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Galatia 3:28 dan Panggilan untuk Keadilan Gender di Komunitas Iman Indonesia: Hermeneutik Solidaritas Terluka

Galatians 3:28 and the Call for Gender Justice in Indonesian Faith Communities: A Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity

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Abstrak: *Kekerasan berbasis gender (KBG) tetap menjadi krisis global yang meresap, sering diperkuat oleh tafsiran religius yang melegitimasi hierarki patriarkal. Meskipun Galatia 3:28 telah banyak dikaji dalam konteks Barat, potensinya sebagai sumber untuk merespons persekusi berbasis gender di komunitas iman Indonesia masih kurang berkembang. Artikel ini bertujuan membangun kerangka teologis kontekstual bagi gereja-gereja Indonesia untuk merespons KBG dengan menafsirkan Galatia 3:28 melalui hermeneutik pembebasan feminis, kritik pascakolonial, dan teori trauma. Studi ini menggunakan hermeneutik pembebasan feminis, mengikuti tarian hermeneutik empat langkah Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (kecurigaan, ingatan, evaluasi, dan imajinasi kreatif), dilengkapi kritik pascakolonial Kwok Pui-lan, metode trauma-informed Serene Jones, dan analisis Michelle Eastwood tentang kepenulisan laki-laki dan ketidakhadiran perempuan, dengan menganalisis Galatia 3:28 secara intertekstual dengan Kejadian 1:27 dan teks-teks Paulus lainnya. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa formula baptisan "tidak ada laki-laki dan perempuan" (οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ) sengaja menggemakan dan mensubversi Kejadian 1:27, membongkar hierarki penciptaan; bahwa visi teologis kesetaraan dalam Kristus membawa imperatif etis bagi praksis gereja; dan bahwa komunitas iman Indonesia memerlukan strategi kontekstual pada tingkat liturgis, pastoral, dan struktural untuk menerjemahkan visi ini menjadi respons konkret terhadap KBG. Galatia 3:28 menyediakan fondasi teologis bagi respons berbasis iman terhadap KBG, tetapi potensi pembebasannya hanya teraktualisasi ketika penafsiran akuntabel terhadap pengalaman korban dan terwujud dalam praktik gerejawi.*

Kontribusi: *Artikel ini memperkenalkan Hermeneutik Solidaritas Terluka (HWS) sebagai kerangka interpretatif baru yang memprioritaskan pengalaman korban, mengkritik warisan penafsiran kolonial, menuntut kesetaraan struktural dalam tata gereja, dan menegaskan advokasi praktis sebagai ujian validitas teologis.*

Kata Kunci: *hermeneutik pembebasan feminis, kekerasan berbasis gender di Indonesia, kepenulisan laki-laki dan ketidakhadiran perempuan, Hermeneutik Solidaritas Terluka, interpretasi kontekstual Galatia 3:28.*

Abstract: Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a pervasive global crisis, frequently reinforced by religious interpretations that legitimize patriarchal hierarchies. While Galatians 3:28 has been extensively examined in Western contexts, its potential as a resource for responding to gender-based persecution in Indonesian faith communities remains underdeveloped. This article aims to construct a contextual theological framework for Indonesian churches to respond to GBV by interpreting Galatians 3:28 through feminist liberation hermeneutics, postcolonial critique, and trauma theory. The study employs feminist liberation hermeneutics, following Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's four-step hermeneutical dance (suspicion, remembrance, evaluation, and creative imagination), complemented by Kwok Pui-lan's postcolonial critique, Serene Jones's

trauma-informed method, and Michelle Eastwood's analysis of male authorship and female absence, analyzing Galatians 3:28 intertextually with Genesis 1:27 and other Pauline texts. The analysis reveals that the baptismal formula "neither male nor female" (οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ) deliberately echoes and subverts Genesis 1:27, dismantling the creation hierarchy; that the theological vision of equality in Christ carries ethical imperatives for church praxis; and that Indonesian faith communities require contextual strategies at liturgical, pastoral, and structural levels to translate this vision into concrete responses to GBV. Galatians 3:28 provides a theological foundation for faith-based responses to GBV, but its liberating potential is actualized only when interpretation is accountable to victims' experiences and embodied in ecclesial practice.

Contribution: The article introduces the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity (HWS) as a new interpretive framework that prioritizes victims' experiences, critiques colonial interpretive legacies, mandates structural equality in church polity, and insists on practical advocacy as the test of theological validity.

Keywords: feminist liberation hermeneutics, gender-based violence in Indonesia, male authorship and female absence, Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity, Galatians 3:28 contextual interpretation.

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1. Introduction

Gender-based violence constitutes one of the most widespread human rights violations globally, encompassing physical, psychological, sexual, and economic forms of violence that disproportionately affect women and gender minorities (World Health Organization, 2021; UN Women, 2023). In many societies, religion functions as an instrument that legitimizes patriarchal structures and perpetuates such violence, providing theological justification for women's subordination and silencing victims who seek help (Ruether, 1993). However, religious traditions also possess transformative potential to liberate and restore human dignity, creating a paradox that demands critical theological reflection on scriptural texts (De La Torre, 2014). This paradox is particularly acute in Indonesia, where patriarchal culture and religious conservatism intersect in distinct ways that shape both the experience of GBV and the church's response to it (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021). The present study addresses this paradox by examining how Galatians 3:28 can function as a theological resource for Indonesian faith communities responding to gender-based violence.

Galatians 3:28 stands at the center of theological debates on gender equality, declaring that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus (Martyn, 1997; Moo, 2013). Interpretations of this text range from readings that limit its significance to spiritual or eschatological dimensions (Stendahl, 1963; Fredriksen, 2018) to those that locate within it a radical social vision for the church and society (Fiorenza, 1983; Gaventa, 2007). Feminist and liberation theologians have argued that this verse provides theological legitimacy for full equality in church and society (Groothuis, 1997; Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995), while complementarian scholars maintain that Paul's statement pertains only to salvation status rather than ecclesial roles (Grudem, 1994; Schreiner, 2006). This contested interpretive history reveals the need for a hermeneutical approach that attends to both the original context and contemporary ethical implications (Barclay, 2012; Keener, 2019). The present study enters this debate by arguing that the egalitarian reading is most faithful to the text's original context and intertextual echoes, while acknowledging the eschatological tension between the "already" of equality in Christ and the "not yet" of concrete church practices.

The state of the art in Galatians 3:28 scholarship reveals several methodological trajectories that inform this study. Historical-critical approaches have established the pre-Pauline baptismal formula underlying the verse and its function in Paul's argument about justification by faith (Dunn, 1993; Matera, 1992; Longenecker, 1990). Socio-rhetorical and empire-critical approaches have demonstrated how the verse challenges Roman imperial ideology and its hierarchies of ethnicity, status, and gender (Kahl, 2010; Witherington, 2004). Feminist hermeneutics has recovered marginalized voices and practices in early Christian communities where women exercised leadership roles (Fiorenza, 1983; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1998; Gaventa, 2007). Postcolonial and decolonial approaches have interrogated how Western interpretive traditions have shaped global readings and have centered voices from the Global South (Kwok, 2005; Dube, 2000). Trauma-informed theologies have drawn attention to the embodied experiences of victims and the need for interpretations that promote healing rather than abstraction (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010). Most recently, Eastwood (2025) has demonstrated how male authorship, male dominance, and female absence continue to shape biblical interpretation, even in feminist scholarship, and has advocated for reading the Bible with women rather than merely about women.

Despite this rich methodological landscape, significant research gaps remain in the study of Galatians 3:28 and its implications for gender justice in Indonesian faith communities. The dominant interpretive tradition has been shaped by Western theological frameworks, with limited attention to how this text might be read from Global South perspectives, particularly Indonesian contexts where patriarchal culture and religious conservatism intersect in distinct ways (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021). Existing scholarship rarely connects exegesis of Galatians 3:28 with concrete strategies for addressing gender-based violence within faith communities, leaving a gap between theological vision and pastoral practice (Sugiri, 2026). While feminist readings have challenged patriarchal interpretations, there remains insufficient integration of postcolonial and trauma-informed approaches that center victims' experiences in the Indonesian context (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019; Eastwood, 2025). Furthermore, the Indonesian theological literature on feminism, while growing, often remains critical of feminist theology rather than constructive in developing contextual frameworks for gender justice (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). These gaps demand a study that brings exegesis, contextual analysis, and practical theology into conversation with one another.

This article addresses these gaps by asking: How can Galatians 3:28, interpreted through feminist liberation hermeneutics and contextualized within Indonesian Christianity, provide a theological foundation for faith communities to respond concretely to gender-based violence? The study aims to construct a contextual theological framework for Indonesian churches by interpreting Galatians 3:28 through feminist liberation hermeneutics, postcolonial critique, and trauma theory, and by proposing concrete strategies at liturgical, pastoral, and structural levels. The study contributes to Pauline studies by offering a decolonized reading that attends to the intersection of gender, ethnicity, and class in Eastern Indonesia, and by integrating the voices of Indonesian theologians such as Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) and Sugiri (2026) into international scholarly conversation. It contributes to feminist theology by integrating trauma theory and intersectionality with biblical interpretation, and to practical theology by proposing three levels of faith-based response. Most significantly, the article introduces the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity (HWS) as a new interpretive framework that prioritizes victims' experiences, critiques colonial interpretive legacies, mandates structural equality in church polity, and insists on practical advocacy as the test of theological validity.

2. Methods

This study employs feminist liberation hermeneutics as its primary methodological framework, following Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza's four-step hermeneutical dance of suspicion, remembrance, evaluation, and creative imagination (Fiorenza, 1992; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1998). This framework is complemented by Kwok Pui-lan's postcolonial critique (Kwok, 2005), Musa Dube's postcolonial feminist interpretation (Dube, 2000), Serene Jones's trauma-informed theological method (Jones, 2009), Shelly Rambo's theology of remaining (Rambo, 2010), Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), and Michelle Eastwood's analysis of male authorship, male dominance, and female absence in the biblical text (Eastwood, 2025). Historical-critical methods, while valuable for establishing original context, often fail to interrogate the interpretive interests that have shaped reception history, particularly those that have reinforced patriarchal readings (Fiorenza, 1983). Socio-rhetorical approaches attend to rhetorical strategies but may neglect the experiences of marginalized readers (Robbins, 1996). Feminist liberation hermeneutics uniquely combines attention to historical context with critical analysis of power dynamics in interpretation and commitment to transformative praxis, making it particularly appropriate for a study seeking to address gender-based violence (West, 2006). Postcolonial critique further enriches this framework by attending to how Western interpretive traditions have shaped global readings and by centering voices from the Global South (Kwok, 2005; Dube, 2000). Trauma theory ensures that the analysis remains accountable to the embodied experiences of victims rather than abstracting theological reflection from concrete suffering (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010).

The application of this methodology proceeds through four interconnected steps that structure the Results and Discussion sections. The hermeneutics of suspicion interrogates dominant interpretations of Galatians 3:28 that have limited its significance to spiritual equality or eschatological hope, asking whose interests have been served by interpretations that separate this text from concrete social transformation (Fiorenza, 1992). This step also extends to the conditions of biblical production, interrogating how male authorship and male dominance have shaped the text and its interpretation, as Eastwood (2025) demonstrates through her analysis of female absence and the systematic alteration of women's names such as Junia. The hermeneutics of remembrance recovers marginalized voices and neglected dimensions of the text, attending to the pre-Pauline baptismal formula underlying Galatians 3:28, the echoes of Genesis 1:27, and the

practices of early Christian communities where women exercised leadership roles (Fiorenza, 1983; Gaventa, 2007). This step also recovers the voices of Indonesian women and theologians who have addressed gender injustice in their contexts, including the critical reflections of Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) and the constructive proposals of Sugiri (2026). The hermeneutics of evaluation assesses competing interpretations critically, engaging both egalitarian and complementarian readings and evaluating them according to their capacity to promote justice and human dignity (Schüssler Fiorenza, 1998). This step also considers the caution raised by Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) regarding the danger of eisegesis, while maintaining that feminist hermeneutics can and must maintain methodological rigor. The hermeneutics of creative imagination constructs alternative readings and practices that realize the text's liberating potential in contemporary contexts, moving from interpretation to transformation (Fiorenza, 1992). This step is developed through the construction of the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity, which integrates the insights of feminist, postcolonial, trauma, and intersectional theories into a framework specifically formulated for the Indonesian context.

The primary data for this study consists of the Greek text of Galatians 3:28, analyzed intertextually with Genesis 1:27 in the Septuagint, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Colossians 3:11, and other Pauline passages addressing gender (Martyn, 1997; Moo, 2013). Secondary data includes Indonesian scholarship on gender and theology (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021; Darmaputera, 1998; Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019; Sugiri, 2026), empirical reports on gender-based violence in Indonesia (Komnas Perempuan, 2023, 2024), international theological and gender studies literature from 2015 to 2025 including Eastwood (2025), and church documents from the Indonesian Communion of Churches on gender justice (PGI, 2018). Secondary literature was selected through systematic database searches using keywords such as Galatians 3:28, gender-based violence, feminist hermeneutics, Indonesian theology, trauma theology, male authorship, and contextual Bible study. Inclusion criteria prioritized peer-reviewed publications from the last decade, works addressing both biblical exegesis and contemporary ethical implications, Global South and postcolonial perspectives, and interdisciplinary research integrating theology with sociology and psychology. Following feminist methodological requirements (Fiorenza, 1992; Schüssler Fiorenza, 1998), the study acknowledges the researcher's positionality as a theologian working within the Indonesian Christian context, committed to gender

justice, and shaped by both Western theological education and engagement with Indonesian grassroots communities (Eastwood, 2025). This positionality informs the interpretive interests of the study while also requiring critical self-reflection to avoid imposing external frameworks on local contexts.

3. Results

3.1. Exegetical Analysis of Galatians 3:28

3.1.1. Socio-Historical Context and the Pre-Pauline Baptismal Formula

The Letter to the Galatians was written amid theological conflict regarding the role of the Mosaic law for Gentile believers, with Paul vigorously opposing the imposition of circumcision and dietary laws as conditions for salvation (Dunn, 1993; Matera, 1992). Galatians 3:28 appears within a section emphasizing the universality of God's promise to Abraham and the inclusion of all peoples through faith, positioning the verse as a climax of Paul's argument for justification by faith (Longenecker, 1990; Moo, 2013). The verse's triadic structure, negating ethnic, social, and gender distinctions, reflects a pre-Pauline baptismal formula that Paul deploys for his argument rather than composing himself (Kahl, 2010; Gaventa, 2007). This formula likely originated in early Christian baptismal practice, where converts confessed their new identity "in Christ" as a radical reorientation of their social and religious standing (Witherington, 2004). The formula's function was to articulate the radical egalitarianism of the Christian community over against the hierarchical structures of Greco-Roman society, which organized the world according to gradations of ethnicity, status, and gender (Ehrman, 2003). Understanding this socio-historical context is essential for appreciating the radical nature of the text and its implications for contemporary faith communities.

However, as Eastwood (2025) reminds us, the fact that this liberating formula appears in a letter written by a man, preserved by male-dominated communities, and interpreted for centuries by male scholars should give us pause. The very text that proclaims neither male nor female has been transmitted through structures that have systematically marginalized women, creating a paradox that is central to the hermeneutical challenge of Galatians 3:28 (Eastwood, 2025). Of the approximately seventeen hundred distinct names in the Bible, only one hundred thirty-seven are women, representing roughly eight percent, and even when women are named, their stories are often told through male lenses (Eastwood, 2025). The woman who anoints Jesus in Mark

14:3-9 is remembered in the gospel proclamation, yet her name is lost to history, while the name of the betrayer is preserved (Fiorenza, 1983). This pattern of female absence and male dominance is not merely a historical curiosity but a continuing reality in contemporary interpretation, as Eastwood (2025) demonstrates through her analysis of lectionary bias and male-dominated translation teams. Recognizing this paradox is essential for a hermeneutics that seeks to recover the liberating potential of the text while acknowledging the conditions of its production and reception.

Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) provide additional historical context by documenting how patriarchal assumptions were embedded in Christian theology from its earliest centuries, creating a legacy that continues to shape church practices today. They cite Aristotle's view that women are in the same caste as slaves and animals, Flavius Josephus's assertion that the woman is in all things inferior to the man, and the daily blessing of Rabbi Judah Ben Elai who thanked God for not making him a heathen, a woman, or an uneducated person (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). These attitudes were transmitted through theological traditions, with Augustine arguing that women are not fully made in God's image and Tertullian describing woman as the gateway of the devil (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). The persistence of these attitudes into the modern era is evident in the ongoing resistance to women's ordination and leadership in many Indonesian churches, despite the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Kolimon, 2020). Understanding this historical context is essential for appreciating the radical nature of Galatians 3:28 and the ongoing struggle to realize its implications for gender justice in Indonesian faith communities.

3.1.2. Linguistic Analysis and Intertextuality with Genesis 1:27

The key phrase in Galatians 3:28 is οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ, meaning there is not male and female, which echoes Genesis 1:27 in the Septuagint, which reads ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν, meaning male and female he made them (Kahl, 2010; Martyn, 1997). By using the same vocabulary, Paul deliberately recalls and subverts the creation narrative, transforming a text that has been used to justify gender hierarchy into a proclamation of equality in Christ (Barclay, 2012; Gaventa, 2007). While Genesis 1:27 establishes the creation of humanity as male and female, Galatians 3:28 announces that in Christ, this distinction, which has been used to justify hierarchy, is transcended without being erased (Moo, 2013). The grammatical construction is also significant, as Paul uses καί rather than

οὐδέ in the third pair, unlike the first two pairs where the negation is followed by nor (Kahl, 2010). This suggests Paul is not simply negating the existence of gender but rather subverting the hierarchical relationship between male and female established in the creation account, so that the distinction remains but its significance for status and power is abolished (Kahl, 2010). This linguistic analysis reveals the radical nature of Paul's claim and its implications for gender relations in the church.

The baptismal context is crucial for understanding the significance of this text, as through baptism, believers are incorporated into Christ, and this new identity supersedes all previous identity markers (Matera, 1992; Fee, 2014). This does not mean that ethnic, social, or gender differences are erased from existence, but that they no longer determine one's standing in the community (Wright, 2009). Sugiri (2026) emphasizes that this baptismal formula constitutes a radical vision of equality that challenges traditional gender hierarchies and calls for active pastoral care, advocacy, and education within faith communities. The text is not merely descriptive but prescriptive, announcing a new reality that the church is called to embody in its life and witness (Sugiri, 2026). This imperative dimension of the text provides a foundation for faith-based responses to gender-based violence, as it calls the church to live out the equality it proclaims in baptism (Sugiri, 2026). The baptismal context thus transforms Galatians 3:28 from a theological abstraction into a concrete call to action.

However, Eastwood's (2025) analysis of translation bias raises important questions about how this text has been rendered in English and Indonesian versions, potentially domesticating its radical implications. She demonstrates, for example, how the Hebrew word hayil is translated differently when applied to a man versus a woman, with the male Boaz being described as prominent, rich, or worthy, while the female Proverbs 31 woman is described as capable, excellent, or virtuous (Eastwood, 2025). This pattern of translation bias reflects the male-dominated translation teams and their patriarchal theologies, and similar biases may have shaped translations of Galatians 3:28 (Eastwood, 2025). The observation underscores the importance of reading the text with critical awareness of how translation and interpretation are shaped by power dynamics, and it calls for translations that do justice to the radical equality proclaimed in the text (Eastwood, 2025). A faithful reading of Galatians 3:28 must attend not only to the Greek text but also to the ways in which translation and interpretation have shaped its reception in Indonesian churches.

3.1.3. The Triadic Structure and Its Implications for Hierarchy

Scholars have noted that the three pairs in Galatians 3:28 move from what was most fixed to what was most fluid to what was most foundational, suggesting that if even the most fundamental human distinction—male and female—is transcended in Christ, then all social hierarchies are relativized (Barclay, 2012). Brigitte Kahl (2010) argues that the Galatians 3:28 formula directly challenges the imperial ideology of the Roman Empire, which organized the world according to hierarchies of ethnicity, status, and gender. Paul's declaration that in Christ these distinctions no longer structure community membership constitutes a counter-imperial claim about a new social reality (Kahl, 2010). This reading has profound implications for contemporary contexts where similar hierarchies continue to structure social and ecclesial life, including Indonesian churches where patriarchal norms are often reinforced by theological interpretations (Kolimon, 2020). The triadic structure of the verse thus provides a foundation for challenging all forms of hierarchy that contradict the gospel's vision of equality in Christ.

Eastwood (2025) extends this analysis by drawing attention to the male dominance that characterizes not only the biblical text but also its interpretation, noting that throughout the history of scholarship, men's voices and understandings of the text have dominated. The lectionary has more of a gender bias than the Bible does, as the texts chosen for focus in worship services are more likely to be about men and men's experience (Eastwood, 2025). Male leadership in the church means that women's understanding or reading of the text is often not heard, and in scholarly spaces, feminist theology is often relegated to a sub-discipline along with other contextual readings (Eastwood, 2025). This observation challenges the church to reconsider not only what it reads but also who reads and who is authorized to interpret (Eastwood, 2025). The triadic structure of Galatians 3:28, with its radical relativization of social hierarchies, provides a foundation for addressing these questions, but it also requires careful attention to the historical and literary contexts in which the text was produced.

Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) offer a critical perspective on this debate from an Indonesian evangelical context, affirming the importance of gender justice while cautioning against what they perceive as the excesses of radical feminist theology. They argue that some feminist interpretations engage in eisegesis, reading ideological commitments into the text rather than allowing the text to speak on its own terms (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). While I do not share their suspicion of feminist

hermeneutics as inherently eisegetical, their critique raises important methodological questions about how feminist readings of Galatians 3:28 can maintain both critical rigor and liberating potential (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). The triadic structure of the verse, with its radical relativization of social hierarchies, provides a foundation for addressing these questions, but it also requires careful attention to the historical and literary contexts in which the text was produced. A responsible reading of Galatians 3:28 must hold together the text's radical vision of equality and the methodological rigor that ensures faithful interpretation.

3.1.4. Interpretive Debates and the Question of Pauline Inconsistency

Scholarship on Galatians 3:28 divides into three broad camps, each offering a different interpretation of the verse's significance for gender relations in the church. Egalitarian interpretations argue that the verse establishes gender equality as a theological principle with practical implications for church life, so that if in Christ there is neither male nor female, then women and men must have equal access to all ministries and offices (Fiorenza, 1983; Groothuis, 1997; Grenz & Kjesbo, 1995). Complementarian interpretations maintain that the verse speaks only to salvation status, not to roles and functions within the church, so that gender distinctions remain in the created order and Paul's other letters mandate male headship in church and home (Grudem, 1994; Schreiner, 2006). Eschatological interpretations emphasize that the verse describes the new creation inaugurated in Christ but not yet fully realized, so that equality is an eschatological hope rather than a present social program (Stendahl, 1963; Fredriksen, 2018). Each of these interpretations has strengths and limitations, and each has been used to justify different approaches to gender relations in the church.

The present study argues that the egalitarian reading is most faithful to the text's original context and intertextual echoes, while acknowledging the force of the eschatological tension between the already of equality in Christ and the not yet of concrete church practices (Gaventa, 2007; Keener, 2019). Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) offer a fourth approach that deserves consideration, arguing that passages like 1 Corinthians 14:33-34 and 1 Timothy 2:11-14 are corrective texts addressed to specific situations in local churches where women were being influenced by false teachings. They contend that these texts should not be read as universal prohibitions on women's teaching or leadership, and this contextual reading shares the concern to limit the scope

of these restrictive passages (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). Sugiri (2026) reinforces the egalitarian reading by demonstrating that Galatians 3:28 has direct implications for how faith communities respond to gender-based persecution, calling for active pastoral care, advocacy, and education. This practical orientation is essential for moving from interpretation to transformation and for addressing the gap between theological vision and pastoral practice.

A significant challenge to egalitarian readings is the apparent inconsistency between Galatians 3:28 and passages such as 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 and 1 Timothy 2:12, which some critics argue demonstrate that Paul did not practically implement gender equality (Bird, 1997). Egalitarian scholars offer several responses, including the possibility that some of these passages are later interpolations or reflect Paul's accommodation to cultural norms (Fiorenza, 1983). Others argue that Paul distinguished between the ideal of equality and pastoral accommodation in contexts where change would cause division, while still others contend that the egalitarian vision of Galatians 3:28 provides the hermeneutical lens through which all other Pauline texts must be interpreted (Keener, 2019; Gaventa, 2007). The present study adopts this third approach, reading Galatians 3:28 as the normative Pauline vision and interpreting the restrictive passages in light of the gospel's radical proclamation of equality in Christ. Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) offer a contextual reading that limits the scope of the restrictive passages to specific situations, while Sugiri (2026) emphasizes the ethical imperatives that flow from the egalitarian vision. Together, these approaches provide resources for addressing the question of Pauline inconsistency without abandoning the radical vision of Galatians 3:28.

3.2. Gender-Based Violence and Religion in the Indonesian Context

3.2.1. The Scope and Distinctive Features of GBV in Indonesia

Gender-based violence remains pervasive in Indonesia, with Komnas Perempuan (2024) reporting three thousand seven hundred cases of violence against women in 2023, though this figure significantly underrepresents the true scale due to underreporting. In Eastern Indonesia, where ethnic and religious diversity intersects with patriarchal cultural norms, rates of domestic violence, sexual violence, and harmful traditional practices are particularly high (Komnas Perempuan, 2023). The Indonesian context exhibits distinctive features that shape the experience of gender-based violence,

including strong patriarchal cultural norms across diverse ethnic groups, religious conservatism that often interprets sacred texts to justify women's subordination, a culture of shame that silences victims and deters reporting, and limited theological education on gender justice within faith communities (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021). These features create a context in which gender-based violence is tolerated, silenced, and even justified, and they demand responses that address both the immediate needs of victims and the systemic structures that enable violence (Lakawa, 2021). Understanding the scope and distinctive features of GBV in Indonesia is essential for developing contextual theological responses that are both faithful to the gospel and responsive to local realities.

Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) provide historical context for these realities, documenting how discriminatory attitudes toward women have deep roots in Western philosophy and Christian theology, including Aristotle's view that women are in the same caste as slaves and animals, Flavius Josephus's assertion that the woman is in all things inferior to the man, and the daily blessing of Rabbi Judah Ben Elai who thanked God for not making him a heathen, a woman, or an uneducated person. These attitudes were transmitted to Indonesia through colonial missionaries and have been reinforced by local patriarchal cultures, creating a context in which women are enculturated to be submissive, quiet, gentle, and good, particularly in Christian communities (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019; Eastwood, 2025). The good Christian girl is chaste, modest, and undemanding, encouraged to put aside her own needs and desires in favor of men's demands, expected to be married and often held responsible if the marriage fails, and expected to be a mother, which carries its own set of demands and expectations (Eastwood, 2025). These cultural expectations create a context in which gender-based violence is tolerated, silenced, and even justified, and they highlight the need for theological and pastoral responses that address the deep roots of patriarchal attitudes.

Sugiri (2026) emphasizes that gender-based persecution remains a pervasive issue globally, often rooted in cultural, social, and religious norms that reinforce inequality and discrimination, and he argues that Galatians 3:28 provides a foundational text for responding to gender-based violence within religious communities. This theological foundation is essential for motivating faith communities to take action against gender-based violence, challenging traditional gender hierarchies and supporting a vision of equality grounded in Christian faith (Sugiri, 2026). Without a clear theological warrant

for gender justice, churches may continue to tolerate or even perpetuate patriarchal structures that enable violence (Sugiri, 2026). The scope of the problem in Indonesia, therefore, demands not only practical responses but also theological reflection that grounds those responses in the gospel's radical vision of equality, and it calls for a hermeneutics that is accountable to the experiences of victims and committed to transformative praxis.

3.2.2. Religion as Both Problem and Resource in the Indonesian Context

In Indonesia, religion functions ambivalently in relation to gender-based violence, as religious teachings have been invoked to justify domestic violence, women's subordination, and resistance to women's leadership, while faith communities have also been sites of resistance and transformation (Kolimon, 2020). Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) acknowledge this ambivalence, noting that while the church has often been complicit in patriarchal structures, it also contains resources for liberation, affirming that God created male and female in equality, mutually filling and completing each other. This theological affirmation, rooted in Genesis 1:27, provides a basis for challenging patriarchal interpretations that justify women's subordination and for developing constructive responses to gender-based violence (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). The ambivalence of religion in relation to gender-based violence is not unique to Indonesia but reflects a broader tension within Christianity between the radical vision of equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 and the patriarchal structures that have characterized much of church history (Ruether, 1993). Recognizing this tension is essential for understanding both the challenges and the opportunities for faith-based responses to gender-based violence.

Sugiri (2026) reinforces this point by arguing 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 practical orientation is essential for moving beyond ambivalence toward a clear commitment to gender justice, as the church cannot simultaneously proclaim equality in Christ and tolerate practices that perpetuate gender-based violence (Sugiri, 2026). The gospel demands consistency between proclamation and practice, and this demand provides a theological foundation for faith-based responses to GBV (Sugiri, 2026). The ambivalence of religion in relation to gender-based violence thus becomes an opportunity

for the church to renew its commitment to the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 and to embody that commitment in its policies, practices, and pastoral care.

The ambivalence of religion in relation to gender-based violence also highlights the importance of contextual theological reflection that attends to the specific realities of Indonesian churches. While the Indonesian Communion of Churches has issued statements affirming gender justice and condemning violence against women (PGI, 2018), implementation remains uneven, with many churches continuing to reject women's ordination and providing inadequate pastoral care for victims (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021). This gap between proclamation and practice is a significant obstacle to effective faith-based responses to gender-based violence, and it reflects the deeper ambivalence within Indonesian Christianity about gender equality and women's leadership (Lakawa, 2021). The church is called to be a prophetic community that rejects injustice and embodies the new creation inaugurated in Christ, and this calling requires not only theological reflection but also concrete action to transform the structures and practices that enable gender-based violence (Sugiri, 2026). Recognizing both the problems and the resources within Indonesian Christianity is essential for developing responses that are both realistic and transformative.

3.2.3. The Indonesian Church's Response to GBV and the Gap Between Proclamation and Practice

The Indonesian Communion of Churches has issued statements affirming gender justice and condemning violence against women, yet implementation remains uneven, with many churches continuing to reject women's ordination and providing inadequate pastoral care for victims (PGI, 2018; Kolimon, 2020). Pastoral care for victims of gender-based violence is often inadequate, with churches prioritizing institutional reputation and family preservation over victim safety, and this gap between proclamation and practice is a significant obstacle to effective faith-based responses (Lakawa, 2021). Eastwood (2025) provides comparative data from Australia that illuminates the Indonesian situation, noting that seventy-eight percent of senior church leaders were male, seventy-five percent of leaders were in their first marriage, seventy-seven percent were Australian born, and seventy-four percent were university graduates. This high level of uniformity in church leaders, particularly in terms of gender, does not necessarily match church attenders, sixty-one percent of whom were female, and this gap between

the gender of leaders and the gender of attenders should raise questions (Eastwood, 2025). Women are unlikely to hear a person of their own gender presenting a reading of biblical texts within their worshipping community, which can lead to women feeling invisible or absent in terms of representation, consideration, and inclusion (Eastwood, 2025). This reality likely resonates with many Indonesian church contexts as well, where male leadership dominates and women's voices are often silenced.

Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) note that while the church has often been complicit in patriarchal structures, there are also signs of hope, affirming that God created male and female in equality and calling for the church to empower women according to their functions. This call, while more moderate than some feminist proposals, represents a significant step toward gender justice in Indonesian churches and provides a foundation for constructive dialogue between different theological perspectives (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). Sugiri (2026) goes further by arguing that Galatians 3:28 calls for active pastoral care, advocacy, and education within faith communities, and this call provides a framework for translating theological vision into concrete action. Together, these voices suggest that the Indonesian church is at a crossroads, with opportunities to move toward greater gender justice if it takes seriously the theological vision of Galatians 3:28 and the concrete realities of gender-based violence in its midst (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019; Sugiri, 2026). The gap between proclamation and practice is not inevitable but can be addressed through intentional theological reflection, pastoral care, and structural reform.

The Indonesian church's response to gender-based violence must also address the systemic dimensions of the problem, including the ways in which male dominance in church leadership and interpretation perpetuates patriarchal structures (Eastwood, 2025). Women's ordination must be affirmed, removing barriers to women's leadership at all levels of church life, and safe church policies must be developed and implemented to prevent abuse and protect vulnerable members (Kolimon, 2020; Sugiri, 2026). Churches must use their moral voice to advocate for laws and policies protecting victims and preventing violence, and theological education must integrate gender justice into curricula, including attention to the ways male authorship, male dominance, and female absence have shaped biblical interpretation (Eastwood, 2025; Sugiri, 2026). These structural responses are essential for addressing the systemic dimensions of gender-based violence and for creating a church culture that embodies the radical equality

proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026). The Indonesian church's response to GBV must therefore be comprehensive, addressing not only the immediate needs of victims but also the systemic structures that enable violence and the theological interpretations that legitimize it.

3.3. A Faith-Based Response to Gender-Based Violence: Liturgical, Pastoral, and Structural Strategies

3.3.1. The Liturgical Level: Inclusive Language and Victim-Centered Worship

The response to gender-based violence within Indonesian faith communities must operate simultaneously on liturgical, pastoral, and structural levels, recognizing that these dimensions are interconnected and mutually reinforcing (Sugiri, 2026). Worship practices shape and reflect theological convictions, and liturgies that use exclusively masculine language for God and that reinforce traditional gender roles in worship leadership communicate that women are secondary in the community (Moltmann-Wendel, 1994; Beattie, 2006). Inclusive liturgical reforms begin with expanded language for God, using both masculine and feminine imagery, as the Bible itself contains feminine imagery for God, including like a woman in labor, like a mother who comforts, as a midwife, as a mother who is not forgotten by Israel (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). This biblical warrant for feminine God-language challenges the exclusive use of masculine imagery in worship and provides a foundation for liturgical renewal that reflects the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). Gender-inclusive language for humanity should also be employed, using brothers and sisters rather than brothers, and children of God rather than sons of God, and victim-centered prayers must incorporate lament for violence, acknowledgment of survivors' experiences, and commitment to justice (Sugiri, 2026). Women's voices must be ensured in worship, with women preaching, leading prayers, and reading Scripture, as Eastwood (2025) argues that women's voices in the text, in church traditions, and in faith communities need to be intentionally listened to. Inclusive worship creates a theological foundation for pastoral care and structural change, embodying the church's commitment to the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026).

The liturgical level of response is particularly important because worship is the primary context in which most Christians encounter the biblical text and theological reflection (Moltmann-Wendel, 1994). When liturgies use exclusively masculine language

for God and reinforce traditional gender roles, they communicate that women are secondary in the community and that male dominance is divinely ordained (Beattie, 2006). Conversely, when liturgies use inclusive language and provide opportunities for women's leadership, they embody the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 and create a space in which victims of gender-based violence can experience healing and empowerment (Sugiri, 2026). The liturgical level of response is therefore not merely a matter of aesthetic preference but a matter of theological faithfulness and pastoral care (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). Inclusive worship creates a theological foundation for pastoral care and structural change, and it embodies the church's commitment to the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026).

The liturgical level of response also involves the recovery of women's voices and stories in worship, as Eastwood (2025) argues that women's voices in the text, in church traditions, and in faith communities need to be intentionally listened to. This involves not only including women in worship leadership but also recovering the stories of women in the Bible who have been overlooked or suppressed, such as Junia, the woman apostle whose name has been systematically altered to obscure her gender (Eastwood, 2025; Fiorenza, 1983). It also involves attending to the ways in which translation and interpretation have shaped the reception of biblical texts, and ensuring that translations do justice to the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Eastwood, 2025). The liturgical level of response thus involves a comprehensive reorientation of worship practices that reflects the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 and creates a space in which all people, regardless of gender, can experience the fullness of life in Christ (Sugiri, 2026).

3.3.2. The Pastoral Level: Trauma-Informed Care for Survivors

Pastoral care for survivors of gender-based violence requires trauma-informed approaches that attend to the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of victimization (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010). Churches must create safe spaces where survivors can disclose without fear of blame, shame, or retaliation, and pastoral leaders require training in trauma-informed care, including understanding the effects of trauma, active listening skills, and appropriate referral pathways (Lakawa, 2021). Clear protocols for handling disclosures must be established, prioritizing victim safety, mandatory reporting, and confidentiality, and faith-based support groups for survivors should

integrate spiritual resources with psychological healing (Sugiri, 2026). Sugianto and Maranatha (2019) offer a caution here, warning against romanticizing suffering, where victims of gender-based violence are unintentionally used as tools to build grand theology rather than being treated as full subjects. This warning is well-taken, as trauma-informed care must prioritize the survivor's agency and well-being, not the theological or institutional interests of the church (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). The pastoral level of response thus requires a reorientation of pastoral care that places survivors at the center and attends to their embodied experiences of trauma and healing (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010).

The pastoral level of response also involves addressing the spiritual dimensions of trauma, recognizing that survivors often struggle with questions about God's presence and goodness in the midst of their suffering (Jones, 2009). A theology of the wounded body, which sees the survivor's body as an epiphany of Christ's suffering, can provide a framework for pastoral care that honors the survivor's experience while pointing toward healing and justice (Rambo, 2010). This theology connects Pauline theology, the body of Christ as the congregation, with feminist ethics, bodily autonomy, and it provides a foundation for pastoral care that is both theologically grounded and practically relevant (Sugiri, 2026). The pastoral level of response thus involves a comprehensive approach that addresses the emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of trauma and that places survivors at the center of pastoral care (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010).

The pastoral level of response also involves equipping pastoral leaders with the skills and knowledge they need to respond effectively to gender-based violence, including training in trauma-informed care and the development of clear protocols for handling disclosures (Lakawa, 2021). This training should include attention to the ways in which male dominance and female absence in the biblical text and its interpretation have shaped pastoral practices, and it should provide resources for reading the Bible with women rather than merely about women (Eastwood, 2025). It should also include attention to the systemic dimensions of gender-based violence, including the ways in which church policies and practices may enable or perpetuate violence (Sugiri, 2026). The pastoral level of response thus requires a comprehensive approach that addresses both the immediate needs of survivors and the systemic structures that enable violence, and that places survivors at the center of pastoral care (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010; Lakawa, 2021).

3.3.3. The Structural Level: Policy Reform and Advocacy

At the structural level, faith communities must address the systemic dimensions of gender-based violence, including the ways in which male dominance in church leadership and interpretation perpetuates patriarchal structures (Eastwood, 2025). Women's ordination must be affirmed, removing barriers to women's leadership at all levels of church life, as the practice of men-only ordination has the potential to create a barrier between attendee and leader and means that women are unlikely to hear a person of their own gender presenting a reading of biblical texts within their worshipping community (Eastwood, 2025; Kolimon, 2020). Safe church policies must be developed and implemented, preventing abuse and protecting vulnerable members, and churches must use their moral voice to advocate for laws and policies protecting victims and preventing violence (Sugiri, 2026). Theological education must integrate gender justice into curricula, including attention to the ways male authorship, male dominance, and female absence have shaped biblical interpretation, as well as training in Contextual Bible Study methods that prioritize marginalized voices (Eastwood, 2025; West, 2006). These structural responses are essential for addressing the systemic dimensions of gender-based violence and for creating a church culture that embodies the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026). The structural level of response thus involves a comprehensive approach that addresses both the policies and practices of the church and the broader social and political context in which the church operates (Sugiri, 2026).

The structural level of response also involves addressing the ways in which male dominance in biblical interpretation and theological education perpetuates patriarchal structures (Eastwood, 2025). This includes attending to the ways in which lectionary choices, translation practices, and scholarly norms marginalize women's voices and experiences, and it requires intentional efforts to recover and prioritize women's interpretations of the biblical text (Eastwood, 2025; Fiorenza, 1983). It also involves developing theological education curricula that integrate gender justice and that equip pastors and church leaders to address gender-based violence in their congregations (Sugiri, 2026). The structural level of response thus requires a comprehensive reorientation of theological education and church governance that reflects the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026).

The structural level of response also involves advocacy for laws and policies that protect victims of gender-based violence and prevent violence from occurring (Sugiri,

2026). Churches must use their moral voice to advocate for laws and policies that protect victims and prevent violence, and they must work in partnership with other organizations and institutions to address the systemic dimensions of gender-based violence (Sugiri, 2026). This advocacy must be grounded in the theological vision of Galatians 3:28 and in the concrete experiences of survivors, and it must be accompanied by efforts to transform the church's own policies and practices (Sugiri, 2026). The structural level of response thus involves a comprehensive approach that addresses both the church's internal structures and the broader social and political context in which the church operates, and that is grounded in the radical equality proclaimed in Galatians 3:28 (Sugiri, 2026).

4. Discussion

4.1. Convergence of Theories: Building Bridges between Feminist, Postcolonial, and Trauma Hermeneutics

The discourse on Galatians 3:28 has long been trapped in a narrow dichotomy between egalitarian and complementarian readings, and neither pure historical-critical methods nor systematic dogmatics adequately answer the fundamental question of why this radically subversive text loses its transformative power when confronted with religion-sanctioned gender-based violence (Fiorenza, 1983; Grudem, 1994). This impasse demands a theoretical convergence, not merely an eclectic combination of methods, but a productive dialectical tension that brings different hermeneutical traditions into conversation with one another (Kwok, 2005). Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1992) offers the hermeneutical dance of suspicion, remembrance, evaluation, and creative imagination as a tool to dismantle the power interests behind interpretation, but left to itself, Fiorenza's critique remains trapped within Western academic centers. Here, Kwok Pui-lan (2005) and Musa Dube (2000) introduce the surgical blade of postcolonial critique, reminding us that the interpretation of Galatians 3:28 in Indonesia cannot be detached from the shadow of colonial missionaries who imported a patriarchal and hierarchical version of Christianity. Ironically, the very text used to liberate from the Jewish Law was imported to the archipelago alongside nineteenth-century European social structures that subordinated women (Kwok, 2005; Dube, 2000). The dialectic between Fiorenza and Kwok generates a new question: what if our readings have not been radical enough because we have read Galatians 3:28 from the safe position of theological

conquerors, rather than from the position of victims whose bodies are wounded by structures?

This question compels us to integrate trauma theory from Serene Jones (2009) and Shelly Rambo (2010), as for Jones, theology cannot be built upon abstraction without touching the reality of the victim's fragmented body. When we read there is neither male nor female in the presence of rape survivors or domestic violence victims, these words become profane if they are merely interpreted as a heavenly soteriological status, and trauma compels us to read the text with wounded ears, a hermeneutic that does not seek easy answers but seeks a healing presence (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010). To bridge critical theory with textual exegesis, we must also revive the theological debate between J. Louis Martyn (1997) and Brigitte Kahl (2010), as Martyn reads Galatians through an apocalyptic lens, arguing that in Christ, two eras, the old age of enslavement and the new age of freedom, collide. However, Kahl (2010) criticizes Martyn for remaining too spiritual, arguing that the phrase not Jew, not Greek, not slave, not free, not male and female is a direct assault on Roman imperial ideology, which organized the world based on gradations of social status and gender. If we bring Kahl's perspective to Indonesia, we cannot simply equate the Roman Empire with the State, and the Empire here must be read metaphorically as the Local Patriarchal Empire, consisting of the culture of shame that silences victims, the politics of ecclesiastical institutions that reject women's leadership for the sake of organizational stability, and the literalist hermeneutic imposed by theological elites (Kahl, 2010; Kolimon, 2020).

This is where the work of Mery Kolimon (2020) on women's leadership in Eastern Indonesian churches becomes crucial, as Kolimon demonstrates that the rejection of equality in these churches is not purely a theological issue but a reprisal of colonial and feudal trauma. The church fears losing its face in society if it grants space to women, and by connecting Kahl and Kolimon, a new discourse emerges: the rejection of gender equality in the Indonesian church is a manifestation of the church's inability to free itself from a slave mentality that fears the structures of empire, whether ancient Roman or local feudalism (Kahl, 2010; Kolimon, 2020). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) teaches that gender never stands alone, and in Indonesia, the experiences of women are not uniform, as a Dayak woman in Kalimantan experiences gender-based violence differently from an urban Javanese woman because of the intersection of ethnicity and class. When Paul writes there is no arsen kai thēly, echoing Genesis 1:27, he is dismantling the cosmological

foundation of hierarchy, but this text becomes sterile if we fail to see how the identity of woman in Indonesia is always already contaminated by class and ethnicity (Crenshaw, 1989; Kahl, 2010). The new discourse that emerges here is the politics of the body in reading Galatians, as an interpretation that stops at status equality fails to meet the demands of justice, and a transformative reading must boldly assert that if in Christ there is neither male nor female, then the female body targeted by violence is the torn body of Christ today (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010). This reading borrows sacramental logic, as just as the bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ, so the body of the survivor is an epiphany of Christ's suffering within the congregation (Sugiri, 2026).

4.2. The Birth of a New Discourse: Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity for the Indonesian Church

From the multidisciplinary study above, drawing on feminist hermeneutics, postcolonial critique, anti-empire analysis, trauma theory, and intersectionality, a new interpretive framework emerges, specifically formulated for the Indonesian context, which I term the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity (HWS). This framework has four pillars that distinguish it from conventional hermeneutics, and the first pillar is victim-centered priority, as unlike classical hermeneutics centered on the author's intent, HWS is centered on the text's impact on victims of violence (Jones, 2009; Rambo, 2010). An interpretation of Galatians 3:28 is considered theologically valid only if it strengthens the position of the victim and weakens the position of the perpetrator or the justifier of violence, and this criterion provides a concrete standard for evaluating competing interpretations (Sugiri, 2026). The second pillar is decolonizing exegesis, as HWS rejects the claim of Western interpretive objectivity and acknowledges that the Indonesian interpreter must dare to kill the colonial interpretations that brought patriarchy and read Galatians 3:28 through the lens of gotong royong, mutual cooperation, and equal dignity (Kwok, 2005; Dube, 2000). The third pillar is reconstructing ecclesial politics, as HWS interprets no male and female not merely as an ontological statement but as a constitutional command for the church, meaning that church leadership structures must legally reflect this equality (Sugiri, 2026). The fourth pillar is advocacy praxis, as HWS rejects the separation of theology and social action, and the final result of reading Galatians 3:28 must be a concrete translation in three interrelated lines: liturgical, pastoral, and structural (Sugiri, 2026).

The Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity offers a way forward for Indonesian churches that is both faithful to the biblical text and responsive to the concrete realities of gender-based violence, as it recognizes that the struggle for gender equality is not merely a matter of correct doctrine but a matter of life and death for women who are subjected to violence in their homes and communities (Kolimon, 2020; Lakawa, 2021). It insists that theology must be measured by its impact on the most vulnerable, and that the church's proclamation of equality in Christ must be embodied in its policies, practices, and pastoral care (Sugiri, 2026). The framework also acknowledges the limitations of its own approach, as it is heavily text-dependent and has not been empirically tested in the field, remaining a theoretical proposition that requires testing through participatory research in grassroots church communities (West, 2006). There is also a risk of romanticizing suffering, where victims of gender-based violence are unintentionally used as tools to build grand theology rather than being treated as full subjects, and the framework must continuously practice reflexivity to remain on the side of the subject, not the theory (Sugianto & Maranatha, 2019). These limitations are acknowledged not as reasons to abandon the framework but as invitations to further research and reflection (Sugiri, 2026).

Furthermore, this discourse still faces hermeneutical challenges from charismatic and Pentecostal churches, which are very strong in Indonesia and often emphasize spiritual power over social power, and there is a need for further dialogue with Pentecostal theology to bridge spiritual equality and structural equality (Sugiri, 2026). Future research must explore how the language of the Spirit poured out on all flesh in Acts 2 can be paralleled with Galatians 3:28 to build a dynamic equality that honors both the spiritual and social dimensions of the gospel (Sugiri, 2026). By connecting the various seemingly partial theories, from textual archaeology to empire critique, decolonization, and trauma psychology, we arrive at a new realization: Galatians 3:28 is not a verse about who we are, but about what we must fight for (Kahl, 2010; Sugiri, 2026). This verse speaks not merely in the indicative, you are, but in the imperative, because you are, become, and the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity calls the Indonesian church to transform from an institution that perpetuates shame into a community that celebrates the healing of wounded bodies (Jones, 2009; Sugiri, 2026). This is the true new creation, the transformation that the gospel demands and the world awaits (Sugiri, 2026).

5. Conclusion

This article has argued that Galatians 3:28, interpreted through feminist liberation hermeneutics and contextualized within Indonesian Christianity, provides a theological foundation for faith communities to respond concretely to gender-based violence. The exegetical analysis demonstrated that the verse's echo of Genesis 1:27 and its baptismal formula context establish a radical vision of equality in Christ that transcends gender hierarchy without erasing created distinctions. The Indonesian context reveals both the urgent need for theological engagement with gender-based violence and the significant resources available in Indonesian theological scholarship, including critical reflections on feminist theology and constructive proposals for faith-based responses. The proposed strategies at liturgical, pastoral, and structural levels offer concrete pathways for translating theological vision into practical action within Indonesian churches. The introduction of the Hermeneutics of Wounded Solidarity provides a new framework that prioritizes victims' experiences, critiques colonial interpretive legacies, mandates structural equality in church polity, and insists on practical advocacy as the test of theological validity.

The study acknowledges several limitations, including its reliance on textual and theological analysis rather than empirical investigation, the need for further dialogue with Indonesian Pentecostal and charismatic traditions, and the necessity of testing proposed liturgical and pastoral responses in actual church contexts. Future research directions include empirical studies of church-based gender-based violence programs in Indonesia, comparative denominational analysis, development of trauma-informed pastoral care curricula, and intersectional investigations of gender, ethnicity, class, and religion in Eastern Indonesian violence. The church is called to be a prophetic community that rejects injustice and embodies the new creation inaugurated in Christ, where the hierarchies that structure the world, including the hierarchy of male over female, are abolished. This is not merely a spiritual truth but a concrete call to action, and faith communities must become spaces of healing and justice, where victims are protected, perpetrators are held accountable, and all people are affirmed in their dignity as children of God. This is the transformative vision of Galatians 3:28, and it demands nothing less than a revolution in the life of the church.

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