

The Duties and Responsibilities of Christian Spiritual Mentors Regarding the Faith Growth of Contemporary Adolescents

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Abstract

This article examines the important role of Christian Spiritual Mentors in supporting adolescent faith growth in the contemporary era. Spiritual Mentors must understand their work and calling as servants of God who serve rather than seek to be served. Because adolescence is characterized by curiosity, a desire for freedom, and experimentation, Spiritual Mentors have a major duty and responsibility to guide adolescents through activities that strengthen their faith. The study highlights their responsibility to become effective examples and mentors while addressing spiritual and social challenges, especially the influence of technology and social media. This study employs a qualitative approach through a literature study of books, journals, theses, and other relevant sources. The findings indicate that Spiritual Mentors' duties include pastoral counseling, Bible-based teaching, discipleship, community building, social service, active participation, and exemplary Christian living. Digital technology can support faith formation when used wisely but can also encourage addiction, weaken direct fellowship, and influence adolescents' values and behavior. Therefore, Spiritual Mentors need relevant, creative, loving, and contextual approaches so that adolescents develop strong and mature faith and live according to Christian values in a changing society

Keywords

Adolescents; Duties; Faith; Growth; Responsibilities



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescent faith growth is an important responsibility that must be carried out by Spiritual Mentors and church leaders today because faith is a fundamental part of Christian life and is related to receiving God's work of salvation. Faith growth is especially important during adolescence because this period is significant for the formation of a person's character and spirituality. Adolescents are the next generation who are expected to continue the ministry of the Church,

preserve the Christian faith, and transmit Christian teaching. They need to understand that following the Lord is not an easy matter but requires carrying the cross as Jesus did. Without faith, adolescents may increasingly lose direction and become vulnerable to destructive influences. Faith growth enables adolescents to face challenges with strength, overcome difficulties, and remain steadfast when life brings pressures that may shake them. The authors argue that people whose faith develops properly can understand their identity and know God more deeply, become less fearful of challenges, and resist harmful influences. Therefore, contemporary Christian adolescents need strong and sound faith so that they do not easily fall into destructive behavior and can become examples in the world.

The guidance of adolescents is a primary responsibility of every Spiritual Mentor, ensuring that adolescents not only grow spiritually through the church community but also develop good relationships with other people and society. Spiritual Mentors play an active role in the Church by communicating truth to adolescents and developing ministry in accordance with God's Word. They prepare the Church to support adolescent faith growth and focus on nurturing faith both within the Church and in the wider environment. Spiritual Mentors need to introduce adolescents to spiritual communities in the Church and society so that their faith can be strengthened and continue to grow. A good Spiritual Mentor is able to reach people, guide and direct the congregation, and encourage adolescents to participate actively in church communities. Their ministry should not be limited to church services; they should also provide sound teaching through communities and introduce adolescents to positive environments that nurture faith and become a blessing in society. Thus, Spiritual Mentors should not focus only on preaching during worship but should accompany, nurture, and creatively engage adolescents so that they become increasingly enthusiastic about Bible-based teaching.

METHODS

This study is a literature review that searches for relevant theories concerning the case or problem related to the research topic. Research methods serve as instruments for obtaining data in a study and can be understood as systematic efforts to find appropriate answers to a problem through particular techniques and procedures. A literature review is a written synthesis found in articles, journals, books, and other documents that describe relevant theories. This

research uses a qualitative approach and literature study to examine the duties and responsibilities of Spiritual Mentors toward adolescent faith growth in the contemporary era. The focus is to provide understanding and practical direction for Spiritual Mentors regarding their important role in nurturing adolescent faith, so that adolescents do not become weak in following the Lord but instead become increasingly enthusiastic, mature, and reverent toward God.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Duties of Spiritual Mentors

A Spiritual Mentor's duty is to serve the entire congregation, from children to older adults, without discrimination. Spiritual Mentors must be able to lead adolescents by providing spiritual equipment through sound teaching and encouraging them to remain faithful to God. Their duty also includes strengthening weak faith, providing counseling for adolescents whose faith has not developed well, and being ready to accompany and encourage them. Spiritual Mentors are called to serve rather than to be served so that adolescents do not become trapped by destructive offers and influences of the world but instead continue to grow in the Lord. Therefore, their duties toward adolescents include pastoral counseling and sustained spiritual accompaniment.

Pastoral Counseling

Counseling can be understood as advice and guidance. Pastoral counseling is one of the duties of a Spiritual Mentor in advising adolescents and directing them toward what is right. It is a reciprocal relationship between the counselor and counselee in which the counselor guides and directs the counselee toward spiritual maturity and faith growth. From this perspective, Spiritual Mentors have the duty to provide counseling to adolescents so that they can be guided toward truth, grow in faith, and become increasingly mature.

Spiritual Mentors must understand their work and calling as servants in the Church, community, and family. They are called to serve the congregation, including adolescents, and therefore should provide pastoral counseling that reaches adolescents and prevents them from becoming involved in harmful situations. Effective counseling requires a close relationship, good ethics, and active provision of sound and appropriate advice and guidance. Counseling is not a process that is easy or immediate. Through pastoral counseling, adolescents

can gradually mature and experience faith growth over an extended process. Its purpose is to help adolescents become more mature and independent, develop holistically, become more aware of themselves, and become more sensitive to their thoughts and feelings. It also seeks to prevent promiscuous behavior and other harmful tendencies and to help adolescents avoid conforming to destructive worldly patterns. Pastoral counseling therefore aims to guide and advise adolescents while awakening their awareness of the importance of faith growth.

Discussion

Responsibilities of Spiritual Mentors

Spiritual Mentors are responsible for providing Bible-based teaching to adolescents so that their spirituality can develop and grow. The Bible is understood in the source as the living Word of God through which God speaks to humanity. It is the principal foundation and guide for Christian life and is presented as being written by people specially chosen to receive God's revelation and inspiration. The authors regard the Bible as a source of truth and guidance for Christians, especially adolescents, in spiritual growth and in discerning God's will. Teaching God's Word to adolescents is therefore a central responsibility of Spiritual Mentors because it helps them know God more deeply and build sound spiritual lives.

In the current era of globalization, changes caused by increasingly advanced technology have contributed to adolescents becoming less attentive to reading and learning God's truth and more oriented toward technology. Spiritual Mentors therefore have the task of guiding and teaching God's Word so that adolescents can understand it properly. Ministry to adolescents is a responsibility of Spiritual Mentors because God's Word is understood as God's teaching and message to humanity. Through the Word, adolescents can experience spiritual growth, become closer to God, and be better protected from harmful social relationships. Using the Bible as a foundation for teaching adolescents is consequently essential for faith growth and understanding truth. The Bible is also useful for teaching, correcting, and improving conduct, as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16.

The authors emphasize that ministry to adolescents is a crucial role of Spiritual Mentors in helping them love God more deeply, avoid destructive relationships, and make time to read and meditate on God's Word. Bible teaching can influence

adolescents' ethical character and faith growth because believers are called not only to believe in God but also to read and practice His Word. Joshua 1:8 also emphasizes meditation on the law day and night. Therefore, Spiritual Mentors need to work diligently in teaching adolescents so that their lives are not governed merely by changing trends but are increasingly characterized by obedience and practice of God's Word.

Relevant and Creative Teaching Methods

Spiritual Mentors are responsible for developing ministry and adolescent faith growth through relevant teaching grounded in the Bible. To accomplish this, they need appropriate methods for communicating teaching effectively. A method is a way of working toward the achievement of knowledge and learning goals, and the choice of method influences the success of teaching and learning. The source discusses gradual and repeated methods, dialogue and discussion, educational visits, and other instructional approaches. The authors argue that Spiritual Mentors should use gradual approaches because teaching adolescents requires time and sustained accompaniment. Their responsibility includes teaching creatively, presenting attractive materials, forming small discussion groups, giving instruction, and praying together. Spiritual Mentors therefore need to develop themselves so they can teach adolescents creatively, making the methods used meaningful guides for their lives. Materials for adolescent faith growth should be Bible-based and easy for adolescents to understand.

Exemplary Christian Living

Spiritual Mentors have a responsibility for adolescents' faith growth by becoming examples in speech, faith, and conduct, as reflected in 1 Timothy 4:12. Adolescents can experience spiritual growth when they hear words from Spiritual Mentors that are rooted in God's Word and when they see that their mentors maintain intimacy with God, as reflected in John 10:27. A good Spiritual Mentor is therefore visible through daily conduct, spirituality, and faith. Spiritual Mentors should also make regular time for adolescents by building spiritual communities, visiting them, and accompanying them well. An example is an action that can be imitated by others and can become an effective educational instrument. James 5:7–11 emphasizes exemplary perseverance and character. The authors argue that being an example requires concrete action, not merely words; Spiritual Mentors should therefore demonstrate faith through observable conduct that adolescents can follow.

Faithful example means doing what is right and living honestly before God. A Spiritual Mentor who provides an example of faith can be seen in the way he or she builds healthy communities and does not abandon existing fellowship. The responsibility of Spiritual Mentors in building adolescent spirituality is to demonstrate behavior that corresponds with God's Word. Such an example can encourage adolescents to grow and become enthusiastic in following the Lord. Spiritual Mentors should demonstrate faith by serving seriously, developing ministry, remaining ready to serve, and carrying out ministry with faith in God. In this way, adolescents can understand and observe authentic Christian commitment. Exemplary faith is particularly important because, according to the source, many adolescents today are vulnerable to departing from God's teaching and distancing themselves from God.

The authors further argue that adolescent faith and exemplary character are influenced by the examples they encounter throughout life, especially within the family and through Spiritual Mentors. Spiritual Mentors should provide examples through everyday attitudes and character, ministry, and faith in God. Exemplary conduct is one factor determining the effectiveness of Spiritual Mentor ministry. It is a positive way of life that adolescents can imitate and that communicates care through action, attitude, and obedience.

Challenges Faced by Spiritual Mentors

Adolescence is a period of growth toward youth and adulthood and is characterized by a desire for freedom and a willingness to try new things. Today, adolescents face many challenges, particularly those related to technology. One difficulty is the improper use of technology, such as spending excessive time on mobile phones while neglecting Bible reading and meditation. Consequently, Spiritual Mentors have substantial roles, duties, and responsibilities toward adolescents. They must guide and direct adolescents so that they become people who fear and honor God. Their work should not focus only on ministry from the pulpit but also on the spiritual growth of adolescents.

Social media is now familiar to almost everyone, especially adolescents, and is difficult to separate from daily life or regulate effectively. Social media can make work and learning easier, but it can also create dependence and cause adolescents to forget responsibilities and activities that are important for their development. Churches and Spiritual Mentors therefore face the challenge of designing strategies to reach younger generations in the digital era through

accompaniment, formation, and relationships with mentors who can serve as worthy examples. This requires commitment to prayer for reaching adolescents, determination to regain adolescents who have become distant from church and lost their identity as God's children, and willingness to sacrifice for their spiritual care.

The Influence of Technology and Social Media

Technology can have both positive and negative effects on its users. Social media is a digital platform that facilitates interaction with other users virtually. Its users are no longer only adolescents; people from many age groups now use social media. For adolescents, social media can become difficult to separate from everyday life because of dependence. The influence of technology is therefore significant and requires deep understanding. Adolescents are under pressure to keep up with technological and social-media developments. They may use various platforms and applications, but they also need to understand the impacts and risks associated with technology use.

In an increasingly advanced digital era, adolescents face many challenges that affect their spiritual lives. One major challenge is the negative influence of social media and dependence on technology. Adolescents may become trapped in virtual social circles that affect their emotional and psychological well-being. The influence of technology on adolescent life can therefore be viewed in terms of both positive and negative effects.

The positive influence of technology is its ability to support adolescent development and encourage beneficial change. First, technology makes it easier for adolescents to find and read the Bible. Second, it makes books and information available that can increase knowledge about theology, adolescent spirituality, and other areas of learning. Third, it can help Christian adolescents build faith in God. Technology can thus serve as a means of drawing closer to God and communicating and hearing the Gospel. The negative influence, however, includes effects that can distance believers, including adolescents, from God. Technology can become addictive, making adolescents comfortable with socializing online and reducing interaction with fellow believers because more time is spent in virtual spaces. Excessive use can also contribute to harmful relationships and loss of identity as God's children, including risks such as premarital pregnancy, drug abuse, fighting, bullying, and other behaviors associated in the source with inappropriate gadget use. Technology can therefore

become harmful when it is not used according to its proper function. Technological progress is created as a tool to assist human beings, not to control human life.

Changes in Social Values and Norms and Their Impact on Adolescent Faith

Social lifestyles continue to develop along with globalization. During adolescence, changes of many kinds strongly influence development. There is concern that social and cultural values embedded in adolescents may disappear as outside influences enter and grow. To help adolescents control themselves and avoid the negative effects of social change, they should strengthen themselves through strong faith, broad knowledge, and awareness of social and cultural norms, including courtesy and respect, so that they can behave adaptively. In the present era, social media use can contribute to the loss of ethics and politeness in everyday life.

Social media can produce constructive as well as destructive effects. It can increase creativity, help people build networks, and provide a means of expressing opinions freely. On the other hand, social media can negatively affect spirituality and mental well-being. This may contribute to insecurity and repeated comparison between personal life and idealized images presented on social media, including physical standards, academic achievement, and materialistic lifestyles. Social media also shifts private space toward public space because adolescents may upload many aspects of their activities, thereby influencing and shaping their identities.

Strategies for Using Technology in Faith Formation

Church youth formation is a continuing process with a clear direction for developing faith, character, and social responsibility among adolescents. This is increasingly important because the challenges they face are complex and diverse. Digital technology and globalization have changed how adolescents understand the world, build social relationships, and establish their identities. In this context, effective faith formation cannot remain passive or rigid. It needs to adapt to technological development and social change so that adolescents can grow into spiritually mature individuals who can also contribute positively to society.

Digital technology has become an important means of reaching adolescents because their lifestyles are closely connected to the digital world and online media. Through interactive Bible applications that can be accessed at any time, attractive spiritual videos, online discussion groups, and popular social-media

platforms, churches have substantial opportunities to introduce and strengthen Christian values in ways that are relevant and engaging for adolescents. Applying these strategies can help adolescents continue to grow in faith.

Strategies for Increasing Faith Growth

Discipleship and Christian religious education are important strategies for strengthening adolescent faith. The task of discipleship is understood as the Great Commission first given to the twelve disciples and then continued by the community of believers, as described in Acts 2:14–47. Jesus Himself serves as the model and example for discipleship strategies in the contemporary Church. Discipleship programs therefore have an important position in church growth and in helping adolescents increase their faith in God. The purpose of Christian religious education is to educate children in the Church so that they can participate wisely in Bible study through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, take part in worship, understand the unity of the Church, and be equipped to live responsibly under God's sovereignty for the glory of Christ. Christian families and parents understand children as gifts and responsibilities entrusted by God, requiring them to nurture and educate children in love and forgiveness, teach them God's way, and help them grow in faith and trust in God (Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:20; 1 Peter 2:9). Education in fact begins in the family, and spiritual education is important for nurturing and shaping adolescents.

Spiritual Mentors should provide a place where adolescents can obtain correct knowledge and understanding about faith growth based on the Bible. This includes motivating adolescents, providing appropriate facilities and resources, and making books containing sound Christian teaching available. Spiritual Mentors are responsible for teaching the Gospel to every adolescent. In the discipleship process, they should remain active in Bible teaching and encourage adolescents to participate in the Church because the Church can support faith growth. This responsibility is therefore closely related to adolescent faith growth and the maturation of their faith.

Community Activities and Social Service

Christian community involvement is important for creating an ecosystem that supports adolescent faith growth, both at home and in the Church's digital communities. Community can help a generation of adolescents become strong in faith while remaining relevant to the contemporary digital world. Through social-service activities, such as helping people who are poor, participating in

mutual-help activities, or joining projects in the surrounding environment, adolescents can understand Jesus' teaching about love in concrete ways. Through social service, adolescents learn to express the fruit of faith, including the love and sacrificial character of Jesus Christ, while developing compassion, humility, and social responsibility. As leaders, Spiritual Mentors strengthen relationships between the Church and its surrounding community. Pastors and Spiritual Mentors participate in social ministry and efforts to assist people in need, making their role central to church life and adolescent faith growth.

Encouraging Active Participation

Spiritual Mentors can inspire changes in adolescents' lives by encouraging active involvement in ministry and mission. Adolescents should be encouraged to internalize faith values in daily life and develop critical-thinking skills that support strong spirituality. Through technology, adolescents can be encouraged to align their lifestyles with God's commands and contribute to the mission of the Church and the wider social community.

Exemplary Life in Everyday Practice

Churches generally hope that Spiritual Mentors who serve can develop multiple abilities and bring congregations closer to God. Spiritual Mentors are described as shepherds who protect and care for the flock, as well as leaders who bring the congregation toward God and teach the truth of God's Word. They have duties and responsibilities to guide the congregation toward God. Spiritual Mentors are often used as benchmarks for leadership and everyday ethics, especially by adolescents and young people. Their role is therefore important in guiding adolescents toward a life that follows God's will. A good Spiritual Mentor carries out entrusted duties responsibly and becomes an example within the congregation and among adolescents.

The term Spiritual Mentor is used among Christians, in the Church, and particularly in theological education. A person is regarded as a Spiritual Mentor when he or she serves God and is able to nurture members of the congregation both personally and collectively, from the smallest to the largest. Spiritual Mentors are also described as representatives of God in the world who serve others and prioritize their needs. Becoming a Spiritual Mentor involves many duties and responsibilities, including cooperation with others and expressing God's love to all people. Their duties include uniting the congregation and educating people to understand the truth of God's Word. In carrying out these

duties, Spiritual Mentors should demonstrate humility and genuine servant character. They should not only be humble but also guide, direct, and proclaim the kingdom of heaven. The authors therefore argue that Spiritual Mentors are not merely servants in a functional sense; they must also demonstrate humility toward God and others, direct people toward biblical truth, and become examples. This calling is not easy because it carries great responsibility, but it is also a privilege because Spiritual Mentors are understood as people chosen by God to guide His people toward the right path. They must therefore prepare themselves mentally and spiritually to carry out their duties and responsibilities.

A Spiritual Mentor must be able to become an example in everyday life and perform God's work well by proclaiming the Gospel, teaching God's Word, and directing the congregation to continue growing and maintain true faith. The source identifies three main tasks, drawing on Hadi's discussion of Robert's formulation: proclaiming, caring for, and leading. These three tasks form an inseparable unity that should be carried out by Spiritual Mentors because all three are important for bringing congregations and adolescents toward spiritual growth.

CONCLUSION

Adolescent faith growth is a duty and responsibility of Spiritual Mentors. Spiritual Mentors must become examples in speech, as stated in 1 Timothy 4:12, and examples in faith. Adolescents can experience spiritual growth when they hear the words of Spiritual Mentors that contain God's Word. Spiritual Mentors are responsible for developing ministry and adolescent faith growth through relevant, Bible-based teaching so that adolescents can apply it in everyday life. To support adolescent faith growth, the Church should become a second place for adolescents to fellowship and worship God. The Church should establish healthy spiritual communities where adolescents can learn and participate actively in fellowship, because through healthy communities they can experience faith growth and become increasingly enthusiastic about following the Lord. The Church should also create a safe environment and encourage Spiritual Mentors to serve effectively, making the Church a place where adolescents feel safe to ask questions, express themselves, and explore their faith.

This article emphasizes that Spiritual Mentors have a vital role in adolescent faith growth in the contemporary era. Their duties and responsibilities are not limited to teaching and spiritual formation but also include emotional and social

accompaniment. In facing challenges such as technological influence and social change, Spiritual Mentors are expected to become examples and sources of inspiration. Through relevant and loving approaches, they can help adolescents develop strong and mature faith so that they can live according to Christian values amid the continuing dynamics of contemporary life.

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