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**Practicing Communicability, Redeemability, and Educability:
The Response of Christian Education to Violence against Women
during the Covid-19 Pandemic**

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Abstract

This article explores violence against women in Yogyakarta, which increased rapidly during the pandemic. The study showed that violence against women is also the result of deep and troubling cultural structures that oppress women. Based on a see-judge-act analysis, this article proposes that church educational ministries can build relationships with women victims and their families through a variety of transformational ways, even amid a pandemic. The church can develop communication, healing, and education through a holistic approach in Christian education (practicing communicability, redeemability, and educability). The paradigm of gender equality should be integrated into our attitudes and actions in daily life and in the whole range of the church's ministry to create spaces for women's voices not only through education and ritual action but also actual transformation.

Keywords: violence against women; Covid-19 pandemic; Christian Education; communicability; redeemability; educability

INTRODUCTION

On June 30, 2020, the population of Indonesia was 268,583,016: 135,821,768 males and 132,761,248 females. However, of the 34 provinces in Indonesia, four had more females than males. This includes the Special Region of Yogyakarta, which had 39,584 more females than males.¹ During the Covid-19 pandemic, was a significant increase in violence against women² in Yogyakarta (domestic means in the family context). The Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center there reported that between January and May 2020, they assisted 146 cases of violence against women. During the pandemic, the number of women accessing the hotline service was higher than in previous years.³ However, it is estimated that the number of women who dare to complain about their cases is far smaller than the actual number of victims (less than 10 percent).⁴ It is crucial to discuss this issue because, during the pandemic, a woman's role in her family cannot be ignored, since all essential activities (such as worship, school, and work) are carried out from home. Wo-

men have even more responsibilities for their families.

The city of Yogyakarta is known to have strong cultural values, including tolerance. Yogyakarta is called the city of philosophy, culture, and tolerance. However, it has also become a place for violence against women. Given that paradoxical situation, this paper addresses several critical questions: Why has violence against women increased in Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic? Is this increase in cases of violence against women in Yogyakarta a result only of the Covid-19 pandemic? Have the churches in Yogyakarta given attention to this issue? What is the proper educational ministry to address this issue? What can we do to alleviate domestic violence against women, specifically in Yogyakarta?

This study invites us to view the issue of violence against women with a broader perspective. It calls the church community to carry out communication, healing, and education through a holistic approach in Christian education through practicing communicability (communicable love), re-

¹ Dian Erika Nugraheny, "Data Kependudukan 2020: Penduduk Indonesia 268.583.016 Jiwa," *Kompas*, accessed October 6, 2020, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/08/12/15261351/data-kependudukan-2020-penduduk-indonesia-268583016-jiwa?page=all>.

² In this article, I use the term "violence against women/woman" to refer to acts of violence experienced by women, especially in the household (domestic violence).

³ "KDRT Di Yogyakarta Meningkat Selama Pandemi COVID-19 | Kumparan.Com," accessed October 7, 2020, <https://kumparan.com/tugujogja/kdrt-di-yogyakarta-meningkat-selama-pandemi-covid-19-1tckz0P5PbU>.

⁴ Irwan Syambudi, "Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Di Jogja Meningkat Selama Corona," *Tirto.Id*, accessed June 30, 2020, <https://tirto.id/kekerasan-dalam-rumah-tangga-di-jogja-meningkat-selama-corona-fMeQ>.

deemability (redeemable faith), and educability (educable hope).⁵ This discussion enriches several studies that have been conducted on the topic of violence against women. In 2011, a general study on this issue in Javanese context was conducted by Lembaga Pengembangan Kualitas Manusia (LPKM) Fakultas Kedokteran Universitas Gadjah Mada and the Yogyakarta Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center, in collaboration with Umea University and Sweden Women's Health Exchange, USA. The results have been published in a bilingual book entitled "*Membisu dalam Harmoni/Silence for the Sake of Harmony*."⁶ In the Christian context, Asnath Niwa Natar has edited a book entitled "Don't Send Me Flower Again: *Perempuan dan Kekerasan*," which contains writings by women theologians about women and violence from the perspective of feminist theology.⁷ However, I have not found a specific article that discusses the importance of educational ministries in highlighting the issue of violence against women, especially during the pandemic. In 2020, the Association for Theological Education in South East Asia

(ATESEA) held a webinar about "Women in Times of Crisis."⁸ The webinar examines biblical and psychological perspectives, but it has not discussed the perspective of Christian education. This article will discuss the issue from the perspective of Christian education. Thus, it is hoped that this study can enrich previous studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

These research questions are considered through the see-judge-act analysis.⁹ In Christian education itself, the see-judge-act lens is closely related to the transformational approach that analyzes the issue of violence against women. **See-Judge-Act** analysis invites us to address the reality holistically, including the problems that arise with a broader picture. We are invited to **see** social situations, **judge** them in the light of principles drawn from our theological teaching and from our own values and beliefs, and **act** in response to the injustice we observe.¹⁰ In **seeing**, social analysis occurs by observing historical aspects and structural relationships. In that way, reality can be seen accurately and prejudices that arise are

⁵ Mai-Anh Le Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2017), 75.

⁶ Mohammad Hakimi, et. al., *Membisu Demi Harmoni [Silence for the Sake of Harmony]* (Yogyakarta: Rifka Annisa – FK UGM, 2011), 20-21.

⁷ Asnath Niwa Natar, ed., *Don't Send Me Flower Again: Perempuan Dan Kekerasan* (Yogyakarta:

Yayasan Taman Pustaka Kristen Indonesia & PERUATI DIY, 2013).

⁸ "Women in Times of Crisis," in *Webinar: Women's Conference* (Philippines: Association for Theological Education in South East Asia, 2020).

⁹ Erin M. Brigham, *See, Judge, Act: Catholic Social Teaching and Service Learning*, Revised. (Minnesota, USA: Anselm Academic, 2019), 22-23.

¹⁰ Ibid.

tested for their validity in providing a complete understanding. The next step is **judging**, which employs criteria from a set of principles and sources, including our religious values. In this process, we reflect on what is good and right in the context of transformation to respond to problematic situations around us. This process includes a critical dialogue with our own values and beliefs about the present situation. The third step is **acting**. This involves engaging, in charity and justice, with the situation we have identified.

As primary sources, it uses Erin M. Brigham's book about see-judge-act analysis and the results of several literature research, as well as statistical data on violence against women in Yogyakarta. I also explore additional supporting literature to complement the data on the background of the problem and analysis. The second primary source is Mai-Anh Le Tran's insight that opposes violence and develops hope amid various social problems. It based on some practices of Christian education which include communicability, redeemability, and educability as a theoretical basis. As a result, this article presents the idea of practicing communicability, redeemability, and

educability as a response to violence against women during Covid-19.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Seeing: Historical and Social Analysis

Seeing involves social analysis by observing historical aspects and structural relationships. In that way, reality can be understood more accurately and prejudices that arise can be tested for their validity in providing a complete understanding.

Historical Analysis

Yogyakarta has played a crucial role in the history of the women's movement in Indonesia. There are many important events of the women's movement that took place in this city. Yogyakarta was where Indonesian women from various parts of the archipelago held a congress in 1928. That congress became a women's forum for the independence movement, where crucial issues could be discussed, including marriage, violence, polygamy, rape, and women trafficking.¹¹ Yogyakarta is also the birthplace of the women's non-governmental organization in the New Order era, namely the Annisa Swasti Foundation. Since 1982, this foundation has been empowering women workers.¹² The Rifka Annisa Crisis Center

¹¹ Nur Hasyim, "Masihkah Yogyakarta Istimewa Untuk Perempuan?," *Aliansi Laki-Laki Baru*, accessed October 6, 2020, <https://lakilakibaru.or.id/masihkah-yogyakarta-istimewa-untuk-perempuan/>.

¹² Ibid.

(the most prominent women's crisis center in Indonesia) also was built in this city in 1993, and it has provided direct assistance to women victims of gender-based violence by providing counseling and legal services.¹³ In the reformation era, Yogyakarta was selected by Indonesian women activists who were members of the Indonesian women's coalition to carry out political consolidation by holding the first congress at the end of 1998. That event was attended by 500 women from 25 provinces, and it produced an important document for the women's movement in Indonesia.¹⁴

These historical facts show that Yogyakarta has been essential for Indonesian women activities. It has become a symbol of the women's political movement to gain freedom in the middle of oppression and discrimination. However, during the pandemic, violence against women has become a significant issue in this city. This problem can be correlated with the invisible patriarchal spirit of discrimination. We can trace it from the other historical events in Yogyakarta, such as the emergence of Rancangan Peraturan Daerah Istimewa (PERDAIS) Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta (regulation draft of the authority in Special

Region of Yogyakarta). The ratification of the Special Region Regulation in 2015 led to a great deal of controversy. Many parties say that points in the regulation show discrimination against women. One of the prerequisites for the candidates of Governor is the wife's curriculum vitae. It is implied that the candidate for Governor of Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta must be a man.¹⁵ More profoundly, we can say that it shows something that is "not realized" but has a great impact in Yogyakarta. Although its historical aspect seems "friendly" to women, systemic discrimination against women has occurred at the level of the policymakers.¹⁶ What is not visible does not mean that it does not exist. The invisible patriarchal spirit of discrimination affects Yogyakarta and contributes to a culture that supports violence against women.

Structural Analysis

Besides historical elements, other factors have led to increased violence against women during the Covid-19, such as economic and social-cultural factors. It cannot be denied that economic factors are the most crucial cause of the violence during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many workers

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Muhammad Quranul Kariem and Dwian Hartomi Akta Padma Eldo, "Sikap Politik DPRD Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Terhadap Wacana Suksesi Kepemimpinan Di Kraton Yogyakarta," *Journal of*

Government and Civil Society 3, no. 2 (October 30, 2019): 105–116, accessed November 15, 2021, <http://jurnal.umat.ac.id/index.php/jgs/article/view/1726>.

¹⁶ Hasyim, "Masihkah Yogyakarta Istimewa Untuk Perempuan?"

have been laid off. The high cost of living exacerbates this condition because children must study at home, and they need a cell-phone or laptop for distance learning. This expense is very difficult for some people to meet. The Yogyakarta Provincial Statistics Agency reports that the decline of economic growth has happened during Covid-19 pandemic. Yogyakarta's economic growth level (above 6.5 percent per years during the 2010-2019) decreased drastically when the pandemic began in 2020, only 2.69 percent in 2020. This level of decline is deeper than the national economy which experienced a decline of 2.07 percent.¹⁷ Besides economic factors, stressful conditions (especially if family members have been infected by the virus and feel the stigma of society) can make emotions run out of control and by vented as physical violence. The patriarchal structures that place men ahead of women also perpetuate this violent culture. Women become very vulnerable at home when they face a circle of problems that can lead to violence.

Further, it is essential to consider in a structural analysis the Javanese culture, which frames the life of the people in Yogyakarta. In a study of men's views on the concept of masculinity and violence against women in Yogyakarta, two things were raised as vital for constructing a male gender identity: socio-cultural norms and religion.¹⁸ Socio-cultural norms are reflected in some typical Javanese expressions of men's self-concepts. They identify men with power, superiority, authority, and domination. They appear in other references to masculine characteristics such as the word *lanang* (male), which is interpreted as *senajan ta ala tetep menang* (although "ugly" but still win). This is the opposite of the expressions about women which have meanings such as *konco wingking* (woman are always behind), and *swarga nunut neraka katut* (the wife's fate is to follow her husband; if her husband goes to heaven, she will follow, if her husband goes to hell, she will still follow).¹⁹

Women in Javanese culture are limited by the concept of the ideal female,

¹⁷ Badan Pusat Statistik Provinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, *Analisis Pertumbuhan Dan Perubahan Struktur Perekonomian Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta Sebelum Dan Selama Masa Pandemi Covid-19* (Yogyakarta: CV Magna Raharja Tana, 2021), 18.; Sri Cahyani Putri, "Garis Kemiskinan Di DIY Meningkat 12,28 Persen Pada Maret 2020," *Tribunjogja.Com*, accessed October 6, 2020, [https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2020/07/16/garis-](https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2020/07/16/garis-kemiskinan-di-diy-meningkat-1228-persen-pada-maret-2020)

[kemiskinan-di-diy-meningkat-1228-persen-pada-maret-2020](https://jogja.tribunnews.com/2020/07/16/garis-kemiskinan-di-diy-meningkat-1228-persen-pada-maret-2020).

¹⁸ Nur Hasyim, "Kajian Maskulinitas Dan Masa Depan Kajian Gender Dan Pembangunan Di Indonesia," *JSW (Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo)* 1, no. 1 (April 7, 2017): 65–78, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://103.19.37.186/index.php/JSW/article/view/1938>.

¹⁹ Ibid.

which advocates obedience to maintain harmony.²⁰ In Javanese culture, kinship is powerful (blood is thicker than water). To maintain the family's values and dignity, including preserving the parents' inheritance and values, true Javanese women should not tarnish and embarrass their families (including their husbands). Silence is a golden action, even if the woman experiences violence in the family. Women are advised to be careful and hide any conflicts between themselves and their husbands as a symbol of honor (*njaga prao*).²¹ That is why the culture of silence is a part of women's lives in Javanese culture.

When a crisis like the pandemic makes the pressure heavier than usual, it becomes the "driving force" that give women the courage to report their situations. "The noun crisis comes from the Latinized form of a Greek word, *krisis*, meaning 'turning point as in a disease.' In the New Testament, it is often translated 'time of judgment' as in a decision made... It is a critical moment for wisdom and action."²² At such a turning point, we realize that we actually face "multiple pandemics" because, even though violence against women has occurred for a long time, it increases during a pandemic when

some problems become overwhelming and unbearable. If there is no adequate response to this situation, it will get worse. Women victims can do damage to themselves (such as suicide) or their families (for example, harming children).

Where is the Church?

In 1999, an innovative program for women victims of domestic violence was established in Yogyakarta. It integrated the efforts of medical personnel in a private hospital, the local police, and the Rifka Annisa Women's Crisis Center. This triangular model (the helper triangle) provided support to women victims of domestic violence.²³ However, we could ask, where is the church or religious community? Based on a factual study, religious values are a factor that perpetuates patriarchal culture. Because it is part of the problem, the religious community must also be involved in efforts to help women victims. The church must not ignore violence against women because this problem is likely to affect the members of its congregation.

There are some recommendations to the mass media, Non-Governmental Organizations, researchers, academics, law en-

²⁰ Hakimi, *Membisu Demi Harmoni [Silence for the Sake of Harmony]*, 20-21.

²¹ Ibid, 21.

²² Dorcas Gordon, "Women in Times of Crisis: Biblical and Theological Understanding," in *South*

East Asia Webinar: Women's Conference (Philippines: Association for Theological Education, 2020).

²³ Hakimi, *Membisu Demi Harmoni [Silence for the Sake of Harmony]*, 35.

forcement agencies, government, and health service providers to address violence against women in Yogyakarta.²⁴ However, there was no mandate for churches or religious communities to pay attention to this issue. This is an essential issue. When religious (and socio-cultural) values greatly influence violence against women in Yogyakarta, the settlement is carried out only at the socio-cultural level. Why is the church not included in the helper triangle for women victims of domestic violence? Is the church not concerned with this issue, or does it care in its way to not resonate with government and community programs? To what extent do churches in Yogyakarta pay attention to the issue of violence against women? Does the church realize that members of its congregation can experience this? Does the church know the number of women who have experienced violence?

As a female pastor assigned in this city to serve in the congregation and university community, I see some efforts by the *Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia* (Fellowship of Churches in Indonesia) to overcome violence against women. However, until now, not all churches have an awareness to promote gender equality. On the other hand, if some churches have gender awareness, often in ministry, gender

equality has not been applied holistically in church services. For example, some members of the congregation expect that their pastor is a man and not a woman. During a pandemic, when the church's income declines, the neglect of violence against women can be sharper because accompanying victims to seek justice can be costly. Thus, we can say that violence against women has not become the central theme in the church's ministry. Although some churches provide pastoral care to women victims of violence, not all churches have done so. The culture that maintains harmony separates household problems in a private sphere. This is different from the response to radicalism and intolerance when churches can walk simultaneously to cooperate at ecumenical and social levels. It is crucial that the response to violence against women include the collaboration of churches.

Judging: Theological and Pedagogical Reflection

Judging offers evaluation based on various principles and from some perspectives, including religious values. From this process, we can reflect on what is good and right in terms of responding to problematic situations around us. Violence against women in Yogyakarta is closely related to the

²⁴ Ibid, 122-123.

perpetuation of a patriarchal culture that allows men to dominate women's lives. Religious values have had a role in maintain that culture. Noddings says that "the historical record shows that religion has more often than not supported war."²⁵ Religious values play an essential role in constructing male gender identity (for example, by interpreting the sacred text based on patriarchal values). If the church's community in Yogyakarta ignores this reality, we can say that the Christian faith community becomes a violent community.²⁶ We need a firm response from religious educators and church ministers. Data show that women are often not safe in their own homes, even in a city that looks very "safe." There are structures of power and domination in the church and society that are invisible but pose a significant threat in terms of domestic violence against women. Therefore, theological reflection is critical as a basis for formulating appropriate responses to cases of violence.

Mary as "the Other" in Her Freedom and Authenticity

I am using the theological views of Marianne Katoppo, an Indonesian female theologian who gave birth to the first work on the theology of Asian women in 1979 (in English). Katoppo's main theological question is, "how do Asian women meet God?"²⁷ Even though her book was not translated into Indonesian for 28 years because it was considered "a threat," her thoughts are still relevant amid the silence of women in Asia today, including Indonesia. Using her experience as an Indonesian woman who sees women's marginalization in various aspects, Katoppo's voice shouted the spirit of liberation from injustice and discrimination against women. The alienation of women in gender construction is reducing the power of women's voices. Women are often considered on a lower level than men because churches see women only as men's "helpers," and they forget that the Hebrew word *'ezer* (which means "helper") is also used to describe God as the helper of the helpless.²⁸

²⁵ Nel Noddings, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 95.

²⁶ This condition is a very important challenge because it relates to the nature of the community itself (*koinonia*) which plays an important role in the process of faith education in the church. Cf. Jeniffer Pelupessy Wowor, "Model Pendidikan Kristiani yang Mengupayakan Koinonia dalam Konteks Kemajemukan Agama di Indonesia," *Gema Teologi* 39, no. 2 (October 31, 2015): 187–204, accessed November 15, 2021, <http://journal-theo.ukdw.ac.id>

</index.php/gema/article/view/202>; Jeniffer F P Wowor, "Communal Religious Education in a Multicultural Indonesian Church," *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 8, no. 2 (December 31, 2020): 157–171, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.indotheologyjournal.org/index.php/home/article/view/201>.

²⁷ Marianne Katoppo, *Compassionate and Free, Tersentuh Dan Bebas: Teologi Seorang Perempuan Asia* (Jakarta: Aksara Karunia, 2007), xv.

²⁸ Ibid, 21.

Women who are being oppressed in Indonesia are “the Other.” However, that “Other-ness” from men and is positive, and it should be celebrated. That “Other-ness” is not a threat because it brings fullness and authenticity to give meaning in women’s lives. We can see this power of fullness and authenticity in the theological perspective on Mary’s life. Her example is an important element in Indonesian women’s theology. Protestantism, especially Calvinism, does not show much concern for Mary. Her figure is considered “too Catholic,” so it is not familiar to Protestants, especially in Indonesia. Mary usually appears only in children’s drama at Christmas and (sometimes) Easter. Statues and images of Mary are very rare in the homes of Protestant families. Moreover, Mary is often seen as a symbol of submissive obedience so that she receives the highest grace from God.²⁹ God, in this sense, is understood as “a male.” From the perspective of women’s liberation, however, Mary’s obedience should not be seen as surrender, but as the sign of freedom. Obeying God is different from obeying humans. Mary’s obedience to God is the creative obedience of a woman who is entirely free and does not submit herself to any human being.³⁰ Reading Mary’s story and her words that say, “may your word to me

be fulfilled” is natural for us because everything ends sweetly with the birth of Jesus. Actually, Mary’s words are not simple words. They show her incredible courage in accepting an enormous risk, losing value in human eyes because she is pregnant. However, Mary may seem “different” from the other women of her era. Mary, as the “Other,” shows her freedom to serve God and humans. In her freedom, she becomes authentic and complete. She opens herself to serve others in dignity. This is the true meaning of Mary’s status as the Holy Virgin. (Virginity is more than not having sexual relations, but it was later constructed so that Protestants would not believe it and because some traditions hold that Mary gave birth to Jesus’ brothers and sisters). She is authentic in her fullness; she becomes “master” in her freedom. That is why Mary, the Holy Virgin, becomes a “fertile” woman and can give “life” to God in her womb.³¹

The Theology of the Womb and the Sacrament of Holy Communion

Women victims of domestic violence in Yogyakarta are supported in their refusal to submit themselves to other humans (read: men or oppressors) but to enjoy their freedom to live and nurture life. When they break away from the culture that tells them

²⁹ Ibid, 23.

³⁰ Ibid, 24.

³¹ Ibid, 28-29.

to be silent to “maintain harmony,” they display a form of courage that we must celebrate. They accept enormous risks and may lose value in humans’ eyes, but they are free to speak and act as the complete human beings that they are. In their freedom, they become authentic in their fullness and open themselves to living the existence around them.

Mary’s spirit of freedom and liberation invites every woman who is a victim of domestic violence to see her integrity and freedom in her noble role in her family and society. Her courage to speak up and “fight” against violence and the invisible oppressive culture saves not only her from destruction; it also saves her family. In this present situation, she “struggles” with the “wisdom” from the past for a hopeful future.³² This understanding is related to a woman’s womb. The womb is where the past, present, and future meet. In the womb, we can find a historical, existential, and eschatological hope.³³ God’s grace in Hebrew comes from the word *rechamim*, which means “movement of the womb” (*rechem*).³⁴

³² Ibid, 115.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid, 90.

³⁵ On the other hand, I acknowledge that even though the concept of womb/reproduction/relationality is powerful, but not all women take that path. Exploration of the concept of the womb in this article does not ignore all roles that women can play, whatever they are, whatever their path even if they do not give birth and get married.

³⁶ This is an autobiographical depiction of my religious education. Steffano Montano, “Did My

A woman gives her womb for life. A woman’s pregnancy is a communion with God. She brings life in her womb without calculating the cost of her sacrifice.³⁵ I remember my time the moment of pregnancy, which was full of difficulties. It is part of my story, my own theological education.³⁶ The bleeding happened after I preached God’s word. I needed to travel to the nearest hospital for medical treatment. It became the “road of death” for me because the road was severely damaged. It took around eighteen hours by motorbike to reach the nearest hospital. My face was pale. My body refused food, and my throat was bleeding because of repeated vomiting. That was part of my maternal sacrifice in pregnancy that was conveyed by Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, a woman theologian from India. She states that pregnancy means “dying to ourselves so that another may have life in a process that never ends.”³⁷ Gajiwala also puts a quotation from Mary Lynn Sheetz at the beginning of her writing, “women have given their bodies to be broken and their blood to be spilt in every part of the world, respond-

Religious Education Teach Me to Hate My Family’s Religiosidad? An Autobiographical Analysis of My Religious and Theological Education,” <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2020.1706231> 115, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 27–33, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344087.2020.1706231>.

³⁷ Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, “The Passion of the Womb: Women Re-Living the Eucharist,” in *The Strength of Her Witness: Jesus Christ in the Global Voices of Women*, ed. Elizabeth A. Johnson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016), 323.

ing to Jesus call to ‘Do this in memory of me.’”³⁸

When I gave birth, I had never felt such pain in my whole life. The pain could not be replaced by anything. After giving birth, I experienced heavy bleeding again as “the life-giving blood of childbirth,”³⁹ and I felt extreme pain from the uterus’ lingering contractions. I remembered, “this is the cup of my blood which shall be shed to you.” However, after seeing my baby, the extreme pain was immediately replaced by an unexplainable joy that I had never felt before. Unfortunately, I was in pain again when I had to breastfeed my baby. I was suffering from mastitis (swelling of the breast because of clogged breast milk), and it made me cry while breastfeeding because it felt like my breast was being sliced by a knife every time my baby sucked it “This is my body given up for you, take and eat.”⁴⁰

From the perspective of struggle and sacrifice in women’s lives, each formulation in the Lord’s Supper becomes very important and strong. In Holy Communion, which “uses Christ’s body and blood to symbolize deep spiritual truths, women also perceive an affirmation of the sacredness of their bodiliness.”⁴¹ The command, “do this

in memory of me” in Luke 22:19, becomes a transformative sign of fellowship with the Savior. This is also the “body and blood” of women victims of violence in Yogyakarta, with the narratives of wounds and grief that accompany their life journey amidst the pandemic. The struggle to address domestic violence against women also is a part of “Holy Communion.” It celebrates human connection, proclaiming one body and blood through, not bread and wine, but *broken bread and poured-out wine*.⁴²

Practicing Communicability, Redeemability, and Educability

In the face of violence and social injustice, Tran states three important ideas *in* and *through* practices of teaching faith. The first is **practicing communicability**. Addressing the reality of violence is the responsibility of the whole community. The church as a community of faith must strengthen the role that supports and encourages each other through (in)decent contact (loving), carnal worship (praying), and boundless table (eating).⁴³ The practice of Holy Communion is one example, “participation in this meal world becomes an act of communicable solidarity.”⁴⁴

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid, 329.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 323.

⁴¹ Ibid, 326.

⁴² Vicki Balabanski, *Anamnesis: Remembering Through the Lord’s Supper*, n.d., cited in Gajiwala,

“The Passion of the Womb: Women Re-Living the Eucharist,” 328, 332.

⁴³ Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*, 85.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 99.

The second idea is **practicing redeemability**. According to Tran, “the broken world in which we live is redeemable.”⁴⁵ In this part, we focus on people’s awakened consciousness and resurrected hope for social change. In this process, protests can be carried out as part of the effort to voice justice. Protest can take many forms, from individualistic to collective, from dissociative to oppositional confrontation.⁴⁶ In it, there must be courage and creativity. Interestingly, Tran also said that prayer can be a form of protest. People claimed hope through the power of prayer. Prayer here is seen not as what one says, prayer is what one does.⁴⁷ We become partners with God in repairing the world.

The third idea is **practicing educability**. What new and renewed practices of faith make it possible for us to unlearn and unmake violence against women? How do we lead people to such communicable, redeemable faith? Radical learning is needed.⁴⁸ It requires “Christian faith communities to ponder what is religious and what is educational about the work that

draws them together and propels them as disciple-citizens in the world.”⁴⁹ In this process, we need “good mimesis” which has two tasks. First, it presents new models of freedom between different people to promote the ways of communion. Second, it cuts out violent destruction. Thus, providing good role models is important in the church’s educational process.

*Act: From Lament to Liberation*⁵⁰

In **acting**, we promote real effectiveness in charity and justice to encourage each other to take appropriate steps to respond to the conditions before us. What is more, this process does not only solve problems; it also prevents them. We can start by **practicing communicability, redeemability**, and then **educability**. We begin with a concrete experience, which is important for understanding. I think this it is the point of Tran’s approach. I remember what Maria Harris said, “The church does not have an educational program; it is an educational program.”⁵¹ If all of church life serves as communal relationships that eventually

⁴⁵ Ibid, 106.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 116.

⁴⁷ John Shelby Spong, *Honest Prayer*, 2000. cited in Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*, 121.

⁴⁸ Modified from some critical questions of Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*, 129.

⁴⁹ Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*, 139.

⁵⁰ This section answers some questions: How did women victims of domestic violence in Yogyakarta meet God? What can we do to alleviate domestic violence against women, especially in Yogyakarta? What is the form of church educational ministry to educate members of the congregation so that they will care about this issue?

⁵¹ Maria Harris, *Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church*, 1989, 47., cited in Boyung Lee, *Transforming Congregations through Community*, n.d., 66.

point the way to **communicability** and **redeemability**, we can bring people to active involvement in confronting violence against women. From here a new *good mimesis* is awakened, and we learn (**educability**) to prevent violent destruction.

As a female pastor of one congregation in Yogyakarta, I think the paradigm of gender equality should be integrated into our attitudes in daily life and into every aspect of the church's education and ministry. For example, we can start with "a small action."⁵² **Communicability** (loving, worshipping/praying, and eating) can be encouraged by creating spaces for women's voices, not only through ritual action but also actual transformation. In that way, healing can occur, "in religious educational language, these are lessons of yet another embodied curriculum, which, with the curricula of loving and praying, reinforce that physical matters and actions such as eating and drinking can become vehicles that make transparent the Holy One who gives birth to the Eucharistic life."⁵³

⁵² **Act** in this sense refers to realistic actions that can be taken without having to make it a burden or guarantee that the result is a success. Mara Brecht, "See–Judge ... Act? The Role of Action in the Anti-Racist Catholic Theological Classroom," <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2019.1613741> 114, no. 3 (May 27, 2019): 202–213, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344087.2019.1613741>.

⁵³ Tran, *Reset the Heart: Unlearning Violence, Relearning Hope*, 102.

⁵⁴ In this process, the church actually "laments" with women victims of domestic violence. Bryan N. Massingale pointed out the importance of lamenting

In ritual action, women's voices can be integrated in the liturgy of Holy Communion (or virtual Holy Communion in during the Covid-19 pandemic). In the spirit of liberation for women victims of domestic violence in Yogyakarta, the culture of violence against women must be "lamented together" through the liturgy of Holy Communion. Of course, engagements with cultural values—especially Javanese culture, which promotes the equality and dignity of women—also should be integrated into the worship/liturgy. The practice of lamenting⁵⁴ can create in us an attitude of compassion and the charge of solidarity. It contains two essential processes in responding to women's violence: **telling the truth** and **affirmative redress** (in both ritual and actual worship/action). One concrete step would be to correlate Holy Communion with the church's efforts to welcome women victims of violence so that they can "feel" God's presence and unconditional love. It invites a person to become fully human in a liberating educational process. It

in expressing our pain. It holds together both loss and hope because in the midst of the pain, "there is another word to be heard from God—a message of compassion and deliverance." Lament in Holy Communion raises a sense of compassion and solidarity in relationships with women victims of domestic violence in their grief and pain. Holy Communion celebrates women's voice in the oppression culture of violence. It supports authentic identity formation and social relationships that are crushed when experiencing pressure. Bryan N. Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 107.

embraces the human person holistically.⁵⁵ Women are no longer victims. Instead, in their communion with God and others, they find great value in their wholeness and freedom. They become subjects of their liberation to serve God and others.

Telling the truth shows the importance of openness and the church's courage to expose this issue (breaking the culture of silence⁵⁶). In preaching (held before Holy Communion), this truth must be emphasized and correlated with Holy Communion.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the preaching topic also should be relevant, for example, Mary's power in "Magnificat Mary." **Telling the truth** can also be done by conveying relevant topics in the theological or biblical perspective of liberation for women. Deconstruction and reconstruction of biblical interpretation must be done to build

a gender-just attitude.⁵⁸ This can be arranged through online or virtual thematic activities of the church's weekly services of the ministry. Thus, the spirit of liberation can be felt both in an explicit and implicit form of church educational ministry. A paradigm that embraces gender equality must be built among all congregation members through various ministerial endeavors. Thus, women, especially in Javanese culture, can feel "true" harmony in their fullness and liberation. In this way, these women become involved as active subjects in the recovery process.⁵⁹

Moreover, Holy Communion also becomes an act of protest against injustice (**redeemability**).⁶⁰ This illustrates the problem-posing method of education, which draws a person to become fully human in a

⁵⁵ In a study on the implementation of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, the affective and psychomotor impact of this process had a very strong impact on the cognitive aspect (quality of thinking in learning). Rifai Rifai, "Penerapan Metode Demonstrasi Untuk Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Pendidikan Agama Kristen Materi Pembelajaran Sakramen Perjamuan Kudus VIII SMP Negeri 17 Surakarta, Tahun 2015/2016," *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 1, no. 2 (April 30, 2017): 171–191, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://sttintheos.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/dunamis/article/view/112>.

⁵⁶ Robert J. Schreiter, "A Practical Theology of Healing, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation," in *Peacebuilding: Catholic Theology*, ed. Robert J. Schreiter, R. Scott Appleby, and Gerard F. Powers (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2010), 386.

⁵⁷ Holy Communion is still considered something important in the ministry of Indonesian churches. Moreover, Holy Communion was always held

online, and it involved all family members during the pandemic.

⁵⁸ Asnath Niwa Natar, "PAULUS DAN PEREMPUAN Suatu Kajian Terhadap 1 Korintus 14:33B-36," *Gema Teologi* 36, no. 2 (October 31, 2012): 251–268, accessed November 15, 2021, <http://journal-theo.ukdw.ac.id/index.php/gema/article/view/145>.

⁵⁹ Asnath Niwa Natar, "Trauma Healing Bagi Perempuan Korban Konflik: Belajar Dari Konflik Maluku Dan Poso," *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 4, no. 1 (October 25, 2019): 1–21, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://sttintheos.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/dunamis/article/view/205>.

⁶⁰ Montague R. Williams, "Holy Communion on Canfield Drive: Listening, Liturgy, and Learning on a College Group Pilgrimage in Ferguson, Missouri," <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2020.1706243> 115, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 46–60, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00344087.2020.1706243>.

liberating educational process.⁶¹ Women's experience of Holy Communion challenges the church to "transform the ways in which we live out the Christian belief that Christ lives among us in the flesh and blood of the Church."⁶² In Yogyakarta, churches also must consider **affirmative redress** in **practicing redeemability** through inter-church cooperation. This issue should not be the concern of only one or two churches but as many as possible. Affirmative redress heals "the psychic wounds, material harms, and economic disadvantages"⁶³ through a sustainable program carried out by the church in collaboration with a support network for women victims of domestic violence in Yogyakarta. For example, providing accurate data on women's violence within and around the church, reflecting and promoting the value of equality in all components of church services, and paying attention to this issue in the church's programs and society.

This is a real form of an "actual" Holy Communion. It is presented through

the church's relationship with parties in society that have been formed (triangle helper). Churches can also build access to collaborate with ecclesiastical and psychological foundations that are equipped to handle domestic violence against women (pastoral approach).⁶⁴ During a pandemic, efforts and protests can also be carried out in online form (webinars or digital protests). This is a form of Christian education in the public sphere, which is very relevant in the current Indonesian context.⁶⁵

It is hoped that all these processes can create many examples of good *mimesis* that can come from inside or outside the church (**practicing educability**). Concretely, it is necessary to think about how the church curriculum relates to the church's work program. If the spirit to be carried is gender equality and the struggle against violence against women, then it is hoped that the church's program and curriculum can accommodate this.

During the pandemic, the program that coordinates one church's ministries can

⁶¹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed. 30th Anniversary*, ed. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York, London: Continuum, 2005), 67.

⁶² Susan A. Ross, "God's Embodiment and Women," in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna, 1993, 186., cited in Gajiwala, "The Passion of the Womb: Women Re-Living the Eucharist," 332.

⁶³ Massingale, *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church*, 100.

⁶⁴ Ira Imelda, "Menelaah Keberpihakan Yesus Terhadap Perempuan Korban Kepentingan Penguasa: Studi Terhadap Injil Yohanes 7:53-8:11,"

Gema Teologi 38, no. 1 (April 30, 2014): 49–64, accessed November 15, 2021, <http://journal-theo.ukdw.ac.id/index.php/gema/article/view/179>.

⁶⁵ A deeper exploration of Christian education in the public sphere, especially in the context of violence, intolerance, and radicalism, can be seen in this article: Jeniffer Pelupessy Wowor, "Partisipasi Pendidikan Kristiani Di Ruang Publik Dalam Menunjang Deradikalisasi," *KURIOS (Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* 7, no. 1 (May 2, 2021): 108–122, accessed November 15, 2021, <https://sttpb.ac.id/e-journal/index.php/kurios/article/view/221>.

be integrated with other congregations. Ministerial programs during a pandemic do not need to be numerous but only of high quality. The churches in Yogyakarta can work together to implement a curriculum against violence against women through catechism, church seminars and webinars, bible study, sermon materials for all worship services, etc. This process can then help the church become a community of care that continues to embody the struggle against violence against women in worship and social action. This is a tireless effort to feed the “hungry” and give drink to the “thirsty” who need the faith community, including women victims of violence.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic has limited social interaction and raised problems in church ministry, but it has also provided the opportunity for women victims of violence to raise their voices. The pandemic is not the only reason for violence against women, but it triggered women’s voices and separated the “culture of silence that maintains harmony” from a structure that oppresses women. It showed the “explosion” of women’s voices because of the insistent pressure that was made more intense. Many more can finally see the reality of what has not been apparent (cultural and structural violence). The church can carry out communicability,

redeemability, and educability through a holistic educational ministry, including the ritual observance and actual implementation of Holy Communion with its transformative power. The spirit of liberation must be sustained both inside and outside the church walls. Women who speak out against the suffering and violence from their wholeness and freedom submit themselves to serve God and not their oppressors.

RECOMMENDATION

This process is an early attempt at shaping church educational ministries to overcome and prevent violence against women. Henceforth, a quantitative study of this issue can be considered to complement the qualitative findings in this paper. In addition, broader internal studies also can be considered, such as developing other ways of practicing communicability (not only through Holy Communion). The wider context can also be studied more deeply, for example, through interfaith community, which also has an important role, especially in Yogyakarta. Some of these ideas can be considered for future research of this subject.

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