


# Formation Through Disorientation: Reframing Reduced Personal Accomplishment in the Indonesian Church

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## Abstract

*This article intervenes in contemporary practical theological discourse on clergy burnout by critically reexamining the category of Reduced Personal Accomplishment (RPA), a core dimension of burnout that refers to a sustained sense of diminished ministerial effectiveness, inadequacy, and loss of vocational meaning. Dominant burnout frameworks interpret RPA primarily as diminished professional efficacy, grounded in performance-oriented anthropological assumptions. This study argues that such assumptions are theologically misaligned with ecclesial vocation and insufficient for interpreting ministerial experience, particularly in contexts marked by pressures, such as those where churches exist as religious minorities. Employing constructive practical theological methodology, the article proposes Formation Through Disorientation as a normative framework that reconfigures RPA as vocational disorientation rather than functional deficit. Integrating vocation theology, imago Dei anthropology, and cruciform spirituality, the framework reorients burnout discourse from managerial restoration toward ontological realignment of ministerial identity. Drawing on Indonesian minority church realities as a critical case, the article contributes a Global South theological anthropo-*



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*logy that challenges dominant Western paradigms and advances practical theology's engagement with identity, legitimacy, and perseverance in ministry.*

**Keywords:** *Formation Through Disorientation; Pastoral Burnout; Reduced Personal Accomplishment; Theology of Vocation; Indonesian Minority Church*

## Introduction

Church ministry is theologically understood as participation in the *missio Dei* and as an expression of obedience to divine calling. In the Pauline tradition, ministry is inseparable from perseverance amid suffering and weakness, as articulated in 2 Corinthians 6:3–10. This understanding is further developed by Jürgen Moltmann (1993, 75–78), who frames Christian service as participation in the suffering of Christ rather than the pursuit of visible success. As Moltmann (1993, 76) explicitly states, “the fellowship of Christ is fellowship in his suffering,” thereby locating the meaning of ministry not in achievement but in communion with the crucified Christ. From this perspective, the meaning of ministry is grounded not in productivity or achievement, but in faithfulness shaped by grace and sustained through communion with Christ.

Within the literature on burnout, Reduced Personal Accomplishment (hereafter, RPA) refers to a diminished sense of competence, effectiveness, and vocational meaning in one's professional responsibilities. In the classical framework of burnout, it constitutes one of the three core dimensions, alongside emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Maslach and Leiter 2016, 103–104; Osmer 2011, 2–4). In ministry, this condition may appear as a growing sense that one's service has lost meaning and vocational coherence. Accordingly, this study approaches RPA not merely as a psychological construct but as an interpretive lens for examining ministerial identity and vocation.

Within contemporary practical theology, clergy burnout has become a critical site of theological reflection (Osmer 2011, 3). Dominant burnout frameworks, however, continue to interpret RPA primarily through performance-oriented assumptions that remain theologically misaligned with ecclesial vocation (Maslach and Leiter 2016, 104). This article intervenes in that discourse by positioning Formation Through Disorientation as a normative practical theological framework, reframing diminished accomplishment as vocational disorientation through which grace reconstitutes ministerial identity.

However, the lived reality of church ministry often reveals a different dynamic. The complexity of pastoral responsibilities, institutional expectations, and personal demands frequently generates emotional strain and spiritual fatigue. Fred-

erick, Thai, and Dunbar (2021, 6–8) argue that ministerial burnout emerges when vocational demands become disconnected from spiritual depth and relational intimacy with God. As they observe, “burnout in ministry is closely tied to a breakdown in the integration of calling and spiritual practices” (Frederick, Thai, and Dunbar 2021, 7). Such conditions demonstrate that the ministry remains vulnerable to vocational disorientation and spiritual fragmentation, even when externally sustained.

One significant manifestation of this loss of meaning is RPA. In the burnout literature, RPA is part of the three-dimensional model of Maslach and Jackson (1981, 101–102), later refined by Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001, 399–401). In this framework, RPA denotes a decline in perceived professional efficacy that develops under conditions of sustained occupational stress. Empirical research confirms the salience of RPA across professional sectors. Studies examining medical personnel during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that levels of RPA may remain elevated even when emotional exhaustion appears comparatively moderate (Zhang et al. 2020, 5–6). Parallel findings within ecclesial settings indicate that ministers likewise experience diminished personal accomplishment as a distinct and persistent dimension of burnout, underscoring the relevance of RPA within church ministry contexts (Gagola and Brek 2025, 60–62).

Research in Indonesia further confirms the relevance of burnout and RPA within church contexts. Sianturi (2024, 74–77) indicates that work-life imbalance and weak social support significantly contribute to burnout among pastors of the Gereja Batak Karo Protestan (GBKP), including the RPA dimension. High congregational demands and limited stress management capacity further intensify spiritual exhaustion (Setiabudi and Hidayati 2024, 1–15). These pressures are compounded by Christianity’s minority status in Indonesia, where ministers face representational expectations within a plural society. Consequently, RPA among Indonesian church leaders reflects not only psychological strain but also socio-religious pressures, revealing the limits of Western organizational burnout models in minority ecclesial contexts.

Despite the growing international literature on clergy burnout, most studies continue to interpret RPA primarily within psychological and organizational frameworks derived from Maslach et al.’s burnout model (Maslach and Jackson 1981, 101–102; Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001, 399–401). While these approaches offer indispensable insights into stress, coping, and institutional dynamics, their explanatory scope in ministerial contexts remains incomplete when detached from theological anthropology and vocational identity. Rather than treating psychological and theological approaches as mutually exclusive, this study proposes a dialogical engagement in which psychology illuminates the experiential dimensions of burnout, while theology interprets its vocational and

ecclesial meaning in ministry (Osmer 2011, 3–4). This complementarity enables a more holistic understanding of ministerial RPA as both psychological strain and theological disorientation.

This study advances a theological reconfiguration of RPA by relocating its interpretive center from psychological inefficacy to vocational disorientation, understood as a disruption in the minister's sense of calling, identity, and meaning in ministry. Rather than treating RPA primarily as diminished self-efficacy, the article argues that in ministerial contexts it signals a rupture in grace-grounded identity, in which ministerial worth is derived from performative legitimacy rather than divine calling. Drawing on the theology of the *imago Dei*, cruciform spirituality, and ecclesial vocation, the study proposes Formation Through Disorientation as a constructive theological framework in which the collapse of performance-based self-understanding becomes a site for vocational recalibration through grace.

Situated within the socio-religious realities of Indonesian church ministry in a minority Christian context, this study contributes to pastoral theology by offering a theological-ontological reframing of burnout that extends beyond psychological regulation toward identity reconstruction. By advancing the construct of Formation Through Disorientation, the article bridges global burnout discourse and the lived ecclesial experience of Indonesian ministers, proposing a contextually grounded theological framework for sustaining vocational perseverance amid contemporary challenges.

Methodologically, the study adopts a constructive, practical-theological approach that places contemporary burnout scholarship in critical dialogue with theological anthropology and vocation theology. Rather than conducting an empirical investigation, the article undertakes a normative theological analysis of dominant psychological interpretations of RPA and reassesses their anthropological assumptions through the lenses of grace-grounded vocation and ministerial identity. The Indonesian minority church context functions as an interpretive case that illuminates the limitations of performance-oriented burnout paradigms and supports a theological reinterpretation of diminished personal accomplishment as vocational disorientation requiring restoration at the level of being rather than merely managerial correction.

## **1. The Theological Dimension of Reduced Personal Accomplishment**

This dynamic shows that ministerial evaluation cannot be reduced to productivity, since ministry is grounded in vocation and relational identity rather than institutional output. RPA therefore reflects not only functional limitation but a disruption in how vocation is interpreted, creating a misalignment between min-

isterial self-understanding and performance-based identity (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001, 399–401). While psychologically associated with diminished effectiveness and motivation, pastorally it signals a deeper shift of identity from a relationship with Christ toward achievement-oriented self-understanding (Maslach and Leiter 2016, 104–105). When grace no longer serves as the primary foundation of vocation, ministry is increasingly interpreted in terms of performance and external evaluation. Consequently, exhaustion arises not merely from workload but from the gradual shift in ministerial identity from a grace-based calling to an achievement-based legitimacy. Within this framework, this article interprets RPA as a moment of vocational disorientation in which the collapse of performance-based identity exposes the fragility of achievement-grounded self-understanding. This disorientation does not negate vocation but reveals its theological foundation, distinguishing between identity grounded in grace and self-worth constructed through performance-based identity.

From a further theological perspective, RPA can be understood as a crisis concerning vocation and the spirituality of the cross. Moltmann (1974, 20–22) emphasizes that Christian ministry finds its meaning in communion with Christ's suffering, not in worldly success. As Moltmann (1974, 21) writes, "to know God means to participate in the suffering of God," thereby reframing suffering as a locus of theological knowledge rather than failure. Similarly, Martin Luther, as interpreted by Timothy J. Wengert (2019, 310–312), asserts that God is known not through strength or achievement but through weakness and the cross. In this theological horizon, "the cross alone is our theology" (Wengert 2019, 311), indicating that divine revelation is disclosed precisely in suffering rather than success. Within cruciform theology, experiences of failure gain hermeneutical significance rather than merely evaluative meaning. RPA can thus be interpreted as a site where ministerial identity is renegotiated, shifting from achievement toward participation in divine grace.

Formation Through Disorientation operates precisely at this juncture, designating a theological process in which experiences of reduced accomplishment interrupt performative paradigms and reorient ministers toward cruciform participation in Christ, understood as sharing in His suffering, humility, and faithful obedience. In this sense, RPA becomes not merely a symptom of burnout but a critical threshold, that is, a decisive turning point for vocational reconstitution and spiritual growth. Yet RPA is also shaped by internal ministerial dynamics, particularly by perfectionism reinforced by quantitative evaluation models (Miner, Dowson, and Sterland 2010, 170–172). When success is measured by numerical indicators such as attendance or program expansion, vocation is implicitly reframed as a performance-based identity, heightening the risk of burnout and widening the interpretive gap between theological identity and performance-driven legitimacy (Hill and Curran 2016, 272–274). In minority church contexts such as Indonesia,

this gap intensifies as ministers function simultaneously as spiritual leaders and symbolic representatives of communal credibility within a plural society, thereby deepening vocational disorientation.

Within this tension, the theology of the cross serves as a corrective by reversing prevailing standards of success. Through the paradox of the cross, divine power is manifested in human weakness (2 Cor 12:9), reframing limitation not as professional failure but as a theological site of grace. Accordingly, Formation Through Disorientation interprets ministerial emptiness as a space in which grace reconstitutes identity beyond measurable achievement. When RPA is read through the lens of cruciform theology, it becomes a formative encounter that restores vocation to its ontological grounding in participation in Christ rather than in institutional validation.

The decline in the sense of personal accomplishment often stems from spiritual attenuation in which worship practices and relationship with God become routine without existential depth. King and Pong (2022, 765–767) argue that when intimacy with God weakens, ministry easily turns into administrative labor that drains existential energy. Similarly, Upenieks (2023, 10–12) demonstrates that higher levels of spiritual well-being among clergy are positively associated with both ministerial fruitfulness and personal flourishing. These findings indicate that sustainable ministry is rooted in spiritual depth that shapes ministerial identity. Spiritual disciplines anchor vocation in communion with God rather than measurable performance. When this grounding weakens, ministry shifts into functional routine, eroding vocational coherence and intensifying RPA.

Within the logic of Formation Through Disorientation, such spiritual attenuation marks the experiential surface of a deeper fracture in identity. RPA emerges not only from workload but from the gradual displacement of relational vocation by functional maintenance, as routine ministry obscures theological depth (Upenieks and Eagle 2024, 90–92; Dunbar et al. 2020, 178–180). Disorientation, therefore, names the moment when routine exposes the loss of theological depth. This fracture intensifies within Indonesia's minority Christian context, where ministers carry representational pressures that equate visible vitality with communal legitimacy (Edu 2025, 95–97). Under such conditions, vocational identity becomes increasingly vulnerable to performance-based evaluation, deepening disorientation beyond individual exhaustion.

Furthermore, Sianturi (2024, 74–77) suggests that weak social support among GBKP pastors reflects not merely personal vulnerability but structural strain within church organizations stretched by complex communal demands and limited resources. Within Indonesia's collective culture, multidimensional expectations placed upon pastors as counselors, administrators, and community leaders exacerbate role conflict. Gunawan (2024, 170–172) indicates that long ministry hours and inadequate institutional mechanisms for mental health support aggra-

vate this condition. In this sense, RPA in the Indonesian context arises from the convergence of internal perfectionism and structural minority pressures rather than from individual fragility alone. This convergence indicates that Western burnout frameworks, developed within majority church and organizational settings, are methodologically insufficient to account for the theological and representational pressures characteristic of minority ecclesial contexts.

Therefore, the theological dimension of RPA indicates that the crisis of personal accomplishment is not merely a psychological symptom, but a struggle of spiritual identity rooted in theological vocation. The emerging emptiness may be reinterpreted as a space to renew the spirituality of the cross and reaffirm ministerial identity as *imago Dei*. Dunbar et al. (2020, 179–181) assert that clergy burnout is closely related to the weakening of pastoral identity and spiritual calling. Clarke, Spurr, and Walker (2022, 602–604) further show that resilience among clergy grows not from the absence of pressure but from perseverance and perceived congregational support. Taken together, these findings reinforce the claim that RPA reflects not simply psychological depletion but a theological crisis of identity requiring spiritual and communal reorientation.

Accordingly, this study argues that recovery from RPA should not be limited to restoring ministerial effectiveness alone. Within a theological ontology of vocation, disorientation becomes formative as grace redefines legitimacy beyond performance-based identity. Formation Through Disorientation thus reconfigures RPA as a threshold of vocational recalibration, extending burnout discourse beyond psychological and managerial paradigms toward a participatory understanding of ministerial identity rooted in Christ's cruciform life.

## **2. Theological Perspectives on Ministry: Vocation, Identity, and Spirituality**

Church ministry, from a theological perspective, cannot be reduced to religious activity but must be understood as participation in God's call and mission. This vocation demands faithfulness, sacrifice, and perseverance, as reflected in Paul's witness in 2 Corinthians 6, where suffering is intrinsic to apostolic service. Accordingly, ministry derives its meaning from communion with Christ rather than external religious routine (Wright and Arterbury 2022, 6–8). Samushonga (2019, 70–72) likewise affirms that authentic ministry transcends professional categories and is grounded in faithful participation in the *missio Dei*. When this grounding is eclipsed by performance expectations, the conditions for vocational disorientation begin to emerge.

Within this framework, ministerial identity is shaped by the awareness that all work is oriented toward God rather than human approval. Colossians 3:23–24 affirms that ministry is undertaken as wholehearted service to the Lord. Burling

(2019, 490–492) describes this orientation as worship grounded in sincere devotion, while Snelgar, Renard, and Shelton (2017, 250–252) emphasize that resilient ministry arises from intrinsic spiritual motivation. Devotion to God thus functions as the theological foundation of resilience amid vocational pressures.

Such motivation finds expression in a ministerial spirituality marked by humility and self-denial, shaped by Christ's kenosis. A study in the Javanese context shows that kenotic spirituality calls the church to center its pastoral attention on the poor and marginalized (Kusumaningdyah and Panjaitan 2024, 332–335), while also inviting reflection on its anthropological grounding in the *imago Dei*.

Ministry is further grounded in the *imago Dei*, affirming that human identity is relationally constituted before God, others, and creation. Rabie-Boshoff and Buitendag (2021, 5–7) emphasize that the image of God signifies participation in divine life rather than privileged status. This relational understanding calls ministers to embody integrity and responsibility in practice. When such grounding is displaced by institutional metrics, vocational coherence weakens and the conditions for RPA emerge.

This relational identity is sustained through spiritual practices that anchor vocation in communion with God. Empirical studies show that disciplined spiritual practices cultivate resilient spirituality (Ottovianus and Sukamto 2023, 215–218) and enable ministers to face vocational pressures without collapsing into performance-based self-understanding (Yustinus 2025). Spiritual formation thus safeguards the integrity of ministry by preserving its grounding in divine grace.

The integration of *imago Dei* theology and spiritual formation provides a decisive foundation for ministerial identity. Tarigan (2024, 30–32) shows that ministers who recognize themselves as bearers of divine authority demonstrate stronger vocational responsibility, indicating that theological self-understanding shapes both motivation and praxis.

Alongside this, the spirituality of the cross constitutes an essential dimension of ministerial identity. Within the Christian tradition, suffering is not merely adversity but participation in Christ's sacrificial faithfulness and redeeming love (López 2023, 42–45). Such participation shapes Christlike character and deepens communion with God, grounding ministry in grace rather than visible success. When this grounding is replaced by performance-based evaluation, suffering is reinterpreted as failure, and RPA emerges not simply as diminished productivity but as a disruption in relational *imago Dei* identity.

Seen through a cruciform lens, suffering becomes formative. Christ's sacrifice provides the normative pattern for ministry, grounding service in humility and dependence on grace (Sinaga and Sihombing 2024, 6–8). Limitations are no longer construed as failure but as occasions for vocational reorientation and deeper conformity to Christ. In this way, suffering contributes to the maturation of ministerial identity.

Furthermore, this perspective reframes suffering as a process through which faith is purified. Tomlin (2020, 2–4) argues that suffering discloses a redemptive horizon in which God’s work transcends human criteria of success. For ministers experiencing RPA, perceived failure becomes a locus of grace rather than vocational negation. Ministerial identity is thus sustained not by visible achievement but by participation in divine action that renews vocation through weakness.

This crisis of vocation and identity is also evident in Indonesian church ministry. Edu (2025, 92–95) shows that clergy often experience role conflict between congregational demands and family responsibilities, eroding personal accomplishment and intensifying vocational strain. Gunawan (2024, 168–170) further identifies unrealistic expectations, extended ministry hours, and weakened spiritual life as key contributors to burnout. These findings indicate that RPA in Indonesia emerges from the convergence of structural pressures and internal spiritual fragility, exceeding a purely psychological explanation. Accordingly, pastoral reflection grounded in the spirituality of the cross and the *imago Dei* is necessary to address this disorientation. Within this framework, RPA is reinterpreted not as incompetence but as a theological disturbance in the alignment between grace-based vocation and institutional expectation

### **3. Emptiness in the Disorientation of Ministerial Meaning**

RPA emerges when ministry is reduced to institutional routine rather than sustained as theological vocation. As transcendent orientation recedes, evaluation becomes governed by recognition and measurable outcomes, creating an existential dissonance in which outward activity persists while inner meaning erodes. In this condition, diminished personal accomplishment signals not merely reduced effectiveness but a rupture between vocation, identity, and perseverance in divine calling.

Phenomenologically, this disorientation is experienced as vocational ambiguity, spiritual numbness, loss of meaning, and a growing sense that pastoral activity no longer aligns with one’s calling (Upenieks and Eagle 2024, 88–90). It becomes evident when ministers continue performing ecclesial duties outwardly while inwardly experiencing detachment and self-doubt. In pastoral contexts, such conditions require intentional accompaniment through spiritual direction, mentoring, and communal discernment to enable theological, not merely psychological, interpretation (Frederick, Thai, and Dunbar 2021, 7–9). Through this process, disorientation may become a turning point toward vocational realignment.

This dynamic is particularly evident in minority church contexts in Indonesia, where expectations often exceed available support. Ministers experience a loss of meaning as vocation and identity become misaligned with lived realities (Sian-

turi 2024, 74–77). Upenieks and Eagle (2024, 92–94) show that deeper spiritual struggles are associated with higher risks of depression and burnout, indicating that disorientation not only increases psychological vulnerability but also intensifies the identity crisis underlying RPA.

The crisis deepens as burnout escalates (Adams et al. 2017, 160–164). Excessive expectations, cumulative workload, and limited support erode spiritual resilience, transforming strain into a crisis of vocational integrity rather than mere fatigue. At the same time, healthy spiritual coping and communal support significantly mitigate depression and burnout among clergy (Upenieks and Eagle 2024, 93–95), suggesting that prevention depends not only on workload management but also on strengthening faith-rooted practices and ecclesial support systems.

Rogers (2023, 1585–1588) further shows that increased pastoral distress is associated with lower spiritual well-being, weaker stress management, and reduced life satisfaction. Unaddressed RPA thus accelerates psychological decline and destabilizes vocational identity. Sustaining ministry therefore requires integrating spiritual well-being and stress regulation into theological-pastoral formation, supported by structures that preserve alignment between vocation and lived experience.

Disorientation intensifies within a performative ministry culture that equates legitimacy with measurable success. As quantitative outcomes become normative, the spiritual grounding of vocation is displaced, leading to depletion rather than resilience. Institutional pressures that neglect clergy well-being significantly increase burnout risk (Adams et al. 2017, 162–165), demonstrating how performance-based expectations erode vocational integrity.

When ministry is defined primarily by outcomes, ministers internalize a performative paradigm that sidelines spiritual growth and relational attentiveness. Gagola and Brek (2025, 60–62) show that such orientation correlates with lower job satisfaction and higher burnout. Vocational integrity, therefore, cannot be sustained by outcomes alone but requires a theological framework rooted in spiritual depth and relational fidelity.

In response, theological reflection must reaffirm ministry as participation in divine vocation rather than institutional performance. The integration of spiritual calling and personal well-being becomes essential for restoring coherence between identity and praxis. Structured pastoral accompaniment and counseling strengthen ministers' capacity to navigate vocational strain (Gagola and Brek 2025, 62–64), sustaining identity through renewed alignment with Christ-centered vocation.

Ministerial emptiness may also be interpreted through a theology of suffering. Abaria (2021, 45–48) argues that suffering and acknowledged limitation function as processes of faith purification through which grace reorients vocation. In this

light, RPA becomes a critical moment in which weakness reveals dependence on grace and initiates renewal.

However, such a theology must also address structural realities. Ecclesial expectations and limited institutional support intensify burnout (Setiabudi and Hidayati 2024, 3–5), requiring integration of spiritual formation with institutional responsibility. Without this, RPA risks being misread as personal fragility rather than a condition shaped by broader ecclesial dynamics. Thus, restoring ministerial meaning through a theology of suffering offers a comprehensive response to RPA. Suffering is understood as constitutive of vocation, not its negation, reorienting ministry toward dependence on grace through which identity and resilience are renewed.

#### **4. Spiritual Renewal in Ministry**

Contemporary ministry often operates within performance-based expectations that equate institutional success with vocational legitimacy (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter 2001, 400–402). This paradigm intensifies psychological strain while obscuring the theological grounding of ministry in grace rather than measurable outcomes. Within the framework of *Formation Through Disorientation*, spiritual renewal is therefore understood not as a technique for managing burnout but as the regrounding of vocational identity in grace following the collapse of performative self-understanding.

Grounded in grace, ministerial legitimacy derives from relational participation in Christ rather than achievement, stabilizing identity beyond fluctuating outcomes. McClanahan (2018, 35–38), drawing on Tim Keller, highlights that sustained practices of prayer and scriptural meditation cultivate resilience and guard against fatigue. In this way, renewal follows disorientation as grace redefines vocational legitimacy and restores alignment between identity and calling.

In the Indonesian context, renewal requires structured communal pastoral accompaniment rather than individual reflection alone. Empirical evidence shows that sustained spiritual and emotional support mitigates RPA and reorients vocational commitment (Setiabudi and Hidayati 2024, 4–6). Ministerial identity is thus reconstructed within communal relationships, where shared accountability stabilizes vocation.

Renewal also requires a reformulation of spiritual formation grounded in coherent theology. The church, as a community of faith, bears responsibility for cultivating grace-centered formation that shapes both ministers and congregations. Wolfteich (2000, 10–12) emphasizes that spirituality must be integrated into lived practice, while empirical studies indicate that intentional formation planning strengthens both congregational growth and ministerial resilience (Siswanto

2024, 360–363). Formation must therefore be structured and contextual, sustaining rather than supplementing ministry.

Spiritual renewal must also be situated within contextual theological reflection. Mulia (2010, 195–198) underscores the integration of theological reflection and spiritual practice as formative for ministry in Indonesia. Such integration enables ministers to sustain vocational coherence amid contemporary pressures by grounding identity in a contextually embodied spirituality.

The implications of renewal extend to the structural life of the church. Effective leadership rests upon a coherent theological foundation embodied in congregational practice (Luther et al. 2023, 66–68). Renewal must therefore be understood as an ecclesial process in which ministers and congregations are jointly formed within a shared vocation, integrating personal formation with institutional responsibility.

Within a broader framework, spiritual renewal integrates identity, cruciform spirituality, and a redefinition of success. Identity grounded in the *imago Dei* locates ministry in the vocation to reflect God’s character (Sipahutar et al. 2024, 160–163), while the spirituality of the cross interprets suffering as participation in Christ rather than deficiency (Nouwen and Dean 1981, 25–27). Ministerial success is thus redefined not by measurable achievement but by fidelity to divine vocation.

Therefore, spiritual renewal should be understood not merely as a response to psychological pressure but as a theological reorientation of ministerial identity. The integration of grace, disciplined formation, contextual reflection, and ecclesial support stabilizes ministry beyond performance-based validation. Within this framework, renewal becomes the constructive horizon of Formation Through Disorientation, in which vocational identity is recalibrated by grace rather than restored by managerial correction.

## **5. Implications for Practical Theology and Pastoral Practice**

Interpreting RPA as vocational disorientation rather than professional deficit carries significant implications for practical theology and pastoral practice. Contemporary responses to burnout have often emphasized resilience, coping strategies, and functional recovery (Osmer 2011, 3–5). While pragmatically useful, such approaches risk obscuring deeper questions of ministerial identity when professional efficacy becomes the primary norm. Reframing RPA redirects pastoral accompaniment from restoring performance toward theological discernment of vocation, identity, and grace-grounded legitimacy.

This reorientation challenges ecclesial cultures that equate faithfulness with measurable outcomes. Empirical studies show that performance-driven expecta-

tions and perfectionistic ministry cultures intensify burnout and weaken vocational coherence (Hill and Curran 2016, 272–275). Practical theology is thus called to critically examine institutional metrics that elevate productivity to a theological norm. At the same time, this critique should remain in dialogue with psychological research on burnout—particularly in stress assessment, resilience, and pastoral mental health (Adams et al. 2017, 162), so that theological and psychological insights can mutually inform ministerial care. Such an approach redefines success in terms of faithfulness, relational integrity, and perseverance in vocation.

Formation Through Disorientation further reframes suffering and limitation as formative rather than pathological. Within cruciform spirituality, weakness is understood as participation in Christ’s self-giving life (Wengert 2019, 310–312). This provides practical theology with a resource for resisting resilience discourses that prioritize self-management while neglecting dependence on grace. Pastoral care and spiritual direction thus function as practices that accompany ministers through disorientation, not merely as responses to functional decline.

This framework must also be embodied in concrete ecclesial practices. In theological education, it can be implemented through curricula integrating reflective supervision, theological self-examination, and spiritual direction (Clarke, Spurr, and Walker 2022, 603–606). In pastoral contexts, structured mentoring, peer support, and spiritually informed counseling help ministers address identity fractures before they develop into burnout (Adams et al. 2017, 162–165). At the institutional level, churches should adopt evaluative structures that prioritize vocational coherence and spiritual depth over numerical success, translating theological insight into sustainable practice.

Although this framework arises from Indonesian minority church contexts, its implications extend more broadly. Research across diverse settings shows that institutional pressure, numerical evaluation, and role overload consistently correlate with burnout and identity strain among clergy (Dunbar et al. 2020, 178–181). The Indonesian context thus serves as a diagnostic lens for global patterns of vocational disorientation. Formation Through Disorientation offers a transferable heuristic for interpreting clergy burnout as a theological disturbance in vocation rather than a deficit in professional capacity.

## **Conclusion**

This study advances a theological ontological reconfiguration of RPA church ministry. The findings demonstrate that RPA in ministerial contexts is not merely a psychological deficit within burnout theory but a formative disruption within grace-based vocational identity, intensified in Indonesia’s minority ecclesial setting. By articulating Formation Through Disorientation as a constructive theo-

logical framework, the study repositions diminished personal accomplishment as a locus of vocational reconstitution rather than functional decline. Grounded in vocation, *imago Dei*, and the spirituality of the cross, this framework challenges performance-oriented paradigms in both organizational burnout discourse and contemporary ecclesial practice.

Through this integrative approach, the research contributes a distinctly Indonesian theological anthropology to the global scholarship on clergy burnout while strengthening pastoral theology's engagement with identity and vocation. In practice, this framework has implications for multiple ecclesial actors. For theological seminaries, it calls for integrating spiritual formation throughout the curriculum rather than treating it as supplementary to academic theology, ensuring that ministerial identity is grounded in grace before students encounter performative pressures. For denominational bodies, it suggests establishing sustained pastoral accompaniment programs that move beyond crisis intervention toward ongoing vocational nurturing, creating safe spaces where ministers can name disorientation without shame. This may be concretely implemented through formal mentoring structures, periodic vocational review sessions, clergy peer reflection forums, and institutional policies that integrate spiritual well-being into ministerial evaluation and continuing education.

For local churches, the framework invites reassessment of performance-driven evaluation metrics that equate numerical growth with faithfulness, encouraging instead forms of accountability that attend to spiritual depth and the integrity of ministerial calling. At the individual level, it offers pastors a theological language to interpret diminished accomplishment not as personal failure but as a potential site of grace, freeing them from the tyranny of constant productivity. By recognizing RPA as a formative moment rather than an immediate failure, local churches can nurture ministerial identities renewed and sustained by divine grace.

This conceptual framework invites further empirical investigation into how Indonesian ministers experience vocational disorientation across diverse denominational and regional contexts. Future research might also explore comparative studies between minority and majority Christian settings to test the transferability of Formation Through Disorientation beyond its original Indonesian locus.

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## **Formacija kroz dezorijentaciju: preoblikovanje smanjenoga osobnog postignuća u indonezijskoj Crkvi**

Sažetak

Ovaj se članak bavi suvremenim raspravama u praktičnoj teologiji o izgaranju crkvenih službenika tako što kritički preispituje pojam smanjenoga osobnog postignuća, jedne od ključnih dimenzija izgaranja koja označava trajni osjećaj smanjene djelotvornosti u službi, neadekvatnosti i gubitka smisla poziva. Prevladavajući modeli izgaranja tumače smanjeno osobno postignuće ponajprije kao pad profesionalne učinkovitosti unutar antropoloških pretpostavki usmjerenih na postignuće. Ova studija tvrdi da su takve pretpostavke teološki neusklađene s crkvenim pozivom te nedostatne za tumačenje službeničkog iskustva, osobito u kontekstima gdje su crkve u manjini. Primjenjujući konstruktivnu metodologiju praktične teologije, članak predlaže koncept formacije kroz dezorijentaciju kao normativni okvir koji smanjeno osobno postignuće preoblikuje kao dezorijentaciju poziva, a ne kao funkcionalni nedostatak. Integrirajući teologiju poziva, antropologiju *imago Dei* i duhovnost usmjerenu na križ, ovaj okvir preusmjerava diskurs o izgaranju s menadžerske obnove na ontološko usklađivanje identiteta službenika. Polazeći od stvarnosti indonezijskih manjinskih crkava kao kritičkog primjera, članak donosi teološku antropologiju Globalnog juga koja izaziva dominantne zapadne paradigme i unapređuje doprinos praktične teologije pitanjima identiteta, legitimnosti i ustrajnosti u službi.