



There is neither male nor female: Theological reflections on Galatians 3:28 as a faith-based response to gender-based persecution

Widjaja Sugiri

University of Wisconsin, Madison, United States

Email: sugiriw@gmail.com

Submitted: 26 October 2025 | Accepted: 22 May 2026 | Published: 30 May 2026

Citation (APA Style):

Sugiri, W. (2026). There is neither male nor female: Theological reflections on Galatians 3:28 as a faith-based response to gender-based persecution. *CHEVRA: Indonesian Journal of Economic, Science, and Humanities*, 1(1): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.46362/chevra.v1i1.107>.

Abstract:

Gender-based persecution remains a pervasive issue globally, often rooted in cultural, social, and religious norms that reinforce inequality and discrimination. This article reflects theologically on Galatians 3:28, which declares, "There is neither male nor female," as a foundational text for responding to gender-based violence within religious communities. The study aims to explore the theological implications of this passage and how it can inform faith-based responses to combat gender persecution. Employing a qualitative research method, the study analyzes biblical texts, theological literature, and contemporary research on gender violence and religion. The findings reveal that Galatians 3:28 challenges traditional gender hierarchies and supports a vision of equality grounded in Christian faith, calling for active pastoral care, advocacy, and education within faith communities. This theological reflection contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender justice by providing a religious framework that empowers believers to resist and transform oppressive structures. Ultimately, the article underscores the role of inclusive theology and faith-driven action in promoting dignity, justice, and peace for all, regardless of gender.

Keywords: gender equality; theological reflection; gender-based persecution; faith-based response; Galatians 3:28.

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence is one of the most widespread forms of human rights violations in the world today. This phenomenon includes various forms of physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence experienced by women and gender minorities. In many contexts, religion has become an instrument of justification for patriarchal structures that perpetuate such violence (Ruether, 1993). On the other hand, religion also has transformative potential to liberate and restore human dignity (De La Torre, 2014). Therefore, critical theological reflection is essential to revisit the meaning

of Scriptural texts in order to respond to the crisis of gender violence in a just and liberating manner.

One text that is often discussed in the discourse of gender equality in the Christian tradition is Galatians 3:28. This verse states that there is "neither male nor female" in Christ, which is often understood as a declaration of spiritual equality among all believers. However, interpretations of this text are often contested, between those who view it as merely eschatological, and those who see it as a basis for social transformation (Fiorenza, 1983; Keener, 2019). This opens up space to reflect on Galatians 3:28 as a relevant faith response to real-life gender injustice. An important question arises: can this text serve as a theological foundation to fight gender-based violence concretely?

Previous studies have shown mixed views on Galatians 3:28. Some such as Groothuis (1997) and Grenz & Kjesbo (1995) assert that this text provides theological legitimacy for full equality in church and society. However, others such as Stendahl (1963) and Fredriksen (2018) emphasize that Paul's original context was more intra-communitarian and not a radical social program. Meanwhile, feminists such as Fiorenza (1992) call for the text to be read from the perspective of women's liberation praxis. This difference shows the importance of a more contextual and interdisciplinary approach in understanding the text.

In the Indonesian context, the theological discourse on gender and violence has not received serious attention in the mainstream church community. A strong patriarchal culture and the lack of critical theological education exacerbate the marginalization of women in the church and society. Some churches even still reject women's leadership on the basis of literal interpretations of certain biblical texts (Beattie, 2006). This suggests that there is an urgent need to reread Scripture with a liberating and inclusive hermeneutic. Galatians 3:28 is an important entry point for such a re-reading.

This paper aims to reflect on Galatians 3:28 as a theological basis in responding to gender-based violence through a contextual approach and liberation hermeneutics. The author will use a critical exegesis approach as well as theological reflection by taking into account the current social context. The main focus is on the possibility of making this text an inspiration for ethics and faith praxis that defends victims of gender violence. In addition, this paper will challenge textual readings that tend to freeze meaning and justify inequality. Thus, this paper proposes a new approach to the text that is more contextual, transformative and pastorally relevant.

The main contribution of this article is to provide a strong theological and biblical basis for churches and faith communities to actively engage in the response to gender violence. It also offers a liberating hermeneutic approach, which can be used in theological education and church liturgy. Furthermore, it aims to show that Christian faith should not be a barrier to equality, but rather a source of power for social transformation (Hooks, 2000; Boff & Boff, 1987). With this approach, this article not only speaks at the theoretical level but also targets practical implementation. The hope is that the church can become a prophetic community that rejects injustice and embraces gender justice as part of its mission.

In the writing process, the author also refers to a contextual theology approach that prioritizes reading from below, from the experiences of victims and the oppressed (Sobrinho, 1993; West, 2006). This approach not only questions old theological structures, but also creates space for marginalized voices to speak. Thus, Galatians 3:28 is no longer read in the abstract, but as a living text that calls to action. Theology is no longer an ivory tower science, but a praxis of faith that touches everyday life. Thus, interpretation of this text must continue to be open to changing social dynamics.

Finally, this paper seeks to respond to the challenges of the times by exploring the depths of Paul's spirituality in a creative and responsible manner. When Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female, he reveals a vision of community that transcends conventional social boundaries (Collins, 2000). This vision must be reinterpreted in the context of contemporary inequality and violence. Biblical texts are not to be maintained statically, but to be explored dynamically in order to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth. Therefore, Galatians 3:28 is not only a declaration of faith, but also an ethical call that demands a concrete response to the suffering of others.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative reflective-theological approach with a critical hermeneutic method to the biblical text, especially Galatians 3:28. The main focus is to interpret the text in light of the reality of gender-based violence and explore its theological potential to encourage social change. The critical hermeneutic method used is inspired by feminist and contextual readings that emphasize the experience of the oppressed as an interpretive lens (Fiorenza, 1992; West, 2006). In the process of exegesis, a historical-critical approach is also used to understand the social and theological context

of the Galatian letter at the time Paul wrote it (Keener, 2019). This research is not empirical-statistical, but analytical and reflective, aiming to build a theological framework that favors victims of gender violence.

The main data in this study is the text of Galatians 3:28, which is analyzed intertextually with other relevant biblical texts and contemporary theological references. The author integrates reflections from liberation theology and feminism as an approach that gives space to the voices of women who experience structural injustice (Ruether, 1993; Sobrino, 1993). In addition, a literature review of the literature on gender theology and religious-based violence is used to strengthen theological arguments. Thus, this method does not only pursue academic understanding, but also builds contextual and prophetic theological praxis. This research aims to shift the theological narrative from justifying domination to transformative liberation.

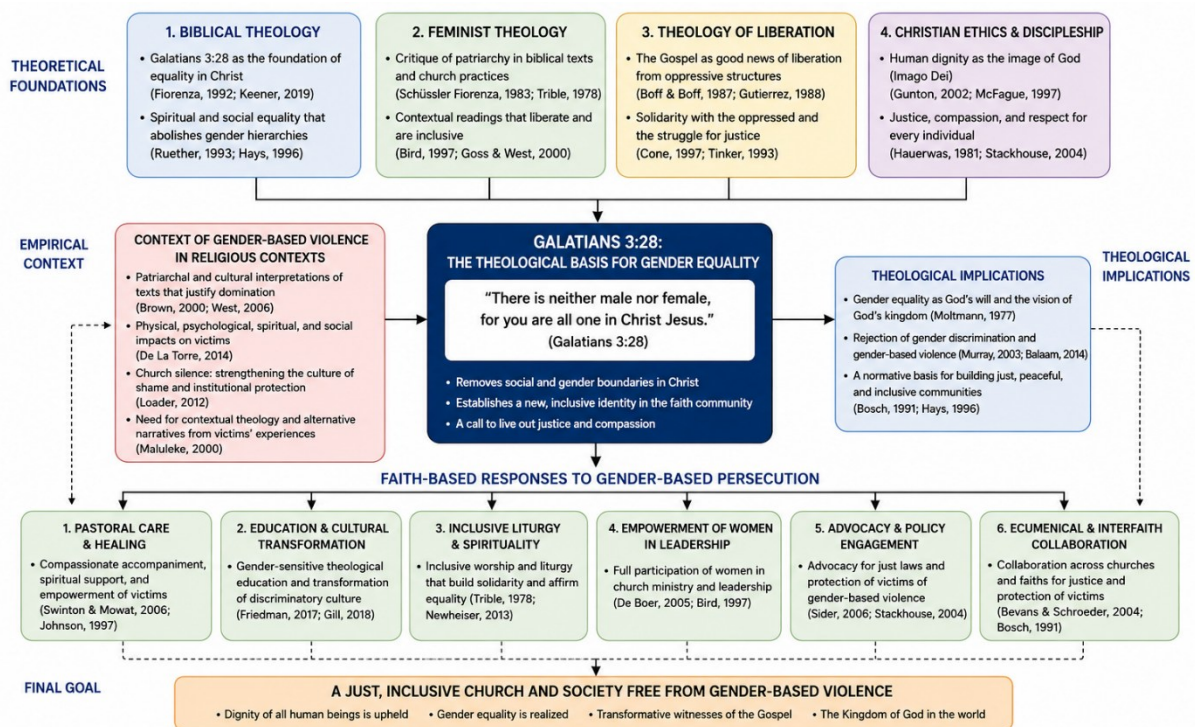


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework Map

RESULT

A Contextual Overview: Gender-Based Violence and Religion

Gender-based violence (GBV) is a systematic and widespread form of oppression, which includes physical, sexual, psychological and structural violence against individuals based on their gender identity. GBV occurs in a variety of contexts-families, communities,

state institutions, even places of worship-often with ideological or religious justification (Cahill, 1996). In many cases, women and gender minorities are the main victims due to the patriarchal culture embedded in social norms and religious teachings (Hooks, 2000). Unequal power relations between men and women are at the root of such violence (Ruether, 1993). Therefore, understanding gender-based violence requires a multidisciplinary approach involving theology, sociology and ethics.

Religion has a major influence in shaping people's views on gender. Historically, many religious traditions including Christianity have been part of patriarchal structures that legitimize the subordination of women (Daly, 1973). For example, certain passages in the Bible are often interpreted literally to justify male leadership and women's absolute obedience (Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995). Such interpretations reinforce narratives of domination and make women's liberation difficult in the context of church and society (Beattie, 2006). However, critical hermeneutic approaches suggest that sacred texts can be reread as sources of liberation, not oppression (Fiorenza, 1992).

Gender-based violence is also often legitimized by religious doctrines that narrow women's roles to the domestic sphere. In the context of the global south, women are often used as symbols of family and community morality, and violations of these roles justify violence (King, 1995). In many churches, women's leadership remains a theologically framed debate, despite studies showing that women's involvement in leadership has a positive impact on communities (Groothuis, 1997). Resistance to women's roles is often not due to the text itself, but rather to readings that are controlled by patriarchal power structures (West, 2006). Thus, there needs to be a deconstruction of oppressive readings of texts.

The reality of gender violence not only impacts the physical and psychological well-being of victims, but also their spirituality and relationship with God. Many victims of religion-based violence experience a crisis of faith because they feel that God is used to justify their suffering (De La Torre, 2014). In the pastoral context, churches often fail to provide a safe space for victims because they are more focused on defending the institution or family (Loader, 2012). In fact, the responsibility of the church should be a place of recovery, not reproduction of wounds (Ruether, 1993). In this case, contextual theology is very important to develop alternative narratives that voice the experiences of victims (Maluleke, 2000).

Research shows that violence against women is often perpetuated by narrow interpretations of gender roles in religion (Brown, 2000). However, some theologians such as Schüssler Fiorenza and Sobrino emphasize that the voices of women and the oppressed should be the starting point of theology (Fiorenza, 1983; Sobrino, 1993). In Asian and African contexts, local theologians emphasize the importance of reading sacred texts in light of the concrete suffering of the people (Massey, 1994; West, 2006). This approach enables the church to not only preach love, but also fight for justice structurally. Liberating readings, then, are an integral part of Christian spirituality.

Galatians 3:28 emerges as a key text in the theological conversation on gender equality. The statement "there is neither male nor female" in Christ radically challenged the social hierarchies of his day (Keener, 2019). However, many modern readings downplay the social power of this text and reduce it to a purely spiritual reality (Stendahl, 1963). Such readings separate faith from ethical action and allow patriarchal structures to remain undisturbed (Fredriksen, 2018). In fact, in the light of gender-based violence, this text can actually be a spiritual foundation for the struggle for justice.

A major challenge is how to integrate this theological reading into the real life of the church. In many contexts, liturgies, sermons and theological curricula are still built on masculine and exclusive assumptions (Moltmann-Wendel, 1994). A reconstruction of the language of faith that is inclusive and victim-centered is needed (Beattie, 2006). This will not only change theological understanding, but also pastoral praxis and church policy. The church is called to be a safe and prophetic space that rejects all forms of violence.

In the Indonesian context, gender-based violence is often silenced by a culture of shame, power relations within the family, and fear of defaming the church. Lack of gender theology education and lack of church advocacy are major inhibiting factors (Kim & Johnson, 2002). In fact, churches in Indonesia have great potential to become agents of social transformation through gender-sensitive pastoral care. The contextual theology movement in Asia can be a source of inspiration to develop contextual and relevant church responses (West, 2006). Thus, the reading of Galatians 3:28 must be linked to the local context of real violence.

Thus, this section asserts that gender and religious-based violence are not separate issues from the Christian faith, but part of the ethical responsibility of the faith community. Interpretations of biblical texts must be constantly re-examined so that they do not become tools of domination, but means of liberation (Fiorenza, 1992). Galatians

3:28, in light of victims' experiences and the context of violence, calls believers to live a faith that favors justice. In this case, it is not enough for the church to pray, but it must also act structurally and prophetically. For faith without defense of the oppressed is an empty faith.

Galatians 3:28 in Original Context

Galatians 3:28 is one of the key verses in Paul's letter to the Galatians which states, "In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female." The historical context of this verse was in the struggle for identity and unity among the believers who came from different ethnic and social backgrounds (Keener, 2019). Paul wrote this letter to emphasize that salvation in Christ abolished the social and cultural differences that used to divide society at that time (Longenecker, 1990). This context is crucial to understanding the radical meaning of the verse in breaking the prevailing social hierarchies. The interpretation of Galatians 3:28 must consider the socio-historical context in which the early church existed.

The letter to the Galatians was written in an atmosphere of theological conflict about the role of the law for non-Jewish believers. Paul strongly opposed the imposition of circumcision and Jewish laws as conditions of salvation (Dunn, 1993). In that context, Galatians 3:28 puts forward the idea that in Christ there are no status distinctions that distinguish the rights and position of believers (Matera, 1992). This verse also marks a shift from ethnic group identity and social status to a new identity as members of the body of Christ. As such, this verse not only expresses spiritual equality, but also significant social implications.

Linguistically, the term "neither male nor female" uses inclusive language and abolishes gender boundaries in the early Christian community (Witherington, 2004). In Greco-Roman society, men had a much higher social status than women, making this statement highly provocative (Ehrman, 2003). Paul's assertion aimed to break down patriarchal social norms that limited women's role in community life (Fiorenza, 1992). However, it does not mean that this verse explicitly abolishes biological gender differences, but rather emphasizes equality in status and rights in Christ. Therefore, Galatians 3:28 provides a theological basis for challenging gender discrimination.

In a historical-critical analysis, Galatians 3:28 is understood as a reflection of Paul's theological thinking about a new identity in Christ that transcends earthly boundaries

(Fee, 2014). Paul states that through baptism, individuals become part of the egalitarian body of Christ regardless of background (Wright, 2009). Baptism in this case marks a new birth that abolishes social differences that are usually a source of conflict (Keener, 2019). This concept is relevant to the ideas of liberation and equality that are central themes in the Galatian letter. Therefore, an understanding of Galatians 3:28 must see the connection between the doctrine of liberation and a new identity within the Christian community.

Traditional interpretations often limit Galatians 3:28 to the spiritual dimension, without regard to its social implications (Hays, 1996). In contrast, feminist theology sees this verse as a call to destroy patriarchy and gender inequality in the community of faith (Ruether, 1993). Some contemporary interpreters emphasize the importance of reading this verse as a basis for advocacy of social justice and gender equality (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983). Thus, this verse is not only historically relevant, but also a source of inspiration for present-day social transformation. This approach opens a space for critical dialogue between the text and the current social context.

Galatians 3:28 is also understood in the context of resistance to oppressive social structures, including slavery and social stratification (Thiselton, 2000). In that context, "slaves and free" denotes the rejection of social domination and the elimination of social status discrimination (Matera, 1992). The text becomes a kind of social manifesto that affirms that in Christ all people have equal value (Hengel, 1974). That is, it challenges the entire system of social injustice that was entrenched in Greco-Roman society. This approach expands the meaning of the verse from just a gender issue to an overall social justice issue.

Some critics consider that Paul did not practically implement gender equality in the early church, given that other letters indicate a limited role for women (Bird, 1997). However, there is also evidence that women took an important role in the ministry and leadership of the early Christian community (De Boer, 2005). The interpretation of Galatians 3:28 should be seen as an ideal vision that calls the church to continue striving for equality (Fitzmyer, 2008). The reality of pastoral practice in the field does not always reflect the spirit of this verse, so it is important to continue to do critical theological reflection. Thus, this verse becomes a source of hope and a challenge for change.

Galatians 3:28 also has eschatological implications, describing a new society where there are no more differences that cause oppression (Barclay, 2012). This verse points to a new reality in Christ that transcends all social and cultural barriers (Moo, 2013). This

eschatological hope encourages the believing community to build a more just and inclusive world in the present (Sanders, 1991). As such, it motivates ethical action and social change based on the vision of God's kingdom. These eschatological implications enrich the theological and practical meaning of Galatians 3:28.

Galatians 3:28 in its original context contains a radical message about eliminating all forms of discrimination based on ethnicity, social status and gender within the Christian community. This verse unifies a new identity in Christ that transcends earthly boundaries and affirms essential equality. A holistic interpretation must integrate the historical, social and theological dimensions so as not to oversimplify the message of this verse. By understanding the original context and its implications, this verse provides a strong basis for opposing gender-based violence and injustice. Therefore, Galatians 3:28 is a theological and ethical call that is relevant for all times.

DISCUSSION

Theological Reflection: Galatians 3:28 as a Foundation for Gender Equality

Galatians 3:28 is often considered a strong theological foundation for gender equality in the Christian tradition. This verse asserts that in Christ, social and gender boundaries that normally separate and discriminate are abolished (Fiorenza, 1992; Ruether, 1993). The equality in question is not only spiritual equality, but also a call to eliminate discrimination in the practice of the life of the faith community (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983; Hays, 1996). Therefore, theological reflection on this verse must place gender equality as an integral part of the gospel message. Many feminist theologians view this verse as a normative basis for challenging patriarchy in church and society (Bird, 1997; Goss & West, 2000).

In the context of liberation theology, Galatians 3:28 offers a paradigm of liberation from structures of oppression, including those based on gender (Boff & Boff, 1987; Gutierrez, 1988). This verse demands radical change that goes beyond mere rhetoric, but has implications for social renewal and power relations (Cone, 1997; Tinker, 1993). Gender equality in this view is not just a moral issue, but part of a commitment to justice and human dignity (Santos, 1993; Johnson, 1997). Liberation theology positions Galatians 3:28 as a concrete call to abolish male domination over women (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983). As such, this verse inspires inclusive and egalitarian religious practices.

Systematic theologians see Galatians 3:28 as revealing the basic principle of humanity's unity and equality before God (Moltmann, 1977; Barth, 1962). Gender equality is a concrete manifestation of the theological reality that all people are created equal in the image of God (*Imago Dei*) (Gunton, 2002; McFague, 1997). Therefore, gender-based discrimination is considered contrary to God's just and loving nature (Plantinga, 2002; Newheiser, 2013). Gender equality is not only a social demand, but also a reflection of faithfulness to God's character (Swinton & Mowat, 2006). This view integrates theological reflection and practical ethics.

Critical hermeneutic reflections on Galatians 3:28 reveal that this verse challenges patriarchal structures in biblical texts and church practices (Meyers, 1988; Tribble, 1978). Feminist interpretations highlight how this verse demands a re-reading of texts that have reinforced women's subordination (Tribble, 1978; Fiorenza, 1992). This invites the church to dare to revise traditions that restrict the role of women (Ruether, 1993; Daly, 1973). Thus, Galatians 3:28 became the basis for theological advocacy that eliminated gender discrimination in the faith community (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983). This interpretation prompted a theological and social paradigm shift.

In the context of Christian ethics, Galatians 3:28 forms the basis for gender-inclusive thinking about justice and human dignity (Hauerwas, 1981; Stackhouse, 2004). The gender equality promoted by this verse reminds us that there is no difference in value between men and women (West, 2000). Therefore, upholding women's rights and stopping gender-based violence are moral obligations for Christians (Sider, 2006; Keller, 2010). This ethic demands concrete actions in daily life, both within the church and the wider community (Grenz, 1995; Smith, 2007). This verse is the foundation for building a community that respects equality and inclusiveness.

Feminist theology expands the meaning of Galatians 3:28 as a call for radical transformation of gender relations (Fiorenza, 1992; Ruether, 1993). This verse affirms that gender equality is part of the kingdom of God present in the world (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983; Christ, 2000). It encourages women to take an active role in church ministry and leadership (Bird, 1997; De Boer, 2005). With this recognition, the church is invited to reflect on and reform practices that have been restricting women's participation (Fitzmyer, 2008). Galatians 3:28 inspires structural and cultural change.

In the context of gender-based violence, Galatians 3:28 affirms that violence and discrimination are against the will of God who created equality (Murray, 2003; Balaam,

2014). A theology based on this verse invites people to actively reject all forms of oppression and violence against women (Hooks, 2000; Cabrera, 2016). Gender equality is an important tool in efforts to prevent and restore victims of violence (Walker, 1999; Oduyoye, 2001). Therefore, this theological reflection opens space for dialog and concrete actions for gender justice (Hunnicut, 2009). This verse builds a strong normative foundation for resistance to gender-based abuse.

An ecumenical approach to Galatians 3:28 places gender equality as a shared issue across denominations and Christian traditions (Bosch, 1991; Volf, 1996). Inter-church cooperation is important to overcome gender discrimination that is often a barrier to Christian service and witness (Friedman, 2017; Gill, 2018). A shared understanding of this verse encourages synergistic movements in the fight for women's rights and social justice (Marshall, 2001; Bevans & Schroeder, 2004). This collective theological reflection strengthens inclusive and sustainable social change efforts (Walls, 2002). Galatians 3:28 is an important meeting point in the ecumenical dialogue on gender equality.

Theological reflection on Galatians 3:28 shows that this verse is not only historically relevant, but also vital for contemporary challenges to gender injustice. Gender equality in Christ is a basic principle that must be lived out in all aspects of church and community life (Bosch, 1991; Hays, 1996). The implementation of this principle requires sustainable structural, cultural and personal change (Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995). Therefore, Galatians 3:28 is the theological foundation that drives the commitment to eliminate gender violence and discrimination (Sider, 2006; West, 2000). Through this reflection, the church is called to be a real and sustainable agent of social transformation.

A Faith-Based Response to Gender-Based Persecution

Faith-based responses to gender-based abuse should be rooted in the values of love, justice and human dignity taught in the Bible (Walls, 2002; Bevans & Schroeder, 2004). Christian faith encourages people to reject all forms of oppression and violence that dehumanize women and men (Keller, 2010; Sider, 2006). Thus, the response of faith is not only ritual or symbolic, but also concrete and practical in fighting for the rights of victims (Cone, 1997; Ruether, 1993). Faith communities have a strategic role in providing protection and advocacy to those who experience gender-based violence (Gill, 2018; Cabrera, 2016). This response is a manifestation of a living faith that bears fruit in social action.

A pastoral approach is an important aspect in responding to gender-based maltreatment with empathy and spiritual support (Swinton & Mowat, 2006; Johnson, 1997). Gender-responsive pastoral care is able to strengthen victims while encouraging changes in attitudes and behaviors in the community (Grenz, 1995; Hauerwas, 1981). Pastoral care should address the emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of victims so that they can recover and be empowered (Murray, 2003; Oduyoye, 2001). The involvement of congregations and spiritual leaders is also important to create a safe and supportive environment (Fiorenza, 1992; Hooks, 2000). With this approach, faith becomes a source of strength for recovery and transformation.

In addition to pastoral care, liberation theology provides a framework that challenges the social and power structures that allow gender-based violence to take place (Boff & Boff, 1987; Gutierrez, 1988). This approach teaches believers to struggle against injustice and uphold justice for the oppressed (Santos, 1993; Tinker, 1993). This critical faith response encourages the church to play an active role in inclusive and transformative social change (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004; Bosch, 1991). Through this theological awareness, gender-based persecution cannot be left as a private matter, but must be faced collectively (Ruether, 1993; Christ, 2000). This approach expands the church's mission as an agent of liberation.

Church communities also have an important role in education and awareness-raising on issues of gender violence (Friedman, 2017; Gill, 2018). Faith-based education that emphasizes equality and respect for women can change discriminatory cultures (Stackhouse, 2004; West, 2000). Training programs for leaders and congregations can strengthen their capacity to counter stereotypes and violence (Smith, 2007; Keller, 2010). Thus, the church becomes a space for cultural transformation that supports gender justice (Bosch, 1991; Hays, 1996). This faith education becomes a long-term investment to eliminate persecution.

Liturgy and worship practices can also be important tools in responding to gender-based abuse (Newheiser, 2013; Swinton & Mowat, 2006). Through gender-aware prayer, praise, and confession, communities participate in a process of healing and liberation (Trible, 1978; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983). Inclusive liturgies affirm that all people, without exception, are God's creation to be respected and loved (Moltmann, 1977; Gunton, 2002). This practice strengthens solidarity among congregation members and reinforces

commitment against discrimination (Plantinga, 2002; Hauerwas, 1981). In this way, faith is embodied in rites that support justice and equality.

The role of women in church ministry and leadership is one of the strategic responses to address gender-based abuse (Bird, 1997; De Boer, 2005). The empowerment of women in various ecclesiastical positions encourages the elimination of patriarchal culture which is often the root of violence (Fiorenza, 1992; Ruether, 1993). The presence of women in leadership also provides a more sensitive perspective to issues of gender and violence (Cabrera, 2016; Hooks, 2000). Therefore, faith responses should encourage inclusivity and full participation of women (Goss & West, 2000; Keller, 2010). This is a concrete step in realizing the equality that Galatians 3:28 affirms.

Interfaith and ecumenical dialogue strengthens responses to gender-based abuse by building solidarity across faith communities (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004; Bosch, 1991). This collaboration opens up opportunities to address complex gender issues more holistically (Friedman, 2017; Gill, 2018). Interfaith approaches also enrich understanding of human dignity and justice (Volf, 1996; Walls, 2002). This cooperation strengthens advocacy networks and protection programs for victims of violence (Santos, 1993; Oduyoye, 2001). Faith thus becomes a force that transcends traditional boundaries.

Faith-based advocacy is also important as a systematic effort to change policies and laws related to gender-based violence (Sider, 2006; Stackhouse, 2004). Churches can be a strong moral voice in pushing for legislation that protects victims and prevents violence (Smith, 2007; Keller, 2010). In addition, religious institutions are often the first place victims turn to for protection and assistance (Murray, 2003; Walker, 1999). With this role, faith responses become an integral part of social protection systems (Bevans & Schroeder, 2004; Cabrera, 2016). Such advocacy shows that faith cannot be passive to gender injustice.

Faith responses to gender-based persecution should be colored by a commitment to building a society that is inclusive, just, and free from violence (Grenz, 1995; Hays, 1996). Gender equality upheld by faith is a tangible manifestation of the expected Kingdom of God (Bosch, 1991; Hauerwas, 1981). The church is called to be an active agent of change, empowering all people without discrimination (Ruether, 1993; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1983). Through faith responses, gender-based abuse is not only addressed, but also prevented entirely (Cone, 1997; Walls, 2002). It is the realization of hope and love that is transformative in the real world.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion emphasizes that Galatians 3:28 is a strong theological foundation for fighting for gender equality in the context of gender-based persecution. This verse invites believers to see themselves as no longer bound by gender categories that can be a source of discrimination and oppression. Theological reflection on this text shows that the Christian faith must actively reject all forms of violence and injustice experienced by women and men. Furthermore, faith's response to gender-based persecution should include pastoral action, social advocacy, education, and liturgical renewal that affirms the dignity of all human beings without exception. Thus, an inclusive and gender-responsive theology becomes an important contribution in bringing justice and peace in society.

Furthermore, a holistic faith-based response involves the role of church communities as agents of social change that empower victims and counter oppressive patriarchal structures. Through the synergy between theology, worship practices, and social action, faith communities can become real spaces of healing and transformation for those experiencing persecution. Gender equality is not just a theological ideal, but a concrete call that must be realized in religious and social life. Therefore, this article emphasizes the importance of shared awareness and commitment in responding to gender-based persecution in a just and humane manner. Finally, strengthening inclusive theology and faith-based concrete actions are key to creating a more equal world free from gender violence.

REFERENCES

- Aichele, G., Jobling, D., Moore, S. D., & Punt, J. (2007). *The postmodern Bible reader*. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Beattie, T. (2006). *Woman: New century theology*. Continuum.
- Boff, L., & Boff, C. (1987). *Introducing liberation theology* (P. Burns, Trans.). Orbis Books.
- Brueggemann, W. (2002). *The Bible and postmodern imagination: Texts under negotiation*. SCM Press.
- Brown, M. L. (2000). *Whatever happened to the power of God?* Destiny Image.
- Cahill, L. S. (1996). *Sex, gender, and Christian ethics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Collins, R. F. (2000). *Introduction to the New Testament*. SCM Press.
- Daly, M. (1973). *Beyond God the Father: Toward a philosophy of women's liberation*. Beacon Press.

- Davies, S. (1985). *The Gospel of Thomas and Christian wisdom*. Seabury Press.
- De La Torre, M. A. (2014). *Doing Christian ethics from the margins* (2nd ed.). Orbis Books.
- Fiorenza, E. S. (1983). *In memory of her: A feminist theological reconstruction of Christian origins*. SCM Press.
- Fiorenza, E. S. (1992). *But she said: Feminist practices of biblical interpretation*. Beacon Press.
- Fredriksen, P. (2018). *Paul: The pagans' apostle*. Yale University Press.
- Grenz, S. J., & Kjesbo, D. M. (1995). *Women in the church: A biblical theology of women in ministry*. InterVarsity Press.
- Groothuis, R. M. (1997). *Good news for women: A biblical picture of gender equality*. Baker Books.
- Hooks, B. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. South End Press.
- Keener, C. S. (2019). *Galatians: A commentary*. Baker Academic.
- Kim, G. J., & Johnson, S. (Eds.). (2002). *Woman, man, and God in modern Islam*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- King, U. (1995). *Theology and the gender debate*. Blackwell.
- Loader, W. (2012). *The New Testament on sexuality*. Eerdmans.
- Maluleke, T. S. (2000). The Bible and African theology. In G. O. West & M. W. Dube (Eds.), *The Bible in Africa* (pp. 121-136). Brill.
- Massey, J. (1994). *Downtrodden: The struggle of India's Dalits for identity, solidarity and liberation*. ISPCK.
- Moltmann-Wendel, E. (1994). *A land flowing with milk and honey: Perspectives on feminist theology*. SCM Press.
- Ruether, R. R. (1993). *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a feminist theology* (2nd ed.). Beacon Press.
- Schüssler Fiorenza, E. (1998). *Sharing her word: Feminist biblical interpretation in context*. Continuum.
- Sobrino, J. (1993). *Jesus the liberator: A historical-theological reading of Jesus of Nazareth* (P. Burns & F. McDonagh, Trans.). Orbis Books.
- Spencer, A. B. (1985). *Beyond the curse: Women called to ministry*. Thomas Nelson.
- Stendahl, K. (1963). The Apostle Paul and the introspective conscience of the West. *Harvard Theological Review*, 56(3), 199-215.

West, G. O. (2006). *The Academy of the Poor: Towards a dialogical reading of the Bible*.
Sheffield Phoenix Press.



CHEVRA: Indonesian Journal of Economic, Science, and Humanities
<https://indonesiastt.ac.id/journal/index.php/chevra>
is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License