for delivering Bible teaching and in-depth discussions of faith.

The creation of a church application can also be an innovation in increasing congregation involvement. The app can be used to provide information about worship schedules, manage community groups, provide Bible study materials, and facilitate interaction between congregations and church leaders. In this way, churches are not only limited to physical space, but can also provide a more flexible and affordable spiritual experience for congregants who have certain busyness or limitations. By integrating technology in ministry, churches can reach more people, expand their impact, and increase their effectiveness in building a closer and more interactive community of faith.

### 3. Collaborative Leadership Model

In the context of ecclesiastical leadership, the collaborative leadership model is one of the important strategies to create a more inclusive and innovative church environment. Church leadership traditions that are too centered on one individual often face challenges in decision-making and congregational involvement. Therefore, pastoral leaders need to adopt a leadership approach that involves more parties in the management and development of the church.

The collaborative leadership model allows pastors and church leadership teams to work together with congregations, youth, and other communities in designing more relevant and effective service programs. More open and participatory leadership will encourage the emergence of creative ideas from various groups, so that the church can present innovations in worship methods, evangelism strategies, and social services.

In addition, the involvement of the younger generation in church leadership is also an important aspect of the collaborative leadership model. The younger generation has great potential in bringing positive change to the church, especially in the aspects of digitalization, creativity, and social engagement. Therefore, the church needs to provide space for them to contribute, both in planning activities, worship services, and managing the church's digital media.

### 4. Strengthening the Development and Service of the Young Generation

The younger generation is the future pillar of the church, so an effective pastoral leadership strategy must include coaching and ministry specifically aimed at them. Many churches face challenges in reaching out to and retaining youth engagement, especially due to the changing mindsets, lifestyles, and spiritual preferences of the modern era.

To address these challenges, churches need to develop innovative discipleship programs, such as digital coaching classes, leadership training, and technology-based creative events. The church can also organize retreats, seminars, and social activities specifically designed to build a sense of community and increase youth involvement in ministry.

In addition, a more inclusive and open approach to the needs and aspirations of the younger generation will help them feel more valued and have a role in the life of the church. By creating an environment that supports and encourages their spiritual growth, the church can ensure that the younger generation remains an active part of the faith community.

### 5. Mission-Oriented and Social Action Churches

The growing church not only focuses on worship in the building, but is also active in social services that have an impact on the community. An effective pastoral leadership strategy must include an orientation to mission and social action as part of church ministry.

Social services can be carried out in various forms, such as assistance for the underprivileged, education for children from poor families, advocacy for humanitarian issues, and involvement in environmental movements. Churches that care about social conditions will more easily reach and attract people from various backgrounds to join their communities.

Through involvement in social action, the church can manifest Christ's love and be a blessing to the wider community. In addition, social services can also be an effective means to develop a sense of empathy, care, and a spirit of service among congregations.

### **Leadership Strategies for Building a Dynamic and Innovative Church Community**

1. Application of Community-Based Church Model
  - a. Growing churches tend to have strong small groups systems.
  - b. Pastoral leaders can encourage the formation of small groups that build closer relationships, strengthen faith, and foster social care.
2. Digitalization and Utilization of Technology in Services
  - a. Churches must optimize digital technologies, such as social media, podcasts, and streaming platforms to reach a wider congregation.
  - b. Creation of a church application to facilitate congregational involvement in worship, prayer, and community activities.
3. Collaborative Leadership Model

Pastors are no longer the sole decision-makers, but must build a more collaborative leadership system by involving the leadership team, youth, and other communities in decision-making and program planning.
4. Strengthening the Development and Service of the Young Generation

The church's growth strategy should include programs specifically for the younger generation, including digital discipleship classes, leadership training, and technology-based creative events.
5. A Mission-Oriented Church and Social Action

The growing church not only focuses on worship in the building, but is also active in social services such as community assistance, education, and advocacy for humanitarian issues.

### **Challenges and Opportunities for Pastoral Leadership in Facing Social Change and Technological Development in the Digital Era**

1. Challenge
  - a. Changes in Worship Patterns and Congregational Attendance
    - 1) Many churches have experienced a decrease in the number of physically present congregations due to the existence of online worship alternatives.
    - 2) Pastoral leaders must find ways to continue building spiritual attachment and inter-congregational relationships in the midst of the digital age.
  - b. Generational Differences in Worship and Community Styles
    - 1) The younger generation tends to be more open with a flexible and digital-based worship model, while the older generation still maintains conventional worship traditions.
    - 2) Church leaders must be able to bridge the gap between generations so that the church remains relevant to all age groups.
  - c. The Threat of Polarization and Hoax Information
    - 1) The development of digital technology also brings challenges in the form of the spread of hoax information and divisions within the church community.

- 2) Priests must be active in providing guidance to the congregation so that they are not easily provoked by invalid news.
  - d. Maintaining a Balance between Technology and Spiritual Relationships  
The use of technology in church ministry must remain balanced so as not to replace the essence of authentic spiritual relationships in the community.
2. Chance
- a. A Wider Reach of the Church with Technology  
Churches can reach new congregations through digital media, live streaming, podcasts, and interactive spiritual content.
  - b. Increased Opportunities for More Personalized Service  
Through digital platforms, churches can build more intensive interactions with congregations through online spiritual consultations, virtual Bible classes, and online prayer groups.
  - c. Cross-Church and Denominational Collaboration  
With access to technology, churches can more easily collaborate with other communities to hold conferences, seminars, and ministry activities together.
  - d. Increasing Spiritual Literacy and Digital Discipleship  
The abundance of digital-based learning resources allows churches to develop more innovative discipleship programs, such as online theology classes and virtual mentorship.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study confirm that effective pastoral leadership is a key element in ensuring the growth and renewal of the church. Service-based leadership, visionary communication, and the ability to adapt to social and technological changes are key factors influencing the church's success in reaching out to congregations and increasing their involvement in ecclesiastical life. In addition, strategies such as the use of digital technology, strengthening small group-based communities, and collaborative leadership have proven to strengthen the church's foundation in facing the challenges of the times.

In the face of the digital era and shifting social paradigms, church leaders are not only required to have a strong theological understanding, but also to be able to manage organizational dynamics and social relations within the church community. Therefore, the church needs to adopt a more flexible and inclusive approach to pastoral ministry, as well as provide room for innovation and active participation of the congregation.

As a suggestion, church leaders need to develop leadership skills that are oriented toward ministry and spiritual strengthening of the congregation. In addition, churches should be more active in utilizing technology as a tool to reach new generations and expand the scope of their ministry. Leadership models based on collaboration with congregations and other ecclesiastical communities also need to be applied to create a more dynamic and inclusive church environment. With the right strategy, the church can continue to grow and experience continuous renewal, so that it remains relevant in answering the needs of the congregation in the midst of changing times.

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