



# Resisting Violence and Victimization: Christian Faith and Solidarity in East Timor

*Joel Hodge*

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The reality and nature of religious faith raises difficult questions for the modern world; questions that represent themselves when faith has grown under the most challenging circumstances. In East Timor widespread Christian faith emerged when suffering and violence were inflicted on the people by the state. This book seeks a deeper understanding of faith and violence, exploring how Christian faith and solidarity affected the hope and resistance of the East Timorese under Indonesian occupation in their response to state-sanctioned violence. Joel Hodge argues for an understanding of Christian faith as a relational phenomenon that provides personal and collective tools to resist violence. Grounded in the work of mimetic theorist René Girard, Hodge contends that the experience of victimization in East Timor led to an important identification with Jesus Christ as self-giving victim and formed a distinctive communal and ecclesial solidarity. The Catholic Church opened spaces of resistance and communion that allowed the Timorese to imagine and live beyond the violence and death perpetrated by the Indonesian regime. Presenting the East Timorese stories under occupation and Girard's insights in dialogue, this book offers fresh perspectives on the Christian Church's ecclesiology and mission.

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