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## The Role of Christian Education in Reducing the Failure of Local Wisdom-based Christian Leadership Ethics

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### Abstract

*This article explores the role of Christian education in mitigating ethical failures in Christian leadership, using a qualitative literature review approach. Ethical failures in Christian leadership have become a significant concern, as they undermine the integrity and credibility of church leaders, impacting both congregations and society. The paper examines scriptural principles and theological perspectives that shape ethical leadership, emphasizing the importance of character, integrity, and accountability as essential components of Christian leadership. Key passages from the Bible, such as 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, are analyzed to highlight the ethical expectations for church leaders. Furthermore, the study delves into how Christian education plays a transformative role in shaping the moral and ethical development of leaders, through the integration of theology, ethics, and practical leadership skills. The findings suggest that Christian education provides a foundation for character formation, spiritual growth, and the cultivation of godly leadership practices. By fostering an environment of accountability and ethical training, Christian education can help prevent ethical lapses in leadership and contribute to the restoration of moral integrity in church leadership.*

**Keywords:** *accountability; christian ethics; cultural conflicts; ethical leadership; spiritual formation*

### Introduction

Christian leadership plays a critical role in the development and sustainability of churches and faith-based communities. Leaders are not only spiritual guides but also moral exemplars whose conduct significantly shapes the ethical climate of congregations and their witness to the broader society. Christian leaders are called to reflect Christ-like virtues such as integrity, humility, faithfulness, and servant leadership, as articulated in biblical passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (Venter & Hermans, 2020). These values are not only theological ideals but also ethical imperatives that guide the personal and communal lives of believers. When embodied effectively, Christian leadership fosters spiritual growth, communal harmony, and social transformation (Magezi & Madimutsa, 2023).

However, in recent years, ethical failures in Christian leadership have surfaced with increasing frequency and intensity. Moral scandals involving sexual misconduct, financial mismanagement, authoritarianism, and spiritual abuse have eroded public trust, weakened the moral authority of church institutions, and caused deep wounds in congregations. These

failures are not isolated incidents but often symptomatic of deeper issues related to leadership formation, theological understanding, and institutional accountability. They raise urgent questions about the effectiveness of current leadership development models, particularly in how they cultivate ethical discernment and spiritual maturity.

Christian education has long been considered a vital mechanism for the formation of ethical leadership within the church. Through a holistic integration of biblical theology, moral instruction, and practical leadership training, Christian education aims to nurture leaders who are both spiritually grounded and ethically resilient (Venter & Hermans, 2020). Educational programs that emphasize spiritual formation, character development, and ethical decision-making can serve as preventative measures against moral lapses. Yet, despite its potential, Christian education is often framed within Western pedagogical paradigms that may not fully resonate with or address the ethical realities of leaders in diverse cultural contexts.

In many global South and indigenous communities, including those in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, local wisdom—the moral and cultural values rooted in the lived experiences of communities—has historically functioned as a source of ethical orientation. Concepts such as *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) (Monang, 2022), *dalihan na tolu* (relational ethics in Batak culture) (Napitupulu et al., 2024), *musyawarah* (deliberative consensus) (Faradila, A. N., & Dewi, 2023), and *adat* (customary law) (Syarif & Paramitha Darmayanti, 2023) illustrate how ethical norms are deeply embedded in local traditions. These indigenous frameworks often emphasize relational harmony, communal accountability, respect for elders, and ecological stewardship—values that align with and can reinforce biblical ethics.

However, current scholarly discourse on Christian leadership ethics and formation has largely neglected the constructive role of local wisdom as an integral component of ethical education. While studies have examined Christian education and leadership development separately, few have intentionally explored how indigenous moral frameworks can be harmonized with Christian theological education to produce culturally grounded ethical leadership. This oversight represents a significant research gap, particularly in postcolonial contexts where imported theological frameworks may lack cultural resonance or fail to address community-specific ethical challenges.

This article seeks to fill that gap by critically examining how Christian education can reduce the failure of Christian leadership ethics through the integration of local wisdom. Drawing on a qualitative literature review, it explores the theological, pedagogical, and cultural dimensions of ethical leadership formation. The study proposes that by incorporating indigenous ethical values into Christian education, churches can develop a more contextualized and transformative approach to leadership training—one that not only reinforces biblical morality but also affirms cultural identity and relevance.

The novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary and integrative approach, bringing together Christian education, leadership ethics, and indigenous wisdom within a unified framework. Unlike conventional models that treat ethics as a set of abstract moral rules, this article emphasizes ethics as a lived, relational, and communal reality. It argues that ethical failures are not merely personal deficiencies but often reflect systemic shortcomings in leadership formation and cultural engagement. Therefore, addressing them requires a reimagined Christian education model that is both theologically rooted and culturally attuned.

By advancing this perspective, the article contributes to the ongoing conversation about ethical leadership in the church and offers practical insights for theological educators, church leaders, and policymakers seeking to cultivate trustworthy, humble, and culturally sensitive Christian leaders in an increasingly pluralistic and morally complex world.

## Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on a comprehensive literature review to explore the role of Christian education in addressing ethical failures in Christian leadership, particularly through the integration of local wisdom. Qualitative research is well-suited for examining complex theological and cultural dynamics, offering in-depth insights into how moral and spiritual formation occurs within educational contexts (Creswell, 2014). The study draws from a diverse array of data sources, including scholarly articles, theological texts, case studies, and documents related to Christian education and indigenous ethical systems. These sources were selected based on their relevance to the intersections of Christian leadership, ethics, and local wisdom traditions, such as communal harmony, mutual accountability, and relational leadership values.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and key insights that reveal how Christian education contributes to ethical leadership grounded in both Scripture and contextual values. Central themes that emerged include the formation of character and accountability, the importance of biblical ethical standards, and the transformative role of local wisdom in leadership training. Indigenous concepts—such as *dalihan na tolu* (Batak), *gotong royong* (Java), and *musyawarah* (Indonesia)—were examined as culturally embedded ethical systems that align with Christian values and can strengthen moral resilience in leaders. By integrating these themes, the study presents a culturally attuned educational model that affirms both theological integrity and the moral resources of local communities.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Biblical Foundation and Theological Perspectives*

The biblical foundation for ethical leadership is deeply rooted in scriptural principles that emphasize character, integrity, and the moral conduct expected of those who lead God's people. Ethical leadership, according to Scripture, is not only about the decisions leaders make but also about the character they embody and model to others. Biblical leaders are expected to reflect God's holiness and righteousness, guiding others with wisdom, humility, and justice. Passages like 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 set forth clear expectations for those in leadership positions, outlining the virtues that should define their lives and conduct. These principles form the bedrock for understanding what constitutes ethical leadership in a Christian context, highlighting that a leader's moral character is just as important as their theological knowledge.

1 Timothy 3:1-7 is one of the most comprehensive passages that outlines the qualities expected of church leaders. Paul writes that an overseer must be "above reproach," a term that speaks to the leader's reputation, integrity, and moral uprightness. This passage highlights key virtues such as temperance, self-control, and the ability to manage one's household well. These qualities ensure that a leader can be trusted with the spiritual well-being of the

congregation. The passage emphasizes that a leader must be blameless and not given to drunkenness, violence, or greed, further reinforcing the idea that ethical leadership involves a moral lifestyle that aligns with biblical values (Mabey et al., 2017). Moreover, the ability to teach and communicate biblical truths clearly and lovingly is presented as an essential characteristic of a leader, showing that ethics in leadership is not merely about personal conduct but also about leading others through sound doctrine.

Titus 1:5-9 similarly emphasizes character as a central aspect of leadership. Paul instructs Titus to appoint leaders who are “blameless,” whose lives exemplify the teachings of Christ. Leaders must be “faithful to their wives,” “hospitable,” “self-controlled,” and “upright,” which are all markers of ethical behavior. These qualifications underscore the importance of integrity in both personal and public life (J. D. Henson, 2018). Paul further stresses that leaders should be able to “encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it,” pointing to the necessity of combining personal ethical integrity with the ability to teach others and defend the faith (Brinda, 2024). The connection between personal morality and effective leadership is made clear, as leaders must be both examples of godliness and defenders of the truth.

In both of these passages, ethical leadership is not an isolated quality but is embedded in a broader framework of spiritual maturity and responsibility. Ethical leadership in the biblical sense is rooted in a deep personal relationship with God, where the leader’s character is shaped by divine values. This relationship influences all aspects of their leadership, from their interactions with others to their approach to decision-making. Leaders are expected to reflect God's holiness and justice in their actions, ensuring that their leadership aligns with biblical principles of truth, fairness, and righteousness. This foundational view of leadership emphasizes that those who are called to lead the church or any Christian community must lead with integrity, prioritizing the well-being of others over personal gain (Byiringiro & Ganu, 2024).

The concept of integrity in biblical leadership is not limited to external behavior but also encompasses the leader's inner motivations and attitudes. Jesus’ teachings provide further insights into the integrity required of leaders. In Matthew 23:27-28, Jesus criticizes the Pharisees for their outward displays of righteousness while being corrupt on the inside. He condemns hypocrisy, which is the opposite of integrity, and highlights that true leadership is marked by a purity of heart and actions. The ethical leader, therefore, is one who does not seek to appear righteous but who genuinely lives out the values they teach. This internal-external consistency is crucial for ethical leadership, as it demonstrates authenticity and trustworthiness (Gumusay, 2019).

The Bible also highlights the importance of humility in leadership, a characteristic that is integral to ethical conduct. In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul writes, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” This passage teaches that ethical leaders should lead with a servant heart, putting the needs of others above their own. Humility prevents leaders from becoming self-centered or power-hungry, which can lead to unethical behavior. By following Christ’s example of servanthood, leaders can foster a culture

of humility and ethical conduct in the communities they lead (Worthington & Worthington, 2019).

In addition to humility, ethical leadership is deeply connected to the idea of accountability. Scripture teaches that leaders are not above reproach and must be held accountable for their actions. Hebrews 13:17 encourages the congregation to “obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account.” This underscores the responsibility that leaders have to live according to the standards set by God, knowing that they will give an account to Him for how they have led. The concept of accountability ensures that leaders remain faithful to their calling and do not fall into ethical failure due to unchecked power or influence (Mookgo, 2018).

The need for accountability is also emphasized in James 3:1, where it states, “Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.” This verse highlights the gravity of leadership in the Christian context, as teachers and leaders will be judged more severely for their influence on others. Ethical leaders, therefore, must be vigilant in maintaining their integrity and be open to correction and guidance from others. The call to accountability serves as a safeguard against ethical lapses, reminding leaders that their actions affect the spiritual well-being of those they lead.

Moreover, the Scriptures provide numerous examples of both positive and negative leadership, offering valuable lessons in ethical conduct. Leaders like Moses, David, and Paul exemplify qualities of humility, integrity, and accountability, serving as models for Christian leaders today. However, there are also examples of failed leadership, such as King Saul and Judas Iscariot, whose ethical failures serve as warnings for contemporary leaders. These biblical narratives demonstrate the consequences of ethical lapses in leadership, reinforcing the importance of maintaining personal integrity and accountability (Gumusay, 2019).

The biblical foundation for ethical leadership is rooted in scriptural principles that emphasize character, integrity, humility, and accountability. Key passages such as 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 set forth clear guidelines for leaders, outlining the virtues that should define their conduct. Ethical leadership, as described in Scripture, requires leaders to live lives that reflect God’s holiness and righteousness, guiding others with wisdom, justice, and compassion. The importance of integrity, accountability, and humility in leadership is consistently emphasized throughout the Bible, providing a framework for Christian leaders to follow in order to lead effectively and ethically (Jones et al., 2018).

Theological views on human nature, sin, and redemption have profound implications for understanding ethical failures in leadership. In Christian theology, human nature is understood as inherently fallen due to the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). This fallen nature results in a propensity toward sin and moral failure, which can manifest in both personal and institutional contexts, including in Christian leadership. The Apostle Paul underscores the pervasive nature of sin in Romans 3:23, stating, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” This recognition of humanity’s fallen state provides a foundational context for understanding why ethical failures occur, even among those in leadership positions. Leaders, like all people, are susceptible to sin and need the transforming power of Christ to overcome their weaknesses and lead with integrity (Kretzschmar, 2020).

Sin, according to Christian theology, is not only a personal failure but also has corporate implications. Ethical failures in leadership can have far-reaching consequences, affecting entire communities and even the broader witness of the Church. As leaders fall into sin, whether through personal moral lapses or systemic failures, their actions undermine the trust placed in them by their congregations and society. This is particularly damaging in the context of Christian leadership, where leaders are called to be exemplars of godly living. Theological perspectives on sin remind Christian leaders that their role is not just to lead others but to reflect the character of Christ, a role that requires ongoing spiritual vigilance and accountability (Jura, 2021).

The concept of redemption is central to the Christian faith and offers hope for addressing ethical failures. In the theological narrative, redemption refers to the act of God reconciling humanity to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This act of redemption is essential for understanding how ethical failures can be addressed, as it provides the means for forgiveness, restoration, and transformation. In Colossians 1:13-14, Paul writes, "For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." This redemption not only restores individuals to a right relationship with God but also empowers them to live in a way that reflects the ethical and moral standards of the Kingdom of God (Matijević, 2020).

Redemption, however, is not a one-time event but an ongoing process that continues throughout the life of the believer. Theologically, this process is often referred to as sanctification, the gradual transformation of the believer into the likeness of Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3, Paul writes, "It is God's will that you should be sanctified." Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers to overcome sin and live righteous lives. This transformative process is vital for Christian leaders, as it is through sanctification that they are equipped to lead with moral integrity and avoid the pitfalls of ethical failure. Sanctification involves not only a change in behavior but also a renewal of the mind and heart, which enables leaders to make ethical decisions that align with God's will (Coulter, 2020).

The role of Christian education in this theological context is crucial, as it is the vehicle through which individuals are taught and formed in the ways of God. Education in the Christian faith is not limited to the acquisition of theological knowledge but also includes the formation of character and ethical values. Christian education plays a transformative role in sanctification by providing the tools and environments for spiritual growth. By immersing students in Scripture, prayer, and the study of Christian doctrine, educational institutions foster an atmosphere in which students can encounter the Holy Spirit and grow in their knowledge of God's will. This process of spiritual formation enables leaders to internalize biblical ethics, which then guides their actions and decisions in leadership roles (Kretzschmar, 2020).

Through Christian education, individuals learn not only what is right but also why it is right and how to apply these principles in everyday life. By incorporating ethical teaching alongside theological training, Christian education helps shape leaders who are equipped to navigate the ethical challenges they will face in their ministries. For instance, a curriculum that integrates biblical ethics with practical leadership training teaches students how to make

decisions that reflect Christian values. This educational approach prepares leaders to deal with real-world ethical dilemmas in ways that align with the teachings of Scripture and the character of Christ (J. Henson & Hemby, 2023).

Furthermore, Christian education emphasizes the importance of community in the process of sanctification. In Hebrews 10:24-25, believers are encouraged to “spur one another on toward love and good deeds” and to “not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another.” The communal aspect of Christian education is vital because it fosters mutual accountability and support. Within a learning community, leaders-in-training can encourage one another, hold each other accountable, and provide support as they grow in their faith and character. This communal aspect of education helps reinforce ethical behavior, as students are reminded of the importance of living out their faith in the context of relationships with others.

The process of sanctification through Christian education also involves developing spiritual disciplines that shape ethical leadership. Practices such as prayer, fasting, meditation on Scripture, and confession play key roles in spiritual formation. These disciplines cultivate a heart of humility, repentance, and devotion to God, which are essential for ethical leadership. As leaders engage in these practices, they are increasingly conformed to the image of Christ and become better equipped to lead others with integrity and moral clarity. Christian education, therefore, is not just about imparting knowledge but also about nurturing the spiritual and ethical growth of leaders through the formation of godly habits (Setran & Wilhoit, 2020).

Theologically, the relationship between education, sanctification, and ethical leadership is reciprocal. As individuals grow in their knowledge of God and His Word, they are increasingly transformed into His likeness, which empowers them to lead with greater integrity and righteousness. Conversely, as leaders grow in their ability to lead ethically, they demonstrate the power of the gospel to transform lives, thereby providing a living testimony of God's work in the world. This reciprocal relationship underscores the importance of Christian education in nurturing leaders who are not only knowledgeable but also spiritually and ethically mature, equipped to face the challenges of leadership with wisdom and grace.

Theological perspectives on human nature, sin, and redemption provide a framework for understanding ethical failures in leadership and the role of Christian education in addressing these failures. The fallen nature of humanity and the ongoing need for redemption highlight the importance of sanctification in the life of a leader. Christian education plays a transformative role in this process, helping leaders grow in character, integrity, and spiritual maturity. Through a comprehensive approach that includes the study of Scripture, the cultivation of spiritual disciplines, and the support of a community of believers, Christian education equips leaders to lead with ethical clarity and humility, fulfilling their calling to serve God and His people (Magezi & Madimutsa, 2023).

### ***Challenges of Ethical Failures in Christian Leadership***

Ethical failures in Christian leadership are often the result of a complex interplay between internal vulnerabilities and external pressures. Among the most prominent internal causes is the lack of intentional spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is not merely an

academic endeavor, but a lifelong process of growing in relationship with God through disciplines such as prayer, Scripture study, worship, and accountability. When this foundational process is neglected, Christian leaders are more susceptible to moral lapses, as they drift from a Christ-centered identity. The absence of a deep, ongoing connection with God leads to pride, self-reliance, and moral fatigue—conditions that often precede ethical failures. Leaders who lack spiritual depth may also find it difficult to discern right from wrong when faced with complex ethical decisions (Odongo & Wang, 2018).

Another significant internal challenge is the misuse of authority and the absence of robust accountability mechanisms. In many Christian organizations, especially those with hierarchical or charismatic structures, leaders often operate with unchecked power. Without proper accountability—whether from peers, elders, or congregational structures—leaders may begin to view themselves as beyond correction. This isolation fosters environments where unethical behavior is either overlooked or rationalized. James 5:16 stresses the importance of mutual confession and prayer, suggesting a biblical foundation for transparent and accountable leadership. Unfortunately, in real-world contexts, some leaders have failed precisely because they were not answerable to others, resulting in abuse of power, financial misconduct, or moral compromise.

Cultural conflict is another factor contributing to ethical failures in Christian leadership. In many non-Western societies, local wisdom, such as communal loyalty, elder reverence, or traditional authority, plays a significant role in shaping ethical behavior. While some elements of local wisdom align with biblical values, others may conflict, particularly when loyalty to family or tribe is prioritized over justice and truth. For instance, in certain cultural contexts, nepotism or favoritism may be viewed as expressions of familial duty, but from a biblical standpoint, they violate principles of fairness and impartiality. When Christian leaders fail to critically integrate local wisdom with biblical ethics, they may inadvertently justify unethical behavior under the guise of cultural norms. This lack of integration can weaken moral discernment and lead to compromised leadership.

External societal pressures also influence the ethical landscape for Christian leaders. In today's success-driven culture, leaders are often evaluated based on metrics such as popularity, church growth, financial prosperity, or media presence. This performance-oriented mindset can tempt leaders to prioritize institutional success over moral integrity. The desire for influence and recognition may result in pragmatic decision-making that compromises biblical values. Nicolaidis and Tornam Duho (2019) emphasize that when external rewards are elevated above ethical formation, leadership becomes vulnerable to manipulation, deception, and burnout. Real-world scandals involving high-profile Christian leaders have frequently been linked to such pressures, where external success masked deep ethical flaws.

Institutional structures within churches or Christian organizations can also exacerbate the risk of leadership failure. Many institutions lack sufficient checks and balances, creating spaces where decision-making is concentrated in the hands of a few. This imbalance often leads to authoritarianism, favoritism, and marginalization of dissenting voices. In some churches, leaders are elevated to near-untouchable status, making it difficult for congregants or junior staff to challenge unethical decisions. This dynamic was evident in several well-



documented church leadership crises, where institutional loyalty and a desire to protect reputations allowed abusive behavior to go unchallenged. Without transparency, shared governance, and open dialogue, institutions can unwittingly protect misconduct rather than prevent it.

The rapidly shifting moral and cultural landscape presents ethical dilemmas that many Christian leaders are unprepared to face. Secular ideologies such as relativism, consumerism, and individualism challenge biblical convictions about truth, community, and sacrifice. Issues related to sexuality, gender, race, and justice are increasingly politicized and polarizing. Leaders who are not ethically formed or theologically rooted may feel pressure to conform to cultural trends to avoid criticism or maintain relevance. Uhl-Bien (2021) warns that without deep ethical formation, leaders may adopt cultural values without critical reflection, resulting in compromise and confusion. To navigate these challenges, Christian leaders must be equipped to think theologically, discern ethically, and lead with moral courage in an increasingly hostile environment.

### *The Role of Christian Education*

Christian education functions not merely as an academic discipline but as a dynamic, transformative process aimed at forming ethical, Christ-centered leaders who can navigate both biblical truth and cultural complexity. At its core, Christian education instills foundational virtues derived from Scripture—such as humility, justice, compassion, and self-control—which are essential for sustaining ethical leadership over time. According to du Plessis and Nkambule (2020), leadership rooted in spiritual formation and moral clarity is critical to avoid ethical collapse in ministry and community leadership. Christian education fosters these capacities through intentional engagement with Scripture, guided spiritual disciplines, and communal reflection, enabling future leaders to embody godly character in both personal and public life.

Moreover, Christian education must be contextualized, especially in cultures where local wisdom—such as communal values, indigenous knowledge, or ancestral practices—continues to shape leadership behaviors. In such contexts, ethical failure often arises from a disconnect between biblical standards and unexamined cultural norms. Christian education provides the tools for critical theological reflection, equipping students to evaluate cultural values in the light of Scripture. This is particularly vital in non-Western settings, where leadership models may still be heavily influenced by hierarchical traditions, patronage systems, or syncretistic practices. By engaging local wisdom through a biblical lens, Christian education helps leaders discern which cultural elements can be affirmed, which must be transformed, and which should be rejected.

An effective Christian education curriculum must therefore integrate three core components: theological depth, ethical formation, and contextual awareness. Theological instruction builds a robust framework for understanding God's nature, human dignity, and the moral demands of discipleship. Ethical formation cultivates habits of discernment and moral courage necessary for making just decisions in complex environments. Contextual awareness ensures that leaders can apply these theological and ethical principles meaningfully within their own socio-cultural settings. According to Lee et al. (2017) the interplay of these

elements not only strengthens moral resilience but also enables Christian leaders to address pressing issues—such as corruption, abuse of power, and moral relativism—with biblical authority and cultural sensitivity.

Furthermore, the impact of Christian education is most effective when reinforced through community-based structures like churches and families. While theological institutions lay the academic and spiritual groundwork, churches provide real-life ministry contexts for ethical testing and growth. Through mentorship, discipleship, and accountability structures, students witness how seasoned leaders embody biblical principles amidst daily challenges (Parker, 2017). Likewise, families are the primary context for early moral formation, where children observe and imitate ethical behaviors modeled by their parents. A collaborative relationship between theological institutions, churches, and families forms a holistic educational ecosystem that sustains ethical leadership beyond the classroom. This synergy ensures that Christian values are not only taught, but lived, observed, and reinforced consistently.

Lastly, in an increasingly global and digital world, Christian education must also adapt to include innovative platforms that expand access and foster cross-cultural ethical learning. Online theological programs, virtual mentorship, and digital case studies can facilitate dialogue between leaders from diverse regions, enriching students' understanding of ethical leadership across cultural boundaries. This global engagement exposes students to different expressions of local wisdom and ethical challenges, sharpening their discernment and broadening their leadership perspective. As Reynolds and Wallace (2016) assert, experiential learning and exposure to diverse contexts are vital for developing leaders who are both biblically grounded and culturally agile. Thus, Christian education, when approached as a collaborative, context-sensitive, and spiritually formative journey, plays a crucial role in reducing the failure of local wisdom-based Christian leadership ethics and cultivating faithful, ethical leaders for the global church.

### *Strategies for Enhancing Christian Education*

Christian leadership faces unique ethical challenges when it must navigate both biblical principles and local cultural values. Ethical failures in Christian leadership, particularly those rooted in local wisdom, are often the result of a disconnect between these two dimensions. To mitigate these failures, Christian education must play a pivotal role by equipping future leaders with the necessary tools to understand, integrate, and apply both Christian ethics and local wisdom. This involves not only teaching biblical truths but also fostering an environment where these teachings are integrated with the local cultural context. By doing so, Christian education can help ensure that leaders are not only knowledgeable in scripture but also capable of handling the ethical dilemmas they will face in their cultural settings (Reynolds & Wallace, 2016).

One of the key strategies in Christian education that can address these challenges is the incorporation of experiential learning. Experiential learning encourages students to engage with real-world scenarios that require the practical application of biblical principles. This approach helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Traditional classroom instruction tends to be abstract, focusing heavily on the theoretical

aspects of Christian ethics without providing students with opportunities to see these principles in action. Experiential learning changes that by placing students in situations where they must navigate real ethical challenges, thereby encouraging them to practice decision-making skills in contexts that are culturally relevant. This method allows them to confront issues that may arise in local cultural settings and to apply biblical teachings in ways that resonate with their everyday experiences (Zalukhu, 2024).

Incorporating role-playing exercises, internships, and community service projects into Christian education offers students direct interaction with ethical dilemmas and leadership challenges. For example, a student may participate in a community outreach program where they are tasked with addressing a moral dilemma that requires both ethical discernment and sensitivity to local cultural values. Through these experiences, students learn how to apply biblical teachings in ways that honor both God's Word and the local traditions or norms they may encounter. Such experiences foster deep personal growth by allowing students to practice humility, wisdom, and discernment in their decision-making. Furthermore, these hands-on opportunities create more meaningful and lasting learning experiences that go beyond textbook theories (Reynolds & Wallace, 2016).

A particularly effective method for enhancing experiential learning is case-based learning, where students are presented with real-world scenarios that involve ethical challenges. These case studies allow students to engage in critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical analysis in the context of leadership. For example, a case study might present a situation where a local church leader faces a financial scandal. In analyzing this case, students are prompted to think through how they would apply biblical principles to restore trust, promote repentance, and ensure accountability, all while navigating the cultural nuances that may influence the situation. This type of reflective learning encourages students to connect biblical ethics with real-world leadership challenges, which is crucial for preparing them to handle the complexities of leadership in their future ministries (du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020).

Moreover, collaboration among churches, families, and educational institutions is vital in reinforcing the ethical values that are taught in Christian education. Christian education does not operate in isolation; it requires a collective effort that includes not only the classroom but also the church and family environments. Families, as the primary context for spiritual formation, play an important role in reinforcing the ethical teachings introduced in Christian education. Churches, as places where believers gather to worship and grow, also have a significant role in supporting ethical leadership. By fostering collaboration between these institutions, Christian education can ensure that ethical teachings are consistently reinforced both inside and outside the classroom (Zalukhu, 2024).

The involvement of families in Christian education is essential because they are the first line of moral instruction for children. Parents who actively participate in their children's spiritual development are more likely to raise individuals who are capable of making ethical decisions based on biblical teachings. When families engage in regular discussions about Christian ethics, biblical decision-making, and how to live out their faith in everyday situations, they help students internalize these values more deeply. This creates a foundation for ethical leadership that is not just academic but grounded in lived experiences. Additionally, churches can support families by offering resources, programs, and workshops

that equip parents with the tools they need to nurture their children's ethical development (Reynolds & Wallace, 2016).

The partnership between churches and educational institutions is another key component of a holistic Christian education. Churches can offer mentorship programs, leadership training, and discipleship opportunities that provide students with practical, real-life experiences in ethical leadership. These programs allow students to practice ethical decision-making and leadership skills in a supportive and guided environment. Educational institutions, in turn, can provide theological training and ethical frameworks that help students navigate these situations from a biblical perspective. By working together, churches and educational institutions ensure that students receive both theoretical and practical instruction in ethical leadership, preparing them to face ethical challenges with wisdom and integrity (du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020).

In addition to traditional learning methods, technology can also play a significant role in enhancing collaboration and experiential learning within Christian education. Digital platforms, such as virtual classrooms, online seminars, and online mentoring programs, provide students with access to resources and case studies that might not be available in their local context. These platforms allow for collaboration across geographical boundaries, giving students the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives and ethical dilemmas from around the world. Furthermore, online resources make it easier for students to access leadership training, mentorship, and case studies that reflect the ethical challenges they will face in their own cultural contexts. This broader access to learning materials can enrich students' understanding of leadership ethics and enhance their ability to integrate local wisdom with biblical teachings (Zalukhu, 2024).

Ultimately, reducing the failure of local wisdom-based Christian leadership ethics requires a comprehensive approach to Christian education that integrates both experiential learning and collaboration among churches, families, and educational institutions. By providing students with opportunities to apply biblical ethics in real-world settings, supporting them with mentorship and guidance from both their families and churches, and utilizing technology to broaden learning opportunities, Christian education can produce leaders who are well-equipped to handle the ethical challenges they will face. This approach ensures that Christian education is not just informative but transformative, fostering leaders who are capable of navigating the complex intersection of biblical ethics and local wisdom with integrity and wisdom (du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

This study affirms that Christian education is a vital instrument in reducing ethical failures in leadership by harmonizing biblical ethics with local wisdom. It underscores that ethical leadership cannot be sustained without deep character formation rooted in Scripture and contextual understanding. Christian education nurtures moral integrity by cultivating virtues such as humility, honesty, and accountability—qualities indispensable for ethical discernment and resilience in complex leadership settings. Through a well-integrated curriculum that combines theological instruction, ethical reflection, and practical leadership

training, Christian education equips leaders not only to understand biblical values but also to embody them in culturally relevant and ethically consistent ways.

Furthermore, the findings highlight the necessity of a holistic and collaborative approach to Christian leadership development. Theological institutions, churches, and families must work in synergy to foster environments that support ethical formation and contextual sensitivity. Leadership development must extend beyond the classroom, incorporating mentoring, discipleship, and community engagement that reflect both Christian convictions and cultural realities. Future practice and research should explore models of education that integrate biblical ethics with indigenous wisdom to strengthen leadership integrity across diverse contexts. By doing so, Christian education can contribute not only to personal transformation but also to the moral renewal of communities and institutions entrusted to Christian leaders.

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