

## AN ANALYSIS ON THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF SINGERS IN WORSHIP: A CASE STUDY AT THE NEW JERUSALEM BETHEL CHURCH INDONESIA

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**Abstract** : This research aims to examine the roles and functions of the worship singers at the New Jerusalem Bethel Church Indonesia in Kampung Lebo. To achieve this goal, data collection tools such as observation, interviews, literature review, and documentation were employed. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive method, with the objective of identifying the outcomes obtained in the field. In this study, the researcher utilized theories that support the research, serving as the foundation for investigating the roles and functions of singers in worship at the Indonesian Bethel Church in Kampung Lebo. The research has elucidated the roles and functions of singers in the worship of the New Jerusalem Bethel Church Indonesia in Kampung Lebo. The researcher discovered several aspects regarding the roles and functions of singers, including the significant role of backing vocalists in the progression of worship, their ability to assist the song leader in leading worship, the importance of singers being pitch-perfect, their capacity to provide harmony and vocal energy in every song, the ability to transform the worship atmosphere to avoid monotony, guiding the congregation in singing, providing enthusiasm, and making the congregation feel engaged during worship. The data were obtained through interviews with singers and the pastor.

**Keywords** : *Roles and Functions, Worship Music, Church Music*

### INTRODUCTION

Music is an essential part that cannot be separated from human life. Music is often used on various occasions, for example, used for traditional events, as a means of communication, education, and even as a form of entertainment for its enthusiasts. According to *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*, music is: (1) the art of arranging tones or sounds in sequence, combination, and temporal relationships to produce compositions (sounds) that have unity and continuity; (2) tones or sounds arranged in such a way as to create rhythm, melody, and harmony (especially using instruments capable of producing those sounds).

In Sangihe, in the Manganitu District, specifically in Kampung Lebo, there are various denominations of churches, but the church referred to here is the Gereja Bethel

Indonesia (GBI) of the Yerusalem Baru congregation. The music used by this church somewhat follows the current trends. The Gereja Bethel Indonesia Jemaat Yerusalem Baru in Kampung Lebo uses a music combo, which involves using several musical instruments such as drums, electric keyboard, electric guitar, and electric bass.

Certainly, every denomination of the church has its own rites or liturgy in conducting worship. Fundamentally, the rites or liturgy used in the Gereja Bethel Indonesia Jemaat Yerusalem Baru does not strictly adhere to the order of liturgy written on paper (it varies). This is because each singer-song leader has their own style or uniqueness. For instance, during the opening of the worship, a song leader may sing a song with a slow tempo, then after the opening prayer, the song leader may

perform a song with a fast tempo. It could also happen that during the opening of the worship, the song leader sings a song with a fast tempo, and after the opening prayer, the song leader performs a song with a slow tempo. Because of this, the worship feels more flexible, spontaneous, and less rigid.

During worship, sometimes there are singers or musicians who perform their service carelessly, lacking seriousness, lacking communication between the song leader and backing vocal singers, or insufficient communication between singers and musicians. There might be off-key singing, forgetting or incorrect lyrics, whether from the singers acting as song leaders or those acting as backing vocalists.

Consciously or unconsciously, this can change the atmosphere or ambiance of a worship service. Its consequences undoubtedly affect the attending congregation, altering the emotions or feelings of those present and leading to decreased enthusiasm among the attendees. As much as possible, singers should minimize these risks so that the worship can proceed smoothly because singers guide and direct the congregation during worship. Therefore, this study aims to examine the roles and functions of the worship singers at the New Jerusalem Bether Church Indonesia in Kampung Lebo.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method, aiming to identify the results obtained in the field. The qualitative research method is a process of research and understanding based on a methodology that investigates social phenomena and human issues. In this approach, a comprehensive description is created, examining words, detailed reports from informant perspectives, and studying natural situations.

All data obtained, whether directly or indirectly through observation, interviews, documentation, or capturing images

through photographs, are thoroughly examined, understood, clarified, evaluated, interpreted, and described. The results of these descriptions are concluded inductively and reported to form a research proposal in the shape of a scientific paper.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

#### **1. Lack of communication between singer and musicians**

In general, good communication between the singer-song leader and musicians is highly important, where the singer-song leader plays a crucial role in directing the musicians during religious activities and, of course, serves as the determinant to ensure that the worship proceeds with devotion

To prevent or at least reduce the errors described above, the things that should be done and improved are during rehearsals when musicians and singer-song leaders should discuss and come to an agreement regarding the arrangements to be used. They should establish codes or cues to be used during the worship service and pay particular attention to ensuring that musicians remain focused on their service duties. It's essential to realize that musicians, as accompanists for singers, should have a unified vision and mission, which is to glorify God.

#### **2. Backing vocal singers are less sensitive**

Usually, a situation like this occurs when the singer-song leader is about to deliver sentences that will lead the congregation into a more solemn atmosphere. This is where the role of the backing vocal singers becomes more crucial in responding sensitively to cues or signals from the singer-song leader. With the presence of backing vocal singers, they will have more freedom to reinforce sentences to the congregation, ensuring that the delivery doesn't feel empty.

### **3. Insufficient interaction between the singer-song leader and the congregation**

To prevent occurrences like this, singer-song leaders should expand their vocabulary by reading spiritual books as references, in addition to reading books with biblical verses. This technique significantly influences the congregation during worship, leading them to engage more deeply in the solemn atmosphere.

### **4. Out of Tune Singers**

Another step is from the soundman. If the soundman notices there's an out-of-tune voice from the singers, automatically, the soundman will reduce the volume of the microphone held by the singer with the out-of-tune voice. This step is quite effective to avoid disrupting the worship atmosphere and also to maintain the focus of the congregation attending the service.

For singers who have an out-of-tune voice, the step or solution that can be taken is even though their voice is out of tune, they should gradually learn about singing techniques. There's a lot of information available through Google or YouTube that can be accessed to enhance the skills of the singers for continuous improvement in the future.

### **5. Singers Forgetting the Lyrics**

This situation doesn't occur frequently during the execution of service duties, but it requires more attention for singers. Several factors might contribute to this issue, such as singers not memorizing the provided song lyrics, missing scheduled rehearsal sessions, while rehearsals are crucial for the success of every service. Some individuals may also assume that the songs are easy to memorize due to reliance on projected screens displaying the lyrics.

The solution to avoid forgetting lyrics during worship is for singers to remain calm so as not to affect the focus of other congregants. Additionally, singers should endeavor to memorize by repeatedly listening to and singing the song daily

before it is performed during the worship service.

For the singer-song leader, upon receiving the notification that they will be leading the service on Sunday, two or three days before the worship day, they should send the songs to the backing vocal singers and musicians. This allows them time to listen to and memorize the songs.

### **6. Singer song leader forgot song's arrangement**

Of course, each singer-song leader has their own distinct style when presenting a song during worship. Many ideas emerge during rehearsal sessions, which is very beneficial for supporting the worship. Worship won't feel monotonous because of the ideas or variations brought by the singer-song leader and also the musicians. Arrangements or variations in a song can keep the congregation engaged in the worship, feeling enthusiastic and spirited, even if the songs performed are not the latest.

For singer-song leaders who wish to propose arranging a song, careful consideration is needed to avoid forgetting when delivering an arranged song. If a singer-song leader, like Mr. Samsurya Dumumpe, who sells fish intensively at the market the day before the worship begins, it would be better if the singer records all the arranged songs through a smartphone. This way, before the worship begins and after finishing all activities, they can listen to the arrangements of the songs rehearsed previously

## **Discussions**

### **1. Following the development of spiritual songs**

Basically, there are no restrictions for singers regarding whether they follow the development of spiritual songs or not. However, as time progresses, singers also need to review and observe the progress of spiritual songs, whether through television or other media platforms such as Google and YouTube. It doesn't mean that older spiritual songs should not be used because

they might be considered outdated, but at least expanding and broadening the references regarding spiritual songs can be beneficial.

The opinion of Mrs. Marlintje Gantohe is not wrong because, once again, each singer has their own distinctive style in selecting songs. There's no coercion, and it's optional for each singer. The most important thing is that every song selection should align with the theme of the worship service. One should not just focus on the latest or newest songs solely to keep up with the current trends. Singers should also be more careful in selecting songs. Another step that can be taken is for singers to combine both old and new songs to introduce some diversity and variety into the worship service.

## **2. The singers' perspective on the accompanying musicians**

The musicians play a crucial role for singers, especially in worship services, as they contribute significantly to the success of the worship. The primary duty of musicians is to accompany singers in their singing. Each musician should play their instruments in balance, avoiding any instrument overpowering the others. Skill or proficiency in playing musical instruments is undoubtedly important. It's highly unlikely that during a worship service, musicians play their instruments too loudly as it may disrupt the atmosphere.

Various viewpoints emerge from singers regarding the musicians. In interviews, some singers express a common concern: musicians lacking sensitivity towards the singers. Some musicians are slow in responding to cues from singers. For instance, Mr. Marsialex Lukas mentioned that sometimes, when singers aim to transition the congregation from a calm atmosphere to a lively one using specific cues, the musicians don't pay adequate attention. Instead, they make the worship atmosphere flat, ultimately hindering the dynamic aspects of worship.

Singers explain that musicians are sometimes too preoccupied with their musical performance, leading to a lack of unity between musicians and singers while singing a song. Musicians occasionally tend to excessively arrange songs, forgetting that their primary role is to support the singers and the congregation during worship. Musicians should avoid actions that might disrupt the worship atmosphere.

## **3. Pastors' view on Singers**

In supporting the ministry, Pastor Ezra Muli implements rules for the servants, which include praying and fasting before carrying out their service duties, conducting worship preparation rehearsals twice a week. This is done to make rehearsals more effective, improve pre-worship preparations, and minimize errors during the execution of service duties during the worship service.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research describes the role and function of singers in the worship of the Bethel Indonesia Church, the congregation of New Jerusalem in Kampung Lebo. The researcher found several aspects regarding the role and function of singers, namely that backing vocal singers play a crucial role in the worship process, assisting in accompanying the song leader in leading the worship. Being a singer involves not singing out of tune, providing harmony, vocal energy in every song sung, changing the worship atmosphere to avoid monotony, guiding the congregation in singing, providing encouragement, and creating enthusiasm among the worshippers.

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