



Navigating the Symbiotic Relationship between Churches and Parachurch Organizations in Indonesian context

Khoe Yao Tung¹, Valeria Sonata²

¹Universitas Pelita Harapan, ²Sekolah Tinggi Teologia

Internasional Harvest Tangerang

Correspondence: namakuvaleria@gmail.com

Abstract: The presence of parachurch organizations has become an integral aspect of Christian ministry and community development, functioning as complementary entities that support the effectiveness of the church's mission. However, the relationship between churches and parachurch organizations is not always harmonious, often marked by tensions and misunderstandings. This article explores the dynamics of the church-parachurch relationship by examining themes of synergy, theological challenges, financial management, and professionalism in service delivery. Utilizing a qualitative research methodology with phenomenological and theological approaches, the study investigates three key themes of synergy and tension: Theological Considerations and Financial Management, Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies, and Customer and Human Resource Management. The findings identify critical issues related to governance, funding, and service orientation within parachurch organizations. The study highlights the importance of fostering harmony and professionalism in church-parachurch relationships to enhance the effectiveness and societal impact of ministry in the Indonesian context.

Keywords: church-parachurch relationship; theological challenges; theological consideration; collaborative strategies

Abstrak: Kehadiran organisasi-organisasi parachurch telah menjadi aspek yang tidak terpisahkan dari pelayanan Kristen dan pengembangan masyarakat, yang berfungsi sebagai entitas pelengkap yang mendukung efektivitas misi gereja. Namun, hubungan antara gereja dan organisasi parachurch tidak selalu harmonis, bahkan sering kali diwarnai dengan ketegangan dan kesalahpahaman. Artikel ini mengeksplorasi dinamika hubungan gereja dan parachurch dengan mengkaji tema-tema sinergi, tantangan teologis, manajemen keuangan, dan profesionalisme dalam pelayanan. Dengan menggunakan metodologi penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis dan teologis, penelitian ini menyelidiki tiga tema utama yaitu sinergi dan ketegangan: Pertimbangan Teologis dan Manajemen Keuangan, Profesionalisme dan Strategi Kolaboratif, serta Manajemen Pelanggan dan Sumber Daya Manusia. Temuan-temuannya mengidentifikasi isu-isu kritis yang berkaitan dengan tata kelola, pendanaan, dan orientasi pelayanan dalam organisasi-organisasi gereja. Studi ini menyoroti pentingnya membina keharmonisan dan profesionalisme dalam hubungan gereja dan parachurch untuk meningkatkan efektivitas dan dampak sosial pelayanan dalam konteks Indonesia.

Kata kunci: hubungan gereja-gereja; tantangan teologis; pertimbangan teologis; strategi kolaboratif

Introduction

The presence of parachurch¹ organizations has become an integral component of the ministry and community-building efforts of Christian churches,² even forming a significant part of their ministry systems. Their role within the church is indisputable, as they are essential for coexisting alongside the church—not merely as supplementary entities but as complements that enhance the effectiveness of ministry and foster the growth of Christian communities.³ Strong synergy, synchronization, and collaboration between parachurch organizations and their parent churches are imperative to fulfill the mission of God. Parachurch organizations, operating alongside but independently of churches, have become indispensable fixtures within the broader landscape of Christian ministry.⁴ These institutions serve as vital complements to the church, offering essential support and resources that augment the effectiveness of the church's mission.⁵ While the church and parachurch organizations share a common goal of advancing the Gospel and serving the community, their relationship is not without its challenges.

The main problem this article addresses is the tensions and misunderstandings in the relationship between churches and parachurch organizations despite their shared mission and mutual dependence. While parachurch organizations are essential complements to the church's ministry, their autonomy can lead to conflicts over governance, funding, and authority. The article explores how these tensions arise, particularly when parachurch entities are seen as either ineffective (wasting resources) or too effective (becoming competitors). It

¹ Ralph Winter (1999), a renowned sociologist, introduced the terms modality and sodality into missiology to refer to "the Two Structures of God's Redemptive Mission" as the governing paradigms of mission. In this article, parachurch refers to an organization that complements the church—offering social and spiritual services—whose structure is not controlled by the church. Parachurch organizations can take the form of foundations, associations, business entities, organizations, or groups that collaborate for social services to support evangelism and the social welfare of congregations and communities.

² Malesela J Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular," *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 49, no. 1 (2021): 115–32.

³ Elaine Howard Ecklund, Denise Daniels, and Rachel C Schneider, "From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church," *Religions* 11, no. 9 (2020): 442; Jerry White, *The Church and Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage* (Multnomah press, 1983).

⁴ Douglas W Allen, "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach," *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 27, no. 1 (1995): 97–117; Rob Elkington et al., "Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century," *In Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 49, no. 3 (2015): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911>.

⁵ Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular."

seeks to provide theological and practical solutions to foster greater collaboration, ensuring a harmonious and productive relationship that strengthens Christian ministry.

As Jerry White (1983) observes, parachurch organizations differ from the church in that they are not directly governed by it but operate with a degree of autonomy.⁶ This independent structure can generate tensions, as the church may perceive parachurch organizations as functioning outside its jurisdiction or even as competitors to its ministry efforts. Conversely, parachurch organizations often bring expertise, resources, and specialized services that the church may lack, positioning them as indispensable partners in the church's overarching mission. Despite their independence, parachurch organizations significantly bolster the church's mission.⁷ However, the relationship between the two entities is frequently marked by tension and misunderstanding.⁸

This article examines the dynamics of the church-parachurch relationship, focusing on their synergies, theological challenges, financial management, and professionalism in service delivery. Employing a theological framework alongside practical insights, the study identifies key issues in the governance, funding, and service orientation of parachurch organizations. Moreover, it proposes collaborative strategies to foster harmony between churches and parachurch entities through theological dialogue, mentorship, and the enhancement of service quality, ensuring the sustainability of the evangelical mission.⁹ This research underscores the critical importance of harmony and professionalism in church-parachurch relations to amplify the impact of ministry within the community.

While structurally independent, parachurch organizations are vital complements to the church's work, providing critical support to enhance the effectiveness of its mission.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the relationship between churches and parachurch entities is fraught with

⁶ White, *The Church and Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*.

⁷ Marvin Washington, Harry J Van Buren III, and Karen Patterson, "Pastor Practices in the Era of Megachurches: New Organizational Practices and Forms for a Changing Institutional Environment," in *Religion and Organization Theory* (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2014), 187–213.

⁸ Washington, Van Buren III, and Patterson; Allen, "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach"; Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular"; Bernadette Marie Gailliard and Courtney Wong Davis, "To Be Known, Accepted, and Involved: Investigating Organizational Assimilation in Christian Churches," *Southern Communication Journal* 82, no. 3 (2017): 117–28.

⁹ Allen, "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach"; Kgaugelo Sammy Boya and Germinah Evelyn Chiloane-Phetla, "The Modern Church as Not-for-Profit Organisation: Is It Not Time for the Church to Become More Strategic?," *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 48, no. 1 (2022): 1–21; Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular."

¹⁰ Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular."

challenges, often characterized by tensions and misunderstandings.¹¹ This article delves into the symbiotic dynamics of this relationship, analyzing their synergies, theological considerations, financial management, and professionalism in service delivery.

Jerry White (1983) describes parachurch organizations as Christian institutions that accompany the church in various spiritual ministries, though they are not entirely under the church's control. These organizations tend to operate independently, even when founded by elements within the church. This autonomy often leads to a lack of smooth or harmonious relations, frequently giving rise to tensions. White likens this to a "difficult marriage" between the church and parachurch organizations.¹² Problems often emerge when parachurch organizations are perceived as ineffective, as their existence may be questioned due to consuming substantial financial resources—sometimes at the expense of other ministries—while producing unsatisfactory outcomes.

Conversely, when parachurch ministries are seen as more effective, impactful, dominant, and thriving in their service, they may be perceived as rivals to the church. This misalignment fosters misunderstandings and confusion regarding the respective roles of each entity.

Literature Review

The existing literature underscores the synergies, theological considerations, financial management, and professionalism as critical aspects of this dynamic partnership.¹³

Ecklund et al.¹⁴ highlight the complementary nature of parachurch organizations, emphasizing their role in enhancing the effectiveness of the church's mission.¹⁵ However, White identifies the tensions that may arise due to the independent structure of parachurch organizations.¹⁶

The theological implications of the church-parachurch relationship are also explored in the literature. These studies emphasize the necessity of aligning theological perspectives, adopting a holistic approach to human well-being, and ensuring the stewardship of resources.

¹¹ Masenya.

¹² White, *The Church and Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*.

¹³ Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular."

¹⁴ Howard Ecklund, Daniels, and Schneider, "From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church."

¹⁵ Oladele Olubukola Olabode, "Improving Professional Church Staff Interpersonal Relationships: Transformational Perspective," *Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy* 4, no. 12 (2020): 516–20, <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2020.v04i12.001>.

¹⁶ Masenya, "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular."

Regarding financial management, the literature indicates that a lack of professional oversight and transparency within parachurch organizations presents a significant concern, necessitating strategies to improve accountability and resource allocation. Another key focus of this research is the importance of professionalism and collaborative strategies in addressing the challenges within the church-parachurch relationship.

Carrying Out the Church's Mission Effectively

The church and its parachurch ministries need to maintain open communication between parachurch members and the church. Regular working meetings should be held, including open discussions on goals, vision, and strategies, especially setting short-term and long-term objectives, budgeting, and program development. A "Church Liaison Minister" should be designated to facilitate communication between the church and parachurch ministries, ensuring clarity of roles and preventing misunderstandings in the ministry's actions. Open communication, grounded in love, will help both the church and parachurch ministries grow in all things in Christ as the head of the church (Ephesians 4:15). The task of the "Church Liaison Minister" is to ensure good coordination between parachurch members and the church in planning and implementing ministry programs. Both the church and parachurch ministries are one body, partners in fulfilling the church's mission.¹⁷ The Bible affirms this unity in 1 Corinthians 12:12, stating, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ."

The church and parachurch ministries should provide cross-program services so that they can integrate, and the congregation can become more familiar with the parachurch services under the church's guidance.¹⁸ In some churches, special services are held to introduce parachurch ministries, with themed services like Christian education, showcasing ministry stands offering attractive discounts on services such as health check-ups or music school fees.

The church must develop skills and training for new parachurch workers to understand the continuation of the parachurch ministry entrusted to them. Training and skill development are crucial to ensuring that parachurch workers can carry out their duties more effectively. They must understand the routine of the work, service development, and how doctrinal beliefs

¹⁷ Edward W Said, "Invention, Memory, and Place" 26, no. Winter 2000 (n.d.): 175–92.

¹⁸ Logan Robert E., *Beyond Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990).

are implemented in their parachurch services.¹⁹ Open knowledge sharing and training in service administration will help prevent doubt and suspicion among them. The Bible encourages this in Proverbs 1:5, "Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance."

Structured and regular meetings between the church and parachurch ministries are necessary for monitoring and evaluating ministry programs, ensuring they are effective and identifying areas for improvement. The Bible emphasizes the importance of planning, as in Luke 14:28, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?"

The church should also equip its leaders with training, workshops, or Bible study related to community service as a form of guidance and support to improve their work quality. Modules for leadership development should be documented and used as a reference for future leadership transitions. Training and mentoring should cover the biblical foundations of parachurch ministries, business models for parachurch organizations, understanding non-profit organizations, and effective stewardship. As 1 Thessalonians 5:11 encourages, "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."

Theological Considerations and Financial Management

The relationship between churches and parachurch organizations is not only a practical one but also carries theological implications. Navigating the theological landscape is crucial, as both entities must be aligned in their understanding of the church's role, the purpose of ministry, and the stewardship of resources.

In some cases, the rise of parachurch organizations has led to a compartmentalization of responsibilities, with the church seen as responsible only for spiritual well-being while psychologists and other professionals attend to mental and emotional health. This separation of the spiritual and the psychological can be theologically problematic, as it fails to recognize the holistic nature of human beings and the church's responsibility for the entirety of one's well-being.

¹⁹ Eric E Wright, *A Practical Theology of Missions: Dispelling the Mystery, Recovering the Passion* (Day One, 2010).

Furthermore, the financial management of parachurch organizations can be a source of tension. These organizations are often small, relying heavily on volunteer support, and may not have the professional oversight necessary to effectively monitor their resources or the behavior of their leaders. This lack of financial control can lead to concerns about transparency, accountability, and the appropriate allocation of funds towards the organization's mission.

Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies

In addition to the theological and financial considerations, the professionalism and service quality of parachurch organizations are also critical factors in the church-parachurch relationship. Professional staff members, whether paid or voluntary, must understand the dynamics of office relationships and respect the various operational lines to avoid dissonance among staff members.

To address these challenges, a collaborative approach is essential. As highlighted by Florence & Judith (2018),²⁰ the church must nurture, assess, correct, and build up these relationships to strengthen the entire body and enhance the effectiveness of its mission.

Strategies for fostering harmony between churches and parachurch organizations include:

1. Theological dialogue: Engage in open and transparent discussions to align on theological perspectives, the role of the church, and the purpose of ministry.²¹
2. Mentoring and capacity building: Provide guidance and support to parachurch leaders, helping them develop the necessary management and leadership skills to ensure professionalism and accountability.
3. Service quality enhancement: Collaborate to improve the quality, effectiveness, and impact of the services provided by parachurch organizations, ensuring they align with the church's mission and values.

²⁰ Florence Chatira and Judith Mwenje, "The Development of Management Skills for Effective Church Management in Pastoral Preparation Programs in Zimbabwe," *African Journal of Business Management* 12, no. 5 (2018): 103–20; Olubukola Olabode, "Improving Professional Church Staff Interpersonal Relationships: Transformational Perspective."

²¹ Chatira and Mwenje, "The Development of Management Skills for Effective Church Management in Pastoral Preparation Programs in Zimbabwe."

By embracing these collaborative strategies, churches and parachurch organizations can navigate the complexities of their relationship, foster mutual understanding, and amplify the impact of their collective efforts to serve the community and advance the gospel.

The future challenge for church mission services is not only to understand and resolve various "internal" issues between the church and its parachurch organizations. It also involves the synchronization and alignment of collaborations between one church's parachurch and others, so they can support each other's services.²² If a church has a unique parachurch service compared to other parachurch organizations, they can exchange clients and combine programs to highlight their distinctiveness. These programs can be continuously improved, and cooperation between church synods or synod consortia (ecumenical structures) can lead to joint parachurch service initiatives. For example, collaboration on community development services in remote areas that have yet to be reached would be strategically beneficial for the spread of the gospel. Establishing a "joint" integrated community training centres as a hub for skill development in areas such as livestock farming, fisheries, and agriculture in remote regions can directly impact the surrounding community.

There are instances where one church owns a hospital, another church provides broadcasting services through radio, social media podcasts, another has a school, and another offers counselling services. Essentially, church services are a unified expression of faith, with Christ as the head (Ephesians 4:15). Parachurch institutions, with their diverse services, can collaborate to provide services and build Christian communities, offering church members benefits such as discounted education fees for their children, alumni receiving healthcare benefits at the church's hospital, and discounts on books from parachurch publishers, among other things. This fosters harmonious relationships among them.

Method Of Research

1. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative phenomenological approach, integrating both theological and practical perspectives to explore the relationship between the church and parachurch organizations. The focus is on understanding the synergies and tensions that arise in their

²² Michael L Sweeney, "The Pauline Collection, Church Partnerships, and the Mission of the Church in the 21st Century," *Missiology* 48, no. 2 (2020): 142–53.

interactions, particularly in areas such as governance, financial management, professionalism, and collaborative strategies. By utilizing a phenomenological approach, this research seeks to uncover the lived experiences of individuals who are actively engaged in parachurch organizations, shedding light on the dynamics that shape their cooperation with the broader church institution.

Phenomenology, as emphasized by Moustakas (1994), is concerned with exploring the essence of human experiences by engaging directly with individuals' perceptions and interpretations of their realities. This study employs transcendental phenomenology, which requires researchers to set aside personal biases and assumptions—a process known as *epoche*—to examine participants' experiences as authentically as possible. This methodological approach enables the researcher to gain deeper insights into the structural and relational complexities of parachurch organizations within Christian ministry.

The research follows three core steps in phenomenological inquiry. The first step, *epoche*, involves the researcher deliberately suspending personal preconceptions to ensure a neutral and objective analysis of the data. The second step, *condensation*, requires the identification and synthesis of key themes from participants' experiences through detailed descriptions and cumulative analysis. Finally, the third step, *imaginative variation*, explores multiple perspectives and possible interpretations, allowing the researcher to uncover the underlying structures and meanings embedded in the data. This structured process ensures a comprehensive and unbiased exploration of the church-parachurch relationship.

2. Data Collection and Participants

To ensure a rich and diverse understanding of the phenomenon under study, this research draws on in-depth interviews conducted with individuals from different sectors within parachurch organizations. The participants are purposefully selected based on their active involvement in ministries closely affiliated with church governance. The study involves interviews with five (5) members from Christian schools, two (2) members from health services, and four (4) members from counseling centers. These participants provide insights based on their mission-related experiences, particularly in relation to their engagement with church synods.

The interview process is designed to encourage participants to reflect deeply on their experiences, sharing their perspectives on collaboration, challenges, and tensions within the church-parachurch dynamic. By focusing on qualitative, open-ended questions, the study captures subjective narratives that reveal the complex interplay between theological principles, financial considerations, and professional expectations within these organizations. Thematic analysis of these interviews allows the researcher to identify patterns of synergy and conflict, offering a holistic view of the strengths and challenges inherent in these relationships.

3. Data Analysis and Thematic Development

The process of extracting themes from the data follows Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach, which involves a systematic coding and theme development process. The first step in this process is familiarization with the data, where the researcher transcribes all interviews and reviews the transcripts multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the content. During this phase, notes and initial impressions are documented to capture significant ideas. Next, the researcher proceeds with generating initial codes, systematically identifying and labeling recurring ideas, patterns, and concepts within the data. These codes are assigned to specific phrases or statements that relate to the research questions, ensuring that relevant insights are organized for further analysis.

Once the data is coded, the researcher searches for themes by grouping related codes into broader thematic categories that reflect significant patterns in the data. This process involves linking individual experiences to overarching themes that define the church-parachurch relationship. After identifying potential themes, the next step is reviewing and refining themes to assess their coherence and relevance to the research objectives. The researcher ensures that each theme is distinct yet interconnected, providing a comprehensive understanding of the data. Finally, the themes are defined and named to capture their core essence, with direct quotations from participants used to illustrate their meaning and significance. This structured approach allows for a rigorous and meaningful interpretation of the data, ensuring that the findings accurately reflect the lived experiences of individuals within parachurch organizations.

4. Key Themes of Investigation

This study focuses on three central themes that emerge from the interaction between churches and parachurch organizations:

1. **Theological Considerations and Financial Management** – This theme examines how theological doctrines influence the operations of parachurch organizations, particularly in their financial strategies and accountability structures. Issues such as the reliance on church funding, ethical stewardship, and doctrinal alignment in financial decision-making are explored.
2. **Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies** – This theme investigates the balance between spiritual mission and professional expectations in parachurch organizations. It explores the challenges of organizational governance, leadership structures, and inter-institutional cooperation in ensuring effective ministry work.
3. **Customer and Human Resource Management** – This theme analyzes how parachurch organizations manage their staff, volunteers, and service beneficiaries while maintaining alignment with their Christian mission. It also explores expectations for professionalism, pastoral care, and ethical responsibilities in service-oriented ministries.

5. Significance of the Methodology

By employing a deep qualitative analysis, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of governance, funding, and service orientation within parachurch organizations. The phenomenological approach ensures that the study remains grounded in real-life experiences, highlighting practical challenges and opportunities faced by parachurch entities in their engagement with the church.

Furthermore, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on church-parachurch relations, offering recommendations for fostering harmony, professionalism, and sustainability in their collaborative efforts. Ultimately, the findings seek to enhance the effectiveness and societal impact of Christian ministry within the Indonesian context, providing valuable insights for church leaders, parachurch administrators, and Christian educators

Result And Discussion

1. Parachurch And Its Dilemma

The lack of harmony between the church and parachurch organizations in fulfilling their respective roles often leads to misunderstandings by the parent church (synod). Parachurch organizations, which are established, formed, and owned by church synods, are intended to support the church's vision and mission, particularly in fulfilling the evangelical mandate (Matthew 28:18-20). Resane (2020) identifies several areas where misunderstandings and suspicions frequently arise between the church and parachurch, including management, theology, finance, accountability, governance, and human resources.²³

The existence of parachurch organizations is often associated with issues of financial sustainability, program continuity, and funding, as well as their capacity to be self-sufficient in providing services to congregations and communities.²⁴ In Indonesia, larger church synods with adequate resources typically face fewer financial challenges, whereas smaller synods with limited financial capacity struggle to develop parachurch services for evangelical missions due to constrained financial resources. Sustained and consistent financial support from the parent church or external donors is crucial for parachurch organizations. Conversely, when parachurch organizations achieve financial surpluses, church synods may request a portion of these surpluses to fund church-related activities.

A further concern involves the professional competence of parachurch leaders and staff in managing nonprofit organizations effectively. Many individuals leading parachurch organizations are former church elders assigned to these roles without relevant expertise in nonprofit management. This mismatch of skills often results in stagnation and an inability to achieve self-sufficiency or expand their impact on both congregations and wider communities.

Parachurch organizations are also burdened with management responsibilities, including service development, target setting, work program implementation, and service quality assurance. While parachurch activities are part of the church's nonprofit mission, professional management practices in these "noble industries" are necessary. Management should not operate at minimal capacity under the guise of "volunteer service." Instead, they must adopt

²³ Kelebogile T Resane, "The Church and the Parachurch: Can the Two Dialogue in Order to Agree?," *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41, no. 1 (2020): 1–8.

²⁴ Gregory Shumbambiri, "Promoting Financial Accountability in Churches & Parachurch Institutions." IX, no. VII (2024): 668–74, <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2024.907055>.

a professional approach, driven by faith-based outcomes, while ensuring high-quality, efficient services.

Leadership transitions pose another challenge, particularly in ensuring program continuity and the development of new initiatives. Leadership turnover often creates a "program vacuum," as incoming leaders require time to familiarize themselves with organizational responsibilities. This challenge is encapsulated in a common leadership adage: "One year to understand the issues, one year to develop a work plan, and one year to execute it." Consequently, only one year of "effective action" remains within a three-year leadership term. Some church synods address this issue by retaining a portion of previous leadership—typically 40%—while introducing 60% new leaders, in accordance with church governance rules and government regulations.

The church must provide supportive guidance to ensure parachurch organizations remain aligned with the church's confession of faith, doctrines, organizational culture, and ecclesiastical procedures. Such guidance is vital to prevent doctrinal ambiguities or diverging approaches in handling specific issues, such as resource mobilization and pastoral care. Churches should engage parachurch organizations in ongoing theological dialogues to explore synergies and align their missions. Prolonged dialogue fosters mutual understanding, strengthens faith-based practices, and addresses doctrinal uncertainties. These issues often arise when parachurch organizations operate too independently, particularly if their staff are not aligned with the church's vision and mission.

Personnel in parachurch organizations must possess a clear understanding of the church's core doctrines to ensure the effectiveness of evangelical missions. Senior church leaders who pioneered parachurch services should have opportunities to mentor parachurch leaders and staff, sharing insights into the challenges and unanswered prayers faced during the establishment of such services. Iconic senior figures or founders who have advanced parachurch services can provide exemplary leadership, ensuring alignment with the mission and fostering a spirit of service. However, instances of stagnation among founders may lead to mediocrity, requiring decisive church intervention to appoint new leadership that aligns with the mission.

The quality of services provided by parachurch organizations also remains a critical concern. High-quality services reflect positively on the church, attracting both congregants

and the broader community. For example, Christian schools should exemplify excellence (Colossians 3:23). Superior Christian education attracts congregants to enroll their children and may even appeal to individuals from other faith backgrounds. Conversely, subpar schools can alienate both church members and potential converts. Continuous evaluation by the church is essential to determine the sustainability of parachurch services, particularly in Christian education.

Ideally, parachurch organizations should work collaboratively with the church, striving together to advance the church's mission in diverse contexts. The effectiveness of this collaboration can be seen in how local communities receive and integrate church services. In areas with strong cultural traditions and dominant belief systems, establishing church services can be challenging due to local resistance. In such cases, parachurch institutions like health ministries play a pivotal role, offering healthcare services that support both community well-being and the introduction of church services. Over time, these efforts can facilitate greater acceptance of the church within local populations.

One illustrative example of collaboration involves the establishment of Christian schools as part of evangelism. In regions where church planting is difficult, small educational initiatives, such as tutoring centres, can serve as entry points for faith-based services. These centres may evolve into informal kindergartens and later into primary schools equipped with worship spaces. This gradual development can lead to the establishment of a small church. Similarly, when churches are established within residential communities, congregants often request Christian schools to nurture and develop their children's faith.

Although parachurch ministry operate outside the formal structures of the church,²⁵ they bring professional expertise to nonprofit management, complementing local churches in fulfilling the evangelical mandate. Parachurch organizations specialize in various areas of social service and mission, including healthcare, education, pastoral counseling, publishing, and media outreach. They also innovate in church growth, providing resources, training, and creative solutions to support the church's mission. Through such efforts, parachurch organizations serve as catalysts for both spiritual and organizational development, enhancing the church's overall impact in diverse communities.

²⁵ Byron Straughn, "For the Parachurch: Know the Difference Between Families and Soccer Teams," *9Marks Journal IX* (April 2011), 2011, 22–27.

2. Sinergies And Tension

The presence of parachurch ministries always refers to the work of Jesus Christ on Earth, including His teaching, miracles, healing, spiritual counseling, and various graces for community life. Jesus commissioned the apostles (Matthew 28 and Acts 1) to carry out the gospel mission, which then led to the development of congregations and churches under the apostolic authority. The authority of the church is the authority of Christ as its head, and the church uses this authority for God's mission to reconcile all things to Himself for the glory of God (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 1:20). Furthermore, the church's ministry reflects the diverse works of Jesus in bringing shalom to the world. At least three main functions of parachurch ministries can be identified: opening new fields for evangelism (Matthew 28:19-20), nurturing faith in Christian life for the congregation (Acts 2:42), and promoting the well-being of the surrounding community (Jeremiah 29:7).

The inherent features of parachurch ministries in Indonesia are generally manifested in healthcare ministry, Christian education ministry in the form of schools, and pastoral counselling centre. Other forms include publishing ministries, radio broadcasting ministry, and theological education for rural ministers. These ministries are present in Indonesia as complementary to the church's mission of advancing the gospel. They play a strategic role in shaping the influence of the Christian faith on social and cultural life. Christianity, as expressed through parachurch ministries, holds the potential to transform and renew culture, embedding the values of the Kingdom of God within society. Among the parachurch ministries in Indonesia discussed are Christian ministry in healthcare, education, and pastoral counselling centre.

2.1 Healthcare Ministry

Healthcare ministries involve providing medical care, treatment, and health maintenance services to those in need. This parachurch form may include social welfare activities supported by doctors, clinics, hospitals, and pharmacies. It reflects the work of Jesus in healing the sick and serving the needy. In Christianity, health is viewed as a gift from God (Psalm 103:2-3), and healing is seen as a manifestation of God's grace. The Bible teaches love for others and the

importance of helping those who are sick or in need of care (Matthew 25:35-36). Healthcare institutions serve as means of fulfilling this love by providing care for those in need. The Bible emphasizes holistic well-being, which includes physical, emotional, and spiritual health (3 John 1:2). Healthcare ministry also addresses the need for pastoral support in times of suffering and illness, offering strength, hope, and presence in times of affliction (James 5:13-16).

2.2 Christian Education Ministry

Education is a responsibility given primarily to parents (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6), with the church and Christian schools acting as partners to fulfill this responsibility. Christian education is one of the most effective parachurch ministries in evangelism due to the intense interaction between Christian teachers and students in schools. Therefore, Christian schools must use this privilege to present education integrated with the truth of God's Word. The collaboration of parents, the church, and Christian schools constitutes Kingdom Education²⁶, which nurtures and builds the faith of children. In the process of learning, Christian schools should guide students to follow the path of truth and wisdom from God (Proverbs 1:7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible also teaches the importance of developing the talents and gifts God has given each individual (Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11). Christian educational institutions teach the value of service and contribution to society, training students to become influential servants in the community (Matthew 5:13-16; Galatians 5:13).

2.3 Counselling Centres Ministry

Christian pastoral counselling in the form of counselling centres plays a strategic role in guiding, strengthening, and deepening individual faith in everyday life. Pastoral counselling provides a solid foundation and directs individuals in making wise decisions, offering advice and support in line with God's plan. It offers comfort and companionship (2 Corinthians 1:4),

²⁶ The concept of Kingdom Education, which refers to the collaboration between parents, the church, and Christian schools to educate, shape, and nurture a child's Christian faith, was introduced by Glen Schulz in his book *Kingdom Education, God's Plan for Educating Future Generations* (2003).

supports forgiveness and healing (1 John 1:9), and provides hope in times of trouble (Psalm 46:2), helping individuals understand God's plan for their lives (Jeremiah 29:11).

The strategic role of parachurch ministries is deeply embedded in the church's mission to be a blessing to others and to glorify God. Parachurch ministries represent the calling of believers to fulfill the gospel mandate in the midst of society.

3. Thematic connection

This study explores the dynamics of the parachurch sector in Indonesia through three key pillars: Theological Considerations and Financial Management, Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies, and Customer and Human Resource Management. The findings reveal the complex and multifaceted relationship between churches and parachurch organizations, emphasizing theological alignment, financial accountability, professionalism, and human resource collaboration. By situating these elements within broader organizational and theological frameworks, the study proposes strategies to foster a more harmonious and synergistic partnership between the two entities.

3.1. Theological and Financial Considerations

The theological alignment between churches and parachurch organizations is foundational for ensuring a unified approach to ministry. Fragmentation of responsibilities, such as separating spiritual guidance from psychological and social well-being, can create theological inconsistencies that undermine the holistic mission of the church. Theological dialogue, therefore, is not merely an academic exercise but a practical necessity. Regular, structured conversations between church leaders and parachurch representatives can clarify doctrinal ambiguities and establish a common framework for ministry operations.

Furthermore, financial accountability remains a significant challenge for parachurch organizations, often leading to concerns about transparency and resource allocation. Unlike churches, which typically operate within established governance structures, parachurch organizations may lack robust financial oversight mechanisms, increasing the risk of mismanagement. Implementing standardized financial reporting systems and independent audits can enhance transparency, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and

ethically. Churches, in turn, should play an active role in mentoring parachurch organizations on best financial practices, reinforcing the shared commitment to stewardship and integrity.

3.2. Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies

The necessity for professionalism within parachurch organizations cannot be overstated. As entities that often operate semi-autonomously from the church, parachurch organizations must maintain operational excellence while aligning with the church's mission and values. Professionalism, in this context, extends beyond technical expertise to encompass ethical leadership, accountability, and a commitment to high service standards. Churches can contribute to this by investing in leadership training programs that equip parachurch personnel with managerial, financial, and theological competencies.

Collaboration between churches and parachurch organizations should move beyond informal partnerships toward structured, strategic alliances. Establishing formal agreements that outline roles, expectations, and operational guidelines can mitigate conflicts and foster a cooperative environment. Additionally, co-developing ministry initiatives ensures that parachurch efforts complement rather than compete with church objectives, creating a more cohesive approach to service delivery.

3.3. Human Resource and Capacity Building

Effective ministry hinges on the recognition and development of human resources. The presence of highly valued individuals within churches and parachurch organizations plays a crucial role in unifying collective ministry efforts. Acknowledging and appreciating these contributors not only fosters goodwill but also enhances organizational loyalty and commitment. Implementing mentorship and capacity-building programs can further develop leadership pipelines, ensuring a steady influx of qualified personnel equipped to navigate the complexities of ministry work.

Capacity building should extend beyond technical skill development to include spiritual formation and theological education. By doing so, parachurch leaders can gain a deeper understanding of the church's mission, vision, and theological underpinnings, enabling them to operate with greater coherence within the broader ecclesiastical framework. Collaborative efforts should also focus on service quality enhancement, ensuring that the ministries

provided by parachurch organizations align with the spiritual and social needs of congregants and the wider community.

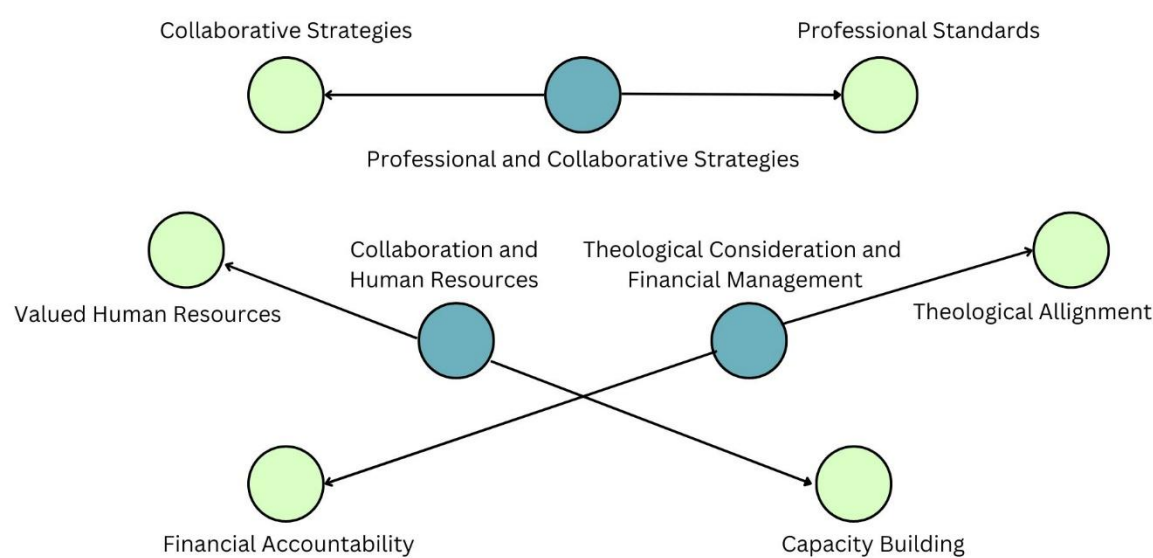
Tabel 1: thematic-dimension and description relation church and parachurh

Theme	Dimension	Description
Theological Considerations and Financial Management	Theological Alignment	Churches and parachurch organizations must ensure their theological perspectives are cohesive to maintain a holistic approach to ministry. Separating spiritual and psychological responsibilities can create theological issues.
	Financial Accountability	Parachurch organizations often struggle with financial oversight, transparency, and the appropriate allocation of resources. Proper financial management is necessary for credibility and sustainability.
Professionalism and Collaborative Strategies	Professional Standards	Parachurch organizations should uphold professionalism, ensuring their operations respect church values and maintain high service quality.
	Collaborative Strategies	Churches and parachurch organizations should engage in theological dialogue and align their mission and strategies for effective cooperation.
Collaboration and Human Resources	Capacity Building	Churches must invest in mentoring and leadership development for parachurch leaders to enhance professionalism and sustainability.
	Valued Human Resources	Recognizing and appreciating individuals who contribute significantly to the ministry fosters unity and strengthens collaboration between churches and parachurch organizations.

4. Strengthening Synergy for Greater Impact

The synergy between churches and parachurch organizations is ultimately driven by a shared commitment to fulfilling the evangelical mission. A well-integrated relationship, characterized by theological unity, financial accountability, professionalism, and effective human resource management, can significantly amplify the impact of ministry efforts. Recognizing the contributions of key individuals and ensuring their active participation in strategic decision-making processes strengthens the collaborative framework, leading to more cohesive and impactful service to the community.

By fostering a structured yet flexible approach to collaboration, churches and parachurch organizations can mitigate tensions and maximize their collective potential. The development of comprehensive partnership models that include theological discourse, professional training, and structured financial oversight will serve as critical components for achieving long-term sustainability and effectiveness in ministry.



Graph 1 Hierarchical Graph Displaying the Thematic Dimensions

In conclusion, a deliberate and well-coordinated effort toward theological alignment, financial transparency, professionalism, and human resource development will enable churches and parachurch organizations to operate in greater harmony. This study suggests that by embracing these strategies, both entities can not only enhance their operational efficiency but also fulfill their shared evangelical mission with greater impact and sustainability.

Conclusion

The effective collaboration between the church and parachurch organizations hinges on alignment in theology, financial management, and professionalism. Theologically, both entities must integrate their perspectives to ensure a unified approach, avoiding issues such as the separation of spiritual and psychological care. Financially, parachurch organizations often face challenges in oversight and accountability, raising concerns about resource allocation. Additionally, professionalism is vital, with parachurch organizations needing to

maintain high service quality and operational integrity that aligns with the church's mission and values. Addressing these aspects strengthens the overall partnership and enhances its impact.

The study explores the intricate interplay between churches and parachurch organizations, focusing on key dimensions such as theological alignment, financial accountability, professional standards, and human resource collaboration. By analysing these interdependent factors, the research underscores the necessity of structured partnerships, ethical governance, and theological coherence to enhance organizational synergy. This investigation contributes to a broader understanding of how these entities can collaboratively fulfil their mission while maintaining doctrinal integrity and operational effectiveness. Strengthening synergy requires structured theological dialogue, transparent financial management, ethical leadership, and capacity-building initiatives. Establishing formal partnerships and aligning ministry efforts ensures a cohesive, impactful service. By fostering collaboration and shared governance, both entities can enhance their effectiveness, reinforcing their mission to serve congregations and communities holistically.

This study further reveals that the symbiotic relationship between the church and parachurch organizations is grounded in a shared dedication to fulfilling the evangelical mission. This interdependence is profoundly shaped by the presence of individuals who are highly valued within the church, as these individuals act as unifying forces within the collective ministry efforts. Their contributions, which are both recognized and appreciated, play a critical role in promoting unity and fostering collaboration. This, in turn, amplifies the overall impact of the ministry. By acknowledging the significance of these roles and contributions, the church is better positioned to align its efforts with the broader mission, thereby ensuring a more cohesive and effective service to the community.

Referensi

- Allen, Douglas W. "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 27, no. 1 (1995): 97–117.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Boya, Kgauelo Sammy, and Germinah Evelyn Chiloane-Phetla. "The Modern Church as Not-for-Profit Organisation: Is It Not Time for the Church to Become More Strategic?" *Studia*

- Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 48, no. 1 (2022): 1–21.
- Chatira, Florence, and Judith Mwenje. "The Development of Management Skills for Effective Church Management in Pastoral Preparation Programs in Zimbabwe." *African Journal of Business Management* 12, no. 5 (2018): 103–20.
- Elkington, Rob, Darryl Meekins, Jennifer M. Breen, and Suzanne S. Martin. "Leadership as an Enabling Function: Towards a New Paradigm for Local Church Leadership in the 21st Century." In *Die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi* 49, no. 3 (2015): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i3.1911>.
- Gailliard, Bernadette Marie, and Courtney Wong Davis. "To Be Known, Accepted, and Involved: Investigating Organizational Assimilation in Christian Churches." *Southern Communication Journal* 82, no. 3 (2017): 117–28.
- Gregory Shumbambiri. "Promoting Financial Accountability in Churches & Parachurch Institutions." IX, no. VII (2024): 668–74. <https://doi.org/10.51584/IJRIAS.2024.907055>.
- Howard Ecklund, Elaine, Denise Daniels, and Rachel C Schneider. "From Secular to Sacred: Bringing Work to Church." *Religions* 11, no. 9 (2020): 442.
- Logan Robert E. *Beyond Church Growth*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Fleming H. Revell, 1990.
- Masenya, Malesela J. "Caught between the Sacred and the Secular." *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies* 49, no. 1 (2021): 115–32.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Olubukola Olabode, Oladele. "Improving Professional Church Staff Interpersonal Relationships: Transformational Perspective." *Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy* 4, no. 12 (2020): 516–20. <https://doi.org/10.36348/jaep.2020.v04i12.001>.
- Resane, Kelebogile T. "The Church and the Parachurch: Can the Two Dialogue in Order to Agree?" *Verbum et Ecclesia* 41, no. 1 (2020): 1–8.
- Said, Edward W. "Invention, Memory, and Place" 26, no. Winter 2000 (n.d.): 175–92.
- Straughn, Byron. "For the Parachurch: Know the Difference Between Families and Soccer Teams." *9Marks Journal IX (April 2011)*, 2011, 22–27.
- Sweeney, Michael L. "The Pauline Collection, Church Partnerships, and the Mission of the Church in the 21st Century." *Missiology* 48, no. 2 (2020): 142–53.
- Washington, Marvin, Harry J Van Buren III, and Karen Patterson. "Pastor Practices in the Era of Megachurches: New Organizational Practices and Forms for a Changing Institutional Environment." In *Religion and Organization Theory*, 187–213. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2014.
- White, Jerry. *The Church and Parachurch: An Uneasy Marriage*. Multnomah press, 1983.
- Wright, Eric E. *A Practical Theology of Missions: Dispelling the Mystery, Recovering the Passion*. Day One, 2010.