

THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Abstrak

Perjanjian Baru dalam tulisan Lukas di kitab Kisah Para Rasul menjelaskan teologi biblika atau ajaran pertumbuhan gereja bahwa pertumbuhan gereja adalah rencana Allah dan Yesus Kristus ingin gereja-Nya bertumbuh baik secara sosial, mental, fisik, dan rohani. Melalui kuasa Roh Kudus yang bekerja dalam pertumbuhan gereja mula-mula dengan kuasa dan urapan-Nya yang memenuhi para rasul dalam pemberitaan Injil. Rasul Paulus tidak hanya memenuhi tujuan ini dalam pelayanannya, tetapi ia juga menjelaskannya dalam suratnya kepada gereja di Efesus 4:1-16. Wahyu ini paling jelas di gereja mula-mula di Yerusalem yang dijelaskan dalam Kisah Para Rasul 2:1-47. Tujuan utama dalam melaksanakan kegiatan ini dimana mereka saling mengajar, bersekutu bersama, beribadah, melayani dan menginjili bersama. Jemaat ada untuk mendidik, mendorong, memuliakan, memperlengkapi dan menginjili.

Keywords: *Church Growth, Evangelism New Testament*

Introduction

The New Testament through the writings of the apostle Luke in the book of Acts explains the basis that church growth is His will and God wants His church to grow. Rick Warren explains that the church consists of humans as living organisms, and all living things will experience spiritual growth. Our job is to overcome all the problems and obstacles that hinder the development of a church. A healthy church will grow naturally and naturally. (Warren, 2000). The Book of the Apostles explains that the Holy Spirit was powerful in the growth of the early church with His power and anointing that filled the apostles in the preaching of the gospel. The Apostle Paul not only carried out his purpose in his ministry, but he also explained in his letter to the Ephesians the need for unity in the church and that the different gifts be combined (4: 1-16). The clearest picture of church growth was found in the early church in Jerusalem when described by the apostle Luke in Acts 2: 1-47. The early church taught one another, fellowship together, worshiped together, served together and, became My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, to the ends of the earth (Acts 1: 8) to people, languages, and nations. That is why congregations are formed or formed to educate, encourage, glorify, equip and evangelize. The growing congregation aims to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to His disciples in the Gospel of Matthew 28:19, 20.

God desires His church, His people. Acts 2:41 explains that “The people who received this word were baptized, and on that day their number increased by about three thousand” (Acts 2:41). “... And every day the Lord increased their number to those that were being saved” (Acts 2:47). God wants all people to be saved from sin and death forever. God is all-loving and merciful, who always desires that everyone

who is loved by Him is reconciled to Him. That is the reason the Father sent His Son." (Wagner, 1996).

God's will is very clear, "God the Father wants everyone to repent and turn to God to obtain salvation". (2 Peter 3: 9). He wants all His people everywhere to come to Him and into His church. In other words, it is God's will that the church grows. Jesus said, "And I also say to you, You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). Here it is clear that the building of the church is Jesus. The building of the church is God's work and God's will and by God through His people. The emphatic statement is given by Paul that every day God increases the number of the survivors (Acts 2:47). In I Corinthians 3: 6-7 Paul states that it is God who gives spiritual growth not Apollos.

Theologians' View of Church Growth

Church growth experts define "church growth" as follows: First, according to Ron Jenson and Jim Steven in their book *Dynamic of Church Growth*, "Church growth is a balanced increase in the quantity, quality, and complexity of the organization of a local church". This definition emphasizes the balance between three components, namely: quantity, quality, and organizational complexity so that the church grows healthily. Second, C. Peter Wagner in his book *Your Church Can Grow* states: "Church growth is everything involved in bringing men and women who have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him into responsible church membership". Third, the growth of the church as "everything that involves bringing people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ into fellowship with Him and bringing them to be responsible church members" (Wagner, 1996).

Fourth, Peters George Wagner in his book *A Theology of Church Growth* gives an understanding that: Church growth is something that is in accordance with divine reality. The Growth Fact is found in Luke 2:40, 52; Matthew 13: 31- 32; Ephesians 4:16; Revelation 5: 9; I Corinthians 3: 9, 16. This growth includes the quantity and quality that indicates the existence of growth behavior: biological, spontaneous, planned, and through special characteristics (Wagner, 1996). In addition, Peters noted that there are seven dimensions of church growth, namely: first, divine worship, second, third fellowship ministry, fourth biblical conceptualization, fifth community evangelization. , accommodating the demands (needs) of the environment (environmental accommodation) sixth, introducing a Christian lifestyle to the community (societal Christianity) seventh, proclamation throughout the world (global proclamation) (Jenson, et.al., 1996).

The Growth of the Church in the Teaching of the Word in the New Testament

Acts 2: 42,46 says that God's people who were first faithful and diligent in learning the teachings of the Apostles, namely the words of God every day (Acts 2: 42,46). They also held meetings in their respective homes (Acts 2:46). In addition to breaking bread and eating together, of course, they had previously listened to the exposition of God's word. There is a clear difference between the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the table where the treatment is also different. Don't be distracted by the service of the Word by table service. That is why the apostles asked

the congregation to determine seven people who were controlled by the Holy Spirit and had the wisdom and wisdom to do table work (Acts 6: 1-7). The apostles saw the ministry of God's Word as important in the church for the spiritual growth of the church (Enoh, 1991).

They learn the Word of God in theory and through the experiences they experience and put it into practice. They also pursue the Bible's truth about who God is through the miraculous signs they witness firsthand (Acts 2: 1-13; 2:43; 3: 1-10; 5: 12-16). They understand God's love through the fellowship and warmth that occurs in the church (Acts 2: 41-47; 4: 32-37).

They learned all the truths outlined in the Bible through the lives of the apostles. They learned about the importance of prayer through observing and experiencing the prayers they prayed answered by God in the life of the congregation (Acts 4: 23-31). Church leaders should be people who are filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2: 1-13) and people who are truly called by God and faithful to that calling (Acts 1: 6-11; 4: 8-11; 5:25).

Growth of the Church in the Federation

The first century of church Christianity in Acts was marked by "fellowship". "They persevered in teaching, the apostles and in the fellowship. Do always gather together to break bread and pray "(Acts 2:42). Fellowship means sharing (Elliott, 1982). In that fellowship, the members of the church first give to one another. In a federation, the deficiency is sufficient until there is no deficiency. In fellowship, they strengthened each other, comforted each other. Fellowshiping for believers is a very important thing, when they worship the Lord and fast, the Holy Spirit says to consecrate Barnabas and Saul to Me for the task I have appointed for them (Acts 13: 2). George Eldon Ladd said, "Fellowship is the elect regardless of social status, education, wealth or skin color simply called the elect of God, the church is the fellowship of saints or sanctified people commonly used by Paul to describe Christians. " (Ladd, 1999).

The meaning of the fellowship of God's believing people is not just to gather to let go of longing or talk but more to a fellowship of worship where each other gives each other advice, strength, comfort, and prayer. As they fellowship, they also strengthened the hearts of Jesus' disciples by counseling them to be strong in the faith (Acts 14:22). A fellowship is a form of strengthening and confirmation from God for His people built on His Word. It is from this fellowship of God's people that the task of preaching the gospel can be done responsibly (Tomatala, 2003). Worshiping, praying, studying the word of God is a manifestation of the earnestness of fellowship, unity, and faithfulness in glorifying and glorifying God.

Church Growth in Perseverance in Prayer

In Acts 2: 4-47, believers first persevered in the apostles 'teaching in fellowship and in prayer (verses 41,43). Their lives are also worth emulating. In love and unity they live together (verses 42), yours is mine, they eat together, give each other help if there is a family in need (verses 44-46). They were liked by all because their lives in accordance with the word of God were a testimony and a blessing to the environment even to unbelievers (Acts 2:47). God was so happy with what they did

that God joyfully increased the number of people who repented every day. Fellowship, unity, love, helpfulness possessed by the congregation first show the quality of their faith so that they produce quality growth as well (Doeka, 2005). I Corinthians 3: 6 says I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.

Believers must pray diligently (Acts 2:42; 4: 27-31). The earnest prayers of the early church and the apostles gave them the courage to bind the Word of God (Acts 4: 5-22; 5: 26-42; 13: 46-48; 14:17; 16:19, 34), it also gives the power to work miracles. Even though they have prayed fervently, they still get challenges but the power of God is becoming more and more real, and more and more people are becoming believers. The prayer was heard by God and He immediately helped the apostles who were in trouble. An example of the power of prayer is shown by the church who prayed for Peter while he was imprisoned (Acts 12: 4-9) until he was released by an angel. Paul and Silas prayed earnestly and through the earthquake, they were released from prison (Acts 16: 25-34). God's immediate help to his apostles made them more zealous in preaching the gospel.

Church Growth in Discipleship

The church is a tool used by the Lord Jesus for human salvation. The congregation has been organized for its service and task of bringing the gospel message to the whole world. From the very beginning, God had planned that through His church that He had called from the darkness into His miraculous light that would shine forth bright rays of glory and God's words would be reflected in the world. His church has been set aside to be the repository of the riches and gifts of Christ and His church so that at the end of the war it will be revealed to the "rulers and powers of heaven," the final and full display of God's love. Ephesians 3:10 (White, 1998). The book of Acts of the Apostles explains that as the number of believers increased, there were also more disciples of Christ. Acts 11:26. It was in antiquity that the disciples were first referred to as Christians. They lived and lived together for one year. They also teach many people. The apostles' withdrawal of souls was rapid during the year. It is God who plans for those who hear his calling to grow so that they become like His children (Romans 8: 18-20). It is God who desires all members of the church to attain growth in accordance with the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4: 12-13). God also wants all nations on earth to be His disciples (Matthew 28: 18-20). As the congregation is called not only to reach out to others or others but also to follow Christ, it must be disciplined. The church has the important responsibility of guiding each person to spiritual maturity. Allah wants everyone to be saved. The Apostle Paul wrote, "... for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all have reached the unity of faith and the true knowledge of the Son of God, full maturity, and a level of growth befitting the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4: 12b-13) (Warren, 1999).

Church Growth in Evangelism

Doing His work, Christ did not choose the learned or eloquent from the Jewish Sanhedrin or the Roman authorities. Ignoring the self-righteous Jewish teachers, the Great Worker chose the humble of the uneducated to proclaim the truth that would move this world. Those people he enters to be trained and educated as leaders of the siding of His church. The gospel must be preached through the power

of God so that they can educate others to be preachers of the gospel of God. Not by human power or by human wisdom should the gospel be proclaimed, but by the power of God.

Jesus was with his disciples for three and a half years and forged a close brotherhood with one another. Jesus gave them evangelistic training. Every day. Together they told stories, talked, listened to Him speak, watched Jesus comfort the heavy laden, and witnessed His power to heal. Sometimes they walked to the slopes of the mountain, sitting while teaching his disciples. Sometimes they walk down the beach. It reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of God and salvation. Jesus' teaching type was not dictatorial as worldly teachers often did. Must do according to the teacher's orders. Jesus taught not by commanding His disciples to do this and that, but He said, "Follow Me." In every journey He made from city to city from one place to another, He always took them with Him so they could see how He taught the people. They take part in His simple meaning and like Him are sometimes hungry and often tired. In the crowded streets, by the lake, in the lonely desert, they were with Him. They see Him in every aspect of life (White, 1998).

Jesus wants all believers and all churches of God to be involved in evangelism. The proof is seen when Jesus called his disciples, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1). Through the great commission of Jesus Christ shortly before He ascended to heaven, Jesus asked His disciples to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28: 19-20); where "the disciples must be witnesses of Christ from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1: 8). Peter also said that believers are called out of darkness into the light of Christ to "declare the mighty works of God" to the world (1 Peter 2: 9,10). This verse explains that the church is the official place led by God to give the gospel to the whole world. The church is not a building but the church is us (humans). We who are God's witnesses and preach the gospel. We are the Pastors and members of the church as the public shoulder to shoulder preaching the gospel so that the growth of the church runs fast. What is an effective evangelistic model? Our example is the model of Jesus' evangelism. Jesus gave teachings through daily life explained through simple illustrations. The point is that Jesus serves people in the context of their needs. Whenever Jesus met someone He would start talking about their difficulties, their needs, and interests (Warren, 2000). This is the method Jesus taught His disciples through His message in Matthew 10: 8, "Heal the sick; raise the dead; cleanse the leper; cast out devils. You have received it freely, therefore give it freely (Matthew 10: 8).

The most effective evangelism is evangelism through understanding the needs of the evangelical because people will be open to hearing the gospel when they understand that it relates directly to their lives. Reactions to the gospel occur when they feel a need (Jenson et.al., 1996). The Apostle Paul did the same. The calling of Paul's experience gave him the strength to continue to witness the gospel for both Jews and Gentiles. So know, brethren, that it is because of him that forgiveness of sins has been proclaimed to you (Acts 13:38). Paul's way of preaching the gospel is by having a strong enthusiasm and conviction, then he asks for the guidance of the Holy Spirit he is ready to carry it out. He served not only to Jews but also to non-Jews, to Greeks, and to all the nations of his life (Acts 9:20).

The evangelism Paul did was evangelism of his own accord. Not sent officially by a certain person or institution. Peter's model of evangelism is preaching. When Peter preached, three thousand people believed (Acts 2:41). Likewise, five thousand people became believers after hearing the Gospel preached by Peter on

Solomon's porch (Acts 4: 4). A large number of Jewish priests believed because of God's ever-spreading Word (Acts 6: 7). Because Philip preached the Word of God in Samaria, many people believed (Acts 8: 6).

The task in church service is without exception called to witness and preach repentance and the way of salvation as Paul was active in preaching the gospel of truth. In Acts 17:23 it is explained, "By not looking at the age of ignorance anymore, now God is telling people that they should all repent everywhere." All Christians are called to be like Jesus Christ, to bear witness to the truth, for this He added, He was born, and for this, He came into the world (John 18:37), the highest truth which is the subject of testimony is Jesus Christ Himself for He is the truth (John 14: 6) "(Stott, 1994).

Church Growth in Diakonia

The book of Isaiah says: In an acceptable time will I answer thee, and in the day of my salvation will I help thee; I have formed and given thee a covenant for mankind, to restore the earth, and to divide the desolate land, to say to the captives: Come forth! To the people in darkness: Appear! along their roads like sheep, there is no shortage of grass, and on all the bare hills there is grass for them. They do not become hungry or thirsty; the scorching wind and the scorching heat of the sun will not overtake them, for their Mercy will lead them and will lead them to the fountain of water. I will make all My mountains a way and all My highways I will make....

"Shout, shout, O heavens; shout, O earth; and be glad, O mountains, for the LORD comforteth his people, and loveth the poor of his people. Zion saith, The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten thee. I have painted thee upon the palms of my hands: thy walls are within my eyes "(Isaiah 49: 8-16).

Deaconess or pleasing ministry is the ministry that Jesus wanted to do when He was serving for about three and a half years of ministry. He walked about doing good and healing all who were physically, spiritually, and socially sick, even those possessed by Satan because God was with Him (Acts 10:38). The Holy Spirit helps a Christian to serve because the love of Christ has dwelt in the hearts of believers and is obligated to bear the yoke given by God to love one another.

Ephesians 4: 8,12 explains that ministry includes the dimension of duty. All disciples of Jesus are called to a noble task of service. By working diligently, willingly, and righteously the body of Christ grows in size, spiritual depth, and reach (verse 16). It is important to pay attention to the inward ministry, that is, the ministry to the local church. This service includes the service of prayer, praise, sacraments, the word of God. This ministry includes serving the common good (1 Corinthians 12: 7; 2 Corinthians 8: 4). The other ministry is through the ministry of teaching through which the believing church is instilled with the norms of true principles and doctrine (Acts 6: 4; Romans 12: 7). These three things: worship, sharing, and teaching are essential to the vitality of the inner life of every church-koinonia of God's people. External "service" also has three dimensions. These three dimensions are often described as the "mission" of the church because they encompass all that a Christian must do. The mission is a special and special calling to look after the poor, widows, orphans, prisoners, homeless and others "(Romans 12: 7-8; Galatians 6: 10a). In addition, there is a ministry of peace through which Christians work for harmony among human beings and social justice in society (2 Corinthians 5: 18-21). And their highest ministry is to bring non -Christians to the church itself (Glasser, 2007).

There are three references to the nature of ministry and humility. When Jesus explained that He came to serve and gave His life as a ransom for many, He intended

it to be an example of greatness for us (Mark 10: 43-45; also repeated in Matthew 20: 25-28). When there was a debate about who was the greatest disciple, Jesus said that the greatest was he who served. He then said, "I am with you as a servant" (Luke 22: 24-27). After Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He intended this act to be followed by His disciples (John 13: 14-17). The ministry of Jesus is the best example driven by compassion and not out of goodness alone.

Conclusion

The New Testament in Luke's writings on the book of Acts explains biblical theology or church growth teaching that church growth is God's plan and Jesus Christ wants His church to grow both socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. Through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the growth of the early church with His power and anointing that filled the apostles in the preaching of the gospel. The apostle Paul not only fulfilled these purposes in his ministry, but he also explained them in his letter to the church at Ephesians 4: 1-16. This revelation was most evident in the early church in Jerusalem described in Acts 2: 1-47. They teach one another, fellowship together, worship, serve and evangelize together. Congregations exist to educate, encourage, glorify, equip and evangelize. A growing church has a special and noble goal of carrying out the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19, 20, and warning people of the three angels' messages of Revelation 14: 6-10, concerning worship, the fall of the powers of darkness, and ju

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