



Enlightening Faith Nurturing Strategies in Contextualization in Damarwulan Village

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the challenges of preserving and developing faith in Damarwulan Village, which boasts a rich and unique cultural and traditional heritage. Several issues have been identified, including nominalism, formalism in worship, and a lack of contextual approaches in faith preservation. The aim of this study is to explore effective strategies for nurturing the Christian faith, making it relevant to the local cultural and traditional context. The methodology employed is a case study with a qualitative approach, analyzing the process of faith revitalization through interviews and observations of the local congregation. The findings indicate that contextual renewal and preservation of faith can address the challenges of nominalism and formalism in worship, providing a solid foundation for deeper and more sustainable faith development. In conclusion, maintaining and growing faith that is aligned with the local cultural and traditional context is essential for strengthening the spiritual life of Christians in Damarwulan Village. This research also offers practical guidance for implementing faith-building strategies that are relevant to this specific context.

Keywords: Christian Faith, Faith Development, Contextualization, Damarwulan Village, Church Revitalization.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aims to address a highly relevant issue within the scope of Christian faith, particularly in Damarwulan Village, concerning the challenges of maintaining true faith and nurturing contextualized faith. Amid a setting rich in local traditions and culture, a profound question arises regarding how the Christian community can preserve and cultivate authentic faith. Faith, in this study, is seen not merely as a religious identity or routine worship practice, but as a dynamic personal experience with God.

The condition of nominalism, where many individuals engage only in routine activities with a Christian identity without experiencing a deep faith, presents a significant challenge in this community (Siburian, 2019). Additionally, church services are often formal and limited by routine, with insufficient emphasis on faith nurturing that aligns with the local context (Paulus, 2014). To address these challenges, contextual faith nurturing, through spiritual renewal and revival, is deemed essential (Sihombing, 2020). This faith-nurturing approach emphasizes discipleship and rapid church growth, which helps denominations in sustainable expansion (Hosea, 2019). Given

the strong influence of culture and tradition in the daily lives of Damarwulan residents, adaptable faith nurturing is crucial for preserving and growing genuine faith.

In Damarwulan Village, where the majority of the population practices Islam, along with minorities including Christians, Catholics, and Buddhists, there are real issues related to faith and religious identity. Many individuals who identify as Christians seem to have inherited this belief without experiencing deep faith. Furthermore, cultural challenges such as migration may also impact the development of faith in the Christian community.

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of contextual faith-nurturing strategies and their positive impact on the Christian community in Damarwulan Village. It also seeks to identify the characteristics of faith in religious practice, explain the challenges faced by the Christian community, and offer solutions or contextual faith-nurturing strategies. This research is expected to make a positive contribution to understanding how Christian faith can grow and thrive in culturally and religiously diverse environments. Additionally, this study aims to provide practical guidance for effective faith nurturing in diverse contexts, as seen in Damarwulan Village.

A review of previous literature is a crucial step in building the theoretical framework and supporting the research to be conducted. Regarding the challenges of true faith and contextual faith nurturing in Damarwulan Village, several relevant literature reviews have been found:

Siburian (2019) examined the phenomenon of nominalism, referring to situations where many individuals engage only in routine religious activities without experiencing a deep personal relationship with God. In this context, nominalism poses a significant challenge to the growth of true faith in various communities, including Damarwulan Village. This research highlights that nominalism often arises due to inherited religion, without being accompanied by real spiritual experiences.

Paulus (2014) critiqued church ministry, which often becomes trapped in formality and routines that are irrelevant to the congregation's context. Such ministry lacks focus on the spiritual and cultural needs of the congregation, making it ineffective in addressing local challenges. This review is vital in understanding how church ministry in Damarwulan Village needs to adapt to be more contextual and relevant to its congregation's conditions.

Sihombing (2020) highlighted the importance of contextual faith nurturing through spiritual revival and renewal. This research emphasizes that faith cannot be separated from the cultural and social context in which it develops. In the case of Damarwulan Village, where there is a wealth of tradition and culture, this approach is highly relevant. Faith-nurturing strategies must be tailored to local challenges and cultural influences to support authentic faith growth.

Hosea (2019) discussed how effective discipleship and rapid congregational growth can support the sustainable expansion of churches. This review is useful in understanding the importance of discipleship strategies that are not only ceremonial but also contextual, allowing the congregation to experience true faith growth. In Damarwulan Village, this discipleship must be designed in such a way that it addresses the spiritual needs in a culturally diverse environment.

The literature review above forms a crucial foundation for this research in understanding the challenges of faith and contextual nurturing strategies. From this review, it is evident that faith nurturing relevant to the local cultural context is essential to address the challenges of nominalism and formalism in the religious life of the Christian community in Damarwulan Village. The scope of this study includes understanding the characteristics

of Christian faith within the context of Damarwulan Village, the cultural and religious challenges affecting it, and relevant faith-nurturing strategies. This research also includes an analysis of how faith nurturing can adapt to the village's unique cultural context and the challenges it faces.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method through observation, structured interviews, and literature review. The qualitative approach is a naturalistic method of writing (Sugiyono, 2021). According to Ade Ismayani, research is a systematic approach to addressing a problem by collecting data, and this inquisitive nature of continuously asking questions adds to one's knowledge to satisfy that curiosity (Ismayani, 2020).

Data collection is not limited to field studies but also encompasses information gathered from books, scholarly journals, and other publications, serving as a means to comprehend the previously incomprehensible. Additionally, SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is employed for evaluating issues and deriving solutions (Fatimah, 2020).

The conclusion is drawn through an inductive approach involving logical reasoning closely linked to sound thinking. It employs critical analysis rooted in the principle of truth, emphasizing interpretations based on the Bible.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies for Nurturing Faith and Christian Spirituality

Faith is a gift from God, yet it is also a theological action and confession (*credo*). Faith can be explained scientifically while also remaining beyond scientific explanation due to its supernatural nature. The Gospel message serves as a crucial foundation for faith, as the ultimate purpose of faith is the salvation of the soul (1 Pet. 1:9). Therefore, the righteous shall live by faith (Rom. 1:17b). The righteous are those justified by God, not the result of human effort or inherited as 'righteous' by religious heritage; instead, faith is a gift bestowed by God and responded to with personal trust.

Do not mix Christian faith with other beliefs that hinder spiritual growth, leading to an unclear Christian identity when associated with absolute truth. God desires His followers to remain committed and obedient in faith. The Spirit of Truth both liberates and indwells the life of believers. As 2 Timothy 4:7 states, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.' Anyone who engages in the contest and preserves their faith will receive the crown of righteousness granted by God (2 Tim. 4:8).

Strategies for contextual faith preservation prove highly effective and receive a positive response from the general congregation. These activities encompass all aspects of daily life, including cultural, social, and economic dimensions. SWOT analysis results indicate that the strength of contextual nurturing lies in its adaptable approach, tailored to specific needs. However, its weakness lies in the requirement for long-term commitment of time, effort, and substantial resources. Opportunities arise to proclaim the Gospel and glorify Jesus, whether the timing seems favorable or unfavorable. Even the smallest opportunities, as long as the congregation remains accessible, become the primary focus. The challenge is maintaining the congregation's interest and willingness to be nurtured, instilling awareness of the need for a spiritual revival.

The exemplification of faith, hope, and love permeates every activity within the nurturing process. These activities encompass Bible study classes, in-depth understanding of the Scriptures within small care groups, counseling and guidance, healthcare seminars, contemporary agribusiness education, support for married couples,

assistance for troubled families, and care for the helpless elderly. Additionally, spiritual impartation occurs during family gatherings, worship services, and spiritual revival meetings, all as expressions of God's grace and mercy. The Lord is the Great Shepherd who leads His flock to still waters and green pastures (Ps. 23:2). He is the One who sustains His people with His unwavering faithfulness. He promises to always be with us, never forsaking or abandoning His people (Heb. 13:5).

Identity and Beliefs in the Christian Religion

As Christians, it is crucial to maintain a pure faith in the true Gospel. The term 'Christian' in Hebrew is מְשִׁיכִיִּים - Meshikhiyim, meaning followers of the Messiah/Christ; and 'Nasrani' in Hebrew is נְצֹרִים - Nots'rim, which is sometimes synonymous with it. Both terms refer to people who believe in Jesus Christ. The Hebrew language's dictionary itself indicates that 'Christian' is נְצֹרִים - Nots'rim.

In the Greek language, χριστιανος - Kristianos, translates to 'Christian,' signifying a follower of Christ, which refers to those who follow Christ (Wahyu, 2006). As followers of η οδος της αληθεια - HÊ HODOS TÊS ALÊTHEIAS, the 'Way of Truth' (2 Pet. 2:2,21), or as mentioned as followers of η οδος του θεου – HÊ HODOS TOU THEOU, the 'Way of God' (Mat. 22:16, Luk. 20:21, Acts 18:26), it refers to the words of Jesus: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life...' (John 14:6) (Wahyu, 2006). "A true Christian is a follower of Christ who undoubtedly exhibits good behavior in accordance with His example. However, it does not mean that a person who behaves well is necessarily a Christian, as there are also individuals who strive for salvation through their good deeds even though no one is capable. Stephen Tong, in his book 'From Faith to Faith,' asserts that faith in Christ undoubtedly yields good fruit as well." (S. Tong, 2004)

In contrast, individuals who identify as Christian merely as adherents to the "name" of a religion without a connection to genuine faith are different. Nominalism originates from the word "nomen," which means "name" or "noun." (Skultans, 2006) The state of religious nominalism means that individuals practice religion merely as followers of the name of a faith. Their identity is religious in nature, and they engage in ritualistic formalities and religious rules. Nominalism as a concept emerged during the period of 1350-1500, in contrast to the Realism philosophy that existed in the 1250-1350 period, which was based on universal concepts (Mc.Grath, 2012). Subsequently, the evolution of nominalism led to Via Moderna, which emphasized the covenant between God and humanity in soteriology, the plan of salvation from God (Mc.Grath, 2012).

Theological Reflection on Faith

Faith is a belief or conviction, signifying an objective truth that is personally embraced (fides qual) (Simatupang, 2020). The Indonesian Bible Society translates faith with the basic word "assurance," while the KJV translates it as "substance." This is because the Greek root word for faith, pistis, is hypostasis, which means essence (Simatupang, 2020). Faith is likened to a seed that must receive proper care to bear abundant fruit. Faith is not goodness, nor something to be strived for, but something to be received. It does not yield profits but rather obedience for humans and glory for God. The opposite of faith is not disbelief but disobedience.

Faith is the totality of one's thoughts, behaviors, and the assurance of one's existential presence (J. Tong, 2007). Faith is the foundation of everything we hope for and the evidence of everything we cannot see (Heb. 11:1). Faith is not a virtue, but the acknowledgment of the salvation offered through Christ, and salvation is solely attainable

through faith in Christ (Childs, 1993). Faith originates from God through God's revelation while contemplating God's manifest works. Salvation is only achievable through faith in Christ. Faith and reason are closely intertwined; thus, faith in Christ becomes truly beneficial when it undergoes conversion—a transformation of one's thoughts, feelings, and life's purpose towards the truth of God.

Faith in the Old Testament is the trust in divine promises as truth, contrasting faith with disbelief. Isaiah 53:1 emphasizes faith in the acknowledgment that Yahweh is the one who liberates His people. Meanwhile, many Psalms express personal confession, stating that the righteous will live by their faithfulness, acknowledging Yahweh's goodness. God credits Abraham's faith in His promises as righteousness due to his obedience to God (Gen. 15:6). So, faith in the Old Testament always constitutes trust based on past events of salvation, while awaiting God's future intervention. It portrays God as the Creator and Redeemer. "Faith in Old Testament is always trust which is grounded in past events of salvation, but which awaits God's future intervention as creator and redeemer." (Childs, 1993) He is both the Creator and the Redeemer of humankind.

In the New Testament, in the synoptic Gospels, the words of Jesus are recorded: "The time has come, the kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15). This reflects faith not only in the words of Jesus but faith in Jesus Himself. Jesus demands that faith be directed toward His own person; He will make the impossible possible; believe in His goodness and His omnipotence (Matt. 21:21, Luke 17:6). In the Gospel of John, faith is focused on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, where God Himself took the initiative to provide assurance of salvation for humanity (John 3:16). The source of salvation and the greatest grace is God. This grace is not for sale at any price, and no one can afford it. Yet, the Lord is exceedingly merciful, and with His love, He has the power to fulfill His desires. God's will is to bestow grace upon anyone who believes in Him (Henry, 2010). He desires that all people be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

The core of Paul's faith is very clear in Romans 1:16, as his belief that the Gospel is the power of God for salvation and faith as the center of his experience and theology. Paul says, "Even if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). Paul's conviction lies in the testimony of the Gospel that Christ, who died, has risen. Therefore, Paul's emphasis is that the righteous will live by faith, not based on faithful deeds but on their trust in the mercy of God that qualifies them to receive the grace they believe in (Childs, 1993).

The author of the letter to the Hebrews believed that faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen (Heb. 11:1). Therefore, the Hebrews were encouraged to emulate those who demonstrated faith, showing perseverance, steadfastness, and a firm grasp on the Word and promises of God (Heb. 6:12, Heb. 13:7).

James emphasizes actions that stem from faith, but justification remains solely through faith, and this faith needs to be tested (James 2:1, 1:3). According to Peter, faith is more precious than gold (1 Pet. 1:7). In the book of Revelation, faith is at times used in a broader sense that can be associated with love (Rev. 2:19), perseverance (13:10), and faith in Jesus (14:12) (Guthrie, 2015, p. 247). Throughout the New Testament, faith is primarily an act of belief. The distinctive faith of a Christian is surrendering oneself to Christ (Guthrie, 2015). At times, faith is understood as "receiving the commission" with the belief that all things that are right come from God.

In the present time, faith once again mirrors the beginning of the Christian life. Faith is intertwined with every aspect of the Christian life, from sanctification (Acts 15:9), to justification (Rom. 5:1), and adoption (Gal. 3:26, Col. 3:24). All of these aspects depend on faith (Pierce, 2005). However, it is not merely receiving the gift of

justification from God but also the result of a new relationship with God. The renewal mentioned means that I am in Christ, and Christ is in me. Faith is an active reality, and salvation is the fruit of faith (Guthrie, 2015).

The essence of faith lies in the union of the heart with Him because the dwelling place of faith is in the human heart, the deepest core of one's being. On the other hand, the enemy seeks to destroy the heart and steal that faith. Satan employs strategies to undermine faith, using doubt and fear as tools, for doubt is a product of unbelief (Pierce, 2005). That's why Christians should be vigilant to avoid falling victim to the schemes of the evil one.

The Existence of Humans as Creatures

Human beings are spiritual creatures created in accordance with and resembling God's image. "Humans are spiritual beings, created in the image of God...our spiritual and moral attributes provide us with the potential for connection and partnership with God." (Mc.Dowell, 1991) Spiritual and moral attributes provide the capacity for a desire to commune with God. Effective faith maintenance strategies involve a contextual conceptual approach in line with the true essence of humanity.

Humans are social beings, capable of thought and reason, capable of making history, able to communicate, thus being able to interact, possessing moral judgment to discern good and evil. Humans cannot survive in isolation without the assistance of others (Listia, 2015). In other words, human relationships always involve mutual interactions with other humans.

As economic beings, humans possess the ability to manage goods and services, act rationally, make calculated decisions to meet insatiable needs. What are human beings? They are analytical thinkers, capable of recording history, communicating, socializing, and appreciating aesthetics. They understand concepts of judgment and punishment, exhibit ethical behavior, and uniquely, they can experience faith, allowing them to worship and place trust in our Creator (Mc.Dowell, 1991).

As cultural beings, humans possess the richness of reason and intellect. Culture represents the intellect and power, encompassing all aspects of consciousness, attitudes, and behaviors in life. Culture enables humans to create knowledge, appreciate beauty that gives rise to various forms of art, and nurtures a longing for religion. From birth to death, humans will continue to engender culture (Herina, n.d.). With reason and intellect, humans strive to innovate to fulfill their physical and spiritual needs, passing down these innovations from generation to generation in the form of customs, tools, language, structures, clothing, art, and even religious systems.

Only humans, as the unique beings they are, experience faith to worship God because faith lives through belief in the gift of salvation bestowed by God. For example, the actions of the Israelites marking their doorposts with blood in faith to ensure the protection of their firstborn from the angel of death, as seen in Exodus 12:13-14 and 12:28, serve as a typology of the Passover lamb and redemption. Those who believed in the redemption through the blood of the Lamb were saved from death. The ultimate purpose of faith is the salvation of the soul and the reception of eternal life, which is unseen but believed in.

Contextual Faith Development Strategies

Based on the data above, the strategy for nurturing faith can be directed towards every aspect of human existence, specifically within the context of the life of the GITJ congregation in Damarwulan village, Jepara. This approach involves entering into their cultural context.

Firstly, nurturing through the economic aspect, emphasizing that everything belongs to the Lord, and humans are merely stewards responsible for developing the well-being He has provided. This involves conducting seminars tailored to their economic needs, training to introduce modern coffee processing techniques for efficient and productive production. Providing education and motivation for the creative development of home industries and expanding their online presence through the trending social media platforms for sales in this digital era. Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) training to empower the utilization of their local garden produce.

Secondly, through the social aspect of healthcare service by directly providing general practitioners along with medications and vitamins. Offering health education on the importance of maintaining daily well-being. The local population predominantly engages in physically demanding labor due to the challenging terrain of the village roads, often resulting in muscle pains and injuries (Koesnadi, Apriyanto, n.d.). Health and faith are interconnected. In His ministry, Jesus showed great concern for physical health. The Christian faith, rooted in love, places importance on health because Jesus taught us to love the Lord with all our hearts and with all our strength (Mark 12:30).

Thirdly, from an ethical perspective, maintaining good relationships contributes to a comfortable and healthy environment for the soul. Therefore, maintaining harmonious relationships within the immediate family, extended family, and the local community is essential. Strategies for building the character of children, couples, and parenting are highly effective. Instilling the character of Christ in adolescents before they leave for further education or work is crucial. This equips them to lead a life that relies on faith in God.

Specific attention needs to be given to the care of the elderly, as there are still productive elderly people living in the village of Damarwulan. They are primarily engaged in farming, livestock raising, or gardening. Their daily routine involves working in the fields in the morning and returning home in the afternoon or evening. They have few other activities aside from attending church (Yusuf, n.d.). Hence, nurturing will serve as a means for gathering together with friends in old age as one of the needs of the elderly. It will be highly beneficial and comforting to the elderly in their solitude. Their need to socialize with fellow elderly individuals creates an activity that strengthens and provides a platform for expressing their faith (Ika, 2018).

Fourth, through the discipline of faith. Pastoral care strategies play a crucial role in helping the flock maintain their faith. A shepherd or spiritual leader must fulfill their role as one who works tirelessly, remains vigilant, and is willing to risk their life for their sheep (Bons-Storm, 2004). The aim of shepherding is to fulfill the Great Commission by tending to His own sheep.

One effective strategy is to conduct conversational visits for pastoral counseling and outreach. These visits are particularly successful due to the open and welcoming nature of the rural community. Storms emphasizes that during such visits, there are typically three types of conversations: practical matters, social relationships with others, and spiritual concerns in the relationship with God (Bons-Storm, 2004). The shepherd provides care and appropriate corrective discipline to ensure that the sheep do not stray or deviate from their faith (Barrackman, 1992).

Discipline is a valuable strategy when done with noble intentions, such as restoration (2 Thes. 3:14, Gal. 6:1). If a shepherd overlooks someone's sin, it is equivalent to encouraging the deterioration of their faith by allowing them to live in their sin. Discipline can lead to repentance when following the proper procedure, which begins with prayer (1 John 5:16), followed by a one-on-one conversation (Matt. 18:15). If the individual remains "stubborn," additional witnesses may be brought in. The Bible teaches that a stubborn person can influence and weaken the faith of fellow believers. Therefore, leaders take action to remove the individual from membership (1 Cor. 5:13) and advise against associating with them (2 Thes. 3:6, 1 Cor. 5:2,7). However, they should not be considered an enemy

but rather, efforts should be made for their repentance and restoration. Loving admonition and intercessory prayer (2 Thes. 3:15), as well as forgiveness for their transgressions, as the blood of Jesus cleanses them from sin (Eph. 4:32, 2 Cor. 2:7-11) (Barrackman, 1992).

The experience of a new life in the Lord as a spiritual reality. Therefore, it is essential to facilitate the congregation to return to worship and establish a personal relationship with God. The congregation fellowships with one heart, as brothers and sisters in faith, to love and strengthen each other's spiritual faith in the unity of the Holy Spirit's blessings (Barrackman, 1992). Facilitating the congregation to experience Christian life, including providing facilities for place and time, creating an inspiring atmosphere for the congregation. Worshiping God is essential, and its preparation should be taken seriously in terms of material, moral, and spiritual aspects.

Fifth, the strategy involves organizing retreats, where they are invited to take a break from their daily routines to find rest and peace. Just as physical life requires rest, so does the spiritual life. The goal is for faith to grow and become more like Jesus. Through perseverance, drawing closer to Him, and seeking Him with all their hearts, they will gain a deeper understanding of His will. The Bible reminds people to be vigilant in their perseverance to avoid going astray (1 Tim. 4:16), "Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers."

Discipleship strategy involves specific mentoring and nurturing for the growth of faith, resulting in bearing fruit as evidence of well-preserved faith. John 15:1-6 illustrates that bearing fruit is a collaborative effort between the vine, branches, and the vineyard owner. The vine will do everything it can to ensure that every branch bears fruit. Fruit is a symbol of the entire expression and productivity of practical actions in daily life (Barrackman, 1992). Christians reflect this through their fruit, so others see Jesus living within them (Gal. 4:19, 2:20, Phil. 1:21). The Bible asserts that a disciple of Christ must reflect the glory of God within them (2 Cor. 3:18). The character of Christ radiating from a person will manifest "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise" (Phil. 4:8). Acts of love are not mere words but the character evident in everyday life.

Another strategy is to provide support to develop talents, which are gifts of the Spirit. A good Christian is one who discovers the gifts given by God to serve Him. Faith can be preserved and even grow rapidly if a Christian lives as a disciple of Christ who can also disciple others in their ministry. In Matthew 28:18-20, the word "disciple" is the key action in the Great Commission.

The ongoing evangelization process aims to teach believers to follow the ways of the Lord Jesus, becoming disciples who will, in turn, make more disciples of Christ. Spiritual maturity is a lifelong journey (Phil. 3:12-14). The key lies in consistency and perseverance. The perspective enables individuals to see both the evident and the unseen. A clear perspective will emphasize the goal more than the skills.

When faith grows, service is no longer merely driven by great skills but by a deeper belief in God, going beyond theoretical knowledge about God (Gunawan, 2017). The Lord rebukes those whose faith is limited to mere belief and doctrine, for the reality of faith is that Jesus is alive, and He is present in every breath of life (Roni, 2022).

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis is used to assess fundamental potential, enabling the formulation of prioritized and focused activity planning (Kusmanto, 2021).

Strength

Having a regular donor base and collective funds to carry out activities. Possessing human resources in the form of volunteer teams that serve in all areas (children, teenagers, youth, married couples, men, the elderly). Having professional human resources such as servants of God, doctors, entrepreneurs, investors, teaching counselors, and God-fearing volunteers. Strength lies in the open, friendly, and sociable personalities of the local population. The beautiful natural landscape serves as an asset for tourism, a gift from God. The strategies employed for nurturing faith include puppet shows, Bible study classes, special-themed worship services, cultural art performances, married couples' seminars, and revival meetings featuring praise and worship.

Weakness

Mission team participants are inconsistent, which hinders effective follow-up and service evaluation. The lack of local young volunteers to support transportation for activities in the village. The routine farming activities in the village lead to monotony and a lack of creativity to enhance the excitement in the rhythm of life. Therefore, the strategy is to create a WhatsApp group to facilitate communication among participants and keep them informed about the progress of faith development services. Involving the congregation in activities such as experimenting with new food items for potential sales and organizing retreats to natural tourist areas with a program that includes refreshing activities and family games with prizes.

Opportunity

Opportunities for improving the quality of coffee and cloves production with more contemporary techniques. Advancements in science and technology allow agribusiness efforts to grow rapidly through improved harvesting techniques and broader, more diverse marketplaces. There is potential in the field of music and art to be developed with an increased focus by expanding the scope of service. Additionally, Damarwulan is blessed with beautiful natural landscapes, serving as an asset for developing nature tourism.

Threats

The presence of health centers and treatment facilities in the city discourages people and imposes a burden when it comes to regular health check-ups. A real threat to health problems is the significant number of the population suffering from physical weaknesses. Another challenge is the lack of young talents for leadership regeneration in the local church. The culture of migration is often associated with success, leading to a reduced interest in contributing to the village. The strategy for nurturing includes providing education on healthy living, personal or small group counseling for the younger generation, and creating care groups within the community for sharing, caring, and praying. The most crucial key to effective decision-making is having the most up-to-date information. Planning contextual faith development activities will be more efficient and effective by utilizing a SWOT analysis, to guide the planning process by identifying primary priorities that involve strategies and consequences.

CONCLUSION

The seed of the Gospel is faith, which is why nurturing the growth of faith "from within" will naturally lead to visible outcomes "on the outside." Life is like riding a bicycle—maintaining balance requires constant movement. Similarly, faith must keep moving forward to remain steady and avoid faltering. Followers of Christ are rightly called

righteous because of their faith. Through God's grace, Christianity grows actively, dynamically, and produces the fruits of faith.

Faith is the alpha (beginning) of hope, which ultimately leads to the final outcome. Theological contributions within the church have rapidly expanded, making it essential for everyone to return to genuine faith as the foundation of truth. One way to combat religious nominalism and reignite true faith is through a strategy of contextual faith development. The journey of the GITJ congregation in Damarwulan village began with God's extraordinary work. With full confidence in His faithfulness to His promises, the congregation trusts that God will continue to sustain the lives of His people until His return Maranatha, when the Lord comes again.

In conclusion, the author believes this research is distinct from previous writings, as it is the only one to document the history of GITJ's establishment in Damarwulan village and provide detailed practical steps for contextual development. Moreover, the preservation and growth of faith, adapted to local cultural and traditional contexts, are key to strengthening the spiritual lives of Christians in Damarwulan village. This study also offers practical guidance for implementing strategies for faith development that are relevant to the local context. May true faith always be sustained until it reaches its ultimate goal: the heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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