



## A Public Theological Response to Gender-based and Sexual Violence in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Gender-based and sexual violence is a public concern. In Indonesian society, three prominent entities (the state, the academy, and the religion) must provide their perspectives to overcome and prevent all forms of gender-based and sexual violence. On the one hand, the state exists via policies in the form of laws related to the prevention and solution to the problems of gender-based violence and sexual violence. As organizations and organisms, on the other hand, academia and religions contribute to the beliefs, concepts, and practices of gender and human sexuality. As a religious institution, the church's action to prevent gender-based and sexual violence is also a form of self-criticism. The church may sanctify violence through gender-biased Bible reading or even commit gender-based violence and or sexual violence against its congregation members through its pastors. The church's understanding of gender and sexual-based violence will allow the church to collaborate with the state to provide a sense of justice, security, and peace for all people, transcending the limitations of gender differences and sexuality. The church can offer theological concepts and practices that address and prevent gender-sexual-based violence both in church and in society in two ways: By reflecting on the experiences of victims of gender-based and sexual violence and by re-examining the root factors of violence in the history of the church and the church's teaching on gender and sexuality, I propose that the church emphasize the diversity of God's creation and the equal relations among humans beyond sexual and gender particularity by redefining the human body in Christian Theology that will serve as the foundation for resisting sexual violence and discrimination.

**Keywords:** Sexuality, sexual violence, body, women, gender, *imago Dei*, spirit.

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## INTRODUCTION

The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia passed the Draft Legislation on the Crime of Sexual Violence on April 12, 2022, as a legitimate law to be implemented across the Republic of Indonesia's territory.<sup>2</sup> Cases of sexual assault were formerly governed only by the Criminal Code (Kitab Undang-undang Hukum Pidana/KUHP), which was drafted and inherited from the Dutch colonial period. Criminal Law only controls two kinds of sexual assault, namely rape and sexual molestation. However, there are fifteen categories of sexual violence, according to the reported cases to partners of Komnas Perempuan during 2001-2011, and the number of sexual violence cases has been rising. Consequently, it is difficult for victims of the 15 categories of sexual abuse to get legal protection. This fact demonstrates the gap in the *lex generalis* KUHP, which must be remedied by *lex specialis* legislation that handles sexual violence explicitly.<sup>3</sup>

The urgent need for specific legislation to address sexual violence in Indonesia stems from the inadequacy of current laws to deal with the rising complexity and prevalence of sexual violence in society. In the discussion portion of the Draft Law on the Elimination of Sexual Violence, a more thorough justification is articulated:<sup>4</sup>

- a. Every citizen has the right to feel safe and free from all forms of violence.
- b. Every form of sexual violence is a crime against human dignity and a violation of human rights that must be eliminated.
- c. Victims of Sexual Violence must receive protection from the state to be free from sexual violence.
- d. The form and quantity of cases of sexual violence are increasing and developing. However, the Indonesian legal system has not been systematically and thoroughly able to prevent, protect, restore, and empower victims and foster public understanding and awareness to eliminate sexual violence.

2 Sebastian Strangjo, "Indonesian Parliament Passes Long-Waited Sexual Violence Bill," *The Diplomat*, April 13, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/indonesian-parliament-passes-long-awaited-sexual-violence-bill/>

3 Nina Nurmila, "Challenges To The Enactment of The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill," *Humanisma: Journal of Gender Studies* 03, no. 02 (Juli-Desember 2019): 92. (Bibliography: 92-101).

4 "Indonesia Draft Bill The Elimination of Sexual Law," accessed October 14, 2020, <https://www.koalisi Perempuan.or.id/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/RUU-Penghapusan-Kekerasan-Seksual-FINAL-31012017-Baleg1-1.pdf>

The draft legislation is intended to tackle sexual crimes in society. Therefore, since 2014 the National Commission for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Komnas Perempuan) has led the proposed legislation in consultation with legal experts, women's groups, academics, and government ministries.<sup>5</sup> Socialization efforts and political lobbying were then undertaken to ensure that the proposed legislation was promptly approved. Moreover, despite these attempts, sexual assault, particularly against women and children, occurs often not just in public settings but also in locations that should be protected from sexual violence, such as religious spaces and schools. Moreover, it seems that a religious teacher was convicted of raping 13 girls in a boarding school, which sparked public outrage and prompted parliament to take sexual assault seriously.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the proposal was approved in April 2022.

Sexuality is a sensitive issue in Indonesia. Discourses about sexuality rarely occur in family rooms, schools, and society, especially in religious spaces. Even if they are talked about, conversations about sexuality tend to be negative, blame women, and are narrowed down to only what is permissible and cannot be done. As a result, people's knowledge about sexuality is minimal, and religious leaders generally control that knowledge within the scope of religion. A further impact of this problem is that cases of sexual violence in Indonesia are still very high, which happens to many people regardless of their religion.

The church must speak out about sexuality and sexual violence in society because it is public, and the church is present in public. Because this problem affects everyone, including the Christian community, the church's voice in public is expected to clarify the church's position, views, and hopes in living together as fellow human beings involving sexuality. In passing the law on eliminating sexual violence in Indonesia, Indonesia's church has not yet made a clear voice to support

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5 Kate Walton, "Indonesia sexual violence bill sparks conservative opposition," *Aljazeera*, February 8, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/2/8/indonesia-sexual-violence-bill-sparks-conservative-opposition>

6 Chad De Guzman, "After a Teacher Was Convicted of Raping 13 Girls, Indonesia Finally Passed Sexual Violence Reform," *Time*, April 14, 2022, <https://time.com/6166853/indonesia-sexual-violence-law/>

or reject it. It seems that theological reasons are still very much needed for churches in Indonesia to be more courageous in speaking out on this issue.

Therefore, this essay explores the Christian concept of the body and sexuality that affects Christians' general understanding and practice in Indonesia. Furthermore, it seeks to offer a theological concept that can accommodate a change in understanding sexuality, which helps Christians take an exact position against all forms of sexual violence in society.

### **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The Bill on the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Indonesia is the starting point for this paper, especially for constructing Christian public theology to respond to various gender and sexual-based violence cases within society. Religious leaders perpetrated some cases. Even though they should be role models in bringing a sense of security and peace to the people they lead or even the church, through its biased interpretation of the biblical text and marginalizing the position, identity, and role of women or those with a unique gender. No public space is free from such violence. Therefore, the three public representations (church, academy, and society)<sup>7</sup> that David Tracy distinguished had the same potential to prevent it from happening because it could happen in any public space. Theology communicates in these three public spaces because all three have the same concerns about violence that hurts people in these public spaces; this violence must be stopped for the sake of a safe, comfortable, and fair life for all.

This essay will show the relationship between the three of them in gender and sex-based violence. The state is tasked with issuing policies and regulations that provide a sense of justice, security, and comfort to all society members. Theology has the task of communicating moral and theological values to this policy and, at the same time, equipping members of society to live up to religious and moral values, even though they come from a universal faith, namely for the good of humanity.

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<sup>7</sup> David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

This way, theology is internalized dynamically in the three public spaces (mutually influencing, interpreting, and giving meaning).<sup>8</sup>

This essay's issue of public gender and sex-based violence relates to Indonesian society's theological concept. Violence is perpetrated by a gender-biased religious understanding (described in brief Christian history and interpretation of the Scriptures) about women's bodies and sexuality or those considered deviating from social norms. Theology often places women in a position as objects of men's power. Therefore, this theological concept needs to be re-examined. If all this time, politics and power in the public sphere have been used to legalize gender and sexual-based violence, we can now have politics and power to change our perceptions, understanding, and treatment of women and marginalized groups' gender differences. When the state comes through policies to prevent sexual violence and protect victims, this needs to be supported by providing theological understanding for religious communities in Indonesia. The construction of the body's theology is a relevant response to answer the reality of gender and sexual-based violence in Indonesia.

Therefore, reflectively, the experiences of gender and based sexual violence victims need to be heard to become a strong warning that this should not happen. Theology must prevent it. The state needs to take a stand to protect all citizens, including those classified as oppressed groups because of differences in gender and sexuality, to have a safe space in society. Churches and academies need to re-examine a single interpretation of the biblical text that places women only in the domestic realm and becomes servants of husbands and children. This single interpretation reduces women to becoming sexual beings solely to fulfill men's interests.

The rejection of religious conservatives towards eliminating the sexual violence bill in Indonesia signifies that religious institutions and academies need to examine the roots of violence in Indonesian society. Conservative groups often disregard the experience and impact of gender-based violence. Victims and

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8 Chul Ho Youn, "The Points and Tasks of Public Theology," *International Journal of Public Theology*, no. 11 (2017): 75.

women's rights advocate battle separately since religion does not assist them greatly. Islamic conservatives vehemently oppose the Indonesian anti-sexual violence legislation, arguing that "the bill will promote free sex and deviant sexual behavior."<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Christianity in Indonesia must also rethink its theology for the same reasons since sexual violence frequently happens in Christian families, even by priests against congregations. The dilemma of the Christian body and sexual theology must be reexamined by analyzing the idea of sexuality in Western theology (since most Indonesian Christian theology's stance on human sexuality is derived from Western theology.) Therefore, as part of its function in interpreting and directing people's lives, theology must examine gender and sexually-based violence critically and then provide theological alternatives

Theological reflection on texts, history, and practices of violence and theological perspectives on the human body-sexuality is theology's way of presenting the truth to the public space. So, Christian truth also becomes part of the public. What does "God say" about the human body's sexuality and relationship? What does God say about violence?

### **Gender and Sexual-Based Violence in Indonesia**

The level of Gender and Sexual-Based Violence in Indonesia is in a critical situation. Cases of violence against women are depicted from the following data, "over 33 percent of women aged 15 to 64 had experienced physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Moreover, more than 42 percent of women reported experiencing restrictions or limitations to women's freedom – such as being prevented from seeing friends, communicating with family, performing religious practices, or seeking health care without permission."<sup>10</sup>

Indonesia National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komisi Nasional/KOMNAS Perempuan) recorded there are 15 types of sexual violence experienced

9 Balawyn Jones and Max Walden, "Conservative rejection of Indonesia's anti-sexual violence bill misplaced," *The Conversation*, February 26, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/conservative-rejection-of-indonesias-anti-sexual-violence-bill-misplaced-111683>

10 Maria Endah Hulupi, "New survey shows violence against women widespread in Indonesia," accessed October 14, 2020, <https://www.unfpa.org/fr/node/16015>

by Indonesian women: “rape, sexual intimidation (including threats and attempted rape), sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, trafficking of women for sexual purposes, forced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced marriages (including forced divorce), forced pregnancy, forced abortion, forced contraception, and sterilization, sexual torture, inhuman punishment by sexual acts, the practice of forced sexual relations against women, sexual control (including through discriminatory rules based on morality and religion).”<sup>11</sup>

Even though Indonesia is very serious about religious matters, it does not make sexual violence cases decrease. The Indonesian National Commission on Violence Against Women released an annual report on March 06, 2020. In 2019, there were 431,471 cases of violence against women in Indonesia: 421,752 were reported as cases processed in district courts and religious courts throughout Indonesia, and the rest of them came from NGOs.<sup>12</sup> Asfinawati, director of the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), “Violence against women comes in many forms, including physical abuse, psychological violence, and sexual violence. Besides individuals, the perpetrators can also be governmental or non-governmental institutions – cultural, religious, and educational. It is systemic violence because it happens multiple times in all sectors and spaces.”<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, during the Covid-19 pandemic, cases of domestic violence also turned out to be increasing. The primary victims are women, so they risk being exposed to the virus and becoming victims of gender-based violence.<sup>14</sup> This fact is also supported by data published by the United Nations on Women, which states

11 “15 Bentuk Kekerasan Seksual: Sebuah Pengenalan,” accessed October 14, 2020, [https://www.komnasperempuan.go.id/file/pdf\\_file/Modul%20dan%20Pedoman/Kekerasan%20Seksual/15%20BTK%20KEKERASAN%20SEKSUAL.pdf](https://www.komnasperempuan.go.id/file/pdf_file/Modul%20dan%20Pedoman/Kekerasan%20Seksual/15%20BTK%20KEKERASAN%20SEKSUAL.pdf)

12 “Catatan Terhadap Kekerasan Perempuan Tahun 2019,” accessed October 14, 2020, [https://www.komnasperempuan.go.id/file/pdf\\_file/2020/Catatan%20Tahunan%20Kekerasan%20Terhadap%20Perempuan%202020.pdf](https://www.komnasperempuan.go.id/file/pdf_file/2020/Catatan%20Tahunan%20Kekerasan%20Terhadap%20Perempuan%202020.pdf)

13 Tara Marchelin, “Violence Against Women in Indonesia Is Systemic, and the Government Is Not Doing Enough to Unravel It: Rights Activists,” accessed on October 14, 2020, <https://jakartaglobe.id/news/violence-against-women-in-indonesia-is-systemic-and-the-government-is-not-doing-enough-to-unravel-it-rights-activists>

14 “Covid-19: Kisah melawan penyintas kekerasan seksual di tengah pandemi, ‘Pelecehan itu kenanya di psikis, lukanya di batin,’ June 22, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-53043739>



that an increase in violence against women aged 15-49 years in the pandemic is 25-33 percent in various countries.<sup>15</sup>

Violence against the LGBT community is also horrific. The LGBT community in Indonesia is considered an illegal group. For example, two cases occurred in the month of the global commemoration of the International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT) on May 2020: "The murder of Mira, a transwoman who was burned to death by a mob in Cilincing, North Jakarta, and a widely criticized prank by YouTuber Ferdian Paleka, who delivered "care packages" full of garbage to transwomen in Bandung, West Java. Observers have noted how the general public's reaction to the two cases has been skewed, with more people being perceived as flocking to social media to condemn the prank rather than the murder. In the latter case, the North Jakarta Police even moved to absolve the suspects by saying they had no intention to kill."<sup>16</sup>

The organization that responded to these cases only came from Non-Governmental Organizations (Civil Society Organizations). Religious groups tend to silence or blame the victims. This issue is worse in Indonesia because the Indonesian Psychiatrists Association (PDSKJI) classifies homosexuality, bisexuality, and transsexualism as mental disorders that can be cured through proper treatment.<sup>17</sup> Because of that, for the LGBT community, it is common knowledge not to show their identity. They realized persecution usually blamed LGBT personally or communally as too expressive to reveal their sexual identity in heteronormative public space.

### **Sample Cases: Sexual Violence in the Christian Community**

The Christian Community (Congregations) has also not been spared from the rampant cases of sexual violence. Most cases are not handled further for the sake of the church's good name and end without resolution in favor of the

15 "Covid-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls," accessed October 14, 2020, <https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2020/issue-brief-covid-19-and-ending-violence-against-women-and-girls-en.pdf?la=en&vs=5006>

16 Ramadani Saputra, "Recent cases of persecution set back LGBT rights advocacy," *The Jakarta Post*, May 27, 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/05/27/recent-cases-of-persecution-set-back-lgbt-rights-advocacy.html>

17 Saputra, "Recent cases of persecution set back LGBT rights advocacy."



victims. The following are two significant sexual violence cases revealed during the Covid-19 pandemic and are still a serious concern in Indonesia. A pastor commits sexual violence for a dozen years against one of his congregations. The pastor was suspected of sexual abuse and violence to a woman. It has been committed since the girl was 12 years old (since 2005).<sup>18</sup> For years the victim has been traumatized and is trying to start a new life. After years, she plans to marry a man willing to accept her traumatic past. The pastor's crime was exposed when the victim refused the family's recommendation that the priest blesses her marriage. After hearing the pastor's name, her memory and trauma peaked. The victim was so depressed that a psychologist and a psychiatrist treated her. The information obtained from the victim is that for a dozen years, the pastor committed obscene, forced, and raped her with threats and pressures using religious reasons, making the victim choose to remain silent and keep the problem for a dozen years.<sup>19</sup> After going through the court process, the pastor was finally sentenced to 10 years in prison.<sup>20</sup>

There are many more cases of sexual violence in religious spaces. Most news is not appropriately resolved and evaporates because the problem is considered to embarrass individuals, institutions, religions, or extraordinary religious figures.

The second case is the practice of forced marriage in the Sumba ethnic culture, where Christianity is the majority (more than 90 percent of the population).<sup>21</sup> On Friday, June 12, 2020, a video showing a group of residents suddenly bringing a woman in front of a house circulates on Twitter social media. The woman is forced

18 Asip Hasani, "Surabaya pastor, named a suspect for alleged sexual abuse a minor," *The Jakarta Post*, March 12, 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/03/12/surabaya-pastor-named-suspect-for-alleged-sexual-abuse-of-a-minor.html>

19 "Pendeta Diduga Cabuli Jemaat di Surabaya Ditangkap Polisi," *CNN Indonesia*, March 9, 2020, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20200309161221-12-481792/pendeta-diduga-cabuli-jemaat-di-surabaya-ditangkap-polisi>

20 "Surabaya pastor sentenced to 10 years in prison for years of sexual abuse," *The Jakarta Post*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/22/surabaya-pastor-sentenced-to-10-years-in-prison-for-years-of-sexual-abuse.html>

21 The incident occurred at Sumba Tengah Regency/District (in Nusa Tenggara Timur Province), where Christianity is 76,29 percent and Catholic is 17,89 percent. Source: "Persentase Penduduk Menurut Kabupaten/Kota dan Agama yang Dianut di Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur 2019," *Official Website of Nusa Tenggara Timur Province*, last updated April 13, 2020, <http://nttprov.go.id/2018/index.php/kondisi-umum/keagamaan>

to obey them, and they take her to where the prospective husband is suspected.<sup>22</sup> The woman can only struggle, crying when her body is lifted and carried by five men. This incident is a practice of Sumba Marriage by Capture. Because these actions are part of local culture, protests from society and the church against these actions have not been seen clearly. Women become powerless over their bodies in this oppressive patriarchal system. The rights to one's own body were lost. Men have total power over women's bodies, so violence experienced by women is considered normal, and the church keeps silent.

### **Responses to Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill in Indonesia**

The Bill on the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Indonesia was formulated to overcome and prevent all forms of gender and sexual-based violence, as stated by Komnas Perempuan above. The process of drafting this bill has been going on for five years. However, it has not yet been passed into law until now. The bill specifies more detailed forms of violence, including sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, rape, sexual slavery, sexual torture, and the absence of consent in abortion, contraception use, marriage, and prostitution. This bill also highlights the necessity of preventing sexual violence in multiple settings, holding parties accountable, and protecting and recovering the victims and their rights.<sup>23</sup> However, although this law aims to solve cases of sexual violence in society, passing this bill has not gone smoothly.

The public's response is divided into two (the pros and cons of this law's ratification). The pro groups are dominated by NGOs engaged in advocacy for women's rights, such as Komnas Perempuan and the association of civil society organizations (Forum Pengada Layanan/FPL), which then initiated to draft the bill based on their analysis of a decade of the annual report of sexual violence in Indonesia (2001-2011).<sup>24</sup> This organization's main objective is to ensure that sexual

22 Retia Kartika Dewi, "Viral Video Perempuan Ditangkap di Sumba Diduga Kawin Tangkap," accessed October 14, 2020, <https://www.kompas.com/tren/read/2019/12/08/180900565/viral-video-perempuan-ditangkap-di-sumba-diduga-kawin-tangkap?page=all>

23 Shareen Joycelin, "The Sexual Violence Eradication Bill: Is it Really a liberal's Agenda?" *The Development Café*, August 26, 2020, <https://www.dev-cafe.org/the-sexual-violence-eradication-bill-is-it-really-a-liberals-agenda/>.

24 Nurmila, "Challenges To The Enactment of The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill," 93-94.

violence is considered a crime against humanity<sup>25</sup> so that the state has the authority to take legal action against the perpetrators of the violence.

The response of Christians (Catholic and Protestant) in Indonesia to this bill is not seen. No church openly takes a position to support or reject the draft law against sexual violence. However, public opinion considers Christians in Indonesia to support the draft law, especially with Christians' presence and role in Komnas Perempuan and NGOs who support the draft law. For example, Holy Spirit Sister Eustochia Monika Nata, coordinator of the Women's Division at the Volunteer Team for Humanity in Flores, supports the bill by saying, "the bill detailed articles covering victim's right and restitution as well as perpetrators' punishment and rehabilitation."<sup>26</sup> This opinion was conveyed because the police cannot handle many cases of sexual violence because they do not have a robust legal basis for legal action in the law. For example, in incest, police refuse to handle this case if the victim does not get pregnant.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile, the groups that oppose the bill are dominated by opposition groups in the government, who are also conservative groups led by one of Indonesia's religious-based parties (the Islamic-oriented Prosperous Justice Party/PKS). The law's formulation must include a religious perspective (Islam views).<sup>28</sup> The primary point of rejection put forward by groups who oppose this bill is fear of free sex. One of the main arguments against the anti-sexual violence bill is that it criminalizes rape, including marital rape, but does not explicitly prohibit consensual, non-violent sexual relations outside of marriage. In their (the opposition) understanding, by not explicitly addressing premarital sex, the bill indirectly promotes free sex and homosexuality.<sup>29</sup>

25 Nurmila, "Challenges To The Enactment of The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill," 97.

26 Katharina L. Lestari, "Anti-sexual violence bill offers hope to Indonesian women," *Union of Catholic Asian News*, November 4, 2016, <https://www.ucanews.com/news/anti-sexual-violence-bill-offers-hope-to-indonesian-women/77533#>.

27 Lestari, "Anti-sexual violence bill offers hope to Indonesian women."

28 "Indonesian Sexual Violence Bill Faces Religious Opposition," VOA News, last modified Februari 11, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/east-asia-pacific/indonesian-sexual-violence-bill-faces-religious-opposition>.

29 Balawyn Jones and Max Walden, "Conservative rejection of Indonesia's anti-sexual violence bill misplaced," *The Conversation*, February 26, 2019, <https://theconversation.com/conservative->

However, this argument has been refuted to explain that the bill's aim is limited to eliminating sexual violence. Non-violent sexual relations fall outside the bill's scope and are irrelevant to this legislation. Premarital relations' legality is already being debated and legislated in a controversial draft of the amendment to the criminal code. As other legislation already addresses premarital relations, it is unnecessary or appropriate for the anti-sexual violence bill to contain such provisions. Challenging the bill because it does not discuss consensual, non-violent premarital relations is therefore misplaced.<sup>30</sup> Rejection of the bill by conservative groups is also not done by asking for clarification from the bill's drafting.

Moreover, the conservative group shamelessly spread hoaxes and stigma to Komnas Perempuan by spreading hoaxes that the bill supports adultery and LGBT.<sup>31</sup> Strangely enough, one of the conservative figures who opposed the bill also argued against the wife's report of violence against her husband. In her opinion, for the sake of family resilience, the wife should not report her husband's violence because the husband is the *imam* (the leader) of the family, and reporting her husband's violence will make the family falls apart.<sup>32</sup> The same perspective can be found in Christian communities and is strengthened by the patriarchal system of the ethnic culture that exists in Indonesia.

One of the critical points raised in this bill includes detailed provisions for the protection and support of victims of sexual violence, such as providing health services and legal assistance for victims. Ideally, this point provides a clear picture for all groups that this bill is actually on the side of victims of sexual violence, which society has not paid much attention to, including religious communities. Moreover, the characteristic of the bill is to prevent sexual violence in society.

This issue is complicated in Indonesia because Indonesia's political strife after the 2019 presidential election still leaves a clear mark. Opposition groups use

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rejection-of-indonesias-anti-sexual-violence-bill-misplaced-111683.

30 Jones and Walden, "Conservative rejection of Indonesia's anti-sexual violence bill misplaced."

31 Nurmila, "Challenges to The Enactment of The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill," 98-99. Lestari, "Anti-sexual violence bill offers hope to Indonesian women."

32 Nurmila, "Challenges to The Enactment of The Elimination of Sexual Violence Bill," 99.

identity politics (race and religion) to oppose government policies, including policies that protect their citizens. This fact also proves that religion is still influential in influencing the people's perspective in Indonesia, so using religion as a mask to cover the political agenda is still openly used.<sup>33</sup>

### **Theological Problem? - Theology, Body, and Violence**

In response to this sensitive issue, the Christian voice in Indonesia is not heard. Furthermore, it seems that Indonesian Christians' silence or lack of voice on sexual violence in society is highly impacted by patriarchal cultural influences. This patriarchal system also lives in the Christian community. According to Rosemary Radford Ruether, a Christian feminist theologian, this culture gives men authority to define women, including their bodies, "woman's body-her reproductive processes-becomes owned by men, defined from a male point of view. Women are seen as reproducing children and producing cooked food and clothes for men."<sup>34</sup> Ruether further states that the monopoly of men in defining women makes women objects.

The politics of sexuality that results in women's objectification and men's subjectivity continue to exist and develop in our society because agents perpetuate them. One such agent is religion through a gender-biased reading of scriptural texts. Christians often ignore a creation narrative in the Book of Genesis that shows the equality of men and women (Gen. 1:27). The more dominant teaching is that which places women as secondary creations, even as the source of the fall of humanity. Eve who was "seduced" by the tempter, has caused all humankind to fall into sin. As a result of Eve's choice, the fall of man required God's presence in the form of a man who redeemed all humanity from sin. Such teaching is carried on in Christian theology, as Ruether noted below:

At times, in theological definitions and, even more, in popular diatribe, Christian churchmen came and perilously close to this view of woman as sin. While allowing woman baptism, patriarchal theology stressed her "great aptness" for sin and her lesser spirituality. As an "inferior mix," a woman can never fully represent

33 Anna Margret and Yolanda Pandjaitan, "The anti-sexual violence bill: a clash of values or politics?" *The University of Melbourne*, January 28, 2020, <https://indonesiaatmelbourne.unimelb.edu.au/the-anti-sexual-violence-bill-a-clash-of-values-or-politics/>.

34 Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a feminist theology* (Massachusetts: Beacon Press Book, 1983), 74.

the image of God as a man, who is seen as representing the rational and spiritual part of the self.<sup>35</sup>

The position of women and those who have distinct gender identities and expressions are considered inferior. The exploration of this theological concept will provide an overview of how this concept affects human relations in society, starting with Western theology that came into Indonesia. Connell stated that Western developed sexuality based on medieval and Reformation intellectuals' writings on sex and gender in the discourse about the *moral* relationship among men, women, and God.<sup>36</sup> Medieval and Reformed Western Christian theology viewed women and their bodies to be the cause of sin. Moreover, generally Christian theology retains a dualistic view of the body and spirit, which shapes the idea of sexuality. Since sexuality is seen as just a physical activity, sexual experience is considered sinful.<sup>37</sup> As a result, when cases of sexual violence occur, people are reluctant to face them and seek solutions to help victims or resolve the root causes. Most people do not want to devote attention, time, and energy to sexuality and the body since, according to the religious idea that divides body and spirit, it is highly prized to prioritize spiritual issues. Sexuality is not a spiritual issue.

Christianity's history shows how church fathers or reformers have dealt negatively with body and sexuality. For example, one of the church fathers with a negative view of sexual relations and sexuality was Tertullian (160-225 CE). By blaming Eve as a symbol of sexuality, Tertullian considered sex as the entrance for sin that made life contains mistakes until the present; the sin enters the world through the woman.<sup>38</sup> Unconsciously, this perspective is used to blame women and is considered to trigger sexual violence, for example, by saying, "you wear short clothes and invite lust."

35 Ruether, *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a feminist theology*, 94.

36 R.W. Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987), 23.

37 Martha J. Horn. et al. "Sexuality and Spirituality: The Embodied Spirituality Scale," *Theology & Sexuality* 12.1 (2005): 81.

38 Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum*, Book I, Chapter I. trans. S. Thelwall. accessed June 25, 2020, [http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf04/anf04-06.htm#P265\\_52058](http://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf04/anf04-06.htm#P265_52058)



In line with Tertullian, Augustine also views sexuality negatively and tends to blame women. For him, male sexual attraction to women is a sin. Augustine stated that the snake approached Eve in the Garden of Eden because Eve had a smaller ratio than Adam, who lacked self-control.<sup>39</sup> Eve, according to Augustine, represented the body, while Adam represented the spirit. Therefore, sin came into the world because the spirit (*Adam/man*) failed to control the body (*Eve/woman*).<sup>40</sup> The analogy of women as bodies in a lower position than men as spirits shows that men and women are not equal to Augustine.

Church reformer Martin Luther (former Augustine monk) also had a negative view of women. Luther believed that women did not have a remarkable ability to think. A woman's body's anatomy has shown this: her large hips are very suitable for childbirth, while her narrower shoulders match the burden she carries, the smaller brain (ratio).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, even though he considered sex sacred, healthy, and integral to life and marriage, sexuality is a lustful demonstration and a sinful act outside marriage.<sup>42</sup> Meanwhile, Calvin presumed that marriage was a means to tame sexual desire. Calvin suggested that those who cannot tame it should get married and admit that God has forced the need to marry.<sup>43</sup> The views of the two church reformers on sexuality have had a lasting impact on Christians, especially Protestants viewing women and sexuality for centuries. Luther and Calvin's views cannot be clearly distinguished from the Indonesian Protestant perspective.

Discourses about the human body in Christianity seem endless because of its complexity. The story of human creation in the book of Genesis 2 is often used to interpret the human body. This interpretation will then impact the way humans

39 R.R. Reuther, "Augustine: Sexuality, gender, and women," 2007, as quoted in Harry Eiss, *Seeking God in the Works of T.S. Eliot and Michelangelo* (Newcastle, UK.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 40.

40 B. Edwards, "Let My People Go: A Call to End the Oppression of Women in the Church." 2011, as quoted in Eiss, *Seeking God in the Works of T.S. Eliot and Michelangelo*." 40.

41 Susan C. Karant-Nunn and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (ed. and trans.), *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 10.

42 Karant-Nunn and Wiesner-Hanks (ed. and trans.), *Luther on Women*, 10.

43 William J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 136.



treat their bodies and the bodies of others, both positively and negatively. On the negative aspect, wrong theological interpretations legitimize violence against women or gender minority groups.

General claims that arise are that women are subordinate and subject to men. Women do not have power over their bodies. A man who becomes the husband of a woman has full rights over his wife's body. Those who do not appear and behave according to their gender also experience violence as they are considered to deviate from social norms. The violence experienced by this group often ends as "understandable or accepted" of the perpetrator's reasons or blaming the victim that is not following generally accepted social norms.

An example of the body's discourse in Christianity is discussed in a chapter by Lisa Isherwood and Elizabeth Stuart. They argue about the relationship between the body and Christianity. They argued, "Christianity has always subordinated the body to the soul, or Christianity has always preached hatred of the body."<sup>44</sup> The description of this relationship has an impact on the way we perceive the body. Moreover, this issue becomes even more complicated when the Bible tells of humans being created in the body (male and female), and then God is called or spoken like a man. Mary Daly stated, "If God is male, the male is God." This concept means that as long as God is depicted as male and allowed to live in the human imagination, this concept will castrate women in life.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, a theological understanding based on the story of women's creation from the rib of men dramatically influences the human perspective to see women's existence in society. Isherwood even mentions that the story of the creation of women from men is often understood as a 'scientific act of creation' which at the same time has a theological impact on women and their bodies as if women and their bodies were a second layer of creation because they were created

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44 Lisa Isherwood and Elizabeth Stuart, *Introducing Body Theology* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 52.

45 Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation*, New paperback edition (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 19.

from men.<sup>46</sup> The further consequence of this understanding and concept of theology put men as the standard or prototype for women; “Man will define who a woman is.”<sup>47</sup> Women descended from men can never hope to have original, good qualities at the same level as men.<sup>48</sup>

Whether we realize it or not, men and their masculinities are at the top of gender relations in social life. Victoria Lee Erikson also emphasizes this distinction between men and women in her work *Where Silence Speaks: Feminism, Social Theory, and Religion* (1993: 3-28). Erikson argues that in a society that divides social life into two categories, sacred and profane, masculinity is considered sacred, and femininity is considered profane.<sup>49</sup> The two groups of these categories are representations of the cultural rhetoric strategy to establish and sustain power.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, Erikson explained that people classified as feminine are women, children who have not reached adulthood, and men who do not appear masculine. This binary point of view gives legitimacy for the masculine (the sacred) to do violence if needed to maintain the sacred (masculine).<sup>51</sup>

The reasons above are often used as the basis for society to tolerate sexual violence experienced by women, especially in a marriage relationship. The subordination of woman to man also seems justified by the Scriptural text, which commands a woman to submit to a man because she is part of his body, which means she is his property.<sup>52</sup> This understanding needs to be criticized and changed because it has become one of the roots of domestic violence, as it has been expressed in facts and countered in the elimination of sexual violence bill.

Violence against the human body leaves physical scars. The body that has experienced violence will continue to “carry” the marks of violence and the

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46 Isherwood, *Introducing Body Theology*, 15.

47 Isherwood, *Introducing Body Theology*, 15-16.

48 Isherwood, *Introducing Body Theology*, 20.

49 Victoria Lee Erikson's argument as quoted by Paula Cooley, “Re-Membering the Body: A Theological Resource for Resisting Domestic Violence,” *Theology and Sexuality* 3 (1995): 27-28.

50 Cooley, “Re-Membering the Body,” 28.

51 Cooley, “Re-Membering the Body,” 28.

52 Isherwood and Stuart, *Introducing Body Theology*, 63.

memories that stick in mind. Nevertheless, wounds that are deep and hard to heal are inner wounds. In sexual violence cases, this inner wound is often more deadly than the inflicted physical wound. Often in society, those deep wounds and scars are caused by systemic racism, sexism, xenophobia, and homophobia.<sup>53</sup>

The inner wound, the emotional pain, usually manifests itself in emotional confusion, profound shame, guilt, depression, and unworthy feelings, often leading to suicidal thoughts. Furthermore,

### **A Spirit Body Sexuality Theology to Overcome Sexual Violence**

In the case of gender and sexual-based violence, body and sexuality are two main theological issues. Unbalanced relations between men and women and the patriarchal concept of sexuality are the main focus and are considered one of the roots of sexual violence in society. Isherwood criticizes the theological concept that only sees sex as a gift without noticing that there are also issues of politics and power in the concept. She wrote that

sex is not only a natural matter; it is a highly constructed reality reflecting the power structures of the society in which it resides. It could be hardly be only other way, since body through which it is both experienced and practiced is like sponges that absorb meaning, and 'highly political' meaning. Political in the sense that the body is used to regulate and shape society; indeed body can be used as a model for any bounded system.<sup>54</sup>

Isherwood's criticism is essential for public theology so that when theology talks about the body and sexuality, theology can also realize the potential for violence due to unbalanced relationships caused by the wrong concept of seeing the body.

Church theology which has tended to be ambiguous and seems to legalize the unbalanced and manipulative relations between men and women, needs to be re-examined. The church needs to emphasize the diversity of God's creations and the equal relations between men and women by redefining the human body

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53 L. Juliana Claassens, "Toward a Feminist Public Theology: on Wounds, Scars and Healing in the Book of Jeremiah and Beyond," *International Journal of Public Theology* 13 (2019): 190.

54 Lisa Isherwood (ed.), *The good news of the body: Sexual theology and feminism* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 20.

in Christian theology because the human body has individual, social, political, and divine dimensions.<sup>55</sup>

The human body is a site where God works, and sexuality is a gift from God. Therefore, the body that has experienced sexual violence must be seen as a violation of humanity, where God works. The theology of the human body and sexuality must provide the good news that sexual violence is a resistance against God that must be stopped, abandoned, and should never happen again. Theology needs to remind us all that the human physical body has specific characteristics, engages in sex are symbolic body embodies values, but also “the spiritual body embodies existence that transcends physicality and replaces the traditional distinction between body and soul.”<sup>56</sup> Regardless of the human condition, physicality, orientation, and gender expression, a person must be seen as a whole person who does not have any reason to experience sexual violence.

### **Human as Imago Dei**

This doctrine is the first teaching we encounter when reading the creation story. In the human body, there is dignity, and God is in it. Recalling this concept will help us see our fellow humans beyond the physical being. This doctrine also does not distinguish humans according to sex and gender; therefore, the conversation of the Imago Dei concept does not differentiate between humans based on differentiating biological factors and products of social construction.

The text of Genesis 1: 26-27 provides the biblical basis for referring to humans as the image of God (Imago Dei). This expression is not applied to other creatures (plants and animals); only humans get this predicate to become one of God’s unique creations, the most different from other God’s creatures. The topic of man as God’s image is essential in the history of Christian theological debate today. Church fathers such as Augustine, Irenaeus, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, and the great theologians of the 20th century such as Karl Barth, Hans Urs

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55 Lisa Isherwood (ed.), *The good news of the body*, 22.

56 Christina Landman, “Women Embodying Public Theology,” in Len Hansen, *Christian in Public: Aims, Methodologies and Issues in Public Theology* (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2007), 205.

von Balthasar, and Jürgen Moltmann have profound arguments about this doctrine because the mention of humans as God's image relates to the issue of human dignity in contemporary society.<sup>57</sup>

The well-known church fathers have the same opinion about man as the image of God. For example, Augustine argues that God created humans by having a 'likeness' to God so that humanity as a whole is good because good God makes humanity good, "*ad Imaginem Dei*."<sup>58</sup> For Aquinas, humans are like God. However, this concept must be understood as an analogy; God's likeness in humans is about humans' true nature.<sup>59</sup> Luther's view is similar to Augustine's, but with the addition that "humanity's identity can only be defined in terms of Christ's justification."<sup>60</sup> Then, for John Calvin, humans are made in "*imago Dei*." However, he then emphasized God's image, distorted due to man's fall into sin. According to him, humans are incapable of participating in a reciprocal relationship with God due to this sin. The relational distance between God and the creatures made in his image becomes most apparent. God now becomes other as human beings passively accept their righteousness, and only Christ restores us to God's image.<sup>61</sup>

Then, the church's great theologians in the 20th century deepened their understanding of the human as *imago Dei*. For example, Karl Barth argued that *Imago Dei* expresses humanity's likeness to God and participation in the divine life.<sup>62</sup> However, Barth presents Christ as the perfect *Imago Dei*, and from the perspective of Christ that he defines human creation as *Imago Dei*.<sup>63</sup> Even though Barth postulate that only Christ can be said as the image of God (Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 4:4), it is interesting that from this concept, Barth emphasizes the identity of human as *Imago Dei* rests in human "relationship" among them and through deeds that we

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57 Dominic Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei: The Thought of Barth, von Balthasar, and Moltmann* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 1.

58 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 9.

59 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 15.

60 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 18.

61 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 20.

62 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 32.

63 Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 45.

reflect our similarity to Christ (the true *Imago Dei*).<sup>64</sup> It means that when humans practice violence against each other, at the same time, they are destroying the Image of Christ (which is the Image of God) because Christ's Image is in the human relationship toward each other.

Furthermore, Jürgen Moltmann, who also holds Christocentric solid views, asserted that "likeness to God" in the doctrine *Imago Dei* "means God's relationship to human beings first of all, and only then, and as a consequence of that, the human being's relationship to God."<sup>65</sup> Moltmann emphasizes the relational model of "*Imago Dei*." God reveals himself in humanity, and human dignity lies because God is inherently present in His creation. When humans have an intimate relationship with God and present humanity, then at that time, humans are presenting God on earth.<sup>66</sup> What does this concept mean for human relations? Humans are disrupting the dignity that comes from God, who is present in humans; they demolish God's presence on earth when humans commit violence against others.

### **Spirit Body Sexuality Theology**

To respond to gender and sexual-based violence in our family, community, church, and society, we must understand that humans are not only physical bodies. Perhaps our knowledge and awareness of human nature as something more than the physical body can help us discover methods to establish mutual regard and respect for the physical body. Still, it also has one soul and spirit. Moreover, thus, sexuality in humans must also be seen as a whole with respect and appreciation. In this way, we give our fellow humans life, and violence will never be part of our understanding and actions in human relationships.

The discourse on the nature of the human being is not only the subject of the theological world. Human nature has been going on for centuries before human religions existed, and this conversation is still struggling to this day. Richard Swinburne, an English Philosopher, tries to explain human beings' nature beyond

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<sup>64</sup> Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 46.

<sup>65</sup> Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 129.

<sup>66</sup> Robinson, *Understanding the Imago Dei*, 130.

their existence as a biological species to which each human belongs. Whether we are body or soul, humans' fundamental question is a substantial question that continues to echo in men's minds, whether he is an atheist or religious.

Swinburne states that human physicalism and substance dualism are ancient views, starting from the 'Atomist' viewpoint in the 5th century BCE in Greece, such as Democritus, who supports physicalism Platonism, which supports substance dualism (human as embodied soul).<sup>67</sup> However, according to Swinburne, what is clear is that humans are not only complex biological creatures and move like machines. Humans also have non-physical elements that need to be seen and understood as a whole that shapes our humanity. We are free to call them souls from our religious perspective or self from a perspective that is not tied to a particular religion.<sup>68</sup>

From a theological perspective, the same question about the nature of human beings is also still rolling. Barth does distinguish between soul and spirit. Human, as God's creation, has God's spirit. To emphasize this, I quote Barth's opinion, "Through the Spirit of God, man is the subject, form, and life of a substantial organism, the soul of his body-wholly and simultaneously both, in ineffaceable difference, inseparable unity, and indestructible order."<sup>69</sup> Barth proposes a way of looking at human existence. According to him, a human being is a soul and body; he further said that man is being with God and being with fellow men.<sup>70</sup>

Nevertheless, Barth considers that the Spirit of God is involved in the creation of the human person.<sup>71</sup> For Barth, the unity of the human body and soul becomes a living being as a pneumatological event since the Spirit is 'the fundamental determination' of human nature as 'the principle which makes a man into a

67 Richard Swinburne, *Are We Bodies or Souls?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 2.

68 Swinburne, *Are We Bodies or Souls?* 2.

69 G.W. Bromiley and T.F. Torrance (eds.), *Karl Barth Church Dogmatics: Volume III The Doctrine of Creation* (London & New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 119.

70 Torrance (eds.), *Karl Barth Church Dogmatics: Volume III*, 119.

71 Marc Cortez, "Body, Soul, and (Holy) Spirit: Karl Barth's Theological Framework for Understanding Human Ontology," *International Journal on Systematic Theology*, Vol. 10 no.3 (July 2008): 336.



subject.<sup>72</sup> It must be understood that ‘human life as a body-soul union is not a fixed possession but is something that God must continually establish through the agency of the Spirit; this pneumatological event ‘must be continually repeated’ for humans to be human. <sup>73</sup> Briefly, Barth understands that the Spirit is the basis of soul and body and thus sees humans as a whole or what he calls the spiritual-corporeal perception.<sup>74</sup> This concept affirms that our humanity comes alive because of the Spirit’s existence as the living agent who connects humankind with God; thus, humans are responsible for God.<sup>75</sup> Then, the unity of the human body and spirit is also emphasized by Nancey Murphy, a philosopher, and theologian, who argues that humans are psychophysical unities. This unity can be understood in terms of their relationships with the believers’ community and God.<sup>76</sup> Murphy stated the thesis to answer the question, ‘Are humans immortal souls temporarily housed in physical bodies, or are we our bodies?’ from the perspectives of three disciplines: Christian theology, science (especially cognitive neuroscience), and philosophy. Her central thesis is. First, we are our bodies – there is no additional metaphysical element such as a mind, soul, or spirit. However, second, this “physicalist” position need not deny that we are intelligent, moral, and spiritual. We are, at our best, complex physical organisms, imbued with the legacy of thousands of years of culture, and, most importantly, blown by the Breath of God’s Spirit; we are Spirited bodies.<sup>77</sup> This thesis serves as a meeting point or negotiation between modern science and theology, often in opposite positions.

Human complexity also includes sexuality. This element has received particular attention not to imply that sexuality is something other than body, soul, and spirit. However, human sexuality is intertwined with the elements that compose the concept of a human being’s nature.

72 Cortez, “Body, Soul, and (Holy) Spirit,” 337.

73 Cortez, “Body, Soul, and (Holy) Spirit,” 337.

74 JinHyok Kim, *The Spirit of God and Christian Life: Reconstructing Karl Barth’s Pneumatology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 533, Apple Books.

75 Kim, *The Spirit of God and Christian Life*, 541.

76 Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 22.

77 Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?* ix.

As a source of Christian faith, the Bible teaches that humans are sexual creatures. However, we must be aware that Bible conversations about sex are varied and scattered in several contexts. David H. Jensen, for example, notes that there are three frames to the approach to the Bible and Sex: (1) an approach that focuses on the explicitly “sexual texts” and sees the Bible as a guidebook on sex; (2) an approach that deems the Bible an insufficient, outmoded, and even oppressive text on many issues, including sexuality, in the contemporary age; and (3) an approach, which I advocate, that views Scripture as itself a narrative of desire, situating sexuality as one moment within other expressions of relationship.<sup>78</sup> Of the three approaches put forward by Jensen, the third approach is the church’s suitable model for discussing sexual violence in people’s lives. This approach invites people to read the Bible with a narrative that can absorb the problems of sexuality today. Jensen reminded us that if we only read the Bible, like looking for rules about sex, we will lose the meaning of the biblical narratives that contain messages and the principle of God’s hope that we must live in love.<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, sexual violence has never been part of the principle of loving each other that God expects.

Jensen revealed that when we read the Bible as a narrative of desire (God’s desire for humankind and humankind’s desire for communion with God and a relationship with one another), ‘sex is one dimension and expression of the desire for communion and connection, intimacy, and relationship.’<sup>80</sup> Sex is a symbol that expresses God’s love for the world, which particularly incarnate become human; that is ‘God’s revelation of God’s very self in one human being.’<sup>81</sup> Consequently, the desire in human relations that involves sex must express and intensify God’s love.

Although some think that sexual violence, such as rape, and sexual assault, as a specific form of (often male) sexuality,<sup>82</sup> the church must choose the position

78 David H. Jensen, “The Bible and Sex,” in Margareth D. Kamitsuka, (ed.), *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 16.

79 Kamitsuka, (ed.), *The Embrace of Eros*, 29.

80 Kamitsuka, (ed.), *The Embrace of Eros*, 30.

81 Kamitsuka, (ed.), *The Embrace of Eros*, 30.

82 Jeff Hearn and Viv Burr, “Introducing the Erotics of Wounding: Sex, Violence and the Body,” in *Sex, Violence, and the Body; the Erotic of Wounding* ed. Jeff Hearn and Viv Burr (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 1.

that rape and sexual assault are forms of violence; it is not a form of ordinary sexual activity, but it is sexual violence. Moreover, sexual violence is physical and non-physical, such as verbal, emotional, psychological, and social abuses that leave scars inside their body, the 'soul,'<sup>83</sup> The experience of sexual violence traumatizes and alters the notion of love, causing damage to the soul. Therefore, although some individuals, particularly males, see sexual violence as a means of deepening love, it is not consistent with the belief that God is love. Sexual violence cannot be seen as expressing and deepening God's love. Sexual violence is a manner of ignoring God's love for the world.

### CONCLUSION

Sexuality is a public issue, and the church is part of the public. Therefore, when sexual violence in public spheres occurs, the church also speaks out and sides with victims and survivors and takes a position against sexual violence. The Bill on the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Indonesia is how the state fulfills its duty to protect its citizens. Furthermore, the church, the element of the public, should support this responsibility. Men and women are equal and equal before God (Genesis 1:27 and Galatians 3:28). No particular gender overcomes another because of the differences that exist between the two. Sexual violence based on gender or sexual differences violates human dignity, which is God's image.

Gender and sexual-based violence mean destroying God's image in humans, which is the same as sinning. We can no longer view our bodies and others as objects that can be controlled because there is the Spirit of God in the body. The spirit gives life so that respect and proper treatment of the body will reflect our reverence for the God who gives life. The existence of each human being is beyond her/his body. There is a soul, emotions, and thoughts in each human, enlivened by the Spirit in every human being. God is in all humans, regardless of gender or sexual differences. God is present in each human. That means violence and the scars to

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83 Michelle Jones and Jeff Hearn, "Physical Bruises, Emotional Scars and 'Love Bites': Women's Experiences of Men's Violence, in *Sex, Violence, and the Body; the Erotic of Wounding* ed. Jeff Hearn and Viv Burr (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 68.

the body who experience sexual violence should also become violence and scars to the community's body because each of us has the same body, soul, and Spirit. Thus, gender sexual-based violence is a public issue that must be stopped collectively.

Therefore, the church must continue to speak out against sexual violence in all places and forms and cannot justify it for any reason. Experience of violence based on gender and sexuality differences needs to be essential in theology because God is also present and works (revelation) through this site, the bodies of those who have experienced sexual violence. The church's voice on this issue is a form of the church siding with gender-based sexual violence victims. The church has to sound for the voiceless women whose opinions, desires, choices, and rights to their bodies have never been allowed to state and determine what is best for them. There should be no forced marriage and no sexual violence.

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