

# THE THEOLOGY OF COMMUNITY SURVIVAL: A STUDY OF MIGRATION THEOLOGY, PENTECOSTALISM, AND WEST KALIMANTAN GAWAI CULTURE

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## ABSTRACT

Suffering is an inherent reality within Asian societies, stemming from various economic, political, social, cultural, and religious factors that contribute to the widespread poverty in Asia. While some individuals accept this suffering as a normal part of human life, others strive to escape the suffering. The concept of overcoming adversity is referred to as survival theology. This study explores the theology of survival through the lenses of migration theology, Pentecostalism, and *Gawai* Dayak culture. Employing a descriptive qualitative research method and a constructive theological approach, this study aims to understand how survival theology can be contextualized within these diverse frameworks. The findings reveal that communal unity serves as a powerful force to help individuals sustain suffering. Additionally, personal faith and trust provide additional for enduring hardships as part of God's plan.

**Keywords:** *Gawai* West Kalimantan, Survival Theology, Contextual Studies, Pentecostalism

## ABSTRAK

*Penderitaan merupakan realitas yang melekat dengan masyarakat, termasuk masyarakat Dayak. Faktor ekonomi, politik, sosial, budaya, dan agama menjadi penyebab suburnya kemiskinan. Merespons keadaan ini, ada yang menerimanya saja sebagai penderitaan wajar manusia, namun ada yang*

*berjuang untuk keluar dari keadaan penderitaan. Konsep berjuang disebut dengan teologi bertahan hidup. Teologi bertahan hidup tercermin dalam teologi migrasi, Pentakostalisme, dan budaya Gawai Dayak. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengkaji teologi bertahan hidup dari teologi Migrasi dan Pentakostalisme yang dihubungkan dengan budaya Gawai Dayak. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan teologi konstruktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kebersamaan dalam komunitas menjadi kekuatan menghadapi penderitaan. Selain itu, iman dan kepercayaan pribadi juga memberikan kekuatan untuk menghayati proses penderitaan sebagai satu kesatuan rencana yang Allah berikan bagi setiap manusia.*

**Kata kunci:** *Gawai Kalimantan Barat, Teologi Bertahan hidup, Studi Kontekstual, Pentakostalisme*

## INTRODUCTION

Asian societies have been characterized by experiences of war, widespread suffering, extreme poverty, diverse religious traditions, and gender inequalities. These attributes are remnants of colonial influences left behind by Western occupation on Asian populations. In his work, Alpius Pasulu emphasized that these realities have significantly shaped the self-image of Asian people.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, Hans-Dieter Evers argues that the sociology of Asian society as leans towards conflict due to factors such as societal plurality, linguistic and cultural diversity (with North Korea being an exception). Moreover, Evers also points out that the blurred boundaries between ethnic groups lead to biased classifications and thus promote socio-economic disparities. Consequently, power dynamics and struggles between different social groups clearly manifested throughout Asia. Asian society is also represents fertile ground for developing a knowledge-based economy to achieve the status of developed country.<sup>2</sup> This characteristic forms the foundation for this study's examination of community resilience within Asian context. The aim of this investigation is to introduce and generate a Christian

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<sup>1</sup> Alpius Pasulu, "Teologi Asia" (Makalah Pada mata Kuliah Perkembangan Teologi Kontemporer, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> Hans-Dieter Evers, "Asia: Sociocultural Overviews: Southeast Asia," 2012.

theological framework with an Asian identity, free from the dominant Western theology pervades contemporary Asian society, particularly in Indonesia.

Andreas A. Yewangoe posits that religious factors play a significant role in creating and perpetuating suffering caused by poverty in Asian societies. This is in addition to political, economic, and mentality factors result in widespread acceptance of poverty as an unchangeable reality. Asian society landscape with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious groups has experienced shared feeling of suffering. The tendency to live out religious values is the reason for the proliferation of poverty and/or suffering. Yewangoe cited religious doctrines prevalent in Buddhism, Hinduism, tribal religions, Islam, and Christianity as examples of faith-based factors contributing to the persistence of poverty in the region.<sup>3</sup> The *Dhammapada Buddha Vagga* verse 182 explains that only in the human realm (*manussa*) can one see the suffering (*samsara*) that enables one to respect life. Likewise, Hinduism accepts the reality of poverty because of Sancita Karma Phala, namely karma and previous incarnations of being greedy.<sup>4</sup> In line with the views of Hinduism, tribal religions also understand that wealth and poverty are the wills of the Gods who always coexist in the journey of human life. Islam understands that poverty is the will and punishment of Allah himself.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, Christianity teaches that eschatology brings joy in heaven without the need to change conditions in the world.<sup>6</sup>

The religious concepts above are in line with poverty data in Asia. According to data from the Asian Development Bank,

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<sup>3</sup> Andreas A. Yewangoe, *Theologi Crucis Di Asia: Pandangan-Pandangan Orang Kristen Di Asia Mengenai Penderitaan Dalam Kemiskinan Dan Keberagaman Di Asia* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> I Wayan Sapta Wigunadika, "Membangkitkan Kembali Karma Phala Sebagai Pilar Keyakinan Agama Hindu," *Purwadita* 2, no. 1 (2018): 3–7.

<sup>5</sup> Fauzi Arif Lubis, "Miskin Menurut Pandangan Al-Qur'an," *Tansiq* 1, no. 1 (2018): 67–82, <http://journal.um-surabaya.ac.id/index.php/JKM/article/view/2203>.

<sup>6</sup> Yewangoe, *Theologi Crucis Di Asia: Pandangan-Pandangan Orang Kristen Di Asia Mengenai Penderitaan Dalam Kemiskinan Dan Keberagaman Di Asia*.

Asia had made spectacular progress in reducing poverty especially between 1990 and 2010. Asian countries lifted 786 million people out of poverty, reducing the population ratio to 20.8% from a peak of 55.2%. However, in 2010 and above, the number of poor people reached 62.4%. Even today, Asia accounts for 81.0% of the world's poor.<sup>7</sup> Despite the previous spectacular performance, poverty remains a challenge for Asia. As of now, Asia accounts for 81% of global poverty rates – with 758 million people living on less than \$1.25 a day. Therefore, suffering remains an intrinsic aspect of daily life for many individuals across Asia.

Suffering, encompassing physical (*malum physicum*) and metaphysical (*malum metaphysicum*) aspects, is an undeniable reality of life. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz argued that suffering stems from human morality (*malum morale*), a problem that humans themselves need to address. According to the Bible, suffering is a direct consequence of sin, specifically identified as Sonny Zaluchu - an unavoidable mechanical human condition due to Adam and Eve's original sin, which brought a curse upon the land (*adamah*) and caused humanity to endure tribulations (*itsavon*). These tribulations persist across generations.

Suffering which comprises of physical difficulty (*malum physicum*) and metaphysical difficulty (*malum metaphysicum*) is an inevitable reality of life.<sup>8</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz argued that suffering stems from human morality (*malum morale*), a problem that human himself must resolve.<sup>9</sup> According to the Bible, suffering is a direct consequence of sin, specifically identified as Sonny Zaluchu - unavoidable mechanical human condition due to Adam and Eve's original sin, which brought a curse upon the land (*adamah*) and caused humanity to endure

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<sup>7</sup> Compassion in Jesus's Name, "Poverty in Asia," <https://www.compassion.com/2022,https://www.compassion.com/poverty/poverty-in-asia.htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Franz Magnis Suseno, *Menalar Tuhan* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2006), 217.

<sup>9</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Die Theodizee* (German: Hofenberg, 2017).

tribulations (*itsavon*).<sup>10</sup> These tribulations persist across generations

Despite acknowledging religious causes for suffering, humans desire a life devoid of it. This notion is central to survival theology. By finding unique strategies for survival, Asian people can comprehend God's presence in their everyday lives. Concurrently, these survival strategies serve as defenses and sources of strength when faced with adversities such as pandemics, natural disasters, economic crises, and wars. The primary aim of survival theology is to preserve one's valuable existence. In response to this situation, it is essential to develop a survival model incorporating theopoetic nuances<sup>11</sup> and hospitality.<sup>12</sup>

To fulfill this objective, a comparative theology with the approaches of Gemma Tulud Cruz - who pioneered the theology of Asian immigrants' survival in Europe - Pentecostal theology, and the Gawai West Kalimantan cultural ceremony was undertaken. These three approaches were selected to interweave Indonesian local wisdom, Pentecostal tradition, and Gemma Tulud Cruz's concept as a forerunner of survival theology.

Gemma Tulud Cruz is a Roman Catholic theologian responsible for initiating the survival theology of Asian peoples

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<sup>10</sup> Sonny Zaluchu, "Penderitaan Kristus Sebagai Wujud Solidaritas Allah Kepada Manusia," *DUNAMIS: Jurnal Penelitian Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristiani* 2, no. 1 (2017): 61, <https://doi.org/10.30648/dun.v2i1.129>.

<sup>11</sup> Theopoetics is a narrative metaphorical and metaphysical approach that interprets God, faith, and theology through aesthetic studies. The term "aesthetics" comes from the Greek *aistêsis*, which means perception by the senses. Richard Viladesau states that aesthetics is the art of beautiful thinking (*ars pulchre cogitandi*) and forming feelings (*ars formandi gustum*). See Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art*, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 18.

<sup>12</sup> Hospitality provides a space that allows an invitation for anyone. The central concept of hospitality is "Come and be in my house as if it were yours; be my guest, you whom I do not know." For more details, see Anne Dufourmantelle, "Hospitality—Under Compassion and Violence," in *The Conditions of Hospitality: Ethics, Politics, and Aesthetics on the Threshold of the Possible* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 13–15.

in responding to suffering. Cruz criticized the churches for merely hosting celebrations without considering ways for the congregation to survive.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, churches, including Pentecostal ones, fail to portray the theopoetic dimension of suffering. Pentecostalism overlooks the aspect of beauty when responding to suffering. Historically, Pentecostalism aligned with Romanticism in rebelling against Enlightenment rationalism, which dominated the early 20<sup>th</sup> century art and literature.<sup>14</sup> Pentecostals associate beauty with worldliness, resulting in its exclusion and causing aesthetics to be perceived as a philosophy of worldly art. Power and charisma are emphasized over suffering as beauty.<sup>15</sup> The Full Gospel does not exhibit the dimension of beauty in suffering. The parochial eschatological expectations of Pentecostalism towards heaven have led to the emphasis on transforming poverty. The acts of human change serve as a vehicle for practical witness (*fides quaerens actum*).<sup>16</sup>

In this study, the Gawai West Kalimantan culture is proposed as a prototype theology of survival through a lens focused on the beauty of suffering. Gawai is a local wisdom tradition involving a cultural performance ceremony to give thanks for harvests and foster solidarity among the Dayak people of West Kalimantan.<sup>17</sup> Beyond this, Gawai can embody various values, including survival theology.

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<sup>13</sup> Gemma Tulus Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Castelo, "The Improvisational Quality of Ecclesial Holiness," in *Toward a Pentecostal Ecclesiology: The Church and the Fivefold Gospel*, ed. John Christopher Thomas (Cleveland: CPT Press, 2010).

<sup>15</sup> Castelo.

<sup>16</sup> Daniel Louw, "Preaching as Art (Imaging the Unseen) and Art as Homiletics (Verbalising the Unseen): Towards the Aesthetics of Iconic Thinking and Poetic Communication in Homiletics," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, no. 2 (2016): 3, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v72i2.3826>.

<sup>17</sup> Irmalini Syafrita and Mukhamad Murdiono, "Upacara Adat Gawai Dalam Membentuk Nilai-Nilai Solidaritas Pada Masyarakat Suku Dayak Kalimantan Barat," *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Budaya* 22, no. 2 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.25077/jantro.v22.n2.p151-159.2020>.

Research on *Gawai* culture and survival theology had been conducted by Herman Ivo in 2001. Ivo found that *Gawai* culture was a ceremony to confirm the fanaticism of the Dayak people towards their identity. Ivo's reason for claiming *Gawai* culture as fanaticism was because the Spirit of the urbanites was spreading in West Kalimantan, and the cultural community wished that the identity of the Dayak people not to be degraded.<sup>18</sup> The concept of fanaticism was also echoed by Ivo in his work entitled "Traditional Ceremony of Dayak Kanayang farming, West Kalimantan" to emphasize Dayak's cultural identity, which could not be degraded. In similar vein, Lituhayu Handayani's and Suparno et al.<sup>19</sup> Examined *Gawai* as strengthening force for the identity of the Dayak community. However, none of the previous studies specifically delved into *Gawai* culture as a survival strategy. Aimie Sulaiman conducted a study on survival theology in Pajem Village, which explored the survival strategies through the Lom people's traditional religion. Sulaiman's findings suggested that establishing rituals among the Lom people facilitated their survival. Concurrently, Elvin Atmaja Hidayat linked three aspects—soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology—as a means to cope with suffering. This article's novelty stems from its attempt to investigate elements of *Gawai* culture that contribute to a survival prototype as manifested in a community that demonstrates gratitude for life, characterized by "weak bond strength." The *Gawai* culture of West Kalimantan exemplifies how an individual perseveres through a thankful community despite experiencing suffering and adversity.

Comparative theology method was employed in this study by juxtaposing the concepts from migration theology, Pentecostalism, and the West Kalimantan *Gawai* ceremony. Findings from each section are then compared to establish continuity that

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<sup>18</sup> Herman Ivo, "Gawai Dayak Dan Fanatisme Rumah Panjang Sebagai Penelusuran Identitas," *Humaniora* 8, no. 3 (2001): 292–98.

<sup>19</sup> Suparno et al., "Mempertahankan Eksistensi Budaya Lokal Nusantara Ditengah Arus Globalisasi Melalui Pelestarian Tradisi Gawai Dayak Sintang," *Jurnal Pekan* 3, no. 1 (2018): 43–56, <http://jurnal.stkipersada.ac.id/jurnal/index.php/PEKAN/article/view/144/140>.

informs the formulation of an Asian-oriented survival theology. In the first section, the migration theology's concept of survival theology will be described. The second section will discuss Pentecostalism's survival theology, followed by the description of West Kalimantan's Gawai culture and its implications for *Gawai*. Lastly, a comparison and construction of survival theology relevant to Asian society's pluralistic nature will be presented.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Survival Theology in a Migration Theological Perspective**

Gemma Tulud Cruz was a theologian who emphasized survival theology. Cruz was a Roman Catholic theologian who discussed the reality of immigrant suffering. She witnessed the reality of poverty firsthand, which led her to ponder, "How can Asian people survive?" Further, she reflected upon the question, "What is salvation today?" Cruz believed that a person will become fully human by answering these questions. This human wholeness is achieved through appreciation of the beauty of suffering.

In his article entitled "When Death Meets Life: Exploring the Links Between Migration and Salvation," Cruz discussed salvation in Christ for immigrants in the postmodern era. She acknowledged that the idea of Jesus as the redeemer of human sin, Jesus as the paradigm, and Jesus as the effect of anthropological change has been widely discussed. However, this concept had little influence on postmodern discussions because there needs to be an articulation of the safety concept for everyday human life.<sup>20</sup> Cruz quoted Anselm Min's opinion to emphasize the importance of salvation associated to today's human suffering. According to Anselm Min, the core of the Christian faith is reality and hope. Hope is associated with eschatological motives, the fulfillment of human existence in a life free from sin, limitations, and mortality, and is united in the relationship of the Triune God. Meanwhile, today's reality is still a debate that

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<sup>20</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, "When Death Meets Life: Exploring the Links Between Migration and Salvation," *Asian Horizons* 6, no. 4 (2013): 753–54.



has yet to find an endpoint.<sup>21</sup> Anselm Min's anxiety has underpinned the construction of today's salvation, implicating survival theology.

As a migration theologian, Cruz viewed the Migration of Asian people to Europe or developed Asian countries, such as Singapore, Japan, and South Korea, as present-day suffering and wounds. The wound is means of understanding present salvation from sins. What is a sin in Migration? Cruz emphasized that structural sin or structures are inhumane and prevent a person from being what he is. Those who migrated were poor because of local and global economic policies that harmed them and wealth resources that were not distributed evenly. Migrants were victims of injustice in their countries because they were used as "main exports" and "cash cows" to get money. Even worse, migrants were exploited, smuggled, and used as "puppets" for lust by the host country of destination.<sup>22</sup> The wages were minimal, around 500 US Dollars per month or around 7,500,000 rupiahs. 500 US Dollars per month was far compared to the minimum wage in destination countries, such as Hong Kong, China, and Singapore, worth 1600 US Dollars or around 20,000,000 rupiahs. Immigrants were not considered human beings but commodities. They were often labeled as "disposable people" because what they do was 3D (dirty, disdained, and dangerous).

Responding to the above circumstances, Cruz viewed the salvation for today's life. Salvation is generally understood as deliverance from evil to freedom and safety (1 Sam. 11:13; 14:45; 2 Sam. 23:10; 2 Ki. 13:17). In the synoptic gospels, in particular, salvation is interpreted as an experience of God's reign. However, the goal of salvation must "already" and "now" occur in various ways. According to Cruz, migrants sought a better life for themselves and their families. This liberating quest was an enduring theme that stuck because most of the world's poor struggled to get their ends met. Migrants sought freedom

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<sup>21</sup> Anselm Min, *Dialectic of Salvation: Issues in Theology of Liberation* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1989), 79.

<sup>22</sup> Cruz, "When Death Meets Life: Exploring the Links Between Migration and Salvation," 755.

from suffering and provided hope for their family life in the future. Therefore, Migration was related to safety. The Old Testament narrative describes the Migration of the Israelites from the land of Egypt. Likewise, in the New Testament, Jesus, who traveled to cities, showed concern for people from across cities and countries. It was Paul who went back and forth across the Roman empire to build Christian communities.<sup>23</sup> Christianity would never become a significant global religion if its adherents did not cross regional boundaries. Thus, immigrants who wished to spread the gospel to the destination country are part of Christianity. However, how could they survive the suffering and discrimination they received as migrants? Cruz explained the survival in five ways.

First, by being silent and taking a contemplative attitude when problems arrived. Silence was taken not to surrender to the existence of suffering but to "ask" God the purpose of giving the existing suffering. Silence also makes someone think clearly and healthily.<sup>24</sup> Clarity of mind will, in turn, give ways for creativity and ideas for survival. A contemplative attitude is part of the spirituality of Catholics. In Pentecostal's spirituality, contemplation can provide serenity and peace because all tensions can slowly loosen up. If carried out correctly and earnestly, contemplation can transform one's personality. Xiaoli Yang from the University of Divinity, Parkville, Australia, described the contemplative aspect of Pentecostal people. According to him, Asian Pentecostals can take personal and communal contemplative actions to achieve peace of mind from the problematic dynamics of life.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, contemplative action is complex for Pentecostals to do, bearing in mind the concept of the dynamics

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<sup>23</sup> VanThanh Nguyen, "Asia in Motion: A Biblical Reflection on Migration," *Asian Christian Review* 4, no. 2 (2010): 21–22.

<sup>24</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: An Asian Theology Survival," in *Asian Theology on The Way, Christianity, Culture, and Context*, ed. Peniel Jesudason Rufus (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), 75–82.

<sup>25</sup> Xiaoli Yang, "Contemplative Aspects of Pentecostal Spirituality: A Case Study of a Retreat Experience in Asia," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 28, no. 1 (2019): 123–42, <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455251-02702008>.

of the Holy Spirit's direction towards worship that is characterized with enthusiasm and cheers without which worship is just a boring routine and does not work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.<sup>26</sup> Even though challenging, meditation calms the inner feelings when facing problems.

Second, doing activities that evoke laughter. Cruz emphasized that God deliberately shows His concern by sending humor for believers to keep smiling. The laugh that Cruz meant was not antipathy towards the feelings and suffering of others but rather the external evidence of someone's joy in the face of suffering.<sup>27</sup> Pentecostals are no strangers to the act of laughing. Laughter is done not only because of a funny story or incident but concerning the Holy Spirit. This activity is called "laughing in the spirit." Many Pentecostal theologians have accepted the phenomenon of laughing in the Spirit, including Richard Roberts, Oral Roberts, Jan Crounc, Paul Crouch, Marilyn Hickey, Benny Hinn, Kenneth Copeland, John Wimber, and many others. Toronto Blessing was a phenomenon on January 20, 1994, which became the forerunner to the phenomenon of laughing in the Spirit.<sup>28</sup> This laughter was resulted from the joy supernaturally given to people in Pentecostal meetings. Miraculous healings and relief from depression and stress often accompany the joy of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> Of course, what Cruz meant differs from the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal services. However, the idea of laughter used to survive is relevant to expressive Asian societies.

Third, telling stories and gathering with other people accompanied by food and drinks. Sharing problems to others can

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<sup>26</sup> Oliver McMahan, "Spiritual Direction in the Pentecostal/Charismatic Tradition," in *Spiritual Direction and the Care of Souls: A Guide to Christian Approaches and Practices*, ed. Gary W. Moon and David G. Benner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 152–53.

<sup>27</sup> Cruz, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: An Asian Theology Survival."

<sup>28</sup> James W. Lewis, "The Phenomena of the Spirit," *A Paper Prepared for the Doctrinal Dialogue*, 2005.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret M Poloma, *Main Street Mystics: The Toronto Blessing and Reviving Pentecostalism* (AltaMira Press, 2003).

channel emotions and receive different perspectives on interpreting problems. Gathering in the concept of Migration theology is forming a “weak” community that supports one another.<sup>30</sup> Examining the early church's life in Acts 2:42-47, small communities were built to gather and break bread. In this community, Christians work together to care for, pay attention to, and support each other, especially regarding physical needs. Togetherness in groups, especially groups that experience the same suffering and identity, is a way to reduce the mental burden caused by suffering, not the suffering itself.

Fourth, performing kinesthetic actions accompanied by songs to express feelings of sadness. Kathleen Norris wrote, “We go to church to sing, and theology is secondary.”<sup>31</sup> Music can even be used to understand one's theology. A person's theological concept will see through the song. Music can also foster community and combat loneliness and hopelessness. Music can bring feelings of comfort, inspiration, and well-being.<sup>32</sup> While there are certainly different levels of appreciation for music in every person, there is no doubt that Pentecostals enjoy music and play it often. Singing and dancing are activities that are closely linked to Pentecostals. Interestingly, Pentecostals listen to music in vehicles on their way to church, gather to sing along with the faith community, and then listen to music on their way home.<sup>33</sup>

Fifth, by promoting creativity and art. In her article “Faith on the Edge: Religion and Women in the Context of Migration,” Cruz emphasized the importance of creative resistance in responding to suffering. She found that Filipino immigrants experien-

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<sup>30</sup> Cruz, *Toward a Theology of Migration: Social Justice and Religious Experience*.

<sup>31</sup> Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 91.

<sup>32</sup> Donald E. Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori, *Pentecostalism Global: The New Face of Christian Social Engagement* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2016), 23.

<sup>33</sup> Travis W. Cooper, “Ecstasy and the Kinesthetic Body: An Ethnographic Study of Contemporary Pentecostal Worship” (Missouri State University, 2011), 4–5.

ced discrimination due to a lack of creativity.<sup>34</sup> Resistance occurred by developing language and soft skills that could attract respect from the host.

Survival is about maintaining physical life and living one's story. The primary key in a series of survival theology strategies according to Cruz is that their realization must base on faith and community. The basis of faith is the existence of individuals in responding to the suffering experienced, while the community is a place to embrace the five ways above. The two become an inseparable unit. This is where beauty is present to elaborate on the methods above. Without it, one will weaken and fall into hopelessness.

### **Survival Theology from a Pentecostalism Perspective**

Pentecostalism is a theological school emphasizing the Holy Spirit's role in believers' lives. It appeared at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has since spread worldwide. Within a century, Pentecostal and Charismatic flourished. According to the Pew Research Center's analysis of estimated numbers sourced from the Global Christian Research Center at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary in 2011, the total composition of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians to world Christianity reached 26.7 percent, reaching nearly 600 million people.<sup>35</sup> According to Allan Anderson, at least one-third of Asia's Christian population now belongs to Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, a proportion that will continue to rise in the decades.<sup>36</sup> One feature Pentecostalism that sets it apart from other Christian traditions is its emphasis on survival. This can be seen in how Pentecostals approach personal crises to global disasters.

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<sup>34</sup> Gemma Tulud Cruz, "Faith on the Edge: Religion and Women in the Context of Migration," *Feminist Theology* 15, no. 1 (2006): 9–25.

<sup>35</sup> Pew Research Center, "Global Christianity – a Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population," Pew Research Center, 2011, [https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/#:~:text=Today%2C the Pew Forum study, the Global North \(39%25\)](https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2011/12/19/global-christianity-exec/#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20Pew%20Forum%20study,the%20Global%20North,(39%25).).

<sup>36</sup> Allan Anderson, "Writing the Pentecostal History of Africa, Asia, and Latin America," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 25, no. 2 (2004): 139–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1361767042000251564>.

Pentecostalism claims orthopathy (righteous feeling) as an integral part of its theology (orthodoxy) because suffering is the most profound feeling of polarity. Many people apostate or turn away from God through suffering in their professing faith. This is where the Holy Spirit calms the human mind and feelings to strive to improve their condition. Suffering in Pentecostalism must do in two ways: having the truth of God's word correctly and preparing God's servants and the congregation to help each other when personal suffering occurs, when others in the church community suffer, and, most importantly, when people are suffering. People outside the church suffer. Suffering is not just to be appeased or removed. This reality must be faced because Jesus has warned that evil and suffering will increase. However, the power of the Holy Spirit works so that later everything will be His glory.<sup>37</sup> Central to Pentecostalism's theology of survival is the belief that suffering is a normal part of Christian life. The idea is that Jesus himself suffered on the cross and that his followers must also be willing to endure hardship and persecution.

Pentecostalism also believes that suffering can have a redemptive purpose. By enduring hardships, believers can draw closer to God and become more and more like Christ or "the fellowship of His sufferings" (Phil. 3:10-11). God asks us to believe. He promises to help but never promises to take believers away from all suffering. The survival theology of Pentecostals can be seen in many ways.

First, prayer and spiritual warfare. A vital element of the survival theology of Pentecostalism is the importance of prayer and spiritual warfare. Pentecostalism believes that prayer is a powerful tool for overcoming adversity and that spiritual warfare is necessary to fight the forces of evil in the world. These often take the form of "praying walks" or "prayer drives," in which believers physically walk or ride through their communities, praying for protection and victory against other spiritual forces.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2010), 99.

<sup>38</sup> Hans Olsson, "Going to War: Spiritual Encounters and Pentecostals' Drive for Exposure in Contemporary Zanzibar," in *Faith in African Lived*

It can also involve more intense forms of spiritual warfare, such as exorcism or deliverance services.

The Holy Spirit moving on the surface of the waters (Gen. 1:2) is the same Spirit moving among believers today. The Holy Spirit, a person of the Trinity, has a mission to advance God's creative act since the beginning. The Holy Spirit moves to control the human Spirit. Through prayer, Pentecostals approach suffering by allowing the movement of the Spirit in crisis. Psalm 100 demands that the believer renounces his selfishness and depend on God, not on self-induced motivations that spring from the soul. The Spirit "counsels and edifies" (1 Cor. 14:3) in crisis during services and prayer meetings.<sup>39</sup>

Second, community and brotherhood. For Pentecostals, community and fellowship are essential components of a theology of survival. Believers are encouraged to unite in times of crisis, supporting one another through prayer and giving one another practical help and emotional support. This sense of community extends beyond individual churches and encompasses entire regions or countries. In times of natural disasters or other crises, Pentecostals often move to provide help and support to those in need. First of all, to fellow Pentecostals, then to other Christians, and then to other people who do not believe in Jesus. Daniela Augustine gives three terms of oikos as a church that embraces human life: Ecology, economics, and ecumenism—all three experience stronger functional connectivity when aimed at the welfare of society.<sup>40</sup> It is this connectedness that calls Pentecostals to work for welfare in suffering.

Augustine's spiritual formation begins with the self-sharing of the Creator and His Creation. Social theology for survival Pentecostal does not start with the market economy method, but

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*Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 249–70, <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004412255>.

<sup>39</sup> Frank D. Macchia, "Pentecostal and Charismatic Theology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology*, ed. Jerry L. Walls (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2009), 497.

<sup>40</sup> Daniela C. Augustine, "Pentecost Communal Economics and the Household of God," in *Pentecostal Ecclesiology*, ed. Chris E.W. Green (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 65–87.

rather the friendliness of the Creator with those created. This ontology encourages the Pentecostal community to prioritize love and material dimensions. All of His creation gives itself to find a way out and creativity to solve the problem of poverty (read: suffering). Carrying out these actions denotes a person growing spiritually toward Christlikeness.<sup>41</sup> Gifts in tithes, Diakonia, and other offerings were used to promote societal stability. Augustine calls the ultimate call to God-likeness. Therefore, what the created owns will be returned to the Giver.

*Spirit, Word, and Community as a Pentecostal hermeneutic trilogy must be developed.*<sup>42</sup> God's hospitality is offered and received by the marginalized through Pentecostal people through the Spirit. The faith community shows hospitality in sharing oneself with the church community and the general public. Society becomes the locus for giving birth to the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5.22-23). The social interaction of this society is a type of interaction in which economy can build forms and relationships as an extension of the contractual ties needed to give birth to new social capital.

The relationship between the Creator and the created demands moral responsibility. The Pentecostalism paradigm of social theology is the embodiment of hospitality. Self-negation is associated with concern for others. McFague argues that self-emptying and self-denial transform a changing perspective on the poverty and suffering of others. In turn, seeing other people as valuable, interrelated, and bound to one another is like a puzzle forming a complete picture as a created being.<sup>43</sup> God's hospitality is an all-encompassing act of love and justice, reuniting the economy with a spiritual foundation. The consequence is in the form of economic relations, namely relations that embrace each other

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<sup>41</sup> Dimitru Staniloae, *The Experience of God: Orthodox Dogmatic Theology, Vol. 2, The World: Creation and Deification* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Holy Cross Orthodox Press, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Amos Yong, *Spirit-Word-Community: Theological Hermeneutics in Trinitarian Perspective* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

<sup>43</sup> Sallie McFague, "Epilogue: The Human Dignity and the Integrity of Creation," in *Theology That Matters: Ecology, Economy and God*, ed. Darby Kathleen Ray (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).



and provide for the needs of their resources. The most visible example is the tragedy of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). Egoism contrast with self-giving; sin contrast with holiness, and property is at the heart of this demarcation.

Third, hope and redemption. Despite the emphasis on suffering and spiritual warfare, the survival theology of Pentecostalism is ultimately rooted in hope and redemption. Believers must look beyond their current circumstances and trust God's ultimate plan. This hope is often expressed through music, dance, and other forms of worship.<sup>44</sup> Pentecostals believe that by praising God during trials, they can experience a sense of joy and peace that transcends their circumstances and gives rise to hope. Hope takes from the reality of the future—the future in eschatological events revealed in scripture.

In viewing suffering from an eschatological lens, it is important not to approach it chronologically but teleologically. The chronological approach can present the problem of viewing suffering as usual. The teleological approach would avoid the "naturalization" of suffering as an instrument of God. Teleological eschatology views suffering as unnatural and unacceptable without "sacrificing" our character, nature, belief, and/or faith in God. Living by seeing that one is on the verge of death or hardship every day but on the threshold of eternity will justify and heal from every sickness, torment, injustice, and pain because Jesus Christ overcame death, and by believing in Christ and obeying Him, transmigration takes place from death to life (2 Tim. 1:10; John 5:24; 8:51; 1 John 3:14). Life is in Christ, even in imminent pain, suffering, or death. Suffering is a dire consequence (from an eternal point of view) because Christ has borne the reality of suffering on the cross. Wonsuk Ma discusses Pentecostal eschatology through an emphasis on the present life. Ma reiterated eschatology which only emphasizes the future (the future) but the present. It is a freshness of eschatology that can

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<sup>44</sup> Johannes S. P. Rajagukguk and Lion Sugiono, "Tinjauan Liturgis Unsur-Unsur Ibadah Pentakosta Terhadap Kedewasaan Rohani," *Matheo : Jurnal Teologi/Kependetaan* 10, no. 1 (2020): 37–51, <https://doi.org/10.47562/matheo.v10i1.101>.

be felt from now on. According to him, this concept has a place for audiences in Asia familiar with suffering.<sup>45</sup>

Pentecostalism's theology of survival is a rich and complex tradition that emphasizes the role of faith in overcoming adversity. Pentecostals have developed a unique approach to coping with life's challenges by emphasizing suffering, prayer, community, and hope. Whether facing a personal crisis or a global catastrophe, Pentecostals believe they can find strength and resilience through their relationship with God and one another.

### **Survival Theology of the Gawai Culture of West Kalimantan**

Survival theology could also be seen in Dayak people in West Kalimantan who maintained a tradition called *Gawai*. Each region calls the *Gawai* ceremony variously Landak District calls it Naik Dango, and Sanggau District calls it *Nosu Minu Podi*. *Gawai* is a thanksgiving ceremony to *Jubata* (a god believed by the Dayak people). This departs from the habits and livelihoods of the Dayak people, who generally are farming. Thanksgiving in *Gawai* shows the Spirit of the Dayak community to maintain a relationship with nature and hope for a balance of life in the future.

The *Gawai* ceremony has a social content for harmonizing the life relations of the Dayak people, especially about practicing cooperation and giving thanks to others *Penompo* (God in 40 Dayak languages) because of the rice yields obtained. *Penompo* is the Creator and maintainer of everything in the natural or virtual world.<sup>46</sup> Based on the value of solidarity, they believe everything in nature comes from *Penompo* or the Creator, one of which is the rice yield. However, in its development, *Gawai* Dayak experienced a shift in meaning. Rostiyanti viewed it from

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<sup>45</sup> Wonsuk Ma, "Pentecostal Eschatology: What Happened When the Wave Hit the West End of the Ocean," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 12, no. 1 (2009): 95–112.

<sup>46</sup> Rivasintha Emusti and Juniardi Karel, "Pergeseran Nilai-Nilai Budaya Dalam Upacara Adat Gawai Dayak Ditinjau Dari Sosial Ekonomi Masyarakat Kota Pontianak," *SOSIAL HORIZON: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial* 4, no. 1 (2017): 1–10, <https://journal.ikipgriptk.ac.id/index.php/sosial/article/view/418>.

two functions, namely spiritual and social. The spiritual function can be seen from the procedures for managing human relations with God, including expecting protection from God for everyday life. At the same time, a social function can be seen from the relationship between humans and nature.<sup>47</sup> *Gawai* is a unifier in all relations of life.

The *Gawai* implementation procedure is as follows. Before the *Gawai* traditional ceremony carries out, the Dayak tribe recites an incantation (*Nyangahatn*) which is called *Matik*. The purpose of the incantation is to ask the *Penompo* in prayer to give his blessing for the event to occur. After that, the traditional leader reads a prayer at the rice barn (*baluh* or *langko*) so that *Penompo* will strengthen the Dayak people to fight and protect nature. Next, recite *Nyangahatn* called *pandarengan* to bless the rice so that it lasts a long time and does not run out quickly. There are 42 *Nyangahatn* recited alternately for thanksgiving and hoping for protection. After offering prayers and thanksgiving, the activity continues by visiting the homes of fellow residents. Usually, on this visit, the host will serve various dishes. Various foods come from community harvests.<sup>48</sup> At present, *Gawai* fills with thanksgiving offerings and competitions that hone the creativity and dexterity of the Dayak people. These competitions include singing regional songs, creative dances, and regional music, chopsticks, and making regional food. The competition was held to hone the abilities of regional sons and daughters to be creative in the modern era but still hold cultural elements.

The element of survival theology in *Gawai* tradition has been explored by some scholars. Rizar Syarif's writings explained that the Dayak people can survive by hunting wild animals. The hunted wild animals will later become food in

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<sup>47</sup> A Rostiyanti, *Fungsi Upacara Tradisional Bagi Masyarakat Pendukungnya Masa Kini* (Yogyakarta: Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> Herlan Herlan and Elyta Elyta, "Model of *Gawai* Dayak Based-Social Capital in the Border of Sajingan Besar of West Kalimantan," *Sosiohumaniora* 22, no. 1 (2020): 55–63, <https://doi.org/10.24198/sosiohumaniora.v22i1.26042>.

implementing the *Gawai* party.<sup>49</sup> Thus, hunting and gathering are the *Gawai* dimensions for one's survival. Dayak people have rules for hunting and gathering. Not all animals and leaves can be taken. According to the chief's recommendation, hunting does when the time is right. Likewise, with the concoction, plants that have taken must be planted with new seeds to remain balanced.<sup>50</sup> Survival must be parallel with respect for nature. In nature, there are the forces of its ancestors. Anyone who enters the Dayak culture cannot be separated from natural life. Therefore, they use sustainable hunting techniques that do not damage the ecosystem. They only hunt animals that are sufficient in number and do not endanger the sustainability of the animal population.

Farming is not just harvesting crops but an expression of love and faith in Gods, loyalty and sacrifice, encounters between humans and gods, and needs and fulfillment in everyday life. In the *Gawai* culture, farming is also a way to survive. A familiar term for farming is *Beuma*.<sup>51</sup> The location of the plantation cannot be arbitrary. The Dayak community must carefully observe the quality of the land, the category of the land (whether it is protected forest or free plantation land), the location of the land, and various natural phenomena, such as the appearance of certain animals (astronomical aspects) or the sounds of birds or other animals (religious dimension) which are considered sacred. Astronomical elements and animal sounds are necessary and definitive in determining a location's location. This concept is certainly far from the modern way of using radio tracking.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Rizar Syarif, "Perburuan Satwa Liar Oleh Masyarakat Suku Dayak Iban Di Dusun Sungai Utik Kabupaten Kapuas Hulu" (Universitas Gadjarda, 2018).

<sup>50</sup> Retno Dwi Hastiti and Haryanto R. Putro, "Kearifan Lokal Dalam Perburuan Satwa Liar Suku Dayak Kenyah Di Taman Nasional Kayan Mentarang, Kalimantan Timur," 2011.

<sup>51</sup> Kristianus Damianus Apo, "Tradisi Beuma Dan Pandangan Akan Alam Dayak Suaid Sebagai Pelestarian Lingkungan," *Balale': Jurnal Antropologi* 3, no. 1 (2022): 17–36.

<sup>52</sup> Vesna Lukic, Francesco de Gasperin, and Marcus Brüggem, "Convolutional Source-Finding with Convolutional Neural Networks," *Galaxies* 8, no. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3390/GALAXIES-8010003>.

An essential concept of survival in *Gawai* culture is social capital. The existence of standard norms and beliefs in community groups is essential to social capital because they share a set of values. *Gawai* Dayak rituals are a significant source of social capital because they have great potential to form substantial social strength, support and resources. This was realized through the movement of being accommodated by the Dayak Customary Council. *Gawai* Dayak is a tradition from the Dayak Association of *Batang* Houses. The origin is a village often disturbed by evil spirits, and crop yields decrease, so the Dayak tribe performs rituals as a blessing to spirits or their ancestors. The benefit is to create characteristics and show the customs of an area, which is to gather at the Dayak *batang* house, eating together, performing Dayak traditional dances, and performing Dayak handicrafts/clothes.<sup>53</sup> Social capital is carried out by cooperation based on mutual benefit, which means a reciprocal relationship exists.<sup>54</sup> This cooperation occurs because of mutual trust. Both of these underpin the power of economic progress. Mutual trust is, first and foremost, the foundation that strengthens social capital to achieve solid cooperation. Fellow residents unless the village community organizes activities.

In conclusion, the *Gawai* culture in West Kalimantan exemplifies how indigenous cultural practices can shape a theology of survival. *Gawai* culture is based on animism, which views nature as imbued with spiritual power. This worldview emphasizes the importance of living in harmony with nature and understanding the spiritual dimension of life. For the Dayak people of West Kalimantan, their animist beliefs have provided a sense of resilience and continuity in the face of colonization, modernization, and other forms of cultural change.

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<sup>53</sup> Herlan and Elyta, "Model of Gawai Dayak Based-Social Capital in the Border of Sajingan Besar of West Kalimantan."

<sup>54</sup> M Membiela-Pollán and J.-A Pena-López, "Clarifying the Concept of Social Capital through Its Three Perspectives: Individualistic, Communitarian and Macro-Social," *European Journal of Government and Economics* 6, no. 2 (2017): 146–70.

## **Asian Societal Survival Theology Construction**

The theology of survival of Asian societies as exemplified by Gawai tradition is a concept that describes how traditional religions and beliefs in Asia can survive in the era of modernization and globalization. This concept emphasizes the importance of maintaining the cultural and spiritual values of Asian peoples to face the challenges of an ever-evolving era. The theology of survival of Asian societies can be understood through the history of the development of traditional religions and beliefs in Asia. Although significant religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam entered Asia thousands of years ago, traditional beliefs such as animism and polytheism have survived. Therefore, Dayak *Gawai* can be a proposal for the survival of Asian people. Based on studies of migration theology, Pentecostalism, and *Gawai* Dayak West Kalimantan, some interpretations summarize the three. The concept is living together to survive, which is the antithesis of Charles Darwin's survival of the fittest. Shared life in the community gives rise to a spirituality of compassion between fellow members. Family and friends come together to provide support and comfort, and there is a shared responsibility for each other's well-being.

*Gawai* Dayak ritual strongly reflects the togetherness in this community. The social life of the Dayak people of West Kalimantan is based on values such as gotong royong, mutual help, and respect for others. They also have unique traditions, such as traditional ceremonies and dances performed together.

The existence of religion functions as not only a means of worship but also a source of inspiration and motivation for the community in living their daily lives. Through religion, a person gains inner peace to fight (again) to face his suffering. Associated with Dayak *Gawai* culture, meditation and mindfulness practices can be the key to inner calm. These techniques are designed to help individuals cultivate inner peace and calm, which can help them better cope with difficult emotions and experiences.

Resilience and perseverance are also reflected in the way Asian peoples survive. Asians are known for toughness and persistence in the face of adversity. The Asian community has a long history of resilience and perseverance, facing many chal-

lenges. From discrimination to economic struggles, Asians have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to overcome adversity. Asians have faced discrimination and marginalization throughout history, from the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. Despite these challenges, Asian immigrants and their descendants persevered, building successful businesses and communities despite significant obstacles, whether through hard work, determination, or willpower.

Pentecostalism gives a spiritual dimension to "rebellion" against suffering. A person can be defiant without being noticed through the language of tongues (glossolalia). This concept parallels migration theology, which advocates using languages the destination country does not understand to declare rebellion. In *Gawai* culture, this is reflected through mantra-mantra, echoed as a language related to Dewa.

## CONCLUSION

This theological understanding within Asian communities encounters increasing challenges due to modernization. Socio-technological shifts have potential implications for the endurance of cultural and spiritual values, necessitating efforts to support and preserve these ideals. Community cohesiveness emerges as a crucial factor in tackling adversity.

The equilibrium of the environment is maintained through hunting, agriculture, and activities seeking sustainable food sources from nature. Respect for nature as God's gift results in achieving balance, evident in the *Gawai* ceremony. This ceremony showcases solidarity among Dayak individuals, expressions of gratitude and commitment to conserving nature, vibrant music and dance performances, and the shared experience of communal dining while narrating stories. In conclusion, survival theology in Asian societies is shaped by multiple factors such as Migration, Pentecostalism, and indigenous cultural practices. These theological convictions and practices instill resilience, hope, and empowerment amidst adversity, assisting communities in surviving and flourishing under challenging conditions.

In the context of Asian societies, survival theology is shaped by a variety of factors, including Migration, Pentecostalism, and indigenous cultural practices, for instance, the *Gawai* culture in West Kalimantan. West Kalimantan's *Gawai* culture serves as a model of Asian survival theology. The survival theology of Asian societies is faced with the growing challenge of modernization. Socio-technological shifts have potential implications for the endurance of cultural and spiritual values, necessitating efforts to support and preserve these ideals. Community cohesiveness emerges as a crucial factor in tackling adversity.

The equilibrium of the environment is maintained through hunting, agriculture, and activities seeking sustainable food source for nature. respect for nature as God's gift results in achieving balance, evident in the *Gawai* ceremony. This ceremony showcases solidarity among Dayak individuals, expressions of gratitude and commitment to conserving nature, vibrant music and dance performances, and the shared experience of communal dining while narrating stories. In conclusion, survival theology in Asian societies is shaped by multiple factors such as Migration, Pentecostalism, and indigenous cultural practices. These theological convictions and practices instill resilience, hope, and empowerment amidst adversity, assisting communities in surviving and flourishing under challenging conditions.

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