

Indonesian Christian Theologies of the Holy Spirit: Their Distinctiveness and Their Origins in Indonesian Experience

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Abstract

The development of Christian pneumatology in Indonesia represents a distinctive theological trajectory shaped by the unique socio-cultural, religious, and historical context of the archipelago. This article explores the distinctiveness of Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit and traces their origins in Indonesian experience. Through a qualitative theological analysis employing contextual and narrative-exegetical approaches, the study examines how Indonesian Christians have articulated pneumatological understandings that differ from Western formulations while remaining faithful to biblical foundations. The findings reveal that Indonesian pneumatology is characterized by its emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker of Christian identity in a Muslim-majority context, its integration with local cultural understandings of spiritual reality, and its development through the "Nusantara model" of contextual theology. The study concludes that Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit emerge from the lived experiences of believers navigating religious pluralism, cultural diversity, and postcolonial identity formation. This research contributes to global pneumatological discourse by offering insights from a non-Western context and demonstrating how theological reflection can be authentically rooted in local experience while maintaining connection to the global Christian tradition.

Keywords: contextual pneumatology; Indonesian Christianity; Holy Spirit; Christian-Muslim relations; Nusantara theology.

INTRODUCTION

The theological landscape of Indonesian Christianity presents a compelling case study for understanding how pneumatology develops in contexts markedly different from the Western settings where classical formulations were forged. Indonesia, as the nation with the world's largest Muslim population, provides a unique environment where Christian theological reflection on the Holy Spirit must contend with the presence of a dominant religious tradition that offers its own understanding of the Spirit (*Rūḥ al-Qudus*). This context shapes not only the content of Indonesian pneumatology but also its very methodology and pastoral concerns. The distinctiveness of Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit lies not merely in their doctrinal content but in their origins within the lived experiences of Indonesian Christians navigating religious pluralism, cultural diversity, and postcolonial identity formation.

Contemporary scholarship on pneumatology has increasingly recognized the importance of contextual approaches that attend to the diverse ways in which the Holy Spirit is understood and experienced across different cultural and religious settings. Scholars such as Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen have emphasized the need for pneumatological reflection that engages with global and contextual perspectives.¹ However, much of the existing literature on pneumatology remains dominated by Western theological frameworks that do not adequately account for the distinctive experiences and challenges of Christian communities in the Global South.² Within this broader context, Indonesian pneumatology represents a significant yet underexplored area of theological inquiry that offers valuable insights for understanding how the Holy Spirit is understood and experienced in a predominantly Muslim, culturally diverse, and postcolonial setting.

This article addresses the relative lack of systematic theological attention to Indonesian Christian pneumatologies that emerge from and speak to the distinctive Indonesian experience. While there has been considerable scholarly work on contextual theology in Asia and on Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia, there has been less focused attention on how Indonesian Christians have developed distinct theologies of the Holy Spirit that both engage with and diverge from Western pneumatological traditions.³ This gap is particularly significant given the central role that the Holy Spirit plays in Indonesian Christian identity formation and in distinguishing Christian faith from Islamic understandings of the divine.

The purpose of this article is to explore the distinctiveness of Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit and to trace their origins in Indonesian experience. Drawing on the conceptual framework of contextual pneumatology, the study examines how Indonesian Christians have articulated pneumatological understandings that address the particular challenges and opportunities of their context while remaining rooted in biblical and theological traditions. The article argues that Indonesian pneumatology is characterized by several

¹ Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology: The Holy Spirit in Ecumenical, International, and Contextual Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 15-18.

² On the significance of World Christianity for theological reflection, see Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1-15.

³ See, for example, the discussion of contextual theology in Asia in Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 177-178; Moses Adeleke Adeoye, and Muhammad Arifudin. "Tracing Theology and Historical Praxis in Early Muslim-Christian Relations". *Indonesian Journal of Religious* 8, no. 2 (2025): 124-148. <https://doi.org/10.46362/ijr.v8i2.74>; Susanti Embong Bulan and Amran Simangunsong. "Click for Tolerance: The Transformation of Christian Religious Education through Digital Media in Fostering Inclusive Attitudes in Indonesia". *MODERATE: Journal of Religious, Education, and Social* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.46362/moderate.v3i1.16>.

distinctive features: its emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker of Christian identity in a Muslim-majority context, its integration with local cultural understandings of spiritual reality, and its development through the "Nusantara model" of contextual theology that engages with Indonesian cultural and religious plurality.

This research contributes to global theological discourse in several ways. First, it provides a case study of contextual pneumatology that demonstrates how theological reflection can be authentically rooted in local experience while maintaining connection to the broader Christian tradition. Second, it offers insights into how pneumatology can serve as a resource for interreligious dialogue and engagement in contexts of religious pluralism. Third, it challenges Western-dominated pneumatological paradigms by presenting alternative understandings that emerge from non-Western contexts. It contributes to the growing body of scholarship on World Christianity that recognizes the diversity and vitality of Christian theological reflection beyond the Western centers of theological production.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative theological research approach that integrates contextual theological analysis with narrative-exegetical interpretation of relevant biblical and theological texts. The contextual theological method, as developed by scholars such as Stephen Bevans, emphasizes the importance of attending to the cultural, social, and religious context in which theological reflection takes place.⁴ This approach recognizes that theology is always shaped by its context and that authentic theological reflection must engage with the particularities of local experience while remaining in dialogue with the broader Christian tradition. The narrative-exegetical component of the methodology draws on the work of scholars such as Richard Hays and N.T. Wright, who emphasize the importance of reading biblical texts within their narrative context and attending to the way in which Scripture shapes Christian identity and practice.⁵

The application of this methodological approach involves several interconnected steps. First, the study examines the biblical foundations of pneumatology, with particular attention to the role of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline epistles, as these texts have been particularly influential in shaping Pentecostal and charismatic theologies of the

⁴ Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, rev. and exp. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 3-15.

⁵ Richard B. Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 1-10; N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 31-46.

Spirit that have been prominent in Indonesian Christianity. Second, the study analyzes the theological interpretations of the Holy Spirit that have emerged from the Indonesian context, drawing on both scholarly theological works and the lived experience of Indonesian Christians. Third, the study engages with the broader discourse on contextual pneumatology and Christian-Muslim relations to situate Indonesian pneumatology within global theological conversations. Throughout this analysis, attention is given to the ways in which Indonesian Christians have both drawn on and departed from Western pneumatological traditions in their theological reflection on the Holy Spirit.

RESULTS

The Holy Spirit as Distinguishing Marker of Christian Identity

The first major finding of this study is that Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit are significantly shaped by the need to distinguish Christian identity from Islamic understandings of the divine. In the Indonesian context, where Muslims constitute approximately 87% of the population, Christians are a minority whose faith is often understood in relation to the dominant Islamic tradition. This context has profound implications for how Indonesian Christians understand and articulate their pneumatology. The Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Trinity, serves as a crucial marker of Christian distinctiveness because Islamic theology denies the divinity of the Spirit and identifies *Rūḥ al-Qudus* with the angel Gabriel.⁶ This difference is not merely a matter of abstract doctrine but has concrete implications for Christian identity formation and interreligious relations.

The theological significance of this distinction is profound. For Indonesian Christians, the Holy Spirit is not merely a theological concept but a lived reality that shapes their identity and practice. As one study notes, "The Spirit's existence is prominent and central to Indonesians' religiosity and significant for Christian identity. It is inseparable from the Trinity, making it a significant distinguishing factor between the church and Islam."⁷ This emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker reflects the broader theological significance of

⁶ See the discussion of Islamic understanding of the Holy Spirit in Erick Johnson Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society: The Mission Concept of the Communion of Churches in Indonesia," in *Mission Continues: Global Impulses for the 21st Century*, ed. Claudia Wahrisch-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), 259-260.

⁷ This observation is supported by the analysis of Indonesian pneumatology in Recky Pangumbahas, Chandra Gunawan, and Robby Repi, "Roh Kudus dan Gereja: Suatu Pendekatan Biblis dan Implikasinya bagi Pertumbuhan Gereja di Indonesia," *Journal of Religious and Socio-Cultural* 2, no. 2 (2021): 142.

pneumatology for Christian identity formation in contexts where Christians are a minority and where their faith is often understood in relation to other religious traditions.

The emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker has also shaped Indonesian Christian approaches to interreligious dialogue and engagement. Rather than minimizing theological differences in the interest of harmony, Indonesian pneumatology often emphasizes the distinctiveness of Christian understanding of the Spirit while also seeking common ground with Muslims on ethical and social issues. This approach reflects what has been called the "Nusantara model" of contextual theology, which seeks to engage with Indonesian culture and religious plurality while maintaining distinctive Christian identity.⁸ The Holy Spirit thus functions not only as a marker of difference but also as a resource for engagement with the religious other, as Indonesian Christians seek to witness to their faith while living in peace with their Muslim neighbors.

Biblical Foundations: Acts 2 and Romans 8 in Indonesian Interpretation

A second significant finding emerges from examining how Indonesian Christians interpret key biblical texts related to the Holy Spirit. The interpretation of Acts 2 (the Day of Pentecost) and Romans 8 (life in the Spirit) reveals distinctive emphases that reflect the Indonesian context.

In Indonesian Pentecostal and charismatic traditions, Acts 2 is interpreted not merely as a historical event but as a paradigm for contemporary Christian experience. The outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost is understood as the empowerment of believers for witness in a pluralistic context. Indonesian interpreters emphasize that the Spirit's coming enabled the disciples to speak in languages understood by people from diverse backgrounds—a powerful metaphor for the church's mission in Indonesia's linguistically and culturally diverse society. The narrative of Acts 2:1-13, in which the Spirit enables communication across linguistic barriers, resonates deeply with Indonesian Christians who minister across ethnic and linguistic boundaries in a nation with over 700 living languages. This emphasis on the Spirit's role in enabling cross-cultural witness reflects the missional orientation of Indonesian pneumatology.⁹

⁸ The "Nusantara model" is referenced in discussions of contextual theology in the Indonesian context, drawing on the work of scholars such as E. G. Homrighausen and I. H. Enklaar, Homrighausen, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1985), 45-60; Enklaar, I. H. *Membina Jemaat: Suatu Pengantar ke dalam Ilmu Pastoral* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1987), 33-50.

⁹ On the missional interpretation of Acts 2 in Indonesian contexts, see Hennie Swart, "Spirit and Mission in Luke-Acts" (unpublished paper, January 2013), 4-8; also see the discussion in Priscille Djomhoué, "The Holy Spirit and Mission in the Church Today: The Acts of the Apostles Reconsidered," in *Mission*

The interpretation of Romans 8 in Indonesian Christianity similarly reflects contextual concerns. The chapter's emphasis on the Spirit's role in adoption as children of God (Romans 8:14-17) is understood as particularly significant for Indonesian Christians who, as a minority, often experience social marginalization. The assurance of divine sonship through the Spirit provides identity and belonging that transcends ethnic and religious divisions. Furthermore, Romans 8:26-27, which describes the Spirit interceding for believers "with groans too deep for words," resonates with Indonesian Christians who have experienced suffering and persecution. The Spirit's intercessory role is understood as God's compassionate response to the struggles of believers in a challenging context. Indonesian theologians have also given distinctive attention to the relationship between the Spirit's work and the concept of *shalom* (peace) in the Pauline corpus. The Spirit as the source of peace (Romans 14:17; Galatians 5:22) is understood as directly relevant to a nation that has experienced significant religious conflict. This interpretation has shaped Indonesian Christian peacebuilding initiatives, which often draw on pneumatological resources to foster reconciliation between Christians and Muslims.¹⁰

The Integration of Pneumatology with Local Cultural Understandings

A second significant finding is that Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit have integrated local cultural understandings of spiritual reality in ways that distinguish them from Western pneumatological formulations. Indonesia's diverse cultural traditions include rich understandings of spiritual forces, ancestral spirits, and the supernatural that have shaped how Indonesian Christians understand the work of the Holy Spirit. This integration is not simply a matter of syncretism but reflects a thoughtful theological engagement with local culture that seeks to communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful terms while maintaining theological integrity.

The integration of pneumatology with local cultural understandings is evident in the way Indonesian Christians have articulated the Holy Spirit's work in terms of power, healing, and spiritual warfare. In many Indonesian Christian communities, the Holy Spirit is understood as the source of spiritual power that enables believers to overcome evil forces and experience

Continues: Global Impulses for the 21st Century, ed. Claudia Wahrisch-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), 65-72.

¹⁰ On the interpretation of Romans 8 and the Spirit's role in peacebuilding, see Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 261; Anwar Tjen, "Crossing the Boundaries: Retelling the Story of My Journey into Christianity," in *Mission Continues: Global Impulses for the 21st Century*, ed. Claudia Wahrisch-Oblau and Fidon Mwombeki (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2010), 205.

healing and deliverance.¹¹ This emphasis on the Spirit's power resonates with traditional Indonesian understandings of spiritual forces while also being rooted in biblical accounts of the Spirit's work in the early church. The result is a pneumatology that speaks to the spiritual concerns of Indonesian Christians in culturally meaningful ways while remaining faithful to biblical and theological traditions.

The contextualization of pneumatology is also evident in the way Indonesian Christians have addressed the relationship between the Holy Spirit and traditional understandings of ancestral spirits. In many Indonesian cultures, ancestral spirits are understood to play an important role in mediating between the living and the divine. Indonesian Christian theology has engaged with this understanding by emphasizing the Holy Spirit as the one who mediates between God and humanity, often drawing parallels between the role of ancestral spirits and the role of the Holy Spirit while also emphasizing the Spirit's unique status as divine.¹² This engagement reflects a careful theological reflection that seeks to communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful terms while maintaining the distinctiveness of Christian faith.

The integration of pneumatology with local cultural understandings has also shaped Indonesian Christian worship and spirituality. In many Indonesian churches, worship is characterized by an emphasis on the Holy Spirit's presence and activity, expressed through enthusiastic singing, prayer for healing, and expectant faith for the Spirit's manifestations. This charismatic spirituality reflects the integration of pneumatology with local cultural emphases on spiritual experience and supernatural encounter. The result is a vibrant and dynamic Christian spirituality that speaks to the spiritual needs and cultural sensibilities of Indonesian Christians.

The Development of the "Nusantara Model" of Contextual Pneumatology

A fourth significant finding is the development of what can be called the "Nusantara model" of contextual pneumatology that emerges from Indonesian experience. The term "Nusantara" refers to the Indonesian archipelago and carries connotations of cultural distinctiveness and national identity. The Nusantara model of pneumatology represents an

¹¹ See the discussion of the Holy Spirit's role in healing and deliverance in Stanley M. Horton, *Oknum Roh Kudus* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2019), 88-95; Lefran Lapijan, *Pneumatologi* (Jember: Diktat Perkuliahan Sekolah Tinggi Alkitab Jember, 1986), 12-20; Steven Phang and Bobby Kurnia Putrawan, *Roh Kudus dan Karya-Nya Bagi Gereja* (Jakarta: Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Indonesia, 2020), 56-70.

¹² The relationship between the Holy Spirit and ancestral spirits is discussed in the context of African pneumatology, which has parallels with Indonesian contexts. See John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1969), 50-65; Kwame Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 90-100.

attempt to develop theological understandings of the Holy Spirit that are rooted in Indonesian culture and experience while remaining in dialogue with the broader Christian tradition. This model is characterized by several distinctive features that distinguish it from Western pneumatological formulations.

The Nusantara model emphasizes the communal and relational dimensions of the Holy Spirit's work in ways that resonate with Indonesian cultural values of community and mutual responsibility. Whereas Western pneumatology has often focused on the individual's relationship with the Spirit, Indonesian pneumatology emphasizes the Spirit's role in creating and sustaining community.¹³ This emphasis reflects the broader Indonesian cultural emphasis on community (*gotong royong*) and mutual responsibility that shapes social life in the archipelago. The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who unites believers in community and empowers them for mutual service and witness.

The Nusantara model also emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in empowering believers for witness in a pluralistic context. In a nation characterized by religious diversity, Indonesian Christians understand the Holy Spirit as the source of power and wisdom for engaging with people of other faiths.¹⁴ This missional emphasis reflects the recognition that Christians in Indonesia are called to bear witness to their faith in a context where they are a minority and where interreligious engagement is a daily reality. The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who enables believers to speak boldly and wisely in witness to Christ while also fostering respect and love for neighbors of other faiths.

The Nusantara model further emphasizes the Holy Spirit's role in addressing the social and political challenges facing Indonesian society. In a nation that has experienced significant religious conflict and social upheaval, Indonesian Christians understand the Holy Spirit as the source of peace, justice, and reconciliation.¹⁵ This emphasis reflects the recognition that the Holy Spirit's work extends beyond individual salvation to encompass the transformation of society and the healing of divisions. Indonesian pneumatology thus has a strong ethical and political dimension that distinguishes it from more individualistic Western formulations.

¹³ This emphasis on community is reflected in the discussion of the Holy Spirit's role in the church in Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi, "Roh Kudus dan Gereja," 141-149.

¹⁴ The missional role of the Holy Spirit is emphasized in the Lukan pneumatology discussed in Swart, "Spirit and Mission in Luke-Acts," 4-8.

¹⁵ The role of the Holy Spirit in peacemaking and reconciliation is emphasized in discussions of the church's mission in the Indonesian context. See Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 255-263; Tjen, "Crossing the Boundaries," 199-207.

Historically, the Nusantara model emerged from the efforts of Indonesian theologians in the post-independence period to develop theological frameworks that were distinct from colonial missionary formulations. Early proponents included theologians such as E. G. Homrighausen and I. H. Enklaar, who emphasized the importance of contextualizing Christian faith in Indonesian culture.¹⁶ Their work laid the foundation for later Indonesian theologians who would develop more explicit pneumatological reflections. In the contemporary period, the Nusantara model has been advanced by scholars who emphasize the Holy Spirit's role in Indonesian cultural identity formation and interreligious engagement.¹⁷

Case Studies: Indonesian Pneumatology in Practice

To illustrate the distinctive features of Indonesian pneumatology, this study examined two specific cases: the Javanese Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Jawa) and the Indonesian Pentecostal movement.

Case Study 1: The Javanese Christian Church (GKJ)

The Javanese Christian Church represents a mainline Protestant tradition that has engaged deeply with Javanese culture. In GKJ congregations, pneumatology is articulated in ways that resonate with Javanese spiritual sensibilities. The Holy Spirit is understood as *Roh Kang Maha Kuwaos* (the All-Powerful Spirit), language that echoes Javanese understandings of spiritual power. GKJ worship incorporates traditional Javanese music and forms of expression, and the Spirit is understood to be present in these culturally appropriate forms of worship. The church's emphasis on community (*gotong royong*) is explicitly linked to the Spirit's work of creating unity and mutual care among believers. This integration demonstrates how the Nusantara model operates in practice, maintaining theological orthodoxy while expressing faith through indigenous cultural forms.¹⁸

¹⁶ Homrighausen, *Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 100-115; Enklaar, *Membina Jemaat*, 80-95.

¹⁷ See Steven Tubagus and Timotius Baktis Saroni, "Roh Kudus dalam Trinitas dan Komunitas Umat Tuhan (Holy Spirit in the Trinity and Community of God's People)," *QUAERENS: Journal of Theology and Christianity Studies* 3, no. 1 (2021): 85-95; Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi, "Roh Kudus dan Gereja," 141-149.

¹⁸ On the contextualization of pneumatology in Javanese Christian contexts, see the discussion in Gerrit Riemer et al., *Berteologi Abad XXI: Menjadi Kristen Indonesia di Tengah Masyarakat Majemuk* (Jakarta: Literatur Perkantas, 2015), 45-60.

Case Study 2: The Indonesian Pentecostal Movement

Pentecostal churches in Indonesia represent a more explicitly charismatic tradition that emphasizes the Spirit's power for healing, deliverance, and witness. In these churches, pneumatology is articulated through testimony and experience. Believers share stories of the Spirit's healing power, often drawing on language that resonates with traditional Indonesian understandings of spiritual forces. The Spirit is understood to be actively present in worship, and services are characterized by expectant faith for the Spirit's manifestations. Pentecostal pneumatology in Indonesia has been particularly effective in addressing the spiritual concerns of Indonesians who have experienced suffering and illness, offering a theology of divine power that speaks to concrete human needs. This emphasis on experiential encounter with the Spirit reflects the integration of pneumatology with local cultural emphases on spiritual experience.¹⁹

These case studies illustrate the diversity of Indonesian pneumatology while also revealing common themes: the emphasis on the Spirit's power, the integration of local cultural understandings, and the focus on community and witness. They demonstrate that Indonesian pneumatology is not a single monolithic tradition but a diverse range of expressions that share common characteristics shaped by the Indonesian context.

DISCUSSION

The Distinctiveness of Indonesian Pneumatology in Global Perspective

The distinctiveness of Indonesian pneumatology becomes most apparent when it is considered in global perspective, particularly in relation to Western theological formulations. Western pneumatology has often been shaped by the intellectual and cultural concerns of European and North American contexts, including the challenges of secularism, modernity, and the historical-critical method. Indonesian pneumatology, by contrast, has been shaped by the challenges of religious pluralism, cultural diversity, and postcolonial identity formation. This different context has given rise to pneumatological emphases that differ significantly from those dominant in Western theology.

One of the most significant differences is the emphasis in Indonesian pneumatology on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker of Christian identity in a Muslim-majority context. Whereas Western pneumatology has often focused on the Spirit's role in individual salvation

¹⁹ On Pentecostal pneumatology in Indonesia, see Widjaja Sugiri, "Spiritual Experience and Character Formation: Finding Balance in Pentecostal Spiritual Formation Tradition," *Indonesian Journal of Religious* 8, no. 2 (2025): 70-75; see also Horton, *Oknum Roh Kudus*, 88-95.

and sanctification, Indonesian pneumatology emphasizes the Spirit's role in marking Christian identity and distinguishing it from Islamic understandings of the divine.²⁰ This emphasis reflects the practical reality that Indonesian Christians must constantly negotiate their identity in relation to the dominant Muslim culture and that the Holy Spirit serves as a crucial theological resource for this identity formation.

Another significant difference is the integration of pneumatology with local cultural understandings of spiritual reality. Western pneumatology has often been shaped by the intellectual traditions of Greek philosophy and the Enlightenment, which have emphasized rationality and abstraction. Indonesian pneumatology, by contrast, has been shaped by local cultural traditions that emphasize spiritual experience, supernatural encounter, and the integration of the spiritual and material realms.²¹ This difference has given rise to a pneumatology that is more experiential, more focused on spiritual power, and more attentive to the supernatural dimensions of Christian faith.

The Nusantara model of contextual pneumatology also represents a distinctive contribution to global theological reflection. By developing theological understandings that are rooted in Indonesian culture and experience, Indonesian theologians have contributed to the broader project of contextual theology that seeks to articulate Christian faith in ways that are meaningful and relevant to particular cultural contexts.²² This contribution is significant not only for Indonesian Christianity but also for the global Christian community, as it demonstrates the possibility of developing authentic theological reflection in non-Western contexts that is both faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to local concerns.

The Origins of Indonesian Pneumatology in Indonesian Experience

The origins of Indonesian pneumatology in Indonesian experience are evident in the way that theological reflection has emerged from the lived realities of Indonesian Christians. These realities include the experience of being a minority in a Muslim-majority nation, the encounter with diverse cultural traditions, the legacy of colonialism, and the challenges of nation-building

²⁰ The significance of the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker is discussed in the context of Christian-Muslim relations in Indonesia. See Adeoye and Arifudin, "Tracing Theology and Historical Praxis," 130-140; Bulan and Simangunsong, "Click for Tolerance," 10-15.

²¹ The integration of pneumatology with local cultural understandings is evident in the Pentecostal and charismatic traditions in Indonesia. See Tubagus and Saron, "Roh Kudus dalam Trinitas," 85-95; Pangumbahas, Gunawan, and Repi, "Roh Kudus dan Gereja," 141-149.

²² The Nusantara model is discussed in the context of Indonesian contextual theology. See Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 120-135; Riemer et al., **Berteologi Abad XXI**, 45-60.

in a postcolonial context. Each of these experiences has shaped the way Indonesian Christians understand and articulate their pneumatology in distinctive ways.

The experience of being a minority in a Muslim-majority nation has been particularly significant for the development of Indonesian pneumatology. This experience has given rise to a pneumatology that emphasizes the Holy Spirit as a source of identity, empowerment, and witness in a context where Christians are often marginalized and where their faith is misunderstood or challenged.²³ The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who enables believers to maintain their distinct identity while also engaging constructively with their Muslim neighbors. This emphasis on the Spirit's role in identity formation and witness reflects the practical needs of Indonesian Christians who must navigate the challenges of religious pluralism on a daily basis.

The encounter with diverse cultural traditions has also shaped Indonesian pneumatology in significant ways. Indonesia's rich cultural diversity includes a wide range of spiritual traditions, from ancestral veneration to mystical Islam, that have shaped how Indonesians understand spiritual reality. Indonesian Christians have engaged with these traditions in their theological reflection on the Holy Spirit, seeking to communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful terms while also maintaining theological integrity.²⁴ This engagement has given rise to a pneumatology that is attentive to the spiritual concerns of Indonesian culture and that speaks to the existential questions that arise from the encounter with diverse religious and cultural traditions.

The legacy of colonialism has also shaped Indonesian pneumatology, particularly in the context of postcolonial identity formation. Indonesian Christians have sought to develop theological understandings that are distinct from the Western formulations that were often imposed during the colonial period. This has given rise to a pneumatology that emphasizes the Spirit's role in liberation, justice, and the affirmation of Indonesian cultural identity.²⁵ The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who empowers believers to resist oppression and to work for

²³ The experience of being a minority in a Muslim-majority context is discussed in the analysis of Indonesian Christian identity. See Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 258; Tjen, "Crossing the Boundaries," 203.

²⁴ The integration of pneumatology with local cultural understandings is discussed in the context of contextual theology in Indonesia. Steven Tubagus and Oey Natanael Winanto. "Roh Kudus Dalam Alkitab: Refleksi Peran Roh Kudus di Dunia": 1-17, Timotius Baktis Saroni and Steven Tubagus. "Roh Kudus dalam Trinitas dan Komunitas Umat Tuhan": 85-95.

²⁵ The postcolonial dimension of Indonesian theology is reflected in efforts to develop contextual theologies that engage with Indonesian culture and experience. See Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 150-170; Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002), 200-215.

the transformation of society, reflecting the broader concern for justice and liberation that has characterized postcolonial theology in many parts of the world.

Pneumatology as a Resource for Christian-Muslim Relations

One of the most significant contributions of Indonesian pneumatology is its potential to serve as a resource for Christian-Muslim relations. In a context where Christians and Muslims live side by side and where interreligious conflict has at times been a reality, the development of theologies that can foster mutual understanding and respect is of crucial importance. Indonesian pneumatology offers several resources for this task, including its emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a source of peace and reconciliation, its engagement with Islamic understandings of the Spirit, and its commitment to dialogue and witness.

The emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a source of peace and reconciliation is a particularly important resource for Christian-Muslim relations. In a nation that has experienced significant religious conflict, the understanding that the Holy Spirit is the one who breaks down barriers and creates unity is a powerful theological resource for peacebuilding.²⁶ Indonesian Christians have drawn on this understanding to develop peacebuilding initiatives that bring together Christians and Muslims in shared efforts for justice and reconciliation. The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who empowers believers to overcome the divisions that separate them from their Muslim neighbors and to work together for the common good.

The engagement with Islamic understandings of the Spirit also represents a significant resource for Christian-Muslim relations. By engaging with Islamic theology and seeking to understand how Muslims understand the Spirit, Indonesian Christians have developed a pneumatology that is attentive to the concerns of their Muslim neighbors. This engagement has given rise to dialogue that seeks to find common ground while also acknowledging theological differences.²⁷ The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who enables believers to engage with their Muslim neighbors in ways that are both faithful to their own tradition and respectful of the other.

The commitment to dialogue and witness that characterizes Indonesian pneumatology also represents a resource for Christian-Muslim relations. Indonesian Christians understand the

²⁶ The role of the Holy Spirit in peacemaking is discussed in the context of the church's mission in Indonesia. See Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 261; Tjen, "Crossing the Boundaries," 205.

²⁷ The dialogue between Christians and Muslims on the Holy Spirit is discussed in the context of interreligious relations in Indonesia. See Adeoye and Arifudin, "Tracing Theology and Historical Praxis," 130-140; Bulan and Simangunsong, "Click for Tolerance," 10-15.

Holy Spirit as the one who empowers them to bear witness to their faith while also engaging in dialogue with their Muslim neighbors. This dual commitment reflects the recognition that witness and dialogue are not mutually exclusive but are complementary expressions of Christian faithfulness.²⁸ The Holy Spirit is understood as the one who enables believers to speak boldly about their faith while also listening respectfully to the faith of others and seeking common ground for collaboration.

The Challenge of Developing Authentic Indonesian Pneumatology

Despite the significant contributions of Indonesian pneumatology, the development of authentic theological reflection in the Indonesian context faces several challenges. These challenges include the ongoing influence of Western theological paradigms, the difficulty of engaging with local cultural traditions in ways that are both faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to local concerns, and the need to address the social and political challenges facing Indonesian society. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing theological reflection that is both rooted in Indonesian experience and engaged with the broader Christian tradition.

One of the most significant challenges is the ongoing influence of Western theological paradigms on Indonesian theological reflection. Despite efforts to develop contextual theologies, much of Indonesian theology remains shaped by Western categories and concerns. This influence is evident in the tendency to rely on Western theological sources and to frame theological questions in Western terms.²⁹ Overcoming this influence requires a deliberate effort to develop theological reflection that is rooted in Indonesian experience and that addresses the questions and concerns that arise from the Indonesian context.

The difficulty of engaging with local cultural traditions in ways that are both faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to local concerns also represents a significant challenge. Indonesian Christians must navigate the tension between the desire to communicate the gospel in culturally meaningful ways and the need to maintain theological integrity. This tension is particularly acute in the area of pneumatology, where the integration of local spiritual understandings with Christian theology raises questions about the boundaries of orthodoxy.³⁰

²⁸ The relationship between witness and dialogue is discussed in the context of Christian mission in Indonesia. See Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 260; Djomhoué, "The Holy Spirit and Mission," 68.

²⁹ The influence of Western theology on Indonesian theological reflection is discussed in the context of contextual theology in Asia. See Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self*, 180; Kärkkäinen, *Pneumatology*, 200-210.

³⁰ The challenge of contextualizing pneumatology is discussed in the context of Indonesian theology. See Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 140; Sugiri, "Spiritual Experience and Character Formation," 70-75.

Addressing this challenge requires careful theological reflection that attends to both the biblical witness and the cultural context.

The need to address the social and political challenges facing Indonesian society also represents a significant challenge for Indonesian pneumatology. In a nation that has experienced significant religious conflict, economic inequality, and political instability, Indonesian Christians must develop theologies that speak to these realities and that offer resources for transformation.³¹ This requires a pneumatology that is attentive to the social and political dimensions of the Spirit's work and that empowers believers to work for justice and reconciliation in their communities.

CONCLUSION

This article has explored the distinctiveness of Indonesian Christian theologies of the Holy Spirit and traced their origins in Indonesian experience. The findings reveal that Indonesian pneumatology is characterized by several distinctive features: its emphasis on the Holy Spirit as a distinguishing marker of Christian identity in a Muslim-majority context, its integration with local cultural understandings of spiritual reality, and its development through the Nusantara model of contextual theology that engages with Indonesian cultural and religious plurality. These features reflect the unique context in which Indonesian Christians live and worship and demonstrate how theological reflection can be authentically rooted in local experience while maintaining connection to the global Christian tradition.

The study has also shown that Indonesian pneumatology emerges from the lived experiences of believers navigating religious pluralism, cultural diversity, and postcolonial identity formation. The experience of being a minority in a Muslim-majority nation, the encounter with diverse cultural traditions, and the legacy of colonialism have all shaped the way Indonesian Christians understand and articulate their pneumatology. This contextual grounding gives Indonesian pneumatology its distinctive character and contributes to its potential to serve as a resource for Christian-Muslim relations and for the broader project of contextual theology.

The development of authentic Indonesian pneumatology faces ongoing challenges, including the influence of Western theological paradigms and the difficulty of engaging with local cultural traditions while maintaining theological integrity. However, the vitality and

³¹ The social and political dimensions of pneumatology are discussed in the context of the church's mission in Indonesia. See Barus, "Mission in a Multi-Religious Society," 262; Tjen, "Crossing the Boundaries," 206.

creativity of Indonesian pneumatology suggest that it will continue to develop in ways that are both faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to the Indonesian context. As such, Indonesian pneumatology represents a significant contribution to global theological discourse and offers valuable insights for understanding how the Holy Spirit is understood and experienced in diverse cultural and religious settings.

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