



Synergistic Role of the Church in Social Action: a Case Study of GBI Jemaat Asia Afrika's Community Service Initiatives

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ARTICLE INFO

Kata Kunci: Church Initiatives, Community Service, Social Action

Received : 28, March

Revised : 20, April

Accepted: 25, May

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ABSTRAK

This community service explores the synergistic role of GBI Jemaat Asia Afrika in society, highlighting its social action initiatives. The method involves surveying target institutions, accurately assessing needs, and announcing plans during church services. Contributions are collected and distributed accordingly. This decade-long initiative targets residents of elderly homes, orphanages, and rehabilitation centers. Success indicators include meeting specific needs and receiving acknowledgment from institution managers. Post-action evaluations ensure continuous improvement. Consistent implementation of these activities demonstrates the church's ability to synergistically fulfill its mission of living, faithfulness, and service, providing meaningful support to the less fortunate and enhancing their sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

The term "Ekklesia" refers to individuals called out of darkness into His marvelous light, originating from the event of Jesus' ascension. The Hebrew word "Qahal," meaning an assembly or gathering, is conceptually related. The church, therefore, signifies a group of people who have been reborn, irrespective of place and time (Situmorang, 2021). The functions of the church encompass several key areas. Didaskalia, or teaching, is essential for the growth of a healthy congregation through accurate biblical instruction, imparting what Jesus taught and did (Kurnia et al., 2023). Crucial doctrines include the Trinity, the inerrancy of Scripture, Jesus as the sole Savior, and the application of biblical ethics and norms in daily life. Marturia, or evangelism, involves fulfilling the Great Commission with responsibility despite obstacles, even to the point of martyrdom. The term "Marturia" (Greek for witness) signifies testimony and advocacy, emphasizing the church's duty to proclaim the gospel as a testimony to Christ's grace (Milne, 2002). Koinonia, or fellowship, manifests in loving God and others through communal unity, transcending social, racial, educational, and national differences (Saragih, 2019). This fellowship, grounded in God's word, underscores mutual support, encouragement, and prayer (Soedarmo, 1986). Diakonia, or service, involves caring for fellow believers, ensuring the church becomes a blessing and reflects God's kingdom on earth (Stott, 1994). This includes providing basic necessities and supporting those less fortunate (Soedarmo, 1986). Lastly, Liturgika, or worship ceremonies, integrates praise, worship, and sacraments, acknowledging Christ's presence among the congregation and manifesting the Holy Spirit's power (Milne, 2002).

The early church community was noted for fostering strong relationships with both God and one another. This profound bond was manifested through mutual care, as members provided assistance to those among them who were in need (Soesilo, 2018). This practice extended beyond their immediate faith community to include the surrounding society, which contributed to their widespread favor and positive reputation among all people. This community service initiative is undertaken by the church as an expression of concern for issues such as poverty, oppression, natural disasters, and similar challenges, though it remains constrained by religious factors (Katarina & Budiman, 2021). Many churches tend to focus more on ceremonial activities, often neglecting other essential functions, such as diaconal services (Saragih, 2019). The explanation of the church's functions presents a significant challenge: whether the local church can effectively address these issues by becoming a light and salt in the world as a tangible testimony. Social action can integrate the church's functions by aiding less fortunate fellow believers in their daily lives. This study aims to address these issues and demonstrate how the church can fulfill its mission in this context.

IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS

The method employed in implementing social action involves conducting surveys of the institutions to be visited, facilitating direct interaction to accurately ascertain their needs (Gunarto et al., 2024). The survey results are analyzed to identify the most fundamental requirements of each institution.

Subsequently, these needs are announced during church services, both the initial and subsequent ones, outlining the planned social action on designated dates and locations, along with the required items such as groceries and other necessities. Collected items are centralized at the church secretariat, and any monetary contributions from congregants are disbursed accordingly to fulfill the identified needs.

The activity, ongoing for over a decade, spans two days during working hours, involving visits to predetermined institutions with the congregation's participation. The target audience comprises residents of various institutions, including the elderly, orphanages, and rehabilitation centers. The service is conducted by directly visiting the designated institutions and delivering collected items according to their needs. Success indicators include meeting the specific needs of the institutions and receiving acknowledgment from their management to ensure the sustainability of the initiative. Following the completion of activities, church leaders, particularly those involved in social action, hold a meeting to evaluate the initiative. The pastor, as the activity's overseer in the local church, announces the outcomes of the visits and presents the donations to the institutions and rehabilitation centers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The early church experienced rapid growth, characterized by an influx of repentant souls accepting Christ as their Savior. Gospel proclamation, accompanied by tangible manifestations of the Holy Spirit's power through healing and restoration, became increasingly evident. Concurrently, social outreach efforts unified the diverse congregation. This dissemination of the good news can be categorized as a proclamation of the Kingdom of God, while the ensuing social actions serve as demonstrations of the Kingdom's power (Pappalan, 2020). In the proclamation of the Gospel, there exists no dichotomy or prioritization between the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's power and social action, as both can harmoniously coalesce. The lifestyle of the early church serves as the foundation for contemporary social ministries (Santosa, 2013). The fellowship practiced by the early church was not merely driven by shared goals or interests but rooted in love and generosity, exemplified through charitable giving to those in need, ensuring that no member lacked food. This enabled the congregation to gather and devote themselves daily from house to house with joy. The act of giving contributions with love and voluntary spirit serves as the answer to why the early church was favored by all, and why the proclamation of the Gospel flourished (Soesilo, 2018).

The implementation of this local church's social action initiatives fosters a sense of brotherhood among individuals by facilitating face-to-face interactions and nurturing empathy within the surrounding community. These activities are conducted periodically, occurring every four months, every six months, annually, or incidentally, depending on the needs of the institutions. The execution of social action involves congregants gathering at the church at 07:00 AM, followed by a briefing session, and then departing using truck vans

to transport donated items, while participants utilize their personal vehicles and those provided by the church.

Implementation Documentation

Panti Wreda Karitas

Address: Jalan Ibu Sangki No.35, RT01/RW13, Kel. Cibeber, Kec. Cimahi Selatan, Kota Cimahi, Bandung.

This social action is conducted every four months as an expression of the congregation's love through charitable giving. The most recent activity took place on August 8, 2023, coinciding with the anniversary of the Karitas elderly care home. The event included worship, communal singing, and the distribution of donations such as rice, cooking oil, milk, soy sauce, diapers, eggs, instant noodles, detergent, biscuits, and vermicelli. Such initiatives will continue regularly. Congregants had the opportunity to directly observe the lives of twenty-three elderly individuals and their respective challenges at the care home. Ten congregation members participated, alongside four committee members.



Picture 1. Pantia Wreda Karitas

Panti Asuhan Bhakti Luhur

Address: Jalan Taman Kopo Indah II Blok III C-1 No.28-29, Rahayu, Margaasih, Rahayu, Kec. Margaasih, Kabupaten Bandung, Jawa Barat 40218

The orphanage also caters to twenty-two children, including those with special needs. Social action activities are conducted intermittently, three or four times a year, with the latest visit occurring on April 11, 2023. Six congregation members, along with four committee members, participated in the visit. The visit began with prayer and fellowship, followed by the distribution of donations consisting of rice, cooking oil, biscuits, eggs, milk, instant noodles, and vermicelli.



Picture 2. Pantia Asuhan Bhakti Luhur

Pantia Asuhan Cahaya Kasih

Address: Jalan KaryaMukti No.132, Babakan, Kec. Babakan Ciparay, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat 40222

This facility specifically caters to underprivileged children from various regions across Indonesia. Congregants had the opportunity to witness twenty-eight children growing up in the home, being prepared to face the future with resilience. Twelve congregation members, accompanied by four committee members, visited the home. The visit commenced with a collective prayer, followed by the distribution of donations including rice, cooking oil, eggs, milk, biscuits, instant noodles, and vermicelli.



Picture 3. Pantia Asuhan Cahaya Kasih

Lembaga Kesejahteraan Sosial Anak Anugrah Kemakmuran Mitra Nusantara Rumah Kasih Karunia

Address: Jalan Sariwangi Asri X No. 8 Parongpong, Sariwangi, Bandung Barat, Kabupaten Bandung Barat, Jawa Barat 40559

The orphanage, guided by Mrs. Ester Kim, a devout Christian from Korea, serves underprivileged children in their journey of life. Activities are conducted every four months on a regular basis, with the most recent visit occurring on August 8, 2023. Ten congregation members and four committee members observed the lives of twenty-two children in the orphanage, along with their respective challenges, and witnessed how the caregivers are preparing them to become resilient individuals for the future. Following a collective prayer,

donations including rice, milk, cooking oil, eggs, instant noodles, vermicelli, and biscuits were provided.



Picture 4. Rumah Kasih Karunia

Yayasan Dunamis Agape

Address: Jalan Mekarwangi No.128, Sariwangi, Kec. Parongpong, Kabupaten Bandung Barat, Jawa Barat 40559

The recovery home serves as a shelter for individuals with mental health disorders (ODGJ - Orang Dalam Gangguan Jiwa) and their symptoms. Visits are conducted periodically every four months. A group of ten congregation members and four committee members directly observed the lives of ODGJ individuals during their recovery process, experiencing firsthand the boundless love of God for those in such situations. Following a worship session, donations including rice, cooking oil, milk, instant noodles, vermicelli, soy sauce, clothing, eggs, and biscuits were provided.



Picture 5. Yayasan Dunamis Agape

LKSA Rumah Pengharapan Baru/Sinar Fajar Indonesia

Address: Jalan Jayagiri 1 No.2, RT.001/RW.015, Jayagiri, Kec. Lembang, Kabupaten Bandung Barat, Jawa Barat 40391

Visits to the orphanage are conducted annually, typically in November. During these visits, congregation members witness the realities of the children's lives at the orphanage and observe their positive growth, while the caretakers attentively plan for their future. Eight congregation members, along with four committee members, participate in these visits, conveying blessings from the

GBI congregation in the form of rice, cooking oil, milk, instant noodles, eggs, biscuits, and collective prayer sessions.



Picture 6. Rumah Pengharapan Baru

Panti GERASA (Gerakan Asih Abadi) Indonesia

Address: Jalan Ac. Lengkeng No.210, RT.001/RW.002, Bojong Menteng, Kec. Rawalumbu, Kota Bekasi, Jawa Barat 17117

The Gerasa Shelter, located in Bekasi city, conducts its social activities periodically, typically in November. During these visits, congregation members observe individuals undergoing rehabilitation, aiming for their future independence. Nine congregation members, accompanied by four committee members, engage in worship sessions and listen to residents reciting Bible verses. Subsequently, they provide assistance in the form of rice, cooking oil, milk, biscuits, instant noodles, eggs, and scraps of cloth for making mats for nearly recovered patients.



Picture 7. GERASA (Gerakan Asih Abadi)

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The regular and occasional social action initiatives undertaken by GBI Jemaat Asia Afrika demonstrate the church's ability to synergize effectively. Sustaining these efforts becomes the responsibility of all congregation members to ensure both qualitative and quantitative growth, aligning with the church's mission to live faithfully and serve. These activities alleviate some of the struggles faced by shelter administrators, although they may not fully meet all their needs. However, like a drop of water in a desert, even minimal support can hold significant meaning and contribute to the continuity of these shelters.

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