

SEEKING THE INTERESTS OF CHRIST JESUS: A CRITICAL HISTORICAL STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS 2:19-30

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ABSTRACT

In Christian's history, the ministry of the Gospel has always been an inseparable part and has often been voiced by clergy and theologians. Gospel ministry is a topic of discussion that continues to resonate in various Christian forums in various regions. In Philippians 2:19-30 Paul also voiced that the Gospel Ministry should be an ongoing part of the life of the Philippian congregation. In the discourse about the ministry of the Gospel, Philippians 2:19-30 shows that Paul presents his fellow servants Timothy and Epaphroditus as a model to describe the unity among the ministers of the Gospel. In this way, the text of Philippians 2:19-30 can be understood as a proclamation in creating unity in the midst of the task of serving the Gospel. This text is also Paul's advice to inspire readers to continually seek unity that is integral to 'the interests of Christ Jesus' in His congregation. The Christian community needs to emerge partnership in order to realizing God's mission for the world.

KEYWORDS: *Gospel Ministry, Unity, Interests of Christ Jesus.*

INTRODUCTION

Paul was an apostle who had an important role in preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ during the early Christian congregation. Paul, whose previous name was Saul, was of Jewish descent whose father was a Pharisee. Saul was a Jew who adhered to the traditions of the Jewish faith. Saul also had Roman citizenship, which some scholars say was purchased citizenship. Before becoming a follower of Christ, Paul initially appeared in Christian history as someone involved in the persecution of Christians. Saul considered his persecution as a service to YHWH, the God worshiped by all the Jewish people (Hakh, 2019).

While in the city of Jerusalem, Saul studied the Torah law and Old Testament traditions. Saul's teacher was the famous Jewish rabbi, Gamaliel. Saul harbored great hatred against Christians because they proclaimed the crucified Jesus as Messiah and Lord. Saul considered his persecution of the

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Israelites' 'blasphemers' of God as a service to God.

Paul's encounter with Christ was the turning point for Saul to become an apostle for Jesus Christ. Paul faithfully lived and even preached the Gospel to various places. In his work of preaching the Gospel, Paul faced various challenges in the early Christian communities in various places. Various challenges come from external to internal parties from the Christian community itself. Paul himself experienced obstacles in conveying the Gospel, one of the reasons being that he was under arrest from the Roman government at that time. The Epistle to the Philippians itself was written while Paul was in captivity under Roman rule (Carson and Moo, 2009).

The letter to the Philippians contains Paul's advice to the congregation in the city of Philippi, as a warning of the long journey that the early church had to take in every service for the name of Jesus Christ. G. Walter Hansen gives an opinion about the purpose of writing the letter to the Philippians. According to Hansen, Paul's letter to the Philippians wanted to show special attention to three (3) main things that were 'attacking' the Christian community in Philippi. According to Hansen, the problems faced by the Philippian congregation were: (1) divisions in the congregation; (2) the suffering of the congregation; and (3) enemies that the Philippian congregation must be wary of (Hansen, 2009).

The text of Philippians 2:19-30 is classified by Hansen as a form of Paul's attention to the suffering faced by the Philippian congregation. Paul first begins the structure of the letter written to the Philippians by providing a perspective on suffering from Paul's own experience (cf. Phil. 1:12-26). Paul continues his perspective on the suffering that the Christian community should face (cf. Phil. 1:27-26). After describing the suffering faced by Paul and the Christian community, Paul expressed his joy at the Philippians' help for Paul while he was under the captivity of the Roman government (cf. Phil. 2:17-30).

The Epistle to the Philippians – especially the text studied – shows how important it is to have comrades in ministry. In the context of the early church, service to Jesus Christ and the spread of the Gospel message were important and essential. Peter D. Koehne argues that the term companion is a very important terminology in the literature of Paul's letters. Koehne sees the term partner as part of what explains each individual's participation in activities outside of the individual's experience. It appears that Koehne viewed Paul as a letter writer who was skilled at choosing wording and diction, to invite every reader to participate in the ministry of the Gospel of Christ (Koehne, 1987).

Paul himself did have the ability to make speeches or rhetoric, which can be seen clearly in the letters he wrote to Christian communities in various other areas of his evangelization. His ability to use rhetoric using the language of Greco-Roman culture and influence from Judaic tradition can make it easier for various readers to understand Paul's letters. Paul's expertise in rhetoric helped spread the Gospel in the early Christian era, so that congregations who came from various traditions could understand the meaning of Paul's advice for the lives of the congregation themselves as readers of Paul's letters (Robertson, 2016).

In the text studied, Paul uses the image of two colleagues who help in the ministry of the Gospel. Timothy and Epaphroditus became colleagues who received 'praise' from Paul in the process of developing the preaching of the Gospel which took place while Paul was under Roman arrest. Paul's praise conveyed in verses 20 and 22 is the Apostle's way of emphasizing that Timothy is truly different from some people who seek their own interests. Paul presents Timothy as a partner who is truly concerned about the welfare of the Philippians. In other words, Timothy showed qualities like Paul had (Asumang, 2017).

Paul's praise continues in the next verse, where there is text-based writing that differentiates

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Timothy from his other colleagues in the context of ministry to the Gospel. Paul stated that Timothy had similar thoughts to himself (which is conveyed later in verse 20), especially in terms of his sincere concern for the Philippians. Timothy has proven this concretely by maintaining the continuity of the Gospel message (O'Brien, 1991).

Paul's praise did not stop with Timothy, but continued with the colleagues he had while he was in captivity in Rome. Paul confirmed in writing what the Philippians had heard in verse 26, namely that Epaphroditus was sick. The Philippians may not have known the severity of Epaphroditus' illness. Paul told the Philippians that Epaphroditus' illness almost killed him. When Epaphroditus brought the letter to them, they would see that Epaphroditus was in better condition than he had been when he was with Paul.

In Paul's plan to send Epaphroditus back to the Philippian congregation, the emphasis was on 'only because of God's mercy' who had saved Paul's co-workers and friends from among the Christian community in the city of Philippi. So, the Philippians could understand that Epaphroditus had been saved from death and God had restored and given Epaphroditus the opportunity to return to the Philippians.

Based on the text studied, the minister of the Gospel is described by Paul through his two ministry partners. According to Peter O'Brien, Paul's depiction of the two models has a paraenesis or instruction related to ethics and morals. O'Brien argues that the text does not simply serve as an announcement by Paul of his plans for his two ministry partners. Paul also aims for the Philippian congregation to follow the model of servants who do not seek their own interests, as Paul described for his two colleagues. Paul's description of his two companions became a model that Paul hoped the church community in the city of Philippi would follow.

The text shows that there were differences between the commissions of Timothy and Epaphroditus. In Paul's assignment to Timothy, there is Paul's explanation of Timothy's dedication to the Gospel and loyalty to the Gospel together with Paul. Moisés Silva believes that Timothy's sending was apostolic in nature, where the explanation Paul gave of the figure of Timothy also wanted to validate the statement of unity between Paul and Timothy as partners in the Gospel ministry. Paul and Timothy, who were loyal to the Gospel, can also be understood through the text as having loyalty to the apostolic mission or responsibility they carried out (Silva, 2005). Ben Witherington also argues that the commission was accompanied by evidence that Paul had – and perhaps the Philippians knew – about Timothy regarding his purity and faithfulness in matters of faith (Witherington, 2011).

There was a difference between the sending of Timothy and the sending of Epaphroditus. The illness suffered by Epaphroditus while he was with Paul was one of the reasons why Paul sent Epaphroditus back to the Philippian congregation. Paul does not directly display the role played by Epaphroditus in the Gospel. However, Paul's sending of Epaphroditus to the Philippian congregation implies a deep meaning which is explained by the sorrow experienced by Epaphroditus while he was sick. Peter Oakes argues that the sending of Epaphroditus which was accompanied by Epaphroditus' experience of sorrow was related to the suffering experienced by the Philippian congregation. The suffering experienced by the Philippian congregation is not explicitly explained, but Oakes suspects that the sending of Epaphroditus who experienced sorrow was related to the figure of Christ which was needed as a model of service for the Philippian congregation (Oakes, 2001). Loveday Alexander expressed opinions that support the argument against the commission of Epaphroditus as a ministry of the Gospel. Alexander saw that the sending of Epaphroditus needed to be seen as the main task of a minister of the Gospel who was responsible for carrying or preaching the message (apostolos) and

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carrying out ministry duties (leiturgos) (Alexander, 2022).

At a glance, Philippians 2:19-30 shows that Paul gave an explanation to the congregation in the city of Philippi regarding Paul's two companions who took part in the Gospel ministry. In the text, Paul emphasizes the importance of the role of fellow workers. Paul gave several positive statements about his two colleagues. Paul also makes a distinction between 'seekers of their own gain' (v. 21) and Timothy. The differences shown through the text raise questions regarding Paul's purpose and purpose in sending Timothy and Epaphroditus. Why does Paul provide a description of the Gospel ministry model through Timothy's ministry model and Epaphroditus' ministry model?

In the development of the Gospel ministry after the time of the early church, there was a shift in the meaning of the essence of the Gospel ministry itself. The history of Christianity shows that the field of Gospel ministry is sometimes influenced by political and economic elements from certain parties. The field of Gospel ministry is still vulnerable to being infiltrated by exploitative efforts to gain personal gain. This reality can be seen from one of the historical events in Christianity, more precisely towards the end of the Middle Ages towards the century of church reform (Renaissance) (de Jonge, 2018).

In the medieval period, the decline of church life was inseparable from political and economic influences. Services that took place in the Middle Ages began to decline because personal interests in power and money were increasingly rampant. This decline in the ministry encouraged efforts by some people - known as reformers - to restore the church and reform the behavior of the clergy to stop prioritizing status and money. Reformation in the church body in the late Middle Ages attempted to bring the church back to a life of service in accordance with God's will.

The phenomena that occurred in the period leading up to the reformation century also occur today. Servants who take part in ecclesiastical services face challenges in the midst of carrying out their duties and responsibilities in a congregational community. Servant leadership is more inclined towards servant leadership with various elements in it. An integral servant's leadership makes him a leader who places service to others as the main priority above all else. However, criticism or objections from the congregational community regarding a servant's leadership model can direct the responsibility that needs to be made to decisions that benefit certain parties in order to maintain the servant's status (Crowther, 2018).

Looking at the reality that has occurred in the history of church development and today, there are still deviations from Paul's advice regarding the ministry of the Gospel. Gospel ministry in accordance with God's commands is still difficult to realize in the lives of Christians. Personal or group interests still come first above the ministry of the Gospel. Today's Gospel ministers still find it difficult to carry out the work of the Gospel according to what Paul advised the Philippians to do. The difficulties faced by ministers of the Gospel today also influence the implementation of the mission carried out by the entire Christian community. Moreover, in carrying out missions in the world, the Christian community today still finds it difficult to implement the Gospel ministry which is the embodiment of the effort to 'seek the interests of Christ Jesus'.

Paul's two models of Gospel ministry provide a deeper explanation for readers, to gain an understanding of the main priorities for ministers who dedicate themselves to Gospel ministry. The Gospel ministry based on Paul's recommendation to his two companions in the text shows that there are problems related to important factors that are at the core of mission implementation - which are raised based on the context that occurred in the early Christian community. So, the title of this article originates from the condition of the Gospel ministry which is still vulnerable to being collided with

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the one-sided interests of a Gospel minister. Departing from the phenomenon in the middle of ministry, guidelines are needed that direct ministers back to the interests of Christ Jesus according to Paul's advice in the text.

The effort to 'seek the interests of Christ Jesus' becomes an essential part of the ministry of the Gospel. However, the reality that occurs shows that the Gospel service which prioritizes Christ Jesus is still difficult to implement in service life in the church. Ministers of the Gospel should balance and direct various interests to be directed towards the interests of Christ Jesus. Various interests in carrying out ministry to the Gospel need to be directed towards special and essential interests. So, the text can be a guide that reminds the church community that the ministry of the Gospel should be filled with elements of the interests of Christ Jesus (Cohick, 2013).

RESEARCH METHOD

In completing this paper, the author will use literary research, namely by exploring the text studied based on various commentary books related to the topic 'Gospel Ministry' and hermeneutic biblical descriptions (theoretical research) to find the meaning of the text according to the hermeneutic stages in the text. Specifically, to explore the text, the author will use the critical historical description method to help understand the meaning of the text from a historical perspective, namely exploring the history of the text in two different contexts or eras. The context that guides the excavation of texts includes the history within the text and the history of the text itself. In researching the text Philippians 2:19-30, the author will look for theological values by maintaining focus on the text. The author will use a hermeneutic research method with a critical historical approach as a guide in finding meaning from the text and forming reflections on life today. The text of Philippians 2:19-30 contains Paul's goal of overcoming problems or threats from 'opportunist' ministers, and Paul's description of two ministers of the Gospel is a way used to deal with threats to the Philippian congregation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Theological Themes

The letter to the Philippians contains Paul's advice and warnings, which are addressed to the Christian congregation in the city of Philippi. The Epistle to the Philippians opens with an introduction in the form of a greeting, with an emphasis on the complete servitude or devotion of Paul and his co-workers to the ministry of the Gospel. Paul gives an introduction that introduces himself and his colleagues – especially Timothy – as “slaves of Christ Jesus” (cf. Phil. 1:1). In Paul's advice to the congregation in the city of Philippi, as a whole, it contains advice related to the attitude needed in carrying out service to the Gospel, namely humility and prioritizing others as an important part of the effort to "seek the interests of Christ Jesus" (cf. Phil. 2:4-11; 2:20-21), and rejoice (cf. Phil. 4:4-7) (Halley, 2000). This advice was conveyed by Paul with the nuances of friendly literature addressed to the congregation in the city of Philippi.

Paul also emphasized the existence of a foundation or basic foundation that binds the fellowship of the Philippian congregation. Paul relates the Gospel as the foundation that binds the fellowship of the Philippian church (cf. Phil. 1:6). In the letter to the Philippians itself, Paul displays the element of community through the connectedness of each individual in carrying out their roles and functions in the ministry of the Gospel. Paul shows that the roles and functions that each individual has are a form

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of permanent participation in God's work and work (cf. Phil. 2:5) (Giesen, 2006). Paul gives advice that shows the attitude of the Philippian church's frame of mind regarding the role and function of each individual, centered on actions that are in harmony with the Christian ethos intended by Christ. Paul displays an attitude he has towards actions that are in line with Christ Jesus.

In the literary nuance of friendly letters, conveying news about the news of Paul and several of his other companions (cf. Phil. 1:12-26; 2:25-26) also becomes a method used to convey advice and edification to the Philippian congregation. The delivery of this advice is necessary for the Philippian congregation, which faces challenges in contribution and participation in the process of serving the Gospel. Paul also provides a Christ-centered model of serving the Gospel (cf. Phil. 2:19-30) in the form of advice to the Philippian congregation, which the Philippian congregation needs to practice in the congregational community life that takes place in the Philippian congregation (cf. Phil. 4:9).

In carrying out his duties in the Gospel ministry, Paul also emphasized the importance of unity between fellow ministers. Paul invites the Philippians to be of one heart and mind, to experience deeper unity of spirit, in carrying out their duties of service to the Gospel of Christ Jesus. Advice that emphasizes unity refers to Christ as the center of ministry and the main foundation in binding the fellowship of the Philippian congregation. The concept of unity that Paul uses in the letter to the Philippians also contains humility in carrying out ministry, so that the Philippian congregation can obtain relationships that are centered on common interests in the community (Swindoll, 2017).

Paul's advice conveyed in the text Philippians 2:19-30 emphasizes the importance of unity and prioritizing interests that are in line with the interests of Christ Jesus. Paul provides a model of a minister of the Gospel who serves the interests of Christ Jesus, starting from one accord with the apostle. The model of Gospel ministry that Paul conveys is advice for Gospel ministers to get to the center of Gospel ministry and the unity that needs to be established between ministers, as illustrated in the relationship between Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus. Paul encouraged the Philippian congregation to experience a change in character in carrying out their ministry duties and also voiced unity of spirit in carrying out their Gospel ministry duties. So, based on the interpretation that has been carried out on the text of Philippians 2:19-30, several theological themes have been found which serve as advice for paranaesis in carrying out ministry in the life of the Christian community.

a) Mission Theology

The Christian community is the fruit of God's work and work for all of His people. In the NT writings, the Christian community is referred to by the term *ekklesia* which refers to the meaning of "those who have been called out" and carry out the task of conveying the news of salvation that has been received from God. The Christian community has become a "tool" used by God to carry out work aimed at all of God's creation (Abineno, 2008). There was institutionalization within the body of the Christian community throughout the journey of Christianity, which was formed in an institution known as the "Church". The church is an institution that is different from other institutions in the world, which moves and is centered on God's will for the world (de Jonge and Aritonang, 1993). As a tool used by God in the world, the church is called to recreate the saving work of Christ Jesus in the world. The Church participates in this realization through the proclamation of the Gospel news that touches all of God's creation (Darmaputera, 1991).

In the text Philippians 2:19-30, Paul also participated in proclaiming the news of the salvation of Christ Jesus, through the two models given to the Philippian congregation. The life of a minister of the Gospel is described by Paul as a form of devotion that is centered on "the interests of Christ Jesus" (v.

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21). Paul emphasizes the mission that the Christian community has, to convey the message of the Gospel of Christ Jesus (cf. Phil. 2:21) and the salvation that has been obtained from Christ's work of salvation for mankind (cf. Phil. 2:30). The sending of Paul's two co-workers became a manifestation of the proclamation of the Gospel, aimed at the Philippian congregation.

In the understanding of mission put forward by David J. Bosch, evangelization carried out in various regions is one of the essence of mission which functions to proclaim Christ's salvation for everyone who does not believe. Bosch also saw the task of the church as a called people as preaching the promise of salvation from God, calling every individual to repentance, and living out service as the fruit of the salvation given by God. God calls and sends His people to witness the work of salvation (cf. Acts 1:8) and preach the Gospel (cf. Mark 16:15) (Woga, 2002). In carrying out the mission carried out by the church, a transformation occurs which shows the essence of a community that has received salvation from God.

In the text Philippians 2:19-30, a model of Gospel service can be obtained that is in line with the essence of mission. Through this text, Paul provides a paradigm that shows the form of Gospel ministry from 2 models of Gospel ministers. Paul's two colleagues who were used as models of Gospel ministry showed elements of carrying out the mission of preaching the Gospel, as witnesses of Christ's salvation (through Paul's model of Epaphroditus' service to Christ) and devotion to preaching the Gospel (through Paul's model of devotion to Gospel service). Based on Paul's explanation in the text, a deep understanding can be found regarding the implementation of the mission of preaching the Gospel news, where the two colleagues established a relationship that enabled the spread of the Gospel message to continue and more and more people accepted Jesus as Christ (Robert, 2009).

In the theology of mission contained in the text, a compatibility is found between the two models of ministers of the Gospel with the concept of mission and the essence of the church as the bearer of God's mission. The ministry of the Gospel was carried out as part of the participation of Paul's two companions, who preached and became a guide for the ministry of the Gospel. The Christian community is invited to take part in the service to prepare for the transformation of the life of the Christian congregation (Guthrie, 2019).

b) Partnership Theology

The Christian community is a form of institution that is also present in the midst of the world. Since the time of Christianity in the first century, there has been a struggle within the church to find the application of the concept of the Kingdom of God in the world. The church struggles with the social context it encounters, and it is not uncommon for the church to demonstrate a form of relationship that tries to transform the concept of the Kingdom of God in every encounter with the context encountered. The implementation efforts and struggles faced by the church cannot be separated from its function as God's tool in God's mission. To achieve the realization of the Kingdom of God in the world, partnerships within the church body are needed in realizing the mission in the world (Berkhof, 1949).

Paul provides an explanation of the peer relationship that took place between his two colleagues and Paul. Paul himself often used the concept of partnership with metaphors and even advice in his letters. As in the use of the concept of partnership wrapped in the literary style of friendship in the text (cf. Phil. 2:25, Paul describes the relationship between himself and Epaphroditus in several terms). Paul uses the concept of partnership as a deeper explanation of the importance of cooperation built within the congregational community (van der Water, 2016). This emphasis on partnership cannot be separated from the nature of the church as an organization, which has members and a structure in order

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to realize God's will for the world.

The theological values that Paul raises in the letter to the Philippians are largely related to partnerships in carrying out the Gospel ministry. Paul gave advice that directed the Philippians to establish a partnership relationship. John A. Fitzgerald sees the advice delivered by Paul in the letter to the Philippians as containing the values of partners or partners needed in the ministry of the Gospel with a strong emphasis on "unity of heart and mind" and "partnership". Fitzgerald sees the theme of the unity of heart and mind as the essence of friendship literature, where Paul uses the element of unity in the letter to the Philippians periodically (cf. Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 2:20; 4:2) in embodying the character of the Gospel ministry. Fitzgerald also sees the theme of partnership as an integral part of the theme of the unity of the spirit, with a two-way relationship between Paul and his companions and also the Philippians (Fitzgerald, 2007).

In relationships with churches that have an institutional form, relationships between members are an important factor in the theme of partnership in the midst of gospel ministry. The relationships that are built in inter-congregational relations also need to take into account the various interests that exist within a community. Referring to the interests held within a Christian community, Jan Hendriks has a theory that highlights the interests within the church that influence congregation growth. In relation to the interests of a congregation, Hendrik sees that the relationships that exist in a church must pay attention to common interests (*gemeinschaft*), organizational interests and personal interests (*gesellschaft*). In the church community, Hendriks sees that these three interests need to be respected to stimulate congregational growth (Hendriks, 2002).

In the theology of partnership contained in the text, elements of partnership are found which Paul raises through his relationships with his two partners and the Philippian congregation. This relationship can be found through Paul's advice which emphasizes unity (cf. Phil. 2:20,26) and the importance of paying attention to the interests within a community (cf. Phil. 2:25). Paul also places emphasis on the interests that need to be maintained and developed in carrying out ministry, so that unity can survive in congregational life (Banks, 1994). The assessment of these interests requires carefulness from ministers of the Gospel – such as Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus when referring to the text – so that mutual interests can be achieved within the Christian community.

2. Relevance of Theology

At the time of writing Philippians, Paul was in Roman captivity. Paul's absence has the potential to hinder the continuation of the Gospel ministry in areas where Christian communities are located. The presence of ministry partners in the context of writing the letter to the Philippians helps the continuation of the Gospel ministry in the Philippian congregation. The presence of ministers in the Philippian congregation also creates relationships that exist in the form of partnerships between fellow ministers and the congregational community in the place served. Although it cannot be denied that there are still some parties who take advantage of Paul's absence for their own interests without being responsible for communal interests. However, the servant model given by Paul in the text Philippians 2:19-30 is advice that tries to realign the meaning of "mission" and "partnership" in the Philippian congregation community.

Christian congregations today also carry out their respective roles in the midst of ecclesiastical life. Christians play a role in church and society, as part of the world in which they exist. Especially in the context of services carried out by ministers today, where the meaning of mission and partnership is an important part of building good relationships with the church and society. Therefore, the relevance

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raised is based on the theological themes obtained from the text, reminding today's ministers of the Gospel to "Carry out Missions in Accordance with God's Will" and "Build Partnership Relations that are of One Heart and One Mind".

a) Carrying out the mission in accordance with God's will

In carrying out God's mission in the world, it is important to underline that a unique encounter occurs between several understandings. Seeing the realities faced in carrying out God's mission in the world, Ernst Troelstch, as quoted by Eka Darmaputera in his writing, expressed the importance of accommodating the Gospel message as a form of communication and actualization of Gospel preaching that is able to adapt to all situations. The church must be open to every development that occurs in the world, in order to carry out God's mission for the world.

The church must be able to present sensitivity in the encounters that occur with the context of life around them. The church should strive for teaching that is contextual to the life of the congregation where it is located. The church also needs to present an attitude as a shepherd for all of God's people. The services carried out must be seen as carrying out God's mission alone, and therefore a leadership concept is needed that is appropriate and appropriate to the social situation faced by the church in the midst of church life (Strauch, 2006).

In carrying out its mission in the midst of community life, the church needs to be alert to various interests that try to infiltrate the congregation's community life or church life. The history of Christianity within the scope of the HKBP itself has recorded radical efforts that conflict with the essence of the mission itself. During the transition of leadership of the HKBP church from the western zending body to the Batak community around the 1940s, efforts arose to make the HKBP church a church driven by tribal principles (Ngelow, 1996). These efforts are contrary to the essence of the mission, which is to create a theocracy (Kingdom of God) in the midst of the world. For this reason, the church must be able to assess various efforts that are useful and constructive for the continuity of mission implementation in various places (Trull and Carter, 2016).

In the context of HKBP which adopts Batak culture, a servant character is needed who is able to direct the congregation to carry out God's mission. Marsahala leadership can direct the implementation of the mission to remain directed towards efforts to "seek the interests of Christ". Not without reason, the character of the leader is an important factor in uniting the goals and vision of the Christian community. Especially in Batak culture, sahala plays a role in directing the entire congregation to participate in carrying out missions amidst the realities of the church and society. Sahala enables leaders to stimulate the growth of the character and identity of the Batak congregation, so that the congregation community becomes more visionary and sensitive in responding to the realities of service life in the church and society (Siregar, 2021).

b) Building Healthy and Like-Minded Partnership Relations

In essence, implementing partnerships that are of one mind and one mind is difficult to apply in church life. The difficulties faced in establishing partnerships of one heart and one mind are caused by the diversity of individuals with varying thoughts and interests. Diversity in a community often creates potential friction between church members or even ministers in a community (Hybels, 2002). In fact, it is not uncommon for clashes to occur due to competition between individuals in the church community and various interests within it (Moseley, 2013).

Within the congregational community, ministers also have a role in guiding the entire

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congregation in understanding and directing the process of experiencing the Christian faith (Singgih, 1997). From a managerial perspective, a servant plays an active role in designing strategies and missions to achieve the vision within the Christian community (Harrison, 2018). Ministers need to consider every context faced by the congregational community. Servants play an active role in creating a suitable "ecosystem" to enable the creation of partnerships, both with fellow servants and the congregation. In order to strengthen partnership relationships in ministry, Eleazer S. Fernandez provides the standards needed to achieve a level of partnership between ministers and congregations. Fernandez revealed that the partnership level has standards for initiating agreements, setting guidelines, clarifying the vision to be achieved, being responsible for agreements that have been established, and developing practices in the community. So, Fernandez sees partnership as a form of agreement between servants that is based on trust and commitment to realizing a shared vision in the community (Fernandez, 2016).

To be able to clarify the vision and agree on interests in the congregation, Jan Hendriks believes that the right portion or measure is needed to prioritize interests among the various interests in the congregation. Although it cannot be denied that all these interests are part of the common interest (Gemeinschaft), the correlation between interests needs to be balanced. Hendriks himself believes that there are no absolute interests in the congregation community. Likewise with partnerships, certain boundaries are needed so that each other's interests do not injure each other which can lead to conflict. So, the effort to 'seek the interests of Christ Jesus' requires Gesellschaft collaboration with the public interest or community to be able to find agreement in it.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the interpretation of the text Philippians 2:19-30 using critical historical research methods, several points were obtained which form the conclusion of this paper. The conclusion is divided into the following points.

1. Philippians 2:19-30 is Paul's writing which contains advice for the Philippians. Paul's advice was delivered when Paul was under the arrest of the Roman empire. The advice that Paul conveyed through the text was Paul's way of staying connected with the Philippian congregation, because Paul's situation did not allow him to be present and convey advice directly to the Philippian congregation.

2. Paul's paranaetic advice aims to invite the Philippians to follow the instructions Paul gave them. In the text Philippians 2:19-30, Paul gives instructions to the Philippians and Paul's colleagues who participated in the ministry of the Gospel, to pay attention to communal interests above their own interests (v. 21).

3. To be able to achieve a model of service according to Paul's instructions, the importance of having unity in the life of the Philippian congregation is also emphasized. Paul provides a model of unity between servants through the relationship that Paul had with Timothy (v. 20) and a model of unity through the similarities between Paul and Epaphroditus (v. 25). Through the two relationship models in the text, Paul shows that unity is an important element in the instruction "Seek the Interests of Christ Jesus" for ministers of the Gospel.

4. Paul's advice was also influenced by the divisions that emerged and had the potential to hamper efforts to "Seek the Interests of Christ Jesus". In his advice to the Philippians, Paul also includes a warning that warns the Philippians of the dangers that come from "seekers of their own

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interests", which is conveyed by including a comparison between people who "Seek the interests of Christ Jesus" and those who seek interests. Alone.

5. Based on the results of the interpretation of the text, it is evident that there is a threat that is disrupting the Gospel ministry taking place in the Philippian congregation. The threat came from self-interest seekers, who were together with the Philippian congregation. So, Paul's paranaesis advice aims to prioritize the interests of Christ Jesus above self-interest.

6. Referring to the text studied, the theological themes contained in the text are related to the themes of mission and partnership in ecclesiastical ministry. In the context of church, all parts of the congregation community have the duty to carry out God's mission for all creation. To be able to carry out God's mission, congregations are encouraged to form partnerships with fellow congregation members.

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