

Ellen G. White Perspective on Politics Among Seventh Day Adventist Leaders

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Abstract

Politics is taking place into pastoral leadership. This practice has its chance to be practiced because of cultural background. However, it brings contention among pastors and affect the mission of the church. Ellen G. White as one of the founders of SDA church paid attention to the practice of politics in the church. For SDA church members politics is restricted because it brings evil effects unto physical, mental and spiritual life. They need to avoid politics in order to develop true God's character. It can also create division among church members. And the most important is if Christian's cling into it, God would not acknowledge them as His people. For pastors and teachers, their role is to form the mindset of church members. This role prohibits them to politics. They will not bring unity in the church when they involve politics in their discourses. Even in more firm statement Ellen White ask them to be disqualified from work which paid by tithe. While He was on the earth, Jesus never practice politics. So, every Christian need to be away from politics.

Keywords: *Politics*

Introduction

Historical Background of the Context

Minahasa is located in the northeast region of North Sulawesi. It has several small islands such as the island of Manado Tua, Bunaken, Siladen, and Naen. Minahasa means *become one*. The capital city of the Minahasa is Manado, one of the largest cities in East Indonesia. Usually, the people called themselves as Manadonese. These people, until now, have and practice different languages or dialects such as *Tonsea*, *Tombulu*, *Tontemboan*, *Tondano*, *Tonsawang*, *Pasan Ratahan* (*Bentenan*), *Ponosakan*, *Bantik*. These dialects came from these sub ethnics respectively.

Mapalus

One unique tradition of Minahasa is *mapalus*. This is a group or a temporary association who had the concept of reciprocal assistance among its members. In the beginning the activity is

to cultivate the farming is the primary intention of formation of this association, however, later it was extended to any work.¹

Tribe Leadership System

Traditionally a place where community settled called *Wanua* or *Kampung*. A *Hukum Tua* leads this. Each *Wanua* divided into smaller areas. Each area has its own *kepala jaga*, and a *meweteng*. There are also assistances for these administrators like a writer, a land meter a man who is an expert on measuring land, a man who is responsible in taking care of irrigation, *tukang palakat* (like communicator), and *kapala jaga polisi* (security). All *kampung* functionaries freed from tax.

According to the myth of Minahasa, in the past there was social stratification. The upper layer is those who were taking care of religion called *Makurua-Siow*, *Walian*, and *Tonaas*. The middle layer was *Makatelupitu*, those people are for government service, and lowest is *Pasiowan Telu*, the common people. Today there is no that kind of social stratification anymore. There is only public assumption that educated workers, government workers and rich people considered as having higher status.

Leadership Election System

The following will describe how *Minahasa* village elect their leader (*kumtua*) in the past. Marcos (2013) stated that the village head election implements direct elections. The method is the candidates were not running, however the public nominated them. At the time of election, candidates should stand at the front and people who want to choose him would follow or would stand behind him. And he who had the most followers would be the leader.² It means that to be a leader in *Minahasa* someone must have a lot of followers.

The one who would have more followers should have criteria which determined by the people. Mostly they should be able to build and maintained the local customs in accordance with the principle of customary law. In addition to these qualities, in his blog Mamahit (1994) adds that leaders chosen based on their ability to deal with or resolve the problems that exist, including his ability to face security threats and to maintain the provisions of the existing customs³. Whoever elected, he would embrace all religions, tribes or ethnic groups in the village.

As impact of modernization and trend of rule changes in Indonesian law, this method of election began to change. However, the spirit and strength of this direct election of leaders still felt. With a few changes, *Minahasanesse* continue to defense their democratization ways in order that this practice will not obliterate from their culture.⁴(Marcos, 2013)

Philosophy of Life

Minahasan people has their philosophy which underlie all of their life aspires. The philosophy represented in a saying or maxim that is *si tou timou tumou tou*. Roderick (2007) said

¹ Ramly Siwi, "*Masyarakat Minahasa Kuno*, (2008), <https://publikreport.com/masyarakat-minahasa-kuno/>, accessed 8 May 2021

² Marcos, "*Keindahan Demokratisasi dan Toleransi Di Minahasa*, "<http://www.marcos.my.id/view/keindahan-demokratisasi-dan-toleransi-di-minahasa.html>, (2013) accessed May 11, 2014

³ Mamahit, <http://mamahit.com/ukung.html>, (1994). Accessed May 11, 2014

⁴ Marcos, 2013

the meanings of these words are "Man lives is to educate others". This saying derived from words 'Tou' for *man*, 'Timou' means *to live or have knowledge/educated*. 'Tumou' stands for *to grow, to develop, to tend and to educate*. And the meaning is a man lives is to educate others.

Ray Maleke suggest the meaning of this saying "*a person lives to give life to others.*"¹ Roderick also said that "this saying is the motto of the true Minahasa descendant."² This old Minahasan life philosophy frequently quoted by the late Dr. G.S.S.J. Ratulangie (known as Dr. Sam Ratulangi, 1890-1949), a Minahasan philosopher, educator and a national hero of Indonesia. This saying can be applied in many aspects of life for Minahasan people. It might be applied in human reproduction, education, religion (salvation), leadership etc.

Challenges in Seventh Day Adventist Church

This system of leader elections, more or less, affects leadership of pastors in the SDA church. However, it is not the only one that affect, *Mapalus* system and *sitou timou tumou tou philosophy* play important role too. Next part will discuss threats of these elements to the leadership of seventh day Adventist pastor which end with its effect on SDA church mission.

Among Pastors

For church leadership, there are pastors in Minahasa who are applying *mapalus system*. They are looking for vote of delegates by visiting personally or sending some friends to persuade them. They are doing their best to find as many as possible church members vote to support them to get the positions. At first, this action done secretly but nowadays it becomes more open. This is they do while there is conference meeting, especially in nominating committee, whether in conferences or union.

This condition creates dispute among pastors. This happened because pastors came from different Minahasa's sub-ethnics. Each ethnic wants their representative pastor to become leader. This situation stimulates secular political ways inside the church election.

Among Church Members

There are some of church members who were sent by local churches as delegates at mission or union conferences. Many of them consciously or unconsciously involved in the political system. Then, when they go back to their churches the practices, which they "found" in conferences meeting, they applied in their local churches respectively.

Now, there is a tendency of some church members to favor certain pastor while at the same time others favor another pastor. This condition brings disunity inside the church. It is obvious lately happen, at the end of the year, when the election time comes there are some church members who will "work" among other church members. They come and persuade other to have *Mapalus* to choose certain member to become elder or hold certain position in the church.

In terms of church mission, conditions mention above brings obstruction in the work of evangelism. It is happening now that there are internal disputes in the church. It occurs between pastors with pastors, pastors with church members and even worse between members.

¹ Ray Maleke, "A Minahasa Local Theology," (September 2013): http://raymaleke.blogspot.com/2013/09/chapter-six_2634.html, accessed 13 May, 2014.

² Roderick, "The Minahasa: Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou," (2007), <http://www.theminahasa.net/indexen.html>. accessed May 13, 2014

This condition grossly affects people who hear the gospel presented by pastors or church members. Even though they accept truth presented but they are reluctant to be baptized because they see the dispute within the church.

This condition also affects the mind set of young pastors. Many young pastors are led to face this condition. These fresh graduates from college are involved in this way of leadership. More or less, this becomes a kind of leadership training or mentoring to them. These situations need more understanding about what the nature of politics is.

There is a tendency of nurturing political system in leadership among Seventh-day Adventist church pastors in Minahasa of East Indonesia Union Conference. There is a need of more understanding among SDA pastors in Minahasa in term of their calling in this ministry.

The purpose of this study is to help pastors to have better understanding regarding politic among church members. This understanding would help them to apply Spirit of Prophecy principles about politics which will help to cultivate unity among pastors as church leader.

This research will apply system analysis and theological reflection. It will analyze literature related to this topic. Organization of this research is in three chapters. The first chapter is the introduction that contains background, statement of the problem, the purpose of research, limitation of the study, delimitations of study, and methodology. The second chapter will discuss about Ellen G. White perspectives concerning politics in the Seventh Adventist Church. The third chapter will be conclusion, this chapter will include summary and implication of study.

Concepts of Power and Politic

Power and politics play a great role in the organizational life and behavior. McShane and Von Glinow describe power as the ability of a person, or group of people, to influence others¹. The person or group does not have to actually use this ability and does not even have to be aware of this ability. If an individual is perceived by others to have influence, he holds power. On the other hand, politics focus on getting, developing, and using power to achieve a desired result in situations of uncertainty or conflict over choices².

Power and political behavior pervades organizational life. It affects the leaders, managers, and subordinates in the organization. This chapter focuses on the understanding of concept of power and political behavior, the development and use of power in organizations, and the role of political processes play using that power.

Definition of Power and Politics in Organizations

Scholars give various definitions about power. Power generally defined as an ability possessed by someone in order to accomplish something according to his or her way³. Other scholars understand that power is the ability to affect other people's behavior, to get people to do what they otherwise might to do, to overcome resistance to changing directions, and to overcome opposition. It includes the ability to gather and use physical and human resources to reach the

¹ Steven L. McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow, "*Organizational Behavior*" 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009).

² Joseph E. Champoux, "*Organizational behavior: Essential tenets for a new millenium.*" (Canada: Southwestern College, 2000).

³ Jeffrey Pfeffer, "*Managing with power: Politics and Influence in Organizations*" (Boston: Harvard Business School, 1993).

person's goals (Kanter, Stein and Jick 1992)¹. However, in Morgan's (2006) study of learning organizations, no clear, consistent definition of power exists². Morgan perceives power as a medium, through which conflicts of interest are ultimately resolved³. Senge (1990) shares both these views with his observation that a political environment is one in which who is more important than what and power is both concentrated and wielded arbitrarily.⁴

Coopey and Bourgoyne (2000), in their studies of power, politics, and organizational learning, define politics as activities within organizations to acquire, develop, and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcomes. Their definition appears to stray from traditional insights that perceive power as the withholding or reallocation of resources rather than as a resource in itself⁵. It also suggests that politics is the means and power is the end. Their interpretation of power does not fully explain "other resources" but indicates that power as a resource is a tool, rather than a capacity to act as suggested by Cervero and Wilson (1994).⁶

French and Bell (1999) provide an Organization Development perspective on power and politics and in the process clarify the term resources. They suggest that (a) power is anything that creates dependence of one person or group on another and stems from possession of, or mediation of, desired resources such as an ability to reward or punish, control critical skills, knowledge or information, and/or an ability to solve critical problems; and (b) politics are the "battlefields" where people either win or lose, usually associated with decision-making, resource allocation, and conflict resolution⁷.

Wheatley's exploration of the "new science" sees organizational power as that which allows workplaces to organize relationships. It involves both the patterns of these relationships and the capacities available to form them. However, in her study of management theory, she portrays power from a traditional, organizational perspective and names power as both a force and a resource. She uses machine imagery to reflect such organizations, in which power is an elusive, energetic force if ever there was one, a measurable resource defined by "a share of the pie".⁸ Wheatley draws on this imagery to scorn organizational reverence for understanding parts in order to comprehend the whole and for thriving on setting boundaries, similar to machines, in which every piece knows its place.⁹

¹ Rosabeth M. Kanter, Barry A. Stein, and Todd Jick, *"The Challenge of Organizational Change: How Companies Experience It and Leaders Guide It"* (New York: The Free, 1992)

² Gareth Morgan, *"Images of Organization"* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2006).

³ Morgan, 2006.

⁴ Peter M. Senge, *"The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization"* (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 2006)

⁵ John Coopey and John Bourgoyne, "Politics and organizational learning" *Journal of Management Studies* 37(6), (2000): 869-885.

Coopey, John and Bourgoyne, John. "Politics and organizational learning" *Journal of Management Studies* 37(6), (2000): 869-885.

⁶ Ronald M. Cervero and Arthur L. Wilson, *"Planning Responsibly in Adult Education: A Guide to Negotiating Power and Interests"* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994)

⁷ Wendell French and Cecil H. Bell *"Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement"* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999). p. 28

⁸ Margaret J. Wheatley, *"Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World"* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1992).

⁹ Wheatley, 1992

In summary, power is the ability of those who hold it to achieve the outcomes they desire. It is the ability of a person to get another person to do something that he or she would not normally do. Thus, any time someone persuades another person to do something; he or she is exercising power. On the other hand, political behavior is getting, developing, and using power to reach a desired result. It often appears in situations of uncertainty or conflict over choices and happens outside accepted channels of authority.

The Sources of Power

Power in organizations can come from many sources. John French and Bertram Raven as cited in Hitt, Miller, and Colella developed one of the commonly used typologies for describing the bases of power. It includes five categories: legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power, and referent power. These five categories are organized in two categories the organizational bases power and the individual bases power.¹ In addition, information power is important in organizational life. It can be categorized as organizational power.

Organizational Bases of Power

This is the formal authority people get from an organization or society, often backed by policy or law. Organizational power refers to the capacity to persuade a person or group to work toward the accomplishment of organizational goals. It depends on the personality traits of the individual exercising the power. There are four types of organizational power. They are legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, and information power.

Legitimate Power. Legitimate power is similar to authority and is based on position and mutual agreement. This form of power is provided to individuals by the organization. Some managers resort to legitimate power if they are insecure with their ability to influence employees using other forms of power. The organization gives the manager decision authority that he or she can use to affect the behavior of subordinates. Assigning tasks and setting goals for completing them are examples of legitimate power.

Coercive Power. Coercive power relies on the management's ability to punish, threaten or discipline unacceptable behavior. The goal in using coercive power is to convince employees through fear to work toward reaching the organizational objectives. Threats of demotion, suspension or decrease in pay are examples of coercive power.

Reward Power. Reward power is used by offering rewards to encourage better performance from employees within the organization. Increases in salary and awards given based on things such as attendance or productivity are examples of reward power. This power depends upon the ability of the power wielder to give valued material rewards, such as money, benefits, time off, desired gifts, promotions or increases in pay or responsibility.

Information Power. Information power derives from the control and distribution of information in an organization. Deliberately controlling the receipt and distribution of information

¹ Michael A. Hitt, Chet C. Miller, and Adrienne Colella, "*Organizational Behavior: A Strategic Approach*" (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2006).

increases a manager's information power. When information is scarce, others become more dependent on the manager for information (Kotter 1990).¹

Personal Bases of Power

The personal bases of power flow from qualities or attributes of the leader or manager. Those bases also depend on the attribution of those qualities to the leader or manager by subordinates. The types of personal bases of power are referent power and expert power.

Referent Power. Referent power is based on the personal liking and individual subordinate has for a manager or leader. The more the subordinate identifies with the manager, the stronger the referent power. A manager or leader who is disliked by a subordinate has low referent power. This power is based on the charisma and interpersonal skills of the power holder.

Expert Power. Expert power is the power people derive from their skills, knowledge and experience and the organization's need for those skills and expertise. Unlike the others, this type of power is usually highly specific and limited to the particular area in which the expert is trained and qualified. Being well-informed and up to date with useful information is part of this power.

Among these five sources of power, creating a positive operating climate involves choosing the most appropriate compliance-gaining tactics, which tend to lead to greater "life" or job satisfaction.² McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, and Kearney (1985) claimed relying on expert, reward and referent power appeared to produce the greatest satisfaction, while reliance on coercive and legitimate power had the opposite effect³. Rahim (1989) found legitimate power useful in gaining compliance, but satisfaction from supervisees decreased⁴. Expert and referent power bases correlated with both compliance and satisfaction.

Political Behavior in Organizations

Organization is built up upon relationship of the organization members, leaders, and managers. Various elements can influence this relationship. One of these factors is political behavior. Political behavior plays an important role in the behavior of both leaders and subordinates when decisions are to be made and specific people in the organization show a preference on how things should be done.⁵

¹ John P. Kotter, *"A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs from Management"*. (New York: Free Press, 1990)

² Timothy Plax, Patricia Kearney, and Timothy M. Downs, "Communicating control in the classroom and satisfaction with teaching and students." *Communication Education* 35, (1986) 379-388.

³ James C. McCroskey, Virginia P. Richmond, Timothy Plax and Patricia Kearney, "Power in the classroom: Behavior alteration techniques, communication training and learning. *Communication Education* 34 (1995) 214-226.

⁴ Afzalur M. Rahim, "Relationship of Leader Power to Compliance and Satisfaction with Supervision: Evidence from A National Sample of Managers" *Journal of Management* 15, (1989) 545-556.

⁵ Michael A. Hitt, Chet C. Miller, and Adrienne Colella, 2006.

Henry Mintzberg, Mel Didier, and Gerry Arbic have the following viewpoints on what they label the system of politics.¹ The system of politics arises either by default, in the weakness of the systems of influence, or by design, to resist them. Formal power flowing down the chain of authority gets blocked or sidetracked - in the formal terms of organization theory, it gets displaced. In its place is substituted political power, in the form of a set of political games that the insiders play with each other - unofficial, non-sanctioned processes by which inside influencers seek to satisfy ostensibly parochial needs.

Political Maneuvering in Organizations

Political maneuvering in organizations consists of political strategies and tactics, which are specific political activities used to reach a goal. Joseph Champoux² points out the understanding of political strategy as a written or unwritten plan to reach a goal using specific political tactics. Political strategy can also be aimed at any target. It specifies various combinations and sequences of political tactics for dealing with different political events as the strategy unfolds. Hitt, Miller, & Colella give three political influence tactics. Upward political influence refers to individual or group influence on those in a superior position³. Lateral politics refer to attempts to influence targets at the same hierarchical level. Finally, downward influence refers to attempts to influence those below them in the hierarchy.

Political Tactics in Organizations

Political tactics involve either building power or using power unobtrusively. A political strategy can use a mix of tactics, moving from one to another as the political landscape changes⁴. A great deal of research has examined the political tactics used within or by organizations Gary Yukl, Helen Kim, and Cecilia M. Falbe. These tactics include the following:

Controlling of information. Information gives a great power in the political behavior. One technique of political behavior is to control as much information as possible. The more critical the information is had and the fewer people who have it, the larger the power base and influence of those who do the political tactics.

Decision making processes. Politically oriented decision maker can affect the choice of alternatives that favor themselves or their organizational units. A decision maker can exert his or her power to deftly affect the process by selectively emphasizing his or her favored alternative.

Controlling the agenda. Controlling the agenda as a common political technique. A manager for example wants to prevent a committee from approving a certain proposal. The manager might first try to keep the decision off the agenda entirely, perhaps claiming that it is not yet ready for consideration or try to have it placed last on the agenda.

¹ Henry Mintzberg, Mel Didier, and Gerry Arbic, “*Power in and Around Organizations*” (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983) p. 172-212

² Joseph E. Champoux, “*Organizational behavior: Essential tenets for a new millenium.*” (Canada: Southwestern College, 2000).

³ Michael A. Hitt, Chet C. Miller, and Adrienne Colella, 2006.

⁴ Robert W. Allen, Dan L. Madison, Lyman W. Porter, Patricia A. Renwick, and Bronston T. Mayes, “Organizational Politics: Tactics and Characteristics of Its Actors. *California Management Review* 22, (1979) 77-83.

Blaming and attacking others. One of the most popularly used tactics of organizational politics involves blaming and attacking others when bad things happen. A commonly used political tactic is finding a scapegoat, someone who could take the blame for some failure or wrongdoing.

Building coalition. The general goal of this technique is to convince others that everyone should work together to get certain things accomplished. For example, a manager who feels he or she does not control enough votes to pass an upcoming agenda item may visit with other managers before the meeting to urge them to side with him or her. If the manager's preferences are in the best interests of the organization, this may be a laudable strategy to follow¹.

Political behavior and its maneuvering in the organization can be minimized. The conditions that fuel organizational politics also give some clues about how to control dysfunctional political activities². Along with minimizing organizational politics, companies can limit the adverse effects of political perceptions by giving employees more control over their work and keeping them informed about organizational events.

Biblical Approach to Manage Power and Political Behavior In Organizations

The church is an organization as a living organism which has a dynamic growth to achieve its missions and objectives. Paul describes the church, using the metaphor of the human body in 1 Corinthians 12:12-26, as being made up of many parts, each interrelated and reliant upon the other. Each part of the body carries out a particular function. The members work together to accomplish the mission of Christ through the church.

Implementing Effective Type of Power in the Church Organization

The Bible gives a clear concept that church leadership and management is a shared power concept. Stott (2002) says, "Christian leaders serve not their own interests but rather the interests of others" (Phil. 2:4) (p. 27)³. This simple principle should deliver the leader from excessive individualism, extreme isolation, and self-centered empire building. Leadership teams, therefore, are healthier than solo leadership for several reasons (Gangel 2007)⁴.

In connection with the church characteristics above, positional power is not the type of power that Jesus endorses and models. On the contrary, Jesus teaches that referent power is the basis for influencing others. In Matthew 20:20-29, the mother of James and John asks Jesus for positional power for her sons. Jesus rebukes her, making it clear positional power is not wielded by his followers. The implication is that any power the disciples have is to be referent, which is derived from their serving of others.

In another example of how leaders are to use referent power rather than positional power, Peter admonishes church leaders to be examples rather than telling others how to behave.

¹ Gary Yukl, Helen Kim, and Cecilia M. Falbe, "Antecedents Of Influence Outcomes" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 81, (1996) 309-317.

² Steven L. McShane and Mary Ann Von Glinow, "*Organizational Behavior*" 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008).

³ John Stott, "*Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Model of Church, Gospel and Ministry*" (England: InterVarsity, 2002)

⁴ Kenneth O. Gangel, "The Meaning of Leadership". In J. D. Berkley, *Leadership handbook of management and administration* (pp. 177-183). (Manila, Philippines: CLC, 2007)

“Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock” 1 Peter 5:2-3 (NIV).

Paul’s instructions to the Colossians are clear directions for effective interpersonal relations, the basis for referent power.

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity” Colossians 3:12-14 (NIV).

In summary, referent power is consistent with the teachings of Jesus and the New Testament. There are many examples of Jesus and others exercising referent power. Referent power is fundamentally based upon the second greatest commandment as given by Jesus to love others as ourselves. This is perhaps the greatest challenge that all leaders face.

Managing Political Behavior in Church Organizations

Political behavior has been a long discussion in the church organization. Scholars and church leaders have discussed this issue over the years. Pauline (2011) views that there are strong and continuing efforts to make sure the composition of leadership in church organization roughly reflects the ethnic makeup of the membership¹. Whether people like it or not, the political behavior exists in the church organizations. Although, politics is not the ideal, however, it is a fact of life within the church². Therefore, the politics needs to be managed or minimized from its existence. The followings are some principles or guidelines to manage and minimize the political behavior in the church.

The leaders and managers must practice humility and self-distrust

Paul discusses such an approach in a powerful passage when he gave counsel to Timothy. It is found in 2 Timothy 2:24–26:

“And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” (NIV).

Transforming the attitude of others to avoid political movement in the church begins from the leaders’ side. Practicing humility, gentleness, and meekness of leaders, it will open a way for God to transform the hearts of others (1 Peter 5:5; Mark 9:33-37, Luke 9:48). This principle can be

¹ Jon Paulin, “Politics in the church,” *Ministry*, August 2011, pp. 15-17.

² Duncan B. Forrester, *Theology and Politics*, (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988)

a good counter to politics in the church. It is not to demand our fair share of whatever, but to be willing to yield our rights for the sake of the whole¹.

Develop fairness management and sharing power

The problem in the church or organizations is caused by competing interests; the solution is to make sure the neglected segment of the church or organization is represented in the decision-making processes of the church. Fairness and management play an important role to minimize the political existence in organization. Gangel (2007) suggests a learning spirit, combined with empathy, will produce a passion for justice.² When the people know that the leader intends to be fair, they are more willing to trust the process.

Reduce Uncertainty

Another way to minimize destructive political behavior is to reduce uncertainty. Clarifying goals and responsibilities makes it easier to assess people's behaviors and makes politics difficult to hide. For the church organizations to be effective, they need to have clear, obtainable goals that focus the ministry of the church. Without clear goals, the mission and vision of the church can easily become muddle in the fog of ambiguity. (Prov 21:5; Acts 20:16; Acts 18:21)

Use the intrinsic motivation to the workers and organizations members

Empower the workers and members with the intrinsic motivation to prevent political behavior. There is no greater privilege than to be called to be a part of Christ body and there are no greater responsibilities than serving in His church. "You did not choose me, but I chose you" (John 15:16). (John 4:34; John 6:38; John 17:4).

Manage informal coalitions and cliques

Influencing the norms and beliefs that steer group behaviors can ensure that employees continue to serve organizational interests. Be sensitive to detect the political behavior movement in the organizations or church at the early stage and solve it carefully before grow to the upper level. (Matthew 18: 15-20; 21-35).

It would be nice if politics could be eliminated from the church. Often in the heat of conflict people open their Bibles with a fresh willingness to learn and grow. Often in the heat of conflict the members are forced to engage the other and discover that they are partly right. Pauline (2011) says "the One who sets up kings and puts them down is well able to manage the mess that human politics can create, even in the church" (p. 17)³.

Summary

Power is a person's ability to get something done the way the person wants it done, including the ability to gather physical and human resources and use them to reach the person's

¹ Jon Paulin, "Politics in the church," *Ministry*, August 2011, pp. 15-17.

² Kenneth O. Gangel, "The Meaning of Leadership". In J. D. Berkley, *Leadership handbook of management and administration* (pp. 177-183). (Manila, Philippines: CLC, 2007)

³ Jon Paulin, "Politics in the church," *Ministry*, August 2011, pp. 15-17.

goals. People's powers in organizations also have individual and organizational bases and come from different sources. On the other hand, political behavior in organizations focuses on getting, developing, and using power to reach a desired result. Lateral relationships in organizations are the major places where power and political behavior play key roles. Political strategies are broad plans for reaching some goal using political tactics. Political tactics are political behaviors that become part of a political strategy. Five major political tactics exist: controlling information, decision making process, controlling the agenda, blaming and attacking others, and building coalition.

The Scriptures teach that referent power is the basis for influencing others. It is the power of disciples to serve others. Referent power is fundamentally based upon the commandment of Jesus to love one another. However, although the church belief to love and serve other is very clear, the political behavior is a fact of life which exists in the church life. The followings are some principles to manage and minimize the existence of politics in the church: the leaders and managers must practice humility and self-distrust, develop fairness management and sharing power, reduce uncertainty, use the intrinsic motivation to the workers and organizations members, and manage the informal coalition and cliques.

Ellen G. White Perspectives on Politics in the Church and Church Leaders

This chapter will discuss writings of Ellen G. White in relations to politics. This will be go into two sections. In the first section will be discussing the role of politics in Christian daily life, its impacts on physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of God's people. It will also discuss briefly about politics as it listed among last days crime. Second section will be discussing the influence of politics upon church leaders. In this case pastors and teachers in general.

God's People

The Secret of Victory of God's People is Moral not Politics

White (1886; 2002) uses the experience of Daniel to describe one element on how people of God may win in the battle of sin¹. Daniel moral character that guarantees his champion. Even though he has the opportunity to utilize his political chance, however he preferred to exercise his trust in God. White said,

Through the moral courage of this one man who chose, even in the face of death, to take a right course rather than a politic one, Satan was defeated, and God honored. For the deliverance of Daniel from the power of the lions was a striking evidence that the Being whom he worshiped was the true and living God. (par.7)².

Political Knowledge Affects Physical and Mental Power

Politics is not just affecting the harmony of the church. It has to do with the psychological and mental faculties of people. As one who acknowledged as church leader White is not absent with this concern.

¹ Ellen G. White. Daniel an Example of Faithfulness, *The Signs of the Times*. Vol. 12. OAKLAND, CA: International Tract and Missionary Society (1886; 2002)

² White, 1886; 2002.

You are a mental dyspeptic. Your mind has been crammed with knowledge of all sorts, -- politics, history, theology, and anecdote,--only a part of which can be retained by the abused memory. Much less, information, with a mind well disciplined, would be of far greater value. You have neglected to train your mind to vigorous action; therefore, your will and inclination have controlled you and been your masters instead of your servants. The result is a loss of physical and mental power (White (1855a; 2002. pp. 497-498)¹.

Politics affects true character development

The bible clearly stated that people of God should live out different attitude with those who are worldly or secular people (Rom. 12:2). Even more apostle James categorize that “friendship with the world is hatred toward God” and “anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (Jam 4:4. NIV). In the same tone, White (1855b:2002) stated that

Your relations with the world must be changed, and a decided separation must take place. The positions which you occupy, which are continually opening to your doors of temptation, must be given up. Avoid politics; shun contention. Keep clear of every office which would encourage those traits in your character that need to be battled down and overcome. (pp. 339-340)²

In the context of character development of His children, God wrote these words.

Politics is A Last Day Crime

Bible informs that at the last day crime will be increased (2 Tim 3:13). In some parts of the bible list thing of behavior that is categorized as crime. White (1925; 2002) mentioned politics as one among crime in last days. Here is what she said,

We are living in the midst of an "epidemic of crime," at which thoughtful, God-fearing men everywhere stand shocked. The corruption that prevails, it is beyond the power of the human pen to describe. Every day brings fresh revelations of political strife, bribery, and fraud. Every day brings its heart-sickening record of violence and lawlessness, of indifference to human suffering, of brutal, fiendish destruction of human life. Every day testifies to the increase of insanity, murder, and suicide. Who can doubt that satanic agencies are at work among men with increasing activity to distract and corrupt the mind, and defile and destroy the body? (pp. 142, 143; ChS. p. 53)³

Pastors and Teachers

This section will describe some counsels that Ellen White addresses to teachers and pastors of SDA church about politics. She dealt with some aspects in their ministry, for example, their

¹ White, E. G *Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 4*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press. (1855a; 2002),

² Ellen G. White *Testimonies for the Church, Vol.5*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press. (1855b; 2002),

³ Ellen G. White *Christian Service*. Washington, DC: Review and Herald. (1925; 2002).

employment, their influence in the church, and their involvement in politics activity. “Gospel ministers are to keep their office free from all things secular or political, employing all their time and talents in lines of Christian effort¹.” The following paragraphs will discuss it in detail.

Should Refrain from Talking Politics

White was concern about influencing or putting into the mind of students or church members all political ideas. She disqualified teachers in church school to express their prejudices about politics. These restrictions include if they are pro or contra to any politician and their ideas. The main reason for not doing this is because they will influence others, in this case students, to accept their theories or sentiments about politics (White, 1923; 2002)². At the end, this church will be place into divisions.

White (1923; 2002) continues to say to teachers that they need to modify their attitude regarding politics. She stresses this by saying,

It is a mistake for you to link your interests with any political party, to cast your vote with them or for them. Those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are to possess the elements of reconciliation. Is it their work to make enemies in the political world? No, no. (p.478)³

It is true that in doing God’s work, preaching the gospel to all the church, people of God need to go and mingling with people. This is one of method that Jesus perform while working in this world. However, in relation to politics White (1923; 2002) said,

God does not call upon us to enlarge our influence by mingling with society, by linking up with men on political questions, but by standing as individual parts of His great whole, with Christ as our head. Christ is our Prince, and as His subjects, we are to do the work appointed us by God (p. 478).⁴

Here she emphasizes that working together with politician in order to be popular in the community is not a better way. It is only by connecting life wholly with Christ. This is the way that accordance to God in finishing God’s work.

Should Relieved from Work

God forbid teachers and pastors to be involved in politics. If there is any who wants to be active in this line, Ellen White warns them that they “should be relieved of their work and responsibilities without delay; for the Lord will not co-operate with them.”⁵ In addition to this Ellen

¹ Ellen G. White, (1855b; 2002), p. 252

² Ellen G. White (1923; 2002). *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press.

³ White, 1923; 2002.

⁴ White, 1923; 2002.

⁵ White, 1923; 2002. p. 477

White uses a statement that is stronger than “his credentials must be taken from him.”¹ Over and over again God through Ellen White gives these statements to pastors. In the context of pastoral work she says,

There is a large vineyard to be cultivated; but while Christians are to work among unbelievers, they are not to appear like worldlings. They are not to spend their time talking politics or acting politics; for by so doing they give the enemy opportunity to come in and cause variance and discord. Those in the ministry who desire to stand as politicians, should have their credentials taken from them; for this work God has not given to high or low among His people.²

This shows how far politicking should be in the ministry of pastors and teachers.

Should not be paid with Tithe

Seventh Day Adventist church believe and practice tithe as the source of pastors' salary. After church members gathered the tithe then they sent to mission or conference offices and use as pastors' salary. However, when pastors like to speak politic, Ellen White forbids them receive salary from tithe. She said, “The tithe should not be used to pay any one for speechifying on political questions.”³

Need to Repent

Teachers and pastors' position as leaders in the church, whether in the school or in the field, are leading God's people into spiritual development. They cannot avoid one thing that is the fact that they need to be more spiritual in their life. The need to put aside all things that refrained them from performing their work smoothly. This needs them to repent every day. Among other things, that they need to be converted is politicking. Ellen White said,

“Every teacher, minister, or leader in our ranks who is stirred with a desire to ventilate his opinions on political questions, should be converted by a belief in the truth, or give up his work. His influence must tell as a laborer together with God in winning souls to Christ, or his credentials must be taken from him.”⁴

If pastors do not repent from this then the effects is only one that is harm in the church. Just like Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, pastors who are politicking are “mingling the common fire with the sacred. [They] dishonor God.”⁵ This is because they are not conveying the truth.

¹ White, 1925; 2002. p. 477

² Ibid, p. 395

³ Ellen G. White (1923; 2002). *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*. Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press. p. 477

⁴ Ellen G. White (1923; 2002). *Fundamentals of Christian Education, Instruction for the Home, the School, and the Church; Fundamentals of Christian Education; Christian Education; Fundamentals of Christian Education*. Southern Publishing Association. p. 477

⁵ White, 1923; 2002

Involve in Politic are not Children of God

This heading seems to be rigid. However, this is because of what Ellen White wrote while she compared those who are well educated in religion with God's children.

The Lord desires all who bear the message for these last days to understand that there is a great difference between professors of religion who are not doers of the word, and the children of God, who are sanctified through the truth, who have that faith that works by love and purifies the soul.¹

There is possibility for people not to be doer of God's word even though they have knowledge of religion, and even more believe in it. However, these people will be different with God's children when they involve in politics because they are mixing the truth with the customs of these last days' customs.

"The Lord speaks of those who claim to believe the truth for this time yet see nothing inconsistent in their taking part in politics, mingling with the contending elements of these last days, as the circumcised who mingle with the uncircumcised, and He declares that He will destroy both classes together without distinction. They are doing a work that God has not set them to do. They dishonor God by their party spirit and contention, and He will condemn both alike."²

Church leaders need to see clearly that taking part in politics and mix this element with proclamation of the gospel will lead into destruction. Because this is a sign that they are not honoring God.

Ministers should not Create Schisms

In John 17 Jesus prays that God gives His disciples unity. This is not only for the twelve but also for "those who will believe in me through their message, (Joh 17:20 NIV)." The basis of this request is because Jesus and God is one. Pastors as church leaders should fortify this unity in their ministry. However, when they involved in politics, they are acting the opposite.

Those who stand as educators, as ministers, as laborers together with God in any line, have no battles to fight in the political world. Their citizenship is in heaven. The Lord calls upon them to stand as separate and peculiar people. He would have no schisms in the body of believers. His people are to possess the elements of reconciliation. (White, 1995; 2002, p. 91)³

Here is rest the pastor's responsibility. They need to enhance unity in the church. Addressing the failure of Israel leaders White (2002) said that it because they were linking their effort with political power instead of coming to God.

"Some of the leaders in Israel felt keenly their loss of prestige and wished that this might be regained. But instead of turning away from those practices which had brought weakness

¹ White, 1923; 2002, p. 482)

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1923; 2002). p. 482

³ Ellen G. White, *Pastoral Ministry*. (Silver Spring, MD: General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Ministerial Association, 1995).

to the kingdom, they continued in iniquity, flattering themselves that when occasion arose, they would attain to the political power they desired by allying themselves with the heathen.”¹

White wrote this statement to describe the condition of Israel when they went to Assyrian and Egypt in order to get peace (Amos. 5:13; 7:11; 12:1). In fact, that was a failure in their position as people of God. In the same manner for church leader today. When they come to the associations with the worldly political way in order to get prestige.

Christ is Model

While Jesus was working in this world, He faced with political matters. However, He choose not to get involved in this matter. White gave reason why Jesus refused to implicate in politics. Again, and again, Christ was facing question regarding legal and political issues. But He refused to interfere in temporal matters. He knew that in the political world there were iniquitous proceedings and great tyranny. But His only exposure of these was the proclamation of Bible truth.² The main focus of Jesus ministry is to teach the principles of the law of God and spoke of the blessings found in obeying these principles.

As a reply to what Jesus showed to pastors. One among other important thing is to employ all the best to please Jesus. White says,

“It is not engaging in political speeches, either in or out of the pulpit. It is in considering with fear and trembling every word we utter. Where the people assemble to worship God let not a word be spoken that shall divert the mind from the great central interest-- Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”³

Instead of involving in the political issues, pastors as church leaders need to focus on studying and preaching Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

This conclusion chapter will summarize the study content. First. Politics is taking place into pastoral leadership especially in Minahasa Conference, Indonesia. This practice has its chance to be practice among pastors because cultural background especially in leadership election has its similarity. However, it brings contention among pastors and affect the mission of the church.

Second, Ellen G. White as one of founder of SDA church paid attention to the practices of politics in the church. In this paper, researcher divide the counsel into two section first what are addressed to church members as general and the second for Pastors and teachers as leaders of the church. For church members politics is restricted because it brings evil effects unto physical, mental and spiritual life. They need to avoid politics in order to develop true God’s character. It can create division among church members. And the most important is if Christian’s cling into it, God would not acknowledge them as His people.

¹ Ellen G. White, *The Story of Prophets and Kings*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1943). p. 280-281

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church, Vol.9*. (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press. (1855c; 2002) p. 218.

³ White, 1855c; 2002, p. 331

For Church leaders, pastors and teachers, their role is to form the mindset of church members. This role prohibits them to politics. They will not bring unity in the church when they are involved politics in their discourses. Even in more firm statement Ellen White ask them to be disqualified from work which paid by tithe.

Lastly, in everyday life undertakings Jesus should be become a role model. While He was on the earth, Jesus never practice politics. So, every Christian need to be away from politics.