



## Enhancing Congregational Devotion: Reconstructing Joshua's Leadership in Contemporary Context

Joko Purianto Silalahi<sup>1\*</sup>, Mesra Ulina Panjaitan<sup>2</sup>, Mei Suryani Sinaga<sup>3</sup>

Institut Agama Kristen Renatus Pematang Siantar.

### \*Corresponding Author Joko Purianto Silalahi

Institut Agama Kristen  
Renatus Pematang  
Siantar.

### Article History

Received: 29.06.2024  
Accepted: 05.07.2024  
Published: 17.07.2024

**Abstract:** Leadership is a fundamental aspect of human existence, crucial for navigating various aspects of communal life. Effective leadership involves the ability to influence others positively, motivating them towards collective achievements. The Book of Joshua provides insights into leadership qualities, emphasizing bravery, wisdom, and reliance on the divine. Obedience, central to leadership, encompasses adherence to established guidelines and respect for authority, including divine authority. This research aims to analyze Joshua's leadership and its impact on worship obedience within the Indonesian Pentecostal Church congregation. Employing a literature review methodology, various sources, including the Bible, textbooks, and scholarly articles, are examined to establish theoretical frameworks and conceptual understandings. Leadership, as depicted in the Book of Joshua, entails vision formulation, change implementation, and resource management to achieve communal goals. Joshua exemplifies perseverance and steadfastness, relying on faith and courage to lead the Israelites towards their promised land. Obedience in congregational worship involves compliance with divine teachings, simplicity, and regularity in worship practices. Joshua's leadership serves as a model for obedience, emphasizing sanctification and fidelity to divine mandates. The Book of Joshua, written around the 19th century BCE, chronicles significant events in Israel's history, including conquests and land allocations. Joshua's ministry, initiated by Moses' call and continued after his death, illustrates the continuity of divine commissioning and leadership responsibilities. In conclusion, effective leadership requires a close relationship with God, courage, vision, and humility. Leaders must prioritize spiritual growth, foster team relationships, and prepare successors for future organizational needs. Joshua's leadership serves as a timeless example, guiding leaders towards fulfilling their roles with integrity and devotion to divine principles.

**Keywords:** Congregational Devotion, Leadership, Contemporary.

### Cite this article:

Silalahi, J. P., Panjaitan, M. U., Sinaga, M. S., (2024). Enhancing Congregational Devotion: Reconstructing Joshua's Leadership in Contemporary Context. *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(7), 59-63.

## Introduction

Human beings are social creatures who cannot exist alone. No one in this world can survive without relying on or needing assistance from others. Humans tend to live in groups, ranging from tribes to nations. The leadership of an individual must be able to control various aspects of human life, such as lifestyle, creative opportunities, interaction with neighbors, participation in society, nationality, and dealings with the state. Leadership issues involve various parties in the learning and development process because leadership plays a very important, even crucial role in modern organizations today (Goleman, 2021).

Therefore, it is important for every individual to be able to adapt to their group so that they can be accepted and feel safe and comfortable in their environment. This is a step taken by an individual to obtain a leadership position within their group (Clinton, 2020). An effective and innovative leader is one who has the ability to master various tasks because that is how they can influence many people. A leader uses their people or subjects as

tools to realize their leadership vision. The same is also emphasized in the leadership system described in the book of Joshua. There, a leader is identified as an individual who is brave (verses 1-4), acts wisely (verses 6-7), and entrusts everything to the Lord (verse 8-9).

Obedience refers to an individual's or group's behavior in complying with established rules. Compliance with policies is an act of submission to the guidelines mandated by policy makers or institutions. Furthermore, there is an element of appreciation for truth and righteousness, as reflected in the respectful attitude towards leaders of integrity (1 Thessalonians 5:12). This includes a broader concept of obedience, which also reflects discipline within the church environment (Blomberg, 2020).

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that obedient leadership also includes genuine obedience to the authority of God's Word, accompanied by earnestness in prayer, diligent service, and adherence to established guidelines. As a measure of obedience to the Word of God, this includes the implementation of His teachings, submission to the authority of God's Word,

earnestness in prayer, and participation in visits to fellow church members' homes (Nell, 2015). This research aims to analyze and study the influence of Joshua's leadership on the level of obedience in worship among the congregation of the Indonesian Pentecostal Church.

## Method

This study utilizes a literature review methodology. The literature review methodology entails gathering information from diverse literary sources, scrutinizing readings, and organizing research materials. Literature review serves as a fundamental component of research, particularly in academic endeavors aimed at advancing theoretical and practical dimensions. Researchers undertake literature reviews primarily to establish a robust groundwork for constructing theoretical frameworks, conceptual frameworks, and devising initial hypotheses. The data sources employed encompass a range of literary materials, including the Bible, textbooks, scholarly journals, articles, and literature reviews pertinent to the examined concept.

## Result and Discussion

A general understanding of leadership is that a leader has the ability to influence others to do or not do something desired by the leader. Additionally, leaders also act as motivators or inspirers for the community to develop and achieve accomplishments. Similar to a rocket engine directing a satellite to its intended orbit, leaders propel the spirit of the community towards rationalized organizational goals. In other words, a leader is an individual who guides the community in achieving change for a better future. The larger the size of the community they lead, the greater the responsibility and tasks held by the leader (Lal et al., 2023).

Etymologically, the terms "leader" and "leadership" come from the word "lead," which then conjugates into "leader" and "leadership." The word "lead" has various meanings, closely related to concepts such as "leading, guiding, mentoring, inspiring, taking the first initiative, being a role model, setting an example, and influencing others through persuasion" and so forth. In Bahasa Indonesia, the term "leader" is often referred to by several other words such as "*penghulu, pemuka, pelopor, pembina, panutan, pembimbing, pengurus, penggerak, ketua, kepala, raja, tua-tua,*" and others.

A leader is an individual who has the ability to formulate and articulate vision, and implement change by aligning people with available resources, and managing people and systems to achieve established goals (Bryman, Grint, & Collison, 2020). Leadership is a journey of learning and personal development for an individual. Individuals who diligently seek knowledge and consistently strive to improve themselves have the potential to become leaders because of their abilities and strengths (Simorangkir, Pakpahan, & Ariawan, 2021).

Some experts defining leadership involves:

a. Someone who directs and leads

A leader must have the ability and willingness to take an active role in leading and determining direction. This requires courage, initiative, and confidence.

b. Someone who determines direction and gives commands

A leader does not operate independently; they are part of their group and responsible for the direction and actions of the group.

They are identified as a leader not only as a member of the group, but as an individual who holds responsibility for its direction and activities.

c. Someone who influences attitudes and actions from the past

A leader has the ability to inspire others by positively influencing their attitudes and actions. They can inspire them to keep moving forward despite facing significant challenges and obstacles.

d. Someone followed willingly by others

A leader has qualities that attract others so that they want to follow them. A leader will not be a leader if no one is willing to follow them. This is a sign of their leadership quality, where people are driven to follow them. The ability to motivate others to achieve shared goals is a key indicator of effective leadership. Good leaders consistently achieve results, reaching their targets and main goals.

From the various perspectives of the figures above, it can be concluded that leadership is an individual's ability to influence others through a vision implemented effectively through human resources, both through trust and support, as well as by influencing and organizing others to achieve common goals.

### 1. Book of Joshua

The Book of Joshua is a literary work that narrates important events in the early history of Israel using vivid and meaningful descriptions. The strong and profound descriptions in the Book of Joshua often have a significant influence on the understanding and beliefs of followers of Old Testament teachings. This includes important events such as the crossing of the Jordan River, the conquest of the land of Canaan, the division of the land among the tribes of Israel, and the learning about worshiping God as a united nation. The Book of Joshua, as part of the Word of God, provides guidance to the people about the journey of the nation of Israel from exile to the promised land of Canaan. Its connection to other books in the Bible is an inseparable part of the belief in the journey of the people of Israel in their faith. The Book of Joshua also portrays Joshua's success in leading and fulfilling the tasks given by God to fulfill His promise to the descendants of Abraham. Joshua demonstrates leadership qualities consistent with those of Moses, who delegated leadership as desired by God. The Book of Joshua also continues the story from the book of Deuteronomy, which tells of the vision and mission of the nation of Israel in taking possession of the land of Canaan. After being in the plains of Moab, the people of Israel awaited the command of the Lord to cross the Jordan River and take possession of the land of Canaan. The story from the book of Deuteronomy continues with the story in the Book of Joshua, including the death of Moses (Joshua 1:1-15). The Book of Joshua also presents the arrival of the people of Israel to the land of Canaan and the division of the land among the tribes of Israel (Gericke, 2013).

In the first verse, it is reported about the death of Moses and the appointment of Joshua as his successor. This event is reiterated several times in this book (1:1; 3:7; 4:2; 5:2; 7:10; 8:1; 10:8; and 20:1), which may only be known by Joshua. In addition to this internal evidence, the Talmud also states that Joshua is the author of this book. The above data clearly indicate that Joshua is the person who wrote this book.

## 2. Congregational Worship Obedience

Obedience is an attitude of compliance with authority, carrying out given commands, adhering to existing requirements, and avoiding prohibitions, as well as diligently performing duties as prescribed. According to Gordon S. Watkins and his colleagues, submissive obedience is a condition or attitude possessed by all members of an organization who are obedient to organizational discipline. In Greek, the word "faith" is translated as "*Pisteue*," which comes from the word "*peite*" meaning trust, belief, loyalty, and obedience (Caneday, 2013).

Based on the concepts above, obedience is a submissive attitude towards the teachings and will of God, and having the simplicity to carry out all commands, both from God and from the organization, with full obedience and regularity. Thus, the standard of obedience in the Congregation of the Indonesian Pentecostal Church includes obedience to the teachings of God, simplicity, and regularity. This includes serving one another by reminding each other of the importance of worship in every meeting and celebration held by the organization, diligently performing the duty of prayer, and obeying the teachings of God that have been received and understood. Obedience is a condition or attitude possessed by all members of an organization who are obedient and disciplined to the organization's regulations.

## 3. Authorship and Time of Writing of the Book of Joshua

The Book of Joshua was written in the 19th century BCE. Generally, scholars believe that sources found in the Torah can also be traced in the Book of Joshua. For example, Joshua 1:12 is believed by most scholars to have been written by authors known as J, E, and D, while other parts of the Book of Joshua, chapters 13-24, are believed to have been mostly written by an author known as P. Martin Noth proposed the view that the Book of Joshua was likely combined with other historical books during the exile. This records their history as conveyed orally in traditional stories and official documents. Noth regarded the Book of Deuteronomy as a theological history introduction. Therefore, these books are often considered as Deuteronomic history. This book indeed has similarities in theological judgments, often displaying characteristic vocabulary. This theology reflects the Book of Deuteronomy, regardless of when the Book of Deuteronomy was completed. However, there are some interesting aspects to note and examine, especially regarding the themes of the historical book. The Book of Joshua tends to have a positive and progressive attitude, while other historical books tend to be negative and repetitive. Some books also have seemingly exaggerated thoughts in their approach (Greever, 2016).

## 4. Structure of the Book of Joshua / Outline of the Book of Joshua

Chapters 1-12 of the Book of Joshua highlight Joshua's journey and efforts in fulfilling his task and divine call to lead the people of Israel to the land of Canaan. Chapter 1 contains the mandate carried by Joshua. Chapters 2-5 narrate the spies in the city of Jericho, the crossing of the Jordan River, the circumcision ceremony, and Passover. Chapters 5-8 depict the conquest of the cities of Jericho and Ai, the construction of an altar on Mount Ebal, and the deception by the Gibeonites. Chapters 9-12 focus on the war against enemy coalitions in the southern and northern regions and the list of conquered kings. Chapter 13 discusses the occupation of the land of Canaan, while chapters 13-21 cover the

allocation of territories for the tribes of Israel, the establishment of refuge cities, and the arrangement of cities for the Levites. Chapter 22 recounts the return of the tribes east of the Jordan River. Chapters 23-24 highlight the renewal of the covenant at Shechem. The book as a whole covers events from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua himself, organized into several clear divisions. The first part, chapters 1-12, describes Joshua's efforts in carrying out his task and fulfilling the divine call to lead the people of Israel to the land of Canaan.

## 5. Background of Joshua

The Book of Joshua continues the narrative of the journey of the people of Israel that began with Moses, establishing the vision-mission set by God for the people of Israel. The Pentateuch records that Joshua was appointed as the successor to Moses, who led the people of Israel in crossing the Jordan River and conquering the promised land by God to their ancestors, especially Abraham, and specifically to Moses as their leader who led them out of the land of slavery (Egypt) to the promised land, namely the land of Canaan. This background has great significance for us and also for the people of Israel. I agree with this understanding because the Book of Joshua is the only source that tells the journey and success of the people of Israel in occupying the land of Canaan. However, there are several views on the time of the occupation of the land of Canaan by the people of Israel. In the Bible, there are two different records of the time of the exodus of the people of Israel from Egypt. The book of Kings 6:1 states that the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan in the 48th year after their departure from Egypt, placing it around 1446 BCE. However, elsewhere, Exodus 12:40 mentions the year around 1290 BCE as the time of the departure of the people of Israel from Egypt (Moritz, 2017).

## 6. Joshua

Joshua was the grandson of Elisama, the head of the tribe of Ephraim (1 Chronicles 7:27). In Numbers 13:8, it is mentioned that Joshua, originally known as Hosea, was from the tribe of Ephraim. Formerly, Joshua was known as Hosea before he joined Moses in carrying out God's call. However, after working with Moses, the name Joshua was often changed to Yehoshua, which in English means Jesus, who is the Savior. Besides this understanding, researchers also include views on Joshua and his characteristics as a visionary leader, in accordance with God's will.

Joshua son of Nun was born in Egypt and was from the lineage of Joseph, from the family of Ephraim. He was known as the successor to Moses, tasked with leading the people of Israel in capturing the land of Canaan. His name means "the Lord is salvation." After Moses' death, Joshua settled in Timnath Serah, in the mountains of Ephraim. Joshua began his ministry as Moses' assistant at a relatively young age, around 20 years old (Numbers 11:28). It is estimated that he became Moses' successor at around 30 years old (Numbers 13:1-3, 16). When he became Moses' successor, it is estimated that he was around 50 or 60 years old, thus devoting three-quarters of his life to God's service. Joshua died at the age of 110. Joshua's ministry proves that he was a great leader among the people of Israel. He was highly respected by the elders of Israel since the people left Egypt and settled in Timnath Serah. Joshua had extraordinary military skills, such as his ability to defeat the Amalekites and enemies in the land of Canaan. However, Joshua was not only skilled in military affairs; as Moses' successor, he was also responsible for arranging the Tabernacle to

conduct worship. Joshua was a dynamic and characterful leader. There are several characteristics of Joshua that we need to learn and possess in our personal lives, especially as the current generation of church leaders, namely:

First, Joshua showed perseverance in his faith. In Numbers 14:6-8, after returning from spying on the land of Canaan with Caleb son of Jephunneh, Joshua firmly expressed his faith. Although the other ten spies gave doubtful reports, Joshua viewed everything from a perspective of faith. He believed that with God's help, the Israelites could capture the strong cities they had spied on. Joshua's focus on God became the basis for the future conquest of the land of Canaan. Joshua's faith demonstrated true faith, which relied entirely on God, not on oneself, one's own wisdom, or one's own abilities. Second, Joshua had a steadfast heart. In Joshua 10:25, Joshua said, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the Lord will do to all the enemies you are going to fight." For Joshua, the phrase "do not be afraid" is a source of strength, and "do not be discouraged" is an exhortation to remain steadfast in the face of threats. Such an attitude motivated Joshua to lead the people of Israel with courage and steadfastness, especially when facing enemies in war. As a steadfast leader, Joshua boldly defended the interests of the nation and society he led, especially in the context of war. Joshua faced enemies with a steadfast heart and maintained the holiness of the people of Israel. The importance of the concept of holiness in the Book of Joshua cannot be underestimated. Related to the status of the people of Israel as God's chosen people, Joshua emphasized the importance of sanctifying oneself as preparation for God to perform great deeds among them (Joshua 3:5). The command "sanctify yourselves" is Joshua's teaching for the people of Israel to acknowledge the holiness of God and recognize His power over their lives.

If not for the help and intervention of the Holy One, the people of Israel would not be able to capture the cities of Canaan from the hands of the enemy. God's people who live holy lives and obey His laws will surely enjoy His presence, and to those who live holy lives, God will reveal Himself. Joshua was known not only as a brave man but also as an obedient one. Until his old age, he remained faithful and obedient. Joshua was a model of obedience, both to Moses, the laws of God, and to God with all his heart. His lifestyle reflected loyalty to Moses because he willingly learned from Moses to be obedient to God. Joshua personally witnessed how Moses taught the people of Israel to live obediently to God (Gericke, 2013).

#### 7. The Calling and Commissioning of Joshua

In Joshua's youth, Moses chose him as his assistant and instructed him to form a force from the unorganized tribes of Israel to face the Amalekite army, as recorded in the book of Exodus 17. Near the Jordan River plain, Joshua was officially consecrated as Moses' successor, becoming a military commander equal to the high priest Eleazar, as stated in Numbers 27:18. Moses blessed Joshua, and the Lord commanded Moses to lay his hands on Joshua, as the successor to leadership. Moses obeyed God's command by laying his hands on Joshua in front of the high priest Eleazar and the people of Israel, giving him the task given by God through Moses.

#### 8. History of Joshua's Ministry

Joshua's ministry began with Moses' call, which has been mentioned previously in the discussion of the call and commissioning. When Moses was on Mount Sinai, Joshua played an important role in occupying and strengthening the Gilgal area. He also succeeded in defeating the Canaanite alliances and leading the people of Israel in various battles concerning their national interests. After Moses' death, all leadership responsibilities fell to Joshua to continue the journey of the people of Israel to the promised land, namely the land of Canaan.

### Conclusion

A true leader must cultivate a close relationship with God, as the success of leadership depends on His support and blessing. Leaders who have faith in God also possess courage, not fear. With this courage, they can strengthen their leadership in front of those they influence. Additionally, a leader needs to have a vision and mission that serve as the foundation for achieving specific goals. As leaders of today, it is important for them to build good relationships with team members and prepare for the next generation, so that there are successors capable of meeting every organizational need in the future.

In this context, as leaders currently entrusted by God, it is important to remain humble, work together, and be genuinely engaged in the true work of God. This is important so that the goals and successes achieved can satisfy oneself, others, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, a leader's preparation in maintaining the integrity of leadership for the benefit that honors God and blesses many people is crucial. A leader must be ready to lead others to knowledge of Jesus Christ and to follow in His footsteps. Joshua, as one example in leadership, can serve as a strong foundation for fulfilling this role.

### Bibliography

1. Blomberg, C. L. (2020). The State of New Testament Studies: A Survey of Recent Research. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 63(2), 366–369.
2. Bryman, A., Grint, K., & Collison, D. L. (2020). *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership*. USA: SAGE Publication Inc.
3. Caneday, A. B. (2013). "If You Continue in the Faith" (Colossians 1:21-23): An Exegetical-Theological Exercise in Syntax, Discourse, and Performative Speech. *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology*. Retrieved from <http://www.sbts.edu/resources/files/2014/03/SBJT-17.3-Fall-2013-Caneday.pdf>
4. Clinton, J. R. (2020). *The Making of a Leader: Recognizing the Lessons and Stages of Leadership Development* (17th ed.). New York: Nav Press.
5. Gericke, J. W. (2013). Why old testament prophecy is philosophically interesting. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v69i1.1197>
6. Goleman, D. (2021). *Leadership Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.
7. Greever, J. M. (2016). *The Nature of the New Covenant: A*

Case Study in Ephesians 2 : 11-22.

8. Lal, J. D., Balachander, T., Karthik, T., Ariawan, S., M, S. P., & Tiwari, M. (2023). Hybrid Evolutionary Algorithm with Energy Efficient Cluster Head to Improve Performance Metrics on the IoT. *International Conference on Computing Methodologies and Communication (ICCMC)*, 7(1), 1218–1223. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICCMC56507.2023.10083708>
9. Moritz, J. M. (2017). Christianity and the Philosophy - Christian Theology of Creation and the Metaphysical Foundations of Science. *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies*.
10. Nell, I. (2015). The end of leadership?: The shift of power in local congregations. *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v71i3.2934>
11. Simorangkir, A. C., Pakpahan, B. A. S., & Ariawan, S. (2021). The Role of Leadership In Improving Employee Discipline. *Jurnal Christian Humaniora*, 5(1), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.46965/jch.v5i1.623>