

Diligently Educate and Nurture Children: A Missional-Praxis Perspective on Female Pastoral Ministry According to the HKBP's Fourth Ministerial Ordination Regulation (Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon)

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ABSTRACT

Educating and nurturing children is one of the important mandates in the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon HKBP Napaopathon, but its implementation still faces various challenges that have an impact on the faith development of the next generation of the church. This study aims to analyze the reality of HKBP women's pastoral ministry in educating and nurturing children, identifying the challenges faced, and formulating a contextual praxis mission strategy in accordance with *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. The research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive-analytical methods through a literature review of the Bible, the HKBP Agenda, and various theological books, as well as structured interviews with HKBP pastors who are actively serving. The results of the study showed that the women pastors had a good understanding of *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*, but the implementation was not optimal because the ministry was more focused on administrative and ceremonial tasks, while the daily development of children was delegated to the Sunday School teacher. The challenges faced include limited time, lack of pastoral visitation, lack of parental involvement, limited means of service, as well as the influence of technology, generational character changes, and social dynamics that affect children's lives. In response, this study offers a praxis mission strategy in the form of strengthening a child-centered pastoral approach, building the capacity of Sunday School teachers, using technology wisely, strengthening partnerships with families, providing church resource support, and developing sustainable children's ministry programs. Thus, optimizing the role of women pastors in children's ministry requires a holistic, contextual, and collaborative approach so that the development of children's faith can take place effectively in accordance with the church's mandate.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Serving is a special gift that God bestows on His people. In the context of the Christian faith, service is not just an ordinary activity, but a manifestation of God's grace that enables people to share in His work. Everyone can do service as a form of expression of gratitude for God's goodness in their lives. Although what man does in service will never compare to the magnitude of the love and blessings that God has poured out, service is a means for man to express his love and dedication to God. Service thus becomes a response of faith that flows from a grateful heart and realizes that the ability to serve itself is a gift from Allah (Siahaan, 2017). Service is a special blessing that God bestows upon a person. In contrast to worldly rewards that are given based on certain achievements or excellence, the gift of service is a form of God's trust in His servants. When a person is entrusted with a ministry assignment, it reflects God's view of the special potential in that person. Through wholehearted service, especially to children, one can bring joy to God (Berutu et al., 2024).

In the Protestant Batak Christian Huria (HKBP), the Agenda is the oldest theological document owned by the HKBP. The HKBP agenda explains the concept of *tohonan* as a service duty or office duty in the church (Pakpahan, 2022). This concept has deep roots in the Batak tradition, where *poda tohonan* is a fundamental guideline for church ministers. This concept does not only refer to formal ordination, but also includes a series of mandates, duties, and sacred messages that are the foundation of ministry so that they are binding (Sitohang, 2018).

Therefore, every ordained minister, i.e. pastor, *bibelvrouw*, deacon, church teacher, and elder, has a *poda tohonan*. The HKBP pastor has seven *poda tohonan* written and explained in the HKBP agenda (Protestant, 2021). The task of serving children in HKBP is guided by *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. This *popoa tohonan* is the basis for every pastor in carrying out services to children. *Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon* specifically emphasizes the obligation of pastors to diligently educate and nurture children in the Christian faith. This emphasis emphasizes that the foundation of faith instilled from childhood greatly determines the sustainability of a person's faith until adulthood. But in reality, the implementation of these guidelines is still far from what was expected.

The main problem faced in the ministry of children, especially Sunday School Children (ASM), is the significant gap between what is established in the teaching pod and the actual practice in the field. Services to children have not reached maximum results at this time due to various obstacles. The existing Sunday School program tends to be monotonous and uses conventional teaching methods that are less appealing to today's children. Teaching materials are often irrelevant to the context of modern children's lives, making it difficult for children to apply the values of faith in their daily lives. In many HKBP churches, there is a limited number of competent supervisors in children's ministry, and coordination between pastors, Sunday School Teachers (GSM), and parents is also not optimal.

Among HKBP ordained ministers, Sunday School responsibilities are generally left to the *huria* teacher (according to the *Poda Tohonan Guru Huria Napaopathon*) or *bibelvrouw* (according to the *Poda Tohonan Bibelvrouw Napaopathon*), while the pastor focuses more on administrative and ceremonial tasks. In fact, the direct involvement of pastors in the development of children is very necessary to provide a strong foundation of faith. Especially for women pastors, despite having a maternal instinct that has the potential to be a strength in the ministry of children, women pastors are often unable to maximize this potential due to the burden of other tasks that must be prioritized according to the church's ministry structure.

The internal factors that hinder the implementation of *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon* are the lack of a routine visit program for pastors to children's homes, the lack of special coaching for the development of children's character and faith, and the lack of a comprehensive evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of children's services. The church also often faces obstacles in providing adequate service support facilities such as rooms, equipment, and teaching materials that are in accordance with the needs of today's children.

Meanwhile, an external factor that affects children's services is a drastic change in the lives of modern children. Today's children live in a very different reality than previous generations. Today's

children grow up in the midst of a very active flow of information and technology from an early age. Electronic devices such as mobile phones have become an integral part of children's lives, which often distracts children from church activities. Changes in modern family structures, in which both parents work, also lead to a lack of parental communication and supervision of the child's spiritual development. The moral and spiritual values that should have started at home have been neglected, so that the responsibility of faith education is increasingly imposed on the church.

The role of women pastors in church ministry, especially in HKBP, has undergone significant development in recent decades. However, women pastors still face various challenges and expectations in carrying out ministry duties, especially in the aspects of education and child care. Female pastors are expected to meet the same standards of professionalism as male pastors as well as role models for children and congregations (Johnson, 2007). In practice, many women pastors rarely conduct special pastoral visits for children or conduct intensive coaching for them because they have to divide their time with various other ministry tasks. In this regard, the study of feminist theology shows a different view: the double expectations in the form of professional demands as well as the role of motherhood are considered to have the potential to become a form of power relations that actually limit women's space of movement in ministry, so that the leadership potential of women pastors cannot be fully optimized (Chopp, 2002). This difference of views shows that the role of women pastors in children's ministry is still an issue that requires further study, especially in the context of HKBP.

Thus, the ministry of children is of great importance because children are the future generation of the church. The picture of the future church can be seen from how the children today are given services in accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. In some churches the HKBP shows that children's participation in church activities tends to decline, and many of them are more interested in other activities outside of the church. Therefore, it is important to study more deeply the mission of praxis of women priests in serving children in accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*.

To understand how these ministry guidelines can be translated into practices that are responsive to today's socio-cultural context, this study uses a praxis mission approach in the context of contextual theology, i.e. efforts to present the Christian faith in a relevant way to the cultural and social realities of the congregation served (Bevans, 2002). With this approach, the research aims to examine in depth the reality of the service, challenges, and mission strategies of HKBP women pastors in carrying out *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon* for children. This research is expected to contribute in the form of mapping of factors that hinder children's services in the HKBP environment as well as recommendations for contextual strategies that can strengthen the involvement of women pastors in fostering children's faith, so that the results can be a practical reference for the church in designing children's ministries that are more responsive to the needs of today's generation.

2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with an analytical descriptive method to examine the ministry of HKBP women pastors in educating and nurturing children. The qualitative approach allows researchers to deeply understand the meaning that individuals or groups attach to a problem (Setran & Kiesling, 2013). The selection of this method allows for a comprehensive exploration of the experiences and perspectives of women pastors in carrying out their ministry duties. The data collection process needs to be closely monitored so that the data collected maintains its validity and reliability. The data that has been collected is then organized, analyzed, and interpreted to produce information that can explain the phenomenon or the relationship between the phenomena. Data collection was carried out through literature studies and interviews.

The study of literature includes the analysis of primary documents such as the Bible, the HKBP Agenda and other theological documents. Document analysis allows researchers to understand the historical and institutional context of the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Literature studies also include the review of secondary sources such as theological books, academic

journals, and other publications relevant to the research topic. The interviews with HKBP women pastors who are active in the ministry. Interviews were conducted to reveal participants' life experiences and the meaning given to these experiences (Seidman, 2019). Interviews are conducted in a structured manner to maintain focus on the research objectives. In this case it is important to create a comfortable communication space for participants to share their experiences (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Reality of HKBP Female Pastor Services in Accordance with *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*

The reality of HKBP women's pastor service in accordance with Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon provides an overview of how the experience of female pastors in service to Sunday school children is. In this case, what needs to be investigated first is the understanding of the priestess about *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. The results of the interview with the female pastor stated that the two speakers had a clear understanding of *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. Where the *poda tohonan* is understood as a guideline in the ministry of the pastor, especially in *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon* which is a service to educate children in the Christian faith. This is in line with the explanation that *poda tohonan* is an important part that must be held firmly and lived by every ordained minister in carrying out his ministry duties. The deepest essence of the entire *poda* of prayer for church servants is loyalty and obedience to God, which is manifested through a response to the mandate of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church who has called, chosen, and sent to be pastors in His ministry (Lumbantobing, 2016).

The speaker's understanding of Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon gave the statement that building a strong foundation of faith from an early age is important. Children are seen as needing to be directed to know God from a young age so that they grow up with a strong and stable foundation of faith (Timpote, 2022). The resource person also said that today's children's services are different from the past. Where today's children's ministry is not only to provide faith teaching, but also to provide assistance that protects children from bad influences (heretical).

Although the understanding of the two speakers about Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon is very clear, in reality there is still a significant gap. Based on interviews with the two speakers, it can be seen that the involvement of the speakers in the Sunday School ministry is still limited to scheduled ministry tasks. The two resource persons played more roles as supervisors and supervisors in accordance with the existing program, while the implementation of the daily program was more delegated to GSM. The form of resource person involvement is also seen in sermons at Sunday School services and leading sermons for GSM according to a specified schedule. The two speakers were also involved in special programs such as retreats, field worship, and bible camps which were held once to twice a year. However, in the case of pastoral visits to the homes of Sunday School children are very rare. This shows that there is a gap in pastoral assistance specifically for children. Meanwhile, there is also no regular evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of Sunday School services. The measurement of effectiveness is carried out only based on the number of children attending Sunday School, without a more comprehensive indicator to assess the success of the service in accordance with *the Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon*.

The significant gap reminds us of the importance of children's services in accordance with Poda Tohonan Hapanditaon Napaopathon. The author departs from the interpretation of the Gospel of Mark 10:14 which places children as an important part (Edwards, 2002). This contrasts with the tendency to position children as passive recipients of service, rather than as active subjects in the growth of faith. The principles in Proverbs 22:6, which emphasize the importance of education according to the developmental stage and character of each child (Fox, 2009) as well as the integrated teaching in daily life written in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Miller, 1990), have not been fully reflected in the ministry practices

of resource persons. The ministry is still more emphatic on formal structure and routine than on the formation of holistic and contextual faith characters.

The visits and special assistance also showed significant gaps with the concept of "shepherds" emphasized in *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. The role of a shepherd who prevents strays refers to a spiritual responsibility to protect and guide children. The meaning of shepherding as a leadership metaphor that emphasizes attention, protection, and direction has not been optimally implemented (Tripp, 2005). Resource persons tend to delegate this service to GSM, so that the personal relationship that should be built between pastors and children is limited. In fact, like Deborah, the priestess also as a "mother" figure has great potential to build personal relationships with children so that they can create a safe and comfortable space for their faith growth (Patterson & Winston, 2023).

Deborah was a prophetess who acted as a judge in Israel (Banks & Stevens, 2012). When the Israelites faced problems, they sought counsel from Deborah, who was known for her wisdom and spiritual gifts. On Deborah's orders, Barak led a war against the Canaanite army led by Sisera, and won the battle (Boa et al., 2013). Deborah's example is as someone who has high integrity, sensitivity to God's timing, humility that does not seek personal honor, and her figure as a "mother" who cares for the people she leads (Mallisa et al., 2004).

Thus, the reality of HKBP's pastoral ministry in accordance with *Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon* in teaching the basics of Christianity has gone well, but it is still less than optimal in terms of special pastoral assistance and the development of programs that suit the needs of Sunday School children. Therefore, women pastors cannot only carry out structural and administrative functions, but become servants who are present personally, creative in approach, and reflective in evaluation, so that they are in accordance with the ministry based on *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*.

3.2. Challenges Faced by HKBP Female Pastors in Running Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon

The implementation of *poda tohonon* is an obligation that must be lived by everyone who receives ordination as a servant at HKBP. This obligation is not only formal, but also reflects a commitment to deepen and live the task of calling to ministry in accordance with the teachings and church system of HKBP. However, in the implementation of the *tohonon poda*, it often faces various challenges, both internally and externally. Therefore, carrying out the *tohonon poda* requires seriousness, perseverance, and support from various parties. In this case, the focus is *Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*. Where pastors, especially women pastors in children's ministry, must be in accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*.

The results of the interviews from the two speakers revealed that in children's services there are a number of internal challenges that are quite complex and diverse. The resource person revealed that as a pastor, he often has to prioritize administrative tasks and church activities that are ceremonial in nature. This certainly takes up attention and energy, so that services to children are often less than optimal. Therefore, this is contrary to the mandate in Mark 10:14 which is the basis of *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*, where Jesus clearly emphasizes the importance of service to children (Edwards, 2002). These internal challenges certainly do not only come from pastors, but also from GSM who have diverse backgrounds and capacities. Not all GSMs have an adequate teaching basis or theological understanding, and often personal busyness makes GSM not have enough time and energy to prepare teaching materials properly. As a result, the learning process becomes less than optimal. This is related to the concept that emphasizes that faith education is the responsibility of the entire faith community, not just pastors or GSM (Westerhoff III, 2012). Therefore, children's faith education does not only depend on GSM, but is a shared responsibility of the entire church community.

Meanwhile, the children served also showed diversity in age, catch, and concentration level. If the teaching method is not interesting, children can easily get bored. Furthermore, some of the ASMs do not receive adequate faith formation at home, so the church must take a greater role in educating ASM spiritually. This challenge is related to the teaching in Proverbs 22:6, where the concept of "in the way it is right for him" implies that educating a child needs to be adapted to his developmental stage and

unique character (Fox, 2009). Parental involvement is also an important factor in children's services. Although most parents express support for Sunday school activities, not all have sufficient understanding of the faith or the time available to accompany their children's spiritual growth. The lack of communication between the church and parents causes the development of children's faith to not be properly monitored and sustainable. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 provides the perspective that faith education should be holistic and integrated in all aspects of life (Miller, 1990), not limited to time in the church alone.

In addition, the limited facilities and infrastructure in many churches are also a serious obstacle. This is because many churches do not have a special space that is suitable and comfortable for children's activities. Teaching aids and learning media are also very minimal, even though these things are very important to convey God's word in a way that is appropriate for the age and needs of children. Another internal challenge that is no less important is the limited financial support from the church for children's ministry. Budgets are often more focused on physical development or congregational activities in general, so Sunday school is not yet a top priority. In fact, Deuteronomy 31:12-13 provides an important insight into the importance of involving children in communal worship where children are not only passive recipients in the community of faith, but full members who actively participate in rituals and communal worship (Brueggemann, 2001). Further in Mark 9:36-37, Jesus placed a child in the midst of the disciples. This symbolic act shows that serving children is not just about educating, but also about welcoming Christ himself (Csinos & Beckwith, 2013). This elevates children's ministry to a higher dimension, making it not just an additional activity in the church, but an integral part of the Christian faith life (Kirk, 2015). Thus, there is a misalignment between theological commitment and application in daily life as written in Deuteronomy 31:12-13 and Mark 9:36-37.

Not only internal challenges, but also external challenges also greatly affect the success of children's services in accordance with Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon. In the interview, it was explained that nowadays humans are increasingly leading to an individualistic lifestyle, where many people prioritize careers, material achievements, and worldly activities over spiritual affairs, especially in terms of fostering children's faith. Children grow up in an environment that is less conducive to the formation of spirituality from an early age. This is in contrast to the principle of "Fear the Lord" in Proverbs 1:7 which emphasizes deep respect and recognition of God's sovereignty (Crenshaw, 1998) over material achievements. This situation is exacerbated by the rapid flow of technology and social media which greatly affects children's attention and mindset. Children are more familiar with gadgets, YouTube, TikTok, and online games, than with Sunday school activities. As a result, if the church's teaching methods are not adapted to the times and stick to conventional approaches, children easily feel bored and not interested in getting involved. Therefore, authentic spirituality must be connected to real-life experiences (Johnson, 2007), where a child-service approach is able to bridge the digital world that children are familiar with with spiritual values that they want to inculcate.

Generational change is also an external challenge, where today's children have a more critical character, like fast-paced and visual things, so they need a creative and innovative approach to keep Sunday school activities relevant and interesting. This has to do with the understanding that all members, including children, are valued and have their voices heard (Russell, 1993), thus becoming relevant to deal with a more critical generation. In addition, family economic factors also affect children's involvement in service. There are children who rarely attend or are even inactive in church activities because their parents are too busy working or the family's economic conditions are not possible. The lack of support from home deprives children of ongoing spiritual companionship. Moreover, the home environment does not accustom children to pray, read the Bible, or discuss faith. This is related to paying attention to the experiences of marginalized communities (Isasi-Díaz, 1996).

Thus, the internal and external challenges faced by HKBP women pastors in running the *Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon* are complex and multidimensional. Therefore, in a deep understanding of these challenges, the church should develop strategies and ministry efforts that are more effective, relevant, and in

accordance with the needs of children today, so that children's ministry in accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon* can be implemented optimally.

3.3. Strategies and Efforts Reviewed from the Praxis Mission in the Ministry of HKBP Women Pastors in Accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*

Faced with the complexity of internal and external challenges in children's ministry, HKBP pastors need to develop a holistic and transformative praxis' mission strategy. Based on the results of the interview, it was revealed that currently there is no comprehensive special strategy, where the service still relies on the existing HKBP Sunday school standard program and curriculum. However, both speakers have shown awareness of the importance of innovation through the use of technology, games, animated videos, and special programs such as retreats and field worship. The mission of praxis in this context is not only understood as the delivery of a spiritual message, but as a concrete action that integrates theological values with the reality of today's life (Woga, 2002), especially in the lives of children.

The first strategy that needs to be developed is the reorientation of ministry priorities through a child-centered pastoral approach. HKBP women pastors should dare to undertake a structural transformation in the allocation of time and energy, where children's ministry is no longer seen as a side activity but as a top priority in line with the teachings of Mark 10:14. Christ reveals his revolutionary perspective on ministry that includes children. This concept of service introduced by Jesus comes as a direct response to the social constructs in ancient Jewish society that placed children in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy (Edwards, 2002). This can be realized by allocating special time for direct observation of Sunday school activities, conducting intensive dialogue with GSM, and being actively involved in the planning of children's learning curriculum. This approach also requires pastors to develop pastoral sensitivity that is able to understand the uniqueness of each child, as emphasized in Proverbs 22:6 about educating children according to the way they are entitled to (Fox, 2009).

To overcome the limitations of GSM capacity, the second strategy is the establishment of a continuous coaching system that focuses on the development of pedagogical and theological competencies. Resource persons have stated the importance of "resource enhancement, such as GSM training" as part of the necessary strategy. This coaching program is not only in the form of formal training, but also personal mentoring which is carried out periodically. HKBP women pastors need to facilitate contextual theological discussions that help GSM understand how to integrate biblical teachings with language and methods that are appropriate for children's development, as the resource persons have sought through explanations that are "easy for children to understand". In addition, it is necessary to develop a GSM rotation system that allows each individual to have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of their peers, so as to create a learning community that supports each other in accordance with the concept that faith education is the responsibility of the entire faith community (Westerhoff III, 2012).

The third strategy is the development of a learning methodology that is responsive to the characteristics of the generation that lives in digital. The resource person emphasized that "the right strategy and effort in this day and age is the use of technology because it can be attractive for Sunday school children". This practice has been implemented by other speakers who "sometimes make games so that they can understand the word in a fun way" and "play animated videos that match the content of God's words". HKBP women pastors need to lead innovation in the use of technology as a medium of learning that does not replace the spiritual essence, but enriches the way God's word is delivered. This can be realized through the use of interactive multimedia, digital storytelling, and learning applications that are tailored to children's interests in gadgets and social media. However, the use of this technology must remain oriented towards the formation of a deep spiritual character, not just entertainment. This approach requires collaboration with parents to ensure that the use of technology in the home also supports the formation of children's spirituality.

The fourth strategy is to strengthen partnerships with families through integrated family pastoral programs. The resource person has stated the need for parental involvement by stating that

"communication groups or activities that must be included with parents such as family gatherings should be created". Given the importance of the role of parents in children's faith education as emphasized in the shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (Miller, 1990). Teaching is not limited to formal times and places, but occurs in the context of everyday life. In the context of Sunday school, it emphasizes the importance of integrating faith into children's life experiences, not just for an hour at church on Sundays. Therefore, HKBP women pastors need to develop programs that not only engage children but also empower parents as primary faith educators at home. These programs can be in the form of parent schools, family devotions, and outreach activities that allow families to explore the values of faith together. The implementation of communication groups as suggested by the resource persons can be an effective coordination medium between the church and the family in monitoring the spiritual development of children. This approach must also be sensitive to diverse economic conditions and social backgrounds, so that no family feels marginalized or unable to participate.

The fifth strategy is advocacy for a proportionate allocation of resources for children's services. HKBP women pastors need to act as advocates who fight for a more adequate allocation of the church budget for children's ministry, including the provision of special spaces, teaching aids, and quality learning materials. This advocacy should be accompanied by a clear proposal about the impact of long-term investment in children's ministry on the growth of the church as a whole. In addition, it is necessary to develop a creative fundraising strategy by involving the entire congregation in supporting children's services, so as to create a sense of shared ownership of the future of the next generation of the church.

The sixth strategy is the development of special programs and ongoing routine activities to strengthen the formation of children's spiritual character. The resource person emphasized that "special programs such as retreats, field worship, and so on must be mandatory programs in churches that are regulated periodically". Meanwhile, other speakers stated the importance of "annual routine activities also need to be developed such as bible camps or art performances". These programs not only serve as a variation of regular Sunday school activities, but also as an intensive momentum for the deepening of faith and the formation of a strong community of children. Retreats and bible camps provide opportunities for children to experience spirituality in different places and settings, while art performances allow children to express creativity in a spiritual context. Field worship and other outdoor activities are also important to show that God is present in all aspects of life, not limited to formal church spaces.

The implementation of this entire strategy requires long-term commitment and ongoing evaluation that includes a transition from conventional approaches to more responsive innovation. In the process of interpreting biblical texts, the fundamental competence that pastors in the past must possess is a deep understanding of religious science. Over time, the standard of success of a pastor has shifted, no longer limited to mere theological expertise, but also includes the approach to ministry that is implemented. The evaluation of a pastor's capabilities also evolves following the development of the era and social transformation in his community. In contemporary times, the mastery of religious doctrine alone is considered inadequate if it is not accompanied by the ability to apply it in spiritual life and active involvement in the social sphere in every responsibility it carries (Purba et al., 2024).

Based on the speaker's acknowledgment that "there is no specific strategy that I have developed yet" and is still "relying on the standard programs that already exist", HKBP women pastors need to develop a monitoring and evaluation system that not only measures children's participation in church activities, but also children's spiritual growth and character. This evaluation must involve various parties, including the children themselves, parents, GSM, and the congregation at large. The feedback obtained then becomes the basis for improving and adjusting strategies to remain relevant to the development of the times and the needs of children, as the resource persons have sought through the adaptation of technology and interactive methods in learning.

Through this praxis mission strategy, the ministry of HKBP women pastors in running *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon* can be more effective and transformative. This strategy not only overcomes

the existing challenges, but also creates a strong foundation for the formation of a young generation that has a strong faith and a character in accordance with Christian values. Thus, educating and nurturing children in ministry is no longer a burden or a challenge, but an opportunity to realize God's mission in a concrete and relevant context.

4. CONCLUSION

HKBP women pastors have a good understanding of Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon, but in practice there are still significant gaps. Female pastors play more roles as supervisors and supervisors according to the set schedule, while the daily implementation is delegated to Sunday School Teachers (GSM). The main shortcomings lie in the lack of pastoral visits to children's homes, the lack of intensive personal assistance, and the lack of a comprehensive evaluation system to measure the effectiveness of services. In fact, in accordance with biblical principles and the concept of shepherding in the pope, women pastors should be able to play a more optimal role as "spiritual mothers" who provide personal attention, protection, and holistic guidance to children, so that they do not only carry out structural and administrative functions.

HKBP women pastors face various complex challenges in running Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon. Internal challenges include greater priority on the administrative tasks and ceremonial activities of the church, limited GSM capabilities and time, the diversity of characteristics of the children served, the lack of parental involvement in the development of children's faith, and the lack of infrastructure and financial support from the church. While external challenges include an increasingly individualistic and materialistic lifestyle of society, the strong influence of technology and social media that distract children from spiritual activities, a change in the character of a generation that is more critical and fond of visual and fast-paced things, and family economic conditions that limit children's involvement in church activities. These challenges require a more creative, innovative, and relevant ministry strategy to the needs of today's children so that the ministry in accordance with the teachings of Christ can be carried out optimally.

HKBP women pastors need to develop a more comprehensive and innovative children's ministry strategy to run Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon effectively. This strategy includes six key approaches, namely placing children's ministry as a top priority with a child-centered pastoral approach, providing ongoing coaching for GSM to be more competent, utilizing modern technology in learning God's word, strengthening cooperation with parents through integrated family programs, advocating for adequate church resource allocation for children's ministry, and developing special programs on a regular basis. All of these strategies aim to create a children's ministry that not only conveys a spiritual message but also shapes children holistically in a way that is relevant and engaging today, so as to build a strong foundation of faith for the next generation of the church.

The hypothesis in this study is proven to show that the resource persons understand the concept of Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon well, but in practice prioritize administrative tasks and ceremonial activities of the church that consume time and energy, so that services to children are less optimal. This gap between good theological understanding and limited practical implementation proves that HKBP women pastors are less than optimal in carrying out children's ministries in accordance with *the Poda Tohonon Hapanditaon Napaopathon*.

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