

Strategy for improving the spirituality of the GBI Church in Bandung based on 2 Timothy 2:1–13



Authors:

Yanto P. Hermanto¹ 
Rivosa Santosa² 

Affiliations:

¹Faculty of Theology,
Kharisma Theological School,
Bandung, Indonesia

²Department of Christian
Education, Faculty of
Theology, Kharisma
Theological School, Bandung,
Indonesia

Corresponding author:

Yanto Hermanto,
yantopaulush@gmail.com

Dates:

Received: 08 May 2024

Accepted: 29 June 2024

Published: 30 July 2024

How to cite this article:

Hermanto, Y.P. & Santosa,
R., 2024, 'Strategy for
improving the spirituality of
the GBI Church in Bandung
based on 2 Timothy 2:1–13',
*HTS Teologiese Studies/
Theological Studies* 80(1),
a9905. [https://doi.
org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9905](https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9905)

Copyright:

© 2024. The Authors.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work
is licensed under the
Creative Commons
Attribution License.

Read online:



Scan this QR
code with your
smart phone or
mobile device
to read online.

The author conducted research to address three problem statements as follows: Firstly, what are the teachings and ideas of Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1–13 to foster the spiritual growth of the congregation? Secondly, how do the leaders of Bethel Church in the Bandung region develop strategies for spiritual nurturing of their congregation? And thirdly, what is the significance of implementing 2 Timothy 2:1–13 in increasing the number of congregations at Bethel Indonesia Church in the Bandung area? To address these problem statements, the author conducted field research by interviewing 19 pastors in the city of Bandung, in addition to library research. From this research, it was found that 42% of churches that adhere to the principles in 2 Timothy 2:1–13 experienced rapid growth, while 32% that only partially followed the principles did not experience the same level of growth. The remaining churches that did not pay sufficient attention to the strategies of spiritual nurturing based on the principles in 2 Timothy 2:1–13 experienced stagnant or declining growth. Out of the 20 GBI church members interviewed, 80% stated that their spiritual growth resulted from discipleship through mentoring methods implemented by their church. Therefore, the strategies for spiritual nurturing identified in this research can be utilised by churches to foster both the spiritual growth and the quantitative growth of the church.

Contributions: This research helps readers to understand how to improve the spirituality of the congregation through the strategies of the Apostle Paul.

Keywords: spiritual formation; Bethel Church Indonesia; discipleship strategies; spiritual growth; church strategies.

Introduction

Spiritual growth is very important for Christians. Christians who do not grow spiritually should question their new birth. This is because only someone who has experienced a new birth will experience spiritual growth and positive changes in their attitude and character (Suhadi & Sunarko 2021).

There are three reasons that Dausey conveys as to why Christians should grow spiritually. These three reasons will encourage all Christians to have a determination to grow spiritually. The first reason is to make Christians strong in facing life's difficulties. Being born again does not mean being free from life's difficulties, but spiritual growth helps one remain strong amidst the challenges that occur in life. The second reason is that spiritual growth will shield them from continuing to sin. They will live according to His word and have unwavering faith, so they will not easily fall into sin. The third reason is that spiritual growth will transform their attitudes and character, making them someone worth emulating and a witness of Christ (Gary Dausey 2002).

A church that functions according to the word of God will produce a spiritually growing congregation. In order to cultivate the spirituality of the congregation, the church must carry out a well-planned, systematic, and effective process of nurturing the congregation (Objantoro et al., 2022). According to Rick Warren, the quality of the congregation will be evident in the type of disciples produced by the church. Have the members truly been transformed to be like Christ? Do they remain steadfast in following the word of God when faced with problems? Have they served others with love? Do they regularly share their faith with others? These indicators are some characteristics of a quality congregation that experiences spiritual growth (Gunwan 2020; Orthner, 2021; Warren 2012).

According to Calvin Miller, the spiritual growth of the church is always related to the nurturing and training provided by the church. The spiritual growth of the congregation will occur if the

church constantly nurtures and trains the spirituality of its members. Therefore, the church should provide serious and systematic teachings for all its members (Calvin Miller 2002; Herwinesastra, Luther & Rostiani 2023). Through consistent and sustainable spiritual nurturing and training, the congregation will grow significantly.

The spiritual growth of the congregation should be the goal of every church in the world. A church with a large portion of the congregation that does not grow spiritually will experience serious problems. This is because a stagnant congregation will easily get offended, speak badly of their fellow members, frequently argue, find it difficult to forgive, and always seek attention. There are many other consequences of not growing spiritually. Therefore, spiritual growth should be the primary target of the church (Coe 2009; Imbing & Pandie 2023; Jatmiko, Mtukwa & Kawengian 2024).

The Bethel Church of Indonesia in the Bandung region is a growing church with a large number of members. Based on the authors' preliminary assumption, this church has a good strategy for nurturing the spirituality of its congregation. With this assumption in mind, the author intends to conduct interviews with pastors in the Bethel Church of Indonesia in the Bandung region regarding their strategies for cultivating the spirituality of their congregation. It is hoped that the findings of this research will be beneficial to churches in Indonesia.

In the letter of 2 Timothy, specifically in chapter 2:1–13, Paul strongly desires for Timothy to grow and become spiritually mature. The authors see a strategy that Paul conveyed in this letter to ensure the spiritual growth of the congregation. Therefore, the authors will research to answer some research questions. The formulation of the research questions includes: firstly, what are the teachings and ideas of Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1–13, specifically to cultivate the spirituality of the congregation? Secondly, how do the leaders of the Church of Bethel Indonesia in the Bandung region develop strategies to nurture the spirituality of their congregation? And thirdly, what is the significance of implementing 2 Timothy 2:1–13 in increasing the number of congregations at Bethel Indonesia Church in the Bandung area? The purpose of this research is to assist churches in having biblical and appropriate strategies to enhance the spirituality of their congregation.

The research that the authors conducted was different from previous published studies. Another research has been published under the title 'Implementation of Coaching Strategies Towards Spiritual Growth of Gereja Kristen Injili Indonesia Youth of the Sidu'ung Muara Berau Congregation' (Mika & Tuhumury 2013). The research with this title discusses effective coaching strategies in improving the spiritual quality of youth by making regular visits, through Bible study, holding retreats, holding crusades, personal evangelism, and establishing fellowship creatively. The results of this research have not touched on the fundamentals of the apostle Paul's strategy. Another published title is

The Role of the Pastor as an Educator in the Spiritual Growth of the Congregation (Telaumbanua 2019). This research discusses the role of the pastor as an educator in the church. The results of this study state that the role of the pastor as an educator can influence the spiritual growth of the congregation. The author believes that the results of this research have only found one aspect, not as targeted as what the apostle Paul conveyed to Timothy. Likewise another study with the title: 'Understanding the Role of the Bible in the Spiritual Growth of Christian Students Through Contextual Discipleship in Surakarta' (Efi Nurwindayani 2020). This research discusses more about the importance of the Bible for spiritual growth. The results of this study indicate that every youth who has the awareness that the Bible is God's revelation and those who faithfully study it will experience spiritual growth. Another title is *Pastoral Strategy in Developing the Dimension of Understanding Generation Z*. This research aims to find new pastoral strategies to reach generation Z, so this article is different from the research the author conducted (Gultom et al. 2022).

The author used a qualitative approach to address the research problem, which involved conducting a literature review using books and journal articles that discuss strategies for cultivating the spirituality of a congregation. Furthermore, the author interviewed 19 leaders from the Bethel Church in the Bandung region to understand how they develop strategies for spiritual mentoring of the congregation. By conducting the literature review and exegesis of 2 Timothy 2:1–13, the author obtained sufficient information to address the first and third research problems. The interview results will address the second research problem and uncover new research findings as a contribution to church leaders.

A brief history of the Indonesian Bethel Church (GBI) Bandung Region

Ho L. Senduk was the founding father of the Indonesian Bethel Church. On 06–07 October 1970, 129 pastors gathered in the city of Sukabumi from all over Indonesia with the sole aim of forming a new organisation. As a result of the meeting, unanimously all the clergy declared the establishment of the Indonesian Bethel Church (Senduk 2011). On 16 October 1970, the Indonesian Bethel Church received approval from the Directorate General of the Christian Community of the Republic of Indonesia.

Data from previous research until 2019 recorded more than 6100 churches under the auspices of the Indonesian Bethel Church, with 16860 pastors and a total of 3.5 million adult congregations and not including children's congregations. Bethel Indonesia Church is the largest church in Indonesia (Sabar 2019). Based on these data, the authors see the growth of the Indonesian Bethel Church as very promising.

Based on data, the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung area began with one church in 1970, namely the Gereja Bethel

Indonesia Paturiani congregation with one pastor and 20 initial congregation members. Since then, GBI has continued to grow until there are 68 churches formed in 2023 with a total of 132 pastors and assisted by more than 200 middle and primary pastors, who handle more than 22 000 congregation members (Y.P. Hermanto [Interview with the Secretary of the GBI Perwil Bandung Region, Husen Jan Putra] pers. comm., 21 June 2023).

The Indonesian Bethel Church's rapid growth certainly cannot be separated from the efforts of its leaders to enhance the spirituality of the congregation. According to H.L. Senduk, the key to the Indonesian Bethel Church's growth is to bring the congregation to live and act according to God's word (Senduk 2011). To find out more about the church's spiritual development strategy, the authors conducted research in this regard.

The strategy of the leaders of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung Region in congregational spiritual development

The respondents who were interviewed in this study were the pastors of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung area. The strength of the Bethel Indonesia church in the Bandung area is 68 churches. The author interviewed 19 senior pastors who oversee 57 churches throughout the city of Bandung; this comprises around 84% of the entire population of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung area. Thus, the authors believe that the results of this study reflect the overall condition of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung area. Strategically, the development of faith between the main church and the branches cannot be much different. The master pastor will pass on his strategies to the pastors under his care.

The results of research on 84% of the leaders of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung region related to the spiritual development of the congregation include the following: Firstly, teaching about salvation in Christ; secondly, fostering the congregation's spirituality through small communities (cell communities); thirdly, fostering the congregation's spirituality through discipleship; fourthly, building the congregation spiritually through religious services; fifthly, teaching about carrying the cross or suffering for Christ (character); sixthly, convincing the congregation that the Bible is the source of their teaching; seventhly, bringing the congregation to love others as the basis for preaching the Gospel; and eighthly, delivering promises of God's inclusion until eternity. In general, these eight strategies for spiritual development for the congregation were carried out by the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung Region, although not all of them are implemented by local churches.

Teaching about Salvation in Christ Jesus

This first catechism strategy has been fully understood by all the pastors of the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung

Region. They understand that the congregation will not grow spiritually if the congregation has not experienced salvation in Christ (Yarbrough 2020). With this understanding, all congregational pastors begin their teaching by introducing Christ Jesus to their congregations (Barton et al. 2014).

Fostering the spirituality of the congregation through small communities (cell communities)

Of the 18 churches 14 (77.7%) conducted coaching through small communities (cell communities). In reality, of the 14 churches, only 5 churches have succeeded in making most of their congregation members of the cell community. And these churches, according to researchers, were the most effective in fostering the spiritual development of the congregation (Donahue & Gowler 2014).

Fostering the spirituality of the congregation through discipleship

Of the 18 churches eight churches (44.4%) carry out spiritual development of the congregation through discipleship classes. Six churches only do discipleship in one period with the same material but two churches do discipleship in stages ranging from the most basic to the level for leaders. Two churches with tiered discipleship use the mentoring method in each of their discipleship classes. This method of discipleship is more effective in fostering the spirituality of the congregation (Barton et al. 2014).

Fostering the spirituality of the congregation through religious services

All the churches interviewed used the main service, especially every Sunday, to build up the congregation's spirituality. They do it regularly with different themes. It is hoped that the spiritual development of the congregation through this main service will bring maximum results (Bosire et al. 2022). However, several studies have shown that the level of absorption of the content of one-way lectures is very minimal (Panjaitan & Lumingkewas 2019).

Guiding the congregation has a character like Christ

Character building is the core of the congregation's spiritual development. However, it was very unfortunate that 58% of the churches interviewed built the character of their congregations through Sunday sermons alone. Meanwhile, 42% of churches, in addition to sermons on Sundays, also deliver materials in small communities and discipleship classes. Based on the observations of researchers, it was this church that was 42% successful in guiding its congregation more optimally, especially in character building (Bradley 2013).

Convince the congregation that the Bible is the source of their teaching

Based on the descriptions of all respondents' answers, the researcher analysed that the main focus of preaching at the

Bethel Indonesia church in the Bandung area was the Bible. This gospel is preached and taught to all churches. In addition, they also train the congregation how to convey the gospel properly and effectively to others. Even though the methods and means they use are different, this focus on preaching the Gospel is a strength of its own within the Indonesian Bethel Church in the Bandung area. The Bible is the power of God, and if the pastors focus on conveying this power of God, then the congregation will experience God's power in their lives (Claussen & Sullivan 2003).

Bringing the congregation to love others as the basis for preaching the Gospel

The Bethel Indonesia Church in the Bandung area has been trying to grow the spirituality of its congregation to love others. Fourteen churches, or 77.8%, have provided manuals and training for small group leaders or teachers in discipleship classes. Meanwhile, four churches, or 22.2%, only teach about love for others at public services. Of course, the results of spiritual coaching in different ways or methods will also have different final results (Dever & Platt 2013; Jamieson 2012).

Delivering the promise of God's inclusion until eternity

All Bethel Indonesia churches in the Bandung area convey God's promises for those who preach the gospel. The congregation is taught to suffer because of the preaching of the Gospel, but on the other hand, they are also taught that God promised to be with them, till eternity and they will reign together with Him. Fourteen churches, or 77.8%, teach this in small communities or discipleship classes, while four churches, or 22.2%, teach it in sermons for public worship.

Figure 1 represents the data shown in Table 1. Table 1 is the data of respondents (RES 01–RES 18) interviewed by the author, and these respondents are church leaders who state that they conduct well-planned, systematic discipleship classes using consistent mentoring methods. For example, RES 01 and RES 11 empower the congregation that has completed the discipleship classes to become mentors for other congregation members who are new to the discipleship classes. The steps taken in discipleship are as follows: new congregants are gathered in one class and given systematic teachings on certain days. After the teaching sessions, they are grouped in fours under the supervision of a mentor. These mentors have undergone 1–2 years of discipleship and

are selected by their mentors, so they are believed to be trustworthy mentors for the new congregants. The results of these church discipleship efforts can be seen from their faithfulness in fellowship and outreach to new souls. As a result, there has been a significant increase in congregants in the churches listed in Table 1. For example, RES 01 pioneered a church in 1990 with 1000 congregation members, and in 2023, it grew to 10000 members. Similarly, RES 11 pioneered a church in 1997 with 50 members and grew to 5000 members in 2023. The other churches listed as RES 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, and RES 10 also experienced fantastic growth in their congregations.

Figure 2 represents the data shown in Table 2. In Table 2, the churches interviewed by the author state that they carry out discipleship but do not use mentoring methods. For example, RES 9 and 18 churches conduct discipleship through teachings in classes on topics determined by the central church management. After the teaching sessions, they end with prayer without any mentoring. Similarly, RES 12, 13, 15, and RES 16 churches conduct discipleship without mentoring. However, these churches still experience growth in the number of members. From Figure 1 and Figure 2, it is shown that churches that comprehensively nurture their congregations through discipleship classes with mentoring methods experience rapid growth. Comprehensive spiritual nurturing and the right approach will result in maximum spiritual development for the congregation. With maximum spiritual growth of the congregation, quantitative growth in the number of members is also maximised (Imeldawati & Regar 2021). The four churches that are not included in Table 1 and Table 2, which

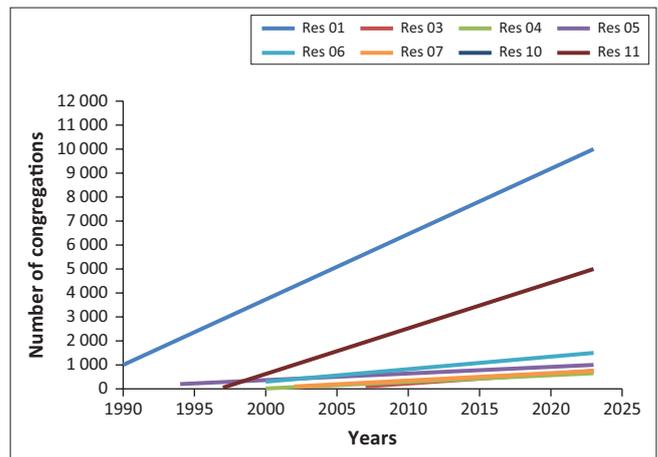


FIGURE 1: Spiritual formation of what Bethel Church Indonesia did in the Bandung region: Carry out Paul's strategy, comprehensively.

TABLE 1: Spiritual formation of what Bethel church Indonesia did in the Bandung region: Carry out Paul's strategy, comprehensively.

Respondent	Year	Initial congregation	Year	Current number of congregations
RES 01	1990	1.000	2023	10.000
RES 03	2007	100	2023	750
RES 04	2000	16	2023	650
RES 05	1994	200	2023	1.000
RES 06	2000	300	2023	1.500
RES 07	2002	100	2023	750
RES 10	1994	50	2023	700
RES 11	1997	50	2023	5.000

TABLE 2: Spiritual formation of what Bethel church Indonesia did in the Bandung region: Carry out Paul's strategy, not complete comprehensively.

Respondent	Year	Initial congregation	Year	Current number of congregations
RES 09	1989	50	2023	250
RES 12	1994	50	2023	250
RES 13	1994	100	2023	600
RES 15	1994	50	2023	350
RES 16	1994	150	2023	550
RES 18	2005	10	2023	60

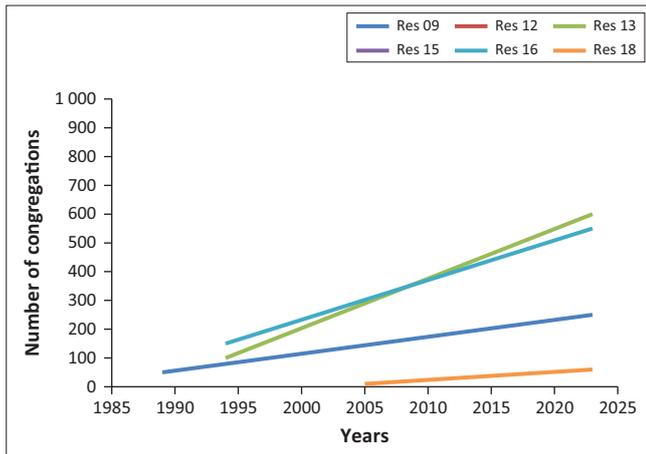


FIGURE 2: Spiritual formation of what Bethel Church Indonesia did in the Bandung region: Carry out Paul's strategy, not comprehensively.

do not conduct any discipleship classes, will experience stagnant growth or even decline.

Spiritual formation in the Bethel Indonesia Church Bandung region

Twenty congregation members were interviewed at Bethel Indonesia Church in the Bandung area using sampling and with questions that were broadly in accordance with the strategy that the Apostle Paul conveyed in 2 Timothy 2:1–13. All the congregations interviewed stated that they were growing spiritually. They believe they grow spiritually because they experience changes within themselves both in terms of spirituality, character, and behaviour.

The author also asked about what caused them to grow spiritually. Of the 20 people, 16 people stated that they grew because of spiritual formation through discipleship. The systematic teaching delivered in the classroom through discipleship helps their spiritual growth. This teaching starts from basic lessons, namely how to experience new birth (salvation in Christ) to lessons on growing spiritually, where the discipleship period ranges from 1 to 2 years continuously.

Another factor that contributed to the growth of the 16 interviewed members was the mentoring method employed in discipleship at Bethel Church of Indonesia in the Bandung region. This mentoring strongly indicated that the congregation was growing more progressively. The mentoring method entailed a mentor providing guidance to a maximum of three members. After the teaching session in discipleship, mentoring would follow for these members. The mentor would assess the members' understanding of the teachings received and personally guide them to apply the teachings in their daily lives. The same mentor would regularly guide subsequent discipleship sessions and also the mentees' daily lives. From this interview, it was also discovered that the congregation grew because they had a community that was growing together. After the teachings in discipleship, they would gather in groups of 3–4 individuals with their mentor to regularly discuss what they had learned

and share their experiences in applying the teachings in their daily lives. This sharing of experiences allowed them to strengthen and correct one another.

The results of this research show that the majority of the congregation, 80%, experienced spiritual growth because the church provided systematic spiritual guidance to them through the mentoring method. This significantly increased the spiritual growth of the congregation and eventually transformed their thinking to become involved in the mission, thereby impacting the church's growth in terms of quantity.

Research contributions to the spiritual development of the congregation by the leaders of the Bethel Indonesian Church in the Bandung region

The spiritual development strategy carried out by the apostle Paul is a strategy that should be implemented by all church leaders. The strategy of the apostle Paul is a strategy that can increase the spiritual growth and missionary role of the church. There are eight strategies for fostering the spiritual growth of the congregation that the apostle Paul conveyed to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:1–13. The eight coaching strategies are to be effective and maximal, so the church must use the apostle Paul's method thoroughly and consistently.

Teaching method with a systematic learning material

Church leaders should use the discipleship class method in nurturing the spirituality of the congregation. This discipleship class delivers systematically designed learning materials, starting from the basic lessons on grace in Christ Jesus, up to lessons for the spiritual maturity of the congregation. The materials in the discipleship class are essential for every church to possess. Churches that aim to enhance spiritual growth and the mission role of their congregation must seriously and comprehensively equip their teaching materials. As conveyed by Andrew Burggraff, teaching materials must be continuously developed and systematically and thoughtfully designed (Burggraff 2015).

The teaching material component is the content in the discipleship class that can provide stimulation for the congregation to grow spiritually. A spiritually growing congregation will not remain silent, but that person will move to reach out to others who have not yet known the grace of Christ. The foundation for creating learning materials should preferably be from the Bible, supplemented by suitable spiritual books (Manalu 2015).

Discipleship class method with mentoring

Paul's strategy for developing the spiritual development of the congregation is contained in 2 Timothy 2:2, 'What you have heard from me in front of many witnesses, entrust it to

people who can be trusted, who are also capable of teaching others'. The verb 'entrust' (ὑπαγαθου = commit: second aorist; give [imperative]) is followed by the word πιστοις (faithful = faithful or trustworthy) ανθρωποις [men]. Someone can be said to be loyal if that person has been proven to go through a long process of time together. In other words, Paul wanted to tell Timothy that the people who would be trusted were those who had faithfully followed Timothy's guidance or direction. They are people who have been mentored by Timothy for a certain period and Timothy believes they are loyal and can be trusted to carry out tasks like he did (Alton 2016).

Mentoring is the best discipleship strategy for spiritual development. Often, spiritual formation is a one-way teaching from the teacher to the congregation. However, mentoring is more about training, setting an example, and being able to communicate closely with each other between the mentor and the congregation (mentee). They can get to know each other better so that the mentor understands and knows how far his mentor understands a lesson (Perangin Angin, Yeniretnowati & Anderson 2021). In addition, through a mentoring strategy, training for trainers will be more possible. They will be trained in the ways that their mentors do so that this becomes a continuous pattern for the next generations (Baskoro, Yunita Dewi & Arifianto 2022; Darmawan, Jamin & Tanhidy 2024).

Discipleship class method by forming character as Christ Wills

The discipleship referred to by the apostle Paul is not only the transfer of knowledge but how the character of the congregation was formed from this discipleship. In 2 Timothy 2:3, Paul states 'Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus'. The word 'suffer together' (συγκακοπαθησον = aorist imperative) means to suffer together in the imperative form and was followed by the clause 'as (ως) a soldier (στρατιωτης [soldier]) who was good/excellent (καλος) of Jesus Christ' So in Paul the meaning of 'suffer together' here was for a specific purpose, namely to have an attitude like a soldier, sportsman, and farmer (Dinkler 2016). The attitudes shown by them are the characters that Timothy might have. In other words, Paul asked Timothy to try to have such a character with a struggle as if he were suffering. In this case, Paul's strategy that he wanted to convey to Timothy was to shape the character of the congregation as Jesus wanted it to be.

So the goal of this strategy is to form a congregation that has a good and strong character. Paul wanted the people he taught to be people who were willing to sacrifice and willing to take part in the troubles of others. He gave an example of a person with a strong character with three professions, namely soldier, sportsman, and farmer (Smith 2017).

A good soldier respects his commander, Jesus Christ. The characteristic of this person is that he does not worry about himself, meaning he does not try to fulfill his desires, he is willing to sacrifice his pleasures for Christ. Secondly, the person does not bother with his livelihood, his income, or

his daily life, because he knows his commander will not spare him when he is doing a job for Him. Thirdly, he desires to please his commander, Christ. So the motivation in doing whatever a soldier does is for the glory of his commander (Diana et al. 2023; John Stott & Lin Johnson 2016; Molina & Van Eck 2011).

Thus, in the spiritual development of the congregation, a mentor must be an example in character as a soldier. When a teacher gives an example like this, of course, it is hoped that the congregation will also have that character. By continuing to make friends, communicate, teach, and train, the researcher believes that with Paul's strategy, the congregation will include people of good character who are pleasing to God (John Stott & Lin Johnson 2016).

Another character is like a sportsman who obeys the rules of a competition (v. 5). He is someone who struggles to always live according to God's word. God's word becomes a guide in his life so that he continues to be directed to the truth and the way that God wills. In addition, a sportsman will compete to win with diligence and effort. They are the ones who are constantly struggling to win over the flesh. They submit their desires of the flesh to Christ who is their God (John Stott 2008). Through the example of this athlete, as a spiritual coach, he must teach and train the congregation to discipline their bodies, passions, and spirits to continue to be led by the truth of God's word and by the Spirit of God. This is what is needed so that the congregation includes people who are ready to win the spiritual war against the flesh, the world, and Satan. (John Stott 2008)

Another character is like a farmer who works hard to do his duty in farming (v. 6). Even though his land is immature, he has to continue to water and fertilise the plants in his field every day. A farmer has a patient character and is not easily discouraged. This character like a farmer must be possessed by a spiritual mentor. The congregation will not bear fruit immediately, but it will take quite a long time (Knoetze 2022). Therefore, it is important to stay faithful by sharing the word, and stay faithful to mentoring the congregation, and there are times when they will bear fruit and have an impact on their environment.

Implementation and evaluation of the continuous discipleship classroom method

Congregational spiritual development through discipleship classes must be carried out consistently, continuously, and evaluated periodically. Discipleship methods through systematic learning materials, mentoring, and Christ-like character building are the contributions made by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1–13. Paul gives a clear example that the spiritual development of the congregation through discipleship continues from one generation to the next. From Paul to Timothy, then from Timothy to other people who can be trusted and continue discipleship to others. And of course, this will continue until new leaders emerge in the future (Smith 2017). However, the discipleship class method must

continue to be evaluated so that the quality gets better. Evaluation of the congregation's spiritual development through discipleship classes is closely related to the process and results achieved. Congregational spiritual development through discipleship classes consists of processes that exist in the formation system. According to Wina, a system is a unified component which is related to one another and interacts with each other to achieve an optimal expected result by the goals set (Wina 2006). Therefore, what must be evaluated are all the components and processes that make it up.

Conclusion

The teachings of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1–13 provide clear directions for the church in developing the spiritual development of the congregation. This teaching of the Apostle Paul will make the congregation grow spiritually, become mature, and finally be active and dare to reach out to other people who do not believe in God. The Indonesian Bethel Church is the largest church synod in Indonesia that has practiced the strategy taught by the apostle Paul. For local churches that follow this strategy of the Apostle Paul comprehensively, the spiritual growth of the congregation increases and the church grows rapidly. However, for churches that only implement part of Paul's strategy, the church is still developing but not optimally.

The contribution of strategies and teachings from the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:1–13 that should be followed by all churches include: firstly, the discipleship class method with systematic learning materials; secondly, the discipleship class method with mentoring; thirdly, the discipleship class method by forming character as Christ wills; and fourthly, the continuous implementation and evaluation of discipleship class methods. The four strategies for the spiritual development of the congregation must be implemented as a whole. If only a part of it is implemented, the result will not be optimal, but if all of it is carried out seriously and consistently then the church will grow both today and prepare for the growth of the future generations.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the central Indonesian Bethel Church for accepting the results of this research as flagship research in 2023.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors' contributions

All authors have equal responsibilities in the conceptualisation of research, methods, and field research, as well as carrying out data recapitulation and processing. R.S. is responsible for translation, while Y.P.H. takes care of the final script writing.

Ethical considerations

This article followed all ethical standards for research without direct contact with human or animal subjects.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

Data sharing does not apply to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors and are the product of professional research. The article does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency, or that of the publisher. The authors are responsible for this article's results, findings, and content.

References

- Alton, G., 2016, *Pemuridan Yang Berhasil*, Gandum Mas, Malang.
- Barton, R.H., Chandler, D.J., Tan, S.Y., Tenelshof, J. & Wilhoit, J.C., 2014, 'Spiritual formation in the Church', *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 7(2), 292–311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/193979091400700212>
- Baskoro, P.K., Yunita Dewi, E. & Arifianto, Y.A., 2022, 'Peran Pemuridan bagi Kebangkitan Pemimpin Rohani Baru dalam Gereja Masa Kini', *Theologia Insani (Jurnal Theologia, Pendidikan, Dan Misiologia Integratif)* 1(1), 49–66. <https://doi.org/10.58700/theologiainsani.v1i1.9>
- Bosire, E.N., Cele, L., Potelwa, X., Cho, A. & Mendenhall, E., 2022, 'God, Church water and spirituality: Perspectives on health and healing in Soweto, South Africa', *Global Public Health* 17(7), 1172–1185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2021.1919738https>
- Bradley, A.P., 2013, 'Book review: Will our children have faith?', *Journal of Education and Christian Belief* 17(1), 200–202. <https://doi.org/10.1177/205699711301700144>
- Burggraff, A., 2015, 'Discipleship is the process of learning the Scriptures, internalizing them to shape one's belief system, and then applying them to change one's life. It is the church's role to be actively involved in following the command given in the great commission', *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 12(2), 397–414. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073989131501200211>
- Calvin, M., 2002, 'Pentingnya Latihan Rohani', in Youth for Christ (ed.), *Pola Hidup kristen*, Gandum Mas, Malang.
- Claussen, M.A. & Sullivan, F.A., 2003, 'From Apostles to Bishops: The development of the Episcopacy in the Early Church', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 34(2), 559–561. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20061481>
- Coe, J., 2009, 'Spiritual theology: A theological-experiential methodology for bridging the sanctification gap', *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 2(1), 4–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/193979090900200102>
- Darmawan, I., Tanhidy, J. & Doma, Y., 2024, 'Youth key persons' digital discipleship process during the pandemic and post-pandemic era', *HTS Teologiese Studies* 80(1), a9673. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v80i1.9673>
- Dever, M., 2013, *Nine marks of a healthy church*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL.
- Diana, R., Simamora, E.S., Perangin-angin, D. & Okoi, I.O., 2023, 'Christian worker analogy according to 2 Timothy 2:1–13 and its implications for sunday school teacher professionalism', *Integritas: Jurnal Teologi* 5(2), 108–119. <https://doi.org/10.47628/jit.v5i2.208>
- Dinkler, M.B., 2016, 'Suffering, misunderstanding, and suffering misunderstanding: The Markan misunderstanding motif as a form of Jesus' suffering', *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 38(3), 316–338. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X15621649>
- Donahue, B. & Gowler, C., 2014, 'Small groups: The same yesterday, today, and forever?', *Christian Education Journal: Research on Educational Ministry* 11(1), 118–133. <https://doi.org/10.1177/073989131401100110>
- Efi, N., 2020, 'memaknai peran alkitab dalam pertumbuhan rohani mahasiswa kristen melalui pemuridan kontekstual di surakarta', *Diegesis: Jurnal Teologi* 5(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.46933/DGS.vol5i2-13>
- Gary, D., 2002, 'Seberapa pentingkah pertumbuhan rohani itu', *Pola Hidup kristen*, Gandum Mas, Malang.
- Gultom, J.M.P., Widjaja, F.I., Novalina, M., Situmorang, E.L. & Natassha, Y., 2022, 'Pastoral strategy in developing the dimension of understanding Generation Z', *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 6(1), 47–58. <https://doi.org/10.46445/ejti.v6i1.472>

- Gunawan, A., 2020, 'Pemuridan dan kedewasaan rohani', *Sola gratia, Jurnal Teologi Biblika Dan Praktika* 5(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.47596/solagratiav5i1.52>
- Herwinesastra, H., Luther, H. & Rostiani, R., 2023, 'The Pastor's role in effectively managing the congregation's potential: A case study in GKII Gracia Sintang', *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 7(1), 63–71. <https://doi.org/10.46445/ejti.v7i1.620>
- Imbing, R. & Pandie, R.D.Y., 2023, 'Application of Shepherd leadership to the spiritual growth of Christian youth in the Digital Age', *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 7(2), 177–187. <https://doi.org/10.46445/ejti.v7i2.668>
- Imeldawati, T. & Regar, Y.E., 2021, 'Prinsip Pertumbuhan Rohani dalam Efesus 5:1-21 dan Korelasinya dalam Mengupayakan Pertumbuhan Rohani Jemaat GPdI Gunung Moria Bedagai', *Jurnal Christian Humaniora* 5(1), 94–106. <https://doi.org/10.46965/jch.v5i1.615>
- Jamieson, B., 2012, *Guarding one another: Church discipline*, Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL.
- Jatmiko, B., Mtukwa, G. & Kawengian, S.E.E., 2024, 'Embracing psychology for Theology: The role of developmental theories in Christian spiritual formation', *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili Dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 8(1), 49–63. <https://doi.org/10.46445/ejti.v8i1.713>
- John, S., 2008, *Kemurnian Ajaran dan Kehidupan Adalah Syarat Inti Menjadi Bentara Kristus*, Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, Jakarta.
- John, S. & Lin, J., 2016, *Berdiri Teguh dalam Kebenaran*, Literatur Perkantas, Jakarta.
- Knoetze, J.J., 2022, 'Theological education, spiritual formation and leadership development in Africa: What does God have to do with it?', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 78(4), a7521. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7521>
- Manalu, R.B., 2015, 'alkitab dasar pengajaran', *Kerusso1* 2(1), 17.
- Mika, M. & Tuhumury, P., 2013, 'Implementasi Strategi Pembinaan Menuju Pertumbuhan Rohani Pemuda Gkii Jemaat Sidu'ung Muara Berau', *Jurnal Jaffray* 11(2), 191–208. <https://doi.org/10.25278/jj71.v11i2.84>
- Molina, C. & Van Eck, E., 2011, 'Σφραγίς (*sfragis*) and its metaphorical testimonial presence in 2 Timothy 2:19', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 67(3), a794. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v67i3.794>
- Objantoro, E., Susanto, Diana, R., Katarina & Darmawan, I.P.A., 2022, 'Church offerings during COVID-19 pandemic: A case study in GKII Tandang', *Pharos Journal of Theology* 103, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.10348>
- Orthner, D.K., 2021, 'Assessing spiritual development: Reflections on building a community measure', *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 14(2), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19397909211036138>
- Panjaitan, F. & Lumingkewas, M.S., 2019, 'Ibadah Jemaat Kristen Kontemporer Abad 21 Dan Tinjauan Kritis-Liturgis', *FIDEI: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis Dan Praktika* 2(1), 162–185. <https://doi.org/10.34081/fidei.v2i1.49>
- Perangin Angin, Y.H., Yenirenowati, T.A. & Anderson, L., 2021, 'Implikasi Strategi Pemuridan Yesus dalam Gereja Meregerasi Pemimpin', *Sabda: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 2(1), 200–218. <https://doi.org/10.55097/sabda.v2i1.20>
- Sabar, 2019, 'Gereja Bethel Indonesia Gelar Sidang Sinode' *Harmoni Indonesia: Mewujudkan Persaudaraan Sejati Dalam Kebhinekaan*.
- Senduk, H.L., 2011, *Sejarah Gereja Bethel Indonesia*, Yayasan Bethel, Jakarta.
- Smith, G.T., 2017, 'Generation to generation: Inter-generationality and spiritual formation in Christian community', *Journal of Spiritual Formation and Soul Care* 10(2), 182–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/193979091701000206>
- Suhadi, S. & Sunarko, A.S., 2021, 'Makna Dilahirkan Kembali Bagi Orang Percaya Masa Kini', *Jurnal Teologi Berita Hidup* 4(1), 206–220. <https://doi.org/10.38189/jtbh.v4i1.98>
- Telaumbanua, A., 2019, 'Peran Gembala Sidang Sebagai Pendidik Dalam Pertumbuhan Rohani Jemaat', *FIDEI: Jurnal Teologi Sistematis Dan Praktika* 2(2), 362–387. <https://doi.org/10.34081/fidei.v2i2.45>
- Warren, R., 2012, *Pertumbuhan Gereja Masa Kini [Cntemporary church growth]*, Gandum Mas, Malang.
- Wina, S., 2006, *Strategi pembelajaran Berorientasi Standar Proses Pendidikan [Educational process standard-oriented learning strategies]*, Kencana Prenada Media, Jakarta.
- Yarbrough, R.W., 2020, 'Gospel Allegiance: What faith in Jesus Misses for salvation in Christ', *Bulletin for Biblical Research* (30), 269.