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# Pancasila and the Christians in Indonesia: A Leaky Shelter?

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# 亞洲文化 37

## ASIAN CULTURE

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# 亞洲文化

## ASIAN CULTURE

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***Pancasila and the Christians in Indonesia: A Leaky Shelter?****Chang-Yau Hoon\**

The diversity of Indonesia was celebrated in the 1945 Constitution in the national motto, “*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*” which proclaimed “Unity in Diversity”. The national ideology of *Pancasila* – the five principles of belief in One Supreme God, humanism, nationalism, popular sovereignty and social justice – further upheld harmony across Indonesia’s diverse populations. Recognition of and respect for different religions, the Indonesian Constitution (UUD 1945) accorded “all persons the right to worship according to their own religion or belief” (Chapter 29). Six religions are officially recognized under the Constitution; Islam, Christianity (Protestantism), Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. The spectrum of religions given official recognition points to an acceptance of diversity as inherently Indonesian. According to the 2010 census, approximately 87 percent of the population of 238 million are Muslim, 7 percent are Protestants, 3 percent are Catholics, less than 2 percent Hindus; with Buddhists, Confucians and others accounting for less than two percent (Sensus Penduduk 2010).

The state ideology of *Pancasila* plays a pivotal role in the unification of the diverse, religious, ethnic and linguistic groups of Indonesia. However, while it articulates the philosophical foundation and noble aspiration of the nation, it is far from being reflective of the social reality of Indonesia. *Pancasila* can be hailed as the model for the diverse communities in the archipelago to imagine themselves as a nation. To borrow Charles Taylor’s notion of “social imaginary” – which he refers to as the ways in which people imagine their social existence in relations to the existence of their fellows – *Pancasila* can be seen as embodying the “modern social imaginary” of Indonesians (2007: 171). This social imaginary is powerful as it proposes an ideal moral order which can determine how members in a moral community should live. However, every community, and, every individual is entangled in a web of varying and contested social imaginaries, so that there will be always be resistance, in varying degrees, to any injunctions to conform. Thus, *Pancasila*, although an important social imaginary, is subject to reception and rejection. How *Pancasila* is negotiated and related to is a useful key to the reading of the evolution of Indonesian society in the face of new forces of modernity and globalization.

The idealism of the ethnic and religious harmony, as proclaimed in the national motto “Unity in Diversity,” had, in time to be realized on the ground through state and institutional intervention. Ethnic and religious plurality was never seriously dealt during Suharto’s “New Order” period (1966-1998) as public discourses on social differences or SARA (ethnicity, religion, race and inter-group differences) were officially prohibited. Assimilation was the dominant discourse. Multiculturalism was only endorsed after the fall of Suharto in 1998 (Suryadinata 2004; Hoon 2006), but the lifting of the top-down strong arm tactics deployed in the interminable 32 years of New Order government; freedom to express ethnic and religious diversity also meant the opening of the door to inter-communal challenges (Parker and Hoon

2013). Various episodes of ethnic, religious and communal violence erupted across Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> Without the intervention of state under Suharto, the national ideology of *Pancasila* began to falter in the face of new individualistic and group ideologies and social imaginaries, which vigorously emerged in the abruptly opened public sphere.

Although post-Suharto Indonesia can be seen as a more open and democratic society, religious pluralism is in fact being circumscribed by restrictive governmental regulations and rising religious intolerance. The recently published monograph, *Disputed Churches in Jakarta*, highlights some of the current controversies and disputes related to church constructions and buildings in Jakarta (see Ali-Fauzi et al. 2012). Rising conservatism within mainstream Islam is also increasingly evident.<sup>2</sup> The increasingly intolerant religious landscape in Indonesia has a significant impact on the country's Christians. A growing minority will always threaten the majority, and the Muslims of Indonesia have named "Christianization" (or "*Kristenisasi*"), whether real or phantom, as a moral threat. With the recent rising popularity of Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic movements, such tensions have become increasingly marked. According to the report released by the International Crisis Group in 2010, religious intolerance in Indonesia has been on the rise due to the impact of "clashing fundamentalisms" as headline Islamists perceive the growth of fundamentalist Christianity as an imminent threat (ICG 2010).<sup>3</sup>

Christianity has experienced an explosive growth globally, especially in developing countries including Indonesia. Significantly, it has not been the more ecumenical and liberal denominations that have grown, but rather their more conservative and fundamentalist counterparts – those who believe in supernatural faith, miracles, infallible scriptural authority and evangelism that has become ascendant (Miller and Yamamori 2007: 36). This new strand of Christianity, referred to as the Pentecostal or Charismatic movement, is remarkably different to the more established and institutionalized traditional denominations. Tham argues that the rise of this movement is a reaction to secularization on one hand, and a demonstration of the failure of institutional religions to meet the emotional needs of their followers on the other. He maintains that the hyper-rationalism and disenchantment brought about by secularization has deprived individuals of "transcendent perspectives" which give meaning and purpose to their lives (2008: 23). Furthermore, secularization and modernization have limited the role of institutional religion in the public sphere. As a result, a religious "market place" has been created as the new religious movement attempts to "re-institute the sacred canopy" and "grapple with the demands of modernization and secularization" (Tham 2008: 24).<sup>4</sup>

The secularization theory (Berger 1969) has been turned on its head in that the "secularization" process itself has triggered a response in religious revivalism and the rise of fundamentalisms globally. The term "fundamentalism" borrows from a period in the history of American Christian Protestantism. Christian fundamentalism refers to a movement of those "who advocate a literalist biblical position; [and] wish to return to and replicate the past" (Esposito 1999: 5). Many scholars believe that fundamentalist religion should be seen as a reaction to the conditions of modern civilization including secularism, anomie, social isolation, loneliness, loss of social connectedness and community, moral bankruptcy, loss of religious authority and continuing flux. As Berger articulates, "Modernity, for fully understandable reasons, undermines all the old certainties: uncertainty is a condition that many people find very hard to bear; therefore, any movement (not only a religious one) that promises to provide or to

renew certainty has a ready market" (1999: 7). Religious belief, and particularly fundamentalist religious belief, offers comfort and passion in a cold, hard world; it offers religious authority to a morally uncertain world; it offers rock-solid answers to a world in flux; it provides a ready community to belong to and an easy identity for lost, rootless or marginalized individuals. Fundamentalisms are marked by their dogmatic insistence on boundary-markers of orthodoxy (or claimed orthodoxy) and acceptance of absolute, literal, non-negotiable truth. The unprecedented growth of the fundamentalist evangelical and Charismatic Christianity poses new challenges to the continuing presence of Christianity within the largest Muslim country in the world.

This article examines the ongoing negotiations between the postcolonial Indonesian state and the Christian minority, focusing on how the Christians use the state ideology of *Pancasila* to claim legitimacy and cultural citizenship rights in the majority Muslim, multicultural society of Indonesia. It needs to be highlighted that the Christians are not a homogeneous group and their attitude towards *Pancasila* is not unified. While most Christians depend on *Pancasila* for protection of their rights as a minority, their commitment towards the pluralistic spirit of the state ideology varies; this article attempts to unpack such varying attitudes. This article draws upon knowledge from interviews conducted by the author in Java during intermittent periods of fieldwork in 2011. Views of Christian and Muslim intellectuals and activists on *Pancasila* were solicited to enable a critical examination of recent appeals of interfaith activists, religious leaders and academics who have sought to revitalize *Pancasila* as a force to re-unify the people, restore the value of tolerance and uphold the respect for difference in Indonesia's multicultural society.

### Christianity and the Pancasila State

The early stages in the development of *Pancasila* were inextricably linked to the fate of the Christians in this new nation-state. A few months prior to Indonesia's proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, the Investigative Body for the Preparation of an Independent Indonesia (BPU/DKI) was established to deliberate on the form of philosophical foundation (*Weltanschauung*) for the new state. The members of BPU/DKI were divided into two opposing camps: the Muslim nationalists and secular nationalists.<sup>5</sup> The former intended to establish an Islamic state while the latter proposed for a national unitary state (Intan 2006; Elson 2009; Latif 2011). Nationalist leaders such as Mohammad Hatta and Supomo argued against an Islamic state worrying that it would exclude religious minorities and undermine the unitary state (*negara perazatan*). While advocating the separation of Islam from the state, secular nationalists did not go as far as proposing a secular state but instead, supported the idea of a "religiously neutral state" (Ichwan 2011).

To break the deadlock between the two opposing groups, Sukarno, who later became the first president of Indonesia, delivered a famous speech on 1 June 1945, in which he stated the five basic principles, known as *Pancasila*, to become the foundation of the state. These principles include: nationalism; internationalism or humanitarianism; deliberation or democracy; social justice or social welfare; and Lordship. Through such an ideology, Sukarno enacted a

common ground of “neither a secular nor a religious state” but a “*Pancasila* state” (Ichwan 2011), which sought to include all segments of the society and use nationalism as its basis (Eison 2009).<sup>6</sup> While the Muslims generally approved *Pancasila* as the ideological basis of the state, they drafted a “gentleman’s agreement” known as the Jakarta Charter to reformulate the *Pancasila* principles closer to their religious values. They proposed: 1) Belief in God with the obligation to carry out the Islamic law (*syari’ah*) for its adherents; 2) Just and civilized humanity; 3) The unity of Indonesia; 4) Democracy guided by inner wisdom in unanimity arising from deliberation amongst representatives; 5) Social justice for all the people of Indonesia (Ichwan 2011). However, the addition of the clause “with the obligation to carry out the Islamic law for its adherents” (also known as “the seven words” of the Jakarta Charter) became a major point of contention. To the Islamic group, “the seven words” signified state recognition of a religion that had long been marginalized during the colonial period (Latif 2011: 24). However, Christian nationalists from eastern Indonesia rejected the additional clause for being discriminatory to minorities and threatened to withdraw from the Republic if the clause remained. To prevent the potential stillbirth of the republic, the Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence (PPKI) abrogated the Jakarta Charter and removed the clause of “the seven words” from the constitution (Darmaputera 1982; Intan 2006; Tialeay 2008).<sup>7</sup>

As a consequence, the first *sila* or principle of the national ideology was amended as “belief in one supreme God”.<sup>8</sup> This principle is significant for it positions Indonesia as *neither* a secular *nor* an Islamic state, but a religious state, not of a theocracy but of plural religious beliefs. *Pancasila* offered a compromise for the competing ideological groups, which proposed Indonesia to be *either* an Islamic *or* a secular state. Calling it a “neither/nor” approach, Darmaputera highlighted the inclusiveness of *Pancasila* beyond the limit of the “either/or” binary. He argues that *Pancasila* is made up of unique principles from Javanese culture, which is based on unity, balance and harmony. These principles were seen as the best viable option for the maintenance of Indonesia’s unity and diversity (Darmaputera 1982). A *Pancasila* state thus promised a safe environment for religions to develop, with the expectation that religions would play a public role in defining and maintaining social ethics (Latif 2011: 42–43). However, the social reality of Indonesia today shows that this ideal is yet to be achieved.

Although the Constitution had accorded “freedom of religion” to Indonesian citizens, it can be argued that this freedom is circumscribed by the state ideology of *Pancasila*. Firstly, Indonesians do not have the right to atheism. Atheism was stigmatized during the Suharto regime when an atheist was automatically assumed to be a communist who warranted exclusion from the national community. More recently, the state’s position towards atheism is being put to the test with the imprisonment of a 30-year old self-declared atheist under charges of blasphemy, disseminating hatred and spreading atheism (*The New York Times*, 21 May 2012).<sup>9</sup> Secondly, the *Pancasila* ideology “denigrates all traditional religions, while giving legitimacy [only] to a variety of modern religions” (Kipp 1996: 190). In postcolonial Indonesia, “*agama*” (or religion) was constructed within the nationalist ideology and a modernist discourse. As Abalain explains,

Agama, conventionally translated as “religion”, is used in Indonesian official discourse more narrowly than the English term is commonly used in English discourse.... An *agama*

is a religious system that fulfils the following criteria: 1) it must “constitute a way of life for its adherents”; 2) it must “teach belief in the existence of The One Supreme God”; 3) it must “have a holy book [*kitab suci*]”; and it must “be led by a prophet [*nabi*]” (2005: 121).

Within this narrow definition, religious systems beyond the six officially sanctioned religions, including Javanese mysticisms, tribal animisms and “deviant” sects, such as Jehovah Witnesses – were labeled as “*keperayaan*” or “beliefs”, and not “*Agama*” (Abalain 2005).<sup>10</sup> All citizens are required to identify their affiliation with one of the official religions in documents of legal status such as birth and marriage certificates, the national identity card (KTP).

The Christians, however, have not been the victim of such circumscription. Christianity was commonly associated with modernity in postcolonial Indonesia due to its legacy of being a “Dutch” religion, which represented ties with the modern, global world (Kipp 1996; Aragon 2000; van Klinken 2003; Keane 2007). This association had a double-edged implication. While the Christians were accorded equal citizenship rights by the Constitution and the *Pancasila* ideology, being a minority in a Muslim majority state and a believer in a “foreign” religion, meant that the “authenticity” of Christians as Indonesian citizens was subject to question. Christians were required to prove their loyalty as Indonesians as Kipp (2000) noted, reflecting Benedict Anderson’s observations in mid-1960s that Javanese Christians were not regarded as truly Javanese but were something less.

Nonetheless, the Christians had proven their citizenship and belonging convincingly. In the struggle for independence, the Christians joined their fellow Indonesians against the Dutch. They were active in nation building and political participation in Independent Indonesia (van Klinken 2003; Tialeay 2008). Indigenous church leaders took over the leadership from their Dutch counterparts after independence, in a move towards Indonesianization of the church. The Dutch mission schools had elevated the Christians in their social status. This minority had become a visible segment of the middle class, occupying many of the white-collar professions and taking important positions in the new state of Indonesia (Kipp 1996: 213; Mujiburrahman 2006: 18).

Christianity is also deemed compatible with the postcolonial official discourse on “*agama*”, and with the New Order’s ideology of national development. The Suharto administration utilized Christian missions to implement basic economic development programs such as creating nuclear family households, introducing biomedicine and expanding school attendance among outer-island minorities (Aragon 2000: 24). However, while the regime needed help from the Christian missionaries to open frontiers in the hinterland, it was cautious about allowing Indonesians to make connections with Christians overseas. This restriction, coupled with the rapid rise of Islamization in urban centers, had created an anxiety among the Christians. This opened up a space for new Christian groups including the neo-Pentecostal and Charismatic movements to expand the “Kingdom of God” among the urban middle class and to fill the ideological vacuum created by the modernization processes (Robinson 2005: 338; Koning 2009: 121). Robinson observed that in the 1970s theological seminaries belonging to these movements had been training students as missionaries to evangelize and plant churches in strong Muslim areas (2005: 339). Such efforts inevitably raised anxiety among the Muslims about “*Kristenisasi*”

of Indonesia, and have resulted in various governmental restrictions on Christian activities.<sup>11</sup> These measures to curb “*Kristenisasi*” show that the ideological tensions inherited from the founding period of the nation did not abate with the failure of the Jakarta Charter. The ambition to promote Islamic ideology and to pursue an Islamic state is seen as a continuing struggle by some Muslim groups (see Tenby 2010). Some observers claimed that even the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs by the government in 1946 was “as means to satisfy Muslim sentiment” outraged at the abrupt rejection of the Jakarta Charter (Elson 2009).

During the New Order, *Pancasila* was utilized for political purposes and was promoted as the sole basis for all mass organizations and social-political groups (Morfit 1986: 42). Before the Suharto administration established *Pancasila* as the sole basis, it “purified” and “sacralized” the ideology as a political doctrine by formulating an official interpretation of the ideology called the Guide for the Understanding and Practicing of *Pancasila* (*Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila*, also known as “P4”) (Ichwan 2011:19-20). This doctrine had been made a compulsory subject for study in schools and universities and among civil servants.<sup>12</sup> Being the sole interpreter of *Pancasila* allowed the state to manipulate the ideology to accord with the interest of the regime. Opponents of the regime were simply labeled as “anti-*Pancasila*” and persecuted.

Under Suharto’s rule, Indonesian citizens irrespective of their ethnicity, religion, class and gender, were all assimilated into a constructed homogeneous *Pancasila* national identity (Hoon 2008). Consequently, internally diverse identities were subsumed and overridden by this imagined national homogeneity. Moreover, the Suharto administration actively prohibited any public discussions related to the four “sensitive” topics encapsulated in the acronym, SARA: ethnicity (*suku*), religion (*agama*), race (*ras*) and interclass (*antar golongan*) differences. Inan contends that, on the surface, *Pancasila* was institutionalized and implanted in all levels of Indonesian society; “in practice, however, what happened in [the] society was [a] moving away from the intention of *Pancasila*” (2006: 68). The spirit of pluralism that the national ideology was created to espouse became instead the main tool of an oppressive authoritarian regime. Given such manipulation of *Pancasila* by the New Order government, it is not surprising that the ideology faded with the downfall of Suharto in 1998. This eroding of adherence to *Pancasila* has made it a leaky shelter for minority groups such as the Christians, who previously could depend on *Pancasila* for legitimacy and protection.

### **Varying Commitments of Christians towards Pluralism and Pancasila**

The Protestant church had established a patron-client relationship with different ruling regimes of Indonesia, including the Dutch colonial government, Sukarno’s Old Order and Suharto’s New Order. Such relationship was informed by pietistic theology, opportunistic mentality and survival strategy (Budjianto 2009). The implication is that Christian’s approval of *Pancasila* may be less about commitment to its values than a strategy for protection and security. This is not to propose the Protestant Christians in Indonesia as a homogeneous group. There is a diversity of Christian movements in Indonesia and their differing missions and doctrinal

positions afford insight into their attitude towards pluralism, a key principle enshrined in *Pancasila*.

The three largest Christian movements in the nation are: the Ecumenicals, the Evangelicals and the Pentecostal-Charismatics. The Ecumenicals comprise the so-called “mainline” churches,<sup>13</sup> which are predominantly ethnic-based, such as the Batak Christian Church, Protestant Church of Maluku, Javanese Christian Church, Toraja Church and Protestant Church in Papua. The Ecumenical movement in Indonesia is represented by the Communion of Churches in Indonesia (PGI, or *Persatuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia*), which is part of the global Ecumenical movement promoted by the World Council of Churches.<sup>14</sup> Since its inception in 1950, the PGI has made efforts to contribute to nation building and to “solve various social-political-economic-legal-cultural problems” (Aritonang 2008: 842). The organization plays an important role in representing the Christian voice on various policy matters, including the debate on legislations discussed in the previous section. Until the middle of the New Order period, a representative from PGI (usually the Chairperson) was invited by the government to become a member of the People’s Assembly (MPR) (Mujiburrahman 2006).

The second major Christian movement in Indonesia is the Evangelical movement, which regards the promotion of Christian fellowships and to spread the Gospel as its objectives. Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008) use the term “Evangelical” to categorize doctrinally conservative churches in Indonesia which are closely associated with the fundamentalism that emerged in the United States in the early twentieth century. The majority of the Evangelical churches in Indonesia were established by US missionaries, but some were founded by European missions and evangelists from China (see Hoon 2013). These churches adhere to a Pietistic and Revivalist theology. In contrast to their Ecumenical counterparts, Evangelical churches tend to distance themselves from political involvement. The theological basis for their position is based on a pietistic interpretation of Romans 13 and a view that regards politics as dirty (Budjianto 2009: 166).<sup>15</sup>

The third largest Christian movement, and notably also the fastest growing one, is the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.<sup>16</sup> Pentecostalism was introduced to Indonesia by Dutch missionaries as early as 1910, but the present situation represents a revitalization which occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the arrival of the Charismatic or the neo-Pentecostal movement from the United States (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008). Pentecostalism thrived because it had presented a good fit among Indonesian Christians already exposed to aspects of Pietistic spirituality, such as an emphasis on otherworldliness, individual experience, and biblical authority espoused by the Evangelicals (Wiyono 2005: 310). Although a group riven by internal schisms, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement has seen explosive growth, so that it is estimated that there were up to 12 million Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians in Indonesia in 2002 (Robinson 2005).

A key difference between the Ecumenical movement on one hand, and the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic movements on the other, is in their interpretation of the call by Jesus “to make disciples of all nations”, otherwise known as “The Great Commission”. This construes of the nature of the Gospel, and therefore the role of the church as essentially evangelist. Such mission positions the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic movements within the pluralistic society of Indonesia. Despite having some fundamental differences in theology, especially on

the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, the Evangelicals and Pentecostal-Charismatics share many common features including basic doctrines, similar worship styles and place heavy emphasis on mission and evangelism.<sup>17</sup> Hence, as shorthand, the Pentecostal-Charismatics will be treated as a subset of the Evangelicals in the following discussion, especially when juxtaposed against the Ecumenicals.

Both Ecumenicals and Evangelicals recognize the mission to bring the Gospel to the world. However, their understanding of what constitutes the Good News and how it should be spread differs significantly. The Ecumenical churches have been accused by the Evangelicals of neglecting evangelism (see Octavianus 2007). For example, they do not hold massive gospel rallies to convert non-believers the way many Evangelical churches do. The Ecumenicals believe that Jesus has accomplished salvation for all people and the role of the church is to bring the "shalom" of God to the world so that everyone can experience justice, freedom and peace. The Ecumenical movement deemphasizes the "fundamentals of faith" which focuses on the fall, atonement and judgment to come, but emphasizes the commitment to proclaim salvation in relations to the world in the present. To them, salvation is not just limited to the soul. Rather, salvation involves all aspects of a person – spiritual, physical and psychological. Because of this understanding, much emphasis has been put in social concerns and justice. The focus of mission is thus to liberate the poor and the oppressed, and not to Christianize unbelievers (Konaniah 1995).

Most churches in Indonesia have long been influenced a by Pietistic theology that has a narrow focus on personal salvation and the return of Christ. To them, "mission is primarily understood as a task to communicate the Gospel verbally, to invite individual conversion, to win souls, and to increase church membership" (Darmaputera 1982: 435). Other social responsibilities in the areas of education, healthcare and socio-economic development are perceived to be secondary or as means for evangelism. However, with the influence of the World Council of Churches, the Ecumenical movement in Indonesia has adopted a "holistic approach" to mission. This approach views mission as an inseparable unity of witness (*martiria*), fellowship (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*). The Ecumenicals equate mission as Christianization or conversion to a "traditional" and "colonial" approach. The holistic approach promotes an inclusive understanding of mission, which encourages Christian engagement with local culture rather than to shun them as "pagan" practices (Darmaputera 1982: 439). This approach to mission adopted by the Ecumenicals is compatible to the state ideology of *Pancasila*, which espouses the spirit of solidarity and inclusiveness.

The Evangelicals, on the other hand, subscribe to the view that the church's mission is to proclaim the Gospel through evangelism. They believe that salvation is exclusive to those who accept Christ and repent their sins (Konaniah 1995). Although they are involved in social action, such as humanitarian relief, this is only as a means to the end of saving souls from eternal damnation. The missionary strategies employed used by Indonesian Evangelical churches to spread the Gospel include: personal evangelism, household evangelism (fitting into Indonesian mores which upholds the family in the social structure); mobilizing the laity to serve as lay ministers; interfaith dialogue (as a point of contact to proclaim the Gospel); contributing to social causes, gospel rallies and revival meetings; and through Christian schools (see Konaniah 1995; Artonang and Steenbrink 2008).

Despite state prohibition on proselytizing among people of other faiths, the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatics have shown no qualms in organizing massive gospel and divine healing meetings targeting non-Christians. In some Bible seminars, one key requirement for graduation involves having students to convert people of other faiths to Christianity. To achieve this, some seminarians would offer incentives like money, food or clothes to attract recruits (Artonang and Steenbrink 2008: 898).<sup>18</sup> As a result of such actions, not only Muslims, but also mainstream churches have looked askance upon the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. Mainstream churches feel the Pentecostal-Charismatic churches have disregarded the boundaries of comity with their lack of hesitation in entering mission fields where congregations have already been established by mainline churches (Wiyono 2005). The aggressive mission to win souls suggests a lack of cultural sensitivity on the part of the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic churches as compared to the ethnic-based mainline churches. For the Evangelical and Pentecostal-Charismatic, their commitment to other-worldly goals clearly takes precedence over values that might come from membership in the pluralistic society of Indonesia. Such self-centered focus can only work to undermine *Pancasila* as a shelter that would provide unity in diversity.

One way in which pluralism may be fostered is through the introduction of interfaith dialogue, which would enable members of diverse various faiths to arrive at common meeting points of respect and tolerance. The Ecumenical movements of Indonesia are generally more active in dialogue than those of the Evangelical confessional group (Mujiburrahman 2006: 253). The Ecumenicals believe the spirit of religious pluralism means respect for differences where parties refrain from absolutizing his/her truth as the only truth (Singeh 2009: 75-8). In his article, Hans Ueko states, "My faith is not destroyed because I affirm the other religions. My witness is not affected because I also accept the other religions" (1989: 27). This hermeneutic on dialogue based on pluralism is built on the acknowledgement that God can be found in all religions and other faiths may possess the truth and the way to salvation (Konaniah 1995: 105). In this pluralist spirit, dialogue can occur without the fear of competition in truth claims, debates on apologetics and expressions of cultural/religious superiority by any party in the dialogue.

The Ecumenicals engage in dialogue generally with an intention to learn about other faiths and to work together with members of other faiths in the bid to solve common societal problems. In contrast Evangelicals would either avoid interfaith dialogue due to the fear of compromising their faith, or would use dialogue as an Evangelical tool to proselytize to members of other faiths.<sup>19</sup> The Evangelicals reject the notions of moral equivalence and equality of religion, which form the very premise of interfaith dialogue. Evangelicals view themselves as the sole custodian of the absolute truth. While the Ecumenicals continuously seek to contextualize the scripture to better address local needs, the Evangelicals uphold the authority and inerrancy of the text. Moreover, the Evangelicals are also wary of the threat of relativism and syncretism, which might follow when the floodgates of pluralism are opened (see Lunnintang 2009a).

However, the more uncertain position of religious groups that has come about following the letting up of authoritarian rule of the New Order has seen even the most strident Christian group employing accommodating strategies. Budjianto's (2009) research on the Evangelicals in Surakarta shows that the 1998 riots forced the Evangelicals to open themselves to interfaith dialogue. However, Budjianto notes that such involvement is driven mainly by practical needs

to seek security, and is not based on change in their theological position as custodians of absolute Truth. They view *Pancasila* and *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* less as a national ideology of respect for differences but through a self-serving lens as proclaiming their right to evangelize freely, to be able to convert people to their faith and as liberty to construct church buildings as they would. Charismatic churches, on the other hand, use a different strategy. Instead of participating in interfaith forum, they tend to use the business connections of their members with government security forces to seek protection (Budjianto 2009).

In contrast to the rejection of pluralism by the Evangelicals, Ecumenical leaders and intellectuals such as Eka Darmaputera, Th. Sumartana, A.A. Yewanogoe, Zakaria Ngelow and E.G. Singgih have long engaged with pluralism on different levels encompassing philosophical, theological and practical. In his book, *The Gray Theology: Religious Pluralism*, Evangelical theologian Stevri Lumnintang (2009a) criticized pluralism advocates as anti-scriptural, deceiving, dangerous, relativist and poisonous. Likewise, opponents of pluralism cast doubt on the orthodoxy of the belief of the Ecumenicals by labeling them as "liberal Christians". Notwithstanding such suspicions, when the New Order regime imposed *Pancasila* as the sole basis of all social organizations in 1984, the Ecumenicals opposed the regulation ferociously as they perceived it to have contradicted 1 Corinthians 3: 11, which stated that only Jesus was the basis of the church. The PGI only accepted the regulation in 1986 after much internal deliberation and negotiation with the government (see Mujiburrahman 2006: 149-153).

On the other hand, the supposedly "uncompromising" Evangelicals swiftly accepted the official instruction; with the leader of the Indonesian Evangelical movement, Petrus Octavianus, calling for all Evangelicals to accept *Pancasila* as the sole basis of the church (Octavianus 1985). According to Octavianus, "*Pancasila* is specially given by God to the Indonesian nation so that we can participate in the building of the Indonesian nation and in the building of God's kingdom" (Octavianus 1989: 17). He went as far as calling *Pancasila* the "most fitting" ideological foundation for the global age, which should be "adopted by every nation in the world" (Octavianus 2009: 131). Such fervent was echoed by his protégé, Stevri Lumnintang, who took it even further by advocating stiff sanctions on people who challenge *Pancasila*, "because questioning *Pancasila* is akin to being the enemy of the state" (Lumnintang 2009b: 649). However, while the reasons for such zealotness towards the regulation on *Pancasila* can leave one speculating, one has to differentiate this sentiment from the real commitment to the pluralistic spirit of *Pancasila*, which is evidently absent in the Evangelicals.

### Quo Vadis Pancasila: Some Contemporary Views

With the demise of the Suharto regime, *Pancasila* faded in post-Suharto public discourses. The knee-jerk reaction is understandable given the fact that the state ideology carries the stigma of a repressive ideological weapon used by the authoritarian regime to silence dissent. A Muslim academic from a state university in Jogjakarta put it this way, "The indoctrination of *Pancasila* during the Suharto period was too militaristic. [*Pancasila*] was used to support the regime; and the identity basis of our society, SARA, was not discussed" (interview, 14/09/2011). A Catholic university lecturer used the word "trauma" to describe the post-1998 feelings of

Indonesians towards *Pancasila* (interview, 16/11/2011). While it was a mandatory subject to be taught at school, *Pancasila* was erased from the national education system under the new Education Law No. 20/2003. The same Muslim academic in Jogjakarta states, "*Pancasila* has almost been forgotten [by the society] now. I am not even sure whether my child can memorize [the five principles] or not..." (interview, 14/09/2011). The People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) dissolved the decree on *Pancasila* as the sole basis of mass organizations (Ichwan 2011). Although most Islamic organizations and political parties (with the exception of radical groups) reinstated Islam as their ideological basis, they have not explicitly rejected *Pancasila*. Instead they have manipulated the state philosophy to their own purpose. Islamization – such as the introduction of Sharia-inspired laws and bylaws – has been justified using the first principle of *Pancasila* (Belief in One Supreme God) (ibid). It is clear that the aspiration set out in the "seven words" of the Jakarta Charter has never really been put to rest.

Ichwan argues that *Pancasila* is experiencing a "transitional crisis", which could either lead to empowerment or deconstruction (2011: 38). Perhaps it is not too late, as my informants who are Indonesian academics are united in their opinion that the Indonesian society at large still believes in *Pancasila*. A Muslim academic in a state university in Jogjakarta argues, "If we look at the political barometer for example, religious based [political] parties especially, Christian and Islamic ones are not very popular and have never won [in elections]. That means, actually the Indonesian nation is still faithful to *Pancasila* and to pluralism" (interview, 14/09/2011). Another Muslim academic in a Jakarta university argued, "I don't think the society does not believe in *Pancasila* or rejects *Pancasila* as an ideology. In reality, the society is rejecting the government, not *Pancasila*. The government has let down the values of *Pancasila*. When the public sees the [disappointing] attitude and the ethics practiced by the government, what will they think of the values of *Pancasila*?" (interview, 15/11/2011). Another informant, a Christian, director of an interfaith organization in Jogjakarta puts it more bluntly: "The state has been weak and not *Pancasila*ist – this is clear in the sense that they allow and even protect the existence of radical groups like MMI (Majelis Mujahedeen Indonesia) and FPI (Front Pembela Islam). *Pancasila* is not observed [by the state] anymore" (interview 16/09/2011). A Muslim academic from an Islamic university in Jogjakarta said: "I think people lost faith in *Pancasila* because they are hungry, thus, they look for ways to blame the government" (interview, 12/09/2011). To him the real problem lies with the government's failure to address the social problem of poverty and distribution of resources.

Is there, and should there be an alternative to *Pancasila*? The Muslim academic from Jakarta proposes: "*Pancasila* is the most suitable and it should be implemented in Indonesia. Our heterogeneous society originates from many communities and identities. If only one identity is privileged, other identities will contest and reject it. Hence, with such diversity, *Pancasila* is the only way." (interview, 15/11/2011). Others spoke in similar vein. Noticeably, the opinion as expressed by Christians showed a more emotional undercurrent. The view of the Muslim academic above had a more rational tone, which was afforded him in his place as a member of the unthreatened majority. The views I solicited from Christian intellectuals include:

“... don't say no to *Pancasila* [because] we don't know what to replace *Pancasila* with...” (interview, Christian academic from a Christian university, 12/09/2011).

“For me, there is only *Pancasila* [suitable for the nation] because there is no other alternative... we have to hold on to *Pancasila*, otherwise the nation will be divided by differences” (interview, Catholic lecturer, 17/09/2011).

“However, in any condition, we still need to hold on to *Pancasila* because if we don't acknowledge *Pancasila* (sigh), what else can we hold on to as a nation?” (interview, Christian, director of an interfaith organization, 16/09/2011).

I see the situation in even more urgent terms. It should be unimaginable for minorities to see living in this most populous Muslim state without the shelter of *Pancasila* and the Constitution set out religiously-neutral values. The end of the New Order has seen *Pancasila* demystified and de-ideologized. With the raft of new ideas that come with the tide of globalization and information to other societies – such as the rise of Islamism in the Middle East with the Arab Spring – *Pancasila* has now become *one of the options* in the ideological marketplace of democracy.

Reformasi has apparently given Indonesians democratic freedom, but this very space has also allowed room for the hard line, radical and exclusive religious groups to grow. The result is growing religious intolerance and inter-religious violence. A scholar from an Islamic university in Yogyakarta is optimistic about the future of *Pancasila*. He argues that social conflicts that took place in recent years have made people reconsider the value of *Pancasila*. Moreover, people can now freely choose their ideological basis when they establish an institution or political party. *Pancasila* has become an option, and not a prescription. “When conflicts occur, people are drawn to consider whether to re-adopt *Pancasila* for unity. I think this process is good because it is more natural. People are also free to critique *Pancasila*” (interview, 13/09/2011).

In response to the growing radicalism in Indonesia, interfaith activists, religious leaders and academics are now calling for the Indonesian state and society to “reclaim”, “revive”, and “return to” *Pancasila* (see Susanto 2009; Adam 2011; Maguis-Suseno 2011; Syofyan 2011). An edited volume entitled *Rindu Pancasila (The Yearning for Pancasila)* featuring a collection of essays written by Indonesian thought leaders was published by one of the nation's largest newspaper publishing house, *Kompas*, in 2010. On the commemoration of the *Pancasila* Day on 1 June 2011, the incumbent president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and two former presidents, Jusuf Habibie and Megawati Sukarnoputri, spoke on the need to revitalize *Pancasila*. There were also proposals in the People Consultative Assembly (MPR) to revive the *Pancasila* ideology through the arts, culture and education, in ways that are different from the New Order (see *The Jakarta Post* 2011). All these signify the hope that the re-actualization of *Pancasila* can ultimately re-unite the people, restoring the value of tolerance and upholding respect for differences in Indonesia's multicultural society.

One Christian non-governmental organization in Jakarta has taken initiatives to socialize citizenship rights and values based on *Pancasila* and the Constitution to Christian communities across the country. Its objective is to promote religious citizenship where the Christians can participate as active citizens to build the nation, and at the same time, knowing how to exercise

their rights and privileges as citizens of Indonesia. The executive director of the NGO states, “By the first principle of *Pancasila*, we believe that religious communities are mandated or even encouraged to participate in building the nation by contributing to the moral and spiritual foundation to nation building. We see ourselves as doing part of our responsibilities as citizens, to encourage the Christians to dig our moral and spiritual values from Christian teachings and to contribute to national welfare” (interview, 17/11/2011). However, not all Christians are optimistic about leveraging on *Pancasila*. A Christian professor in Yogyakarta argues, “I know that many Christians including my close friends are still looking at *Pancasila* as a way out, and follow the old idea that only with *Pancasila* Christians can survive. But I am pessimistic! I think for me, it is better not to fight or to struggle for *Pancasila*, but for civil society, which upholds strongly basic rights ... economic and social justice”. (interview, 15/09/2011). To him, striving towards a new “social imaginary” based on democracy and democratic values are more relevant than *Pancasila*. While certain aspects of Indonesia are moving towards this direction (such as structural and institutional changes in the democratization process) a complete shift towards this new social imaginary may not be possible due to the different social realities experienced in Indonesia compared to the West.

## Conclusion

Is *Pancasila* becoming a leaky shelter for Indonesian minority groups? This paper focuses on one community, the Christians, to articulate positions. The Christians are a rising minority that threatens the majority in a confrontation that is mirrored on the world stage. *Pancasila* has played a pivotal role in uniting the diverse groups of Indonesia and creating an imagined community of the Indonesian nation as a harmonious plural society. While the inclusive state ideology of *Pancasila* has allowed the Christians to claim legitimacy and belonging to the nation, its declining relevance post-1998 has left the Christians in more exposed and vulnerable. Ironically, some Christians have added fuel to the fires of hostility through their over-aggressive proselytization, which show certain extent of cultural insensitivity. The Christian minority continues to battle controversial legislations and cautiously navigate the treacherous waters of rising religious intolerance. But they may have proverbially thrown the baby out with the bathwater. If they throw out the principle of moral equivalence and equality of religion they also throw out *Pancasila*. Without the protection of *Pancasila*, the minority would be isolated, contained and then undermined the situation would be the very opposite from the notion of spreading the Word to a growing community. To create a truly multicultural Indonesia where each and every citizen can safely enjoy the “freedom of religion”, the ideology of *Pancasila* would have to be restored. It is hoped that the re-actualization of *Pancasila* can re-unite the people of Indonesia, as it is only through such unity that a colossal strength in religious social capital can be gathered to rebuild Indonesia.

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**Notes**

1. There were attacks on the Chinese in several towns and cities, ethnic violence in Central and West Kalimantan, religious and communal conflict in Poso, Lombok, Halmahera, Ambon, and elsewhere (Sidel 2007).
2. For example, in 2005, the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) openly condemned pluralism, secularism and liberalism (Gillespie 2007). The Council prohibited Muslims from praying with non-Muslims; in the same year they issued a *fatwa* forbidding Muslims from marrying non-Muslims and outlawed the Islamic minority sect, Ahmadiyah.
3. The rapid growth, in the last few decades, of fundamentalist Christianity in Indonesia is evidenced. Newspaper headlines such as “Christian’s Surge in Indonesia” (Time 26 April 2010) and “Mega church opens in Muslim-majority Indonesia” (International Herald Tribune 20 September 2008), point to the rise of Christianity, and in particular to the formation of Evangelical and Charismatic mega-churches in Indonesia where these movements find fertile ground among the urban middle class. The perceived aggressive proselytizing by Evangelical Christians in majority Muslim areas has raised anxiety among the radical Muslims who have reacted. This “clashing fundamentalisms” has brought about a backlash of religious intolerance manifested in the “mass mobilization and vigilante attacks” carried out by radical Islamist groups (ICG, 24 November 2010).
4. Miller and Yamamori assert, “Within this context of the new religious marketplace, Pentecostalism has experienced a resurgence of growth, contrary to all of the standard secularization theories. One might expect the lower classes to be attracted to ecstatic religion, but why is Pentecostalism growing among the middle class? Supernatural healing, according to secularization theory, will be replaced by medical science; but instead people are flocking to healing services, just as they are embracing various forms of alternative medicine. Furthermore, secularization theory predicts increased private religious experience, but the fastest-growing churches are filled with people having collective religious experiences” (2007: 36-37).
5. It has to be noted that the two opposing camps have existed long before the establishment of BPUPKI. The polemics between the secular nationalists and the Muslim nationalists had been reflected in the contestations between the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) and Sarekat Islam since late-1920s (see Subelmi 2012).
6. Elson asserts that “The Indonesia Sukarno sought would be a Godly (*ber-Tuhan*) state, in which religion was revered and in which mutual tolerance and freedom of belief would be prized (2009: 112).
7. For a carefully examined historical account of the controversy of the Jakarta Charter, see Elson (2009).

8. This new phrase was not without controversy; for details see (Mujiburrahman 2006: 118-125).
9. However, Latif argues that *Pancasila* is only concerned with public morality, not private faith. According to him, the first *sila* allows for individuals to be agnostic or atheist as long as they are not anti-religious (2011: 112).
10. “The result, in a nation of hundreds of different ethnic groups with backgrounds in hundreds of different spiritual traditions, is anxiety over conforming to state regulations, conflict among religious groups vying for government and popular favor, and creative interpretation of local spiritual practices to align them with government classifications” (Aragon 2000: 6).
11. Various controversial legislations have been passed over the years to curb “Christianization”. They include the following: The Joint Decree No. 1/1969 issued by the Minister of Religion and Minister of Home Affairs to control religious activities and the building of places of worship (replaced by the Joint Ministerial Regulation on Places of Worship 2006). The Marriage Law No. 1/1974, which only recognizes marriage registered with the Civil Registration Office and not religious institutions, making inter-religious marriages increasingly difficult from the 1990s as the Civil Registration Office would refuse to register such a marriage. The Joint Decree of 1979 prohibited religious propagation, which restricted the receiving of foreign aid for religious institutions. The Education Law No.2/1989 (replaced by Education Law No. 20/2003), which required religious education teacher to be from the same religion as the students, posing a challenge particularly for Christian school. And the Law No.7/1989 on the Religious Court to deal with Muslim legal matters, which was seen by the Christians as step towards realizing the Jakarta Charter and Islamic state (for detailed discussions of the controversies of these laws, see Mujiburrahman 2006; Crouch 2007 & 2010; van den End and Arionang 2008).
12. The promotion of *Pancasila* as the sole basis was met with strong resistance by the Muslim leaders, see Ichwan (2011) for details.
13. The term “mainline” or “mainstream” churches is generally used to refer to churches which follow the orthodox Reformation teachings, like Lutheran and Reformed (Calvanist); and in some countries, also includes other “traditional” denominations like Methodist, Baptist, Anglican and the Mennonite. Borrowing from Arionang and Steenbrink’s usage of the term, “mainline” is used to refer to the “traditional churches” founded by colonial missions, juxtaposed against the “new churches” founded by the American missions (see Arionang and Steenbrink 2008: 867, footnote 1; see also Oden 2006).
14. For theological definition of the Ecumenical movement see Konaniah (1995).
15. Romans Chapter 13, verses 1-2: “Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves” (The Holy Bible, New International Version).
16. For a description of what the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement entails, see Anderson (2004) and Miller and Yamamori (2007).
17. They believe in the “five fundamentals of faith” – 1) inspiration and infallibility of the Bible; 2) the deity of Christ and his virgin birth; 3) the substitutionary atonement by Christ’s death; 4) literal resurrection of Christ; and 5) the second coming of Christ (Ellingsen in Arionang and Steenbrink 2008).
18. Oeko argues that, “The missionary history has plenty of stories about the so-called rice Christians, i.e. people who turned to the missionary churches or just received the Gospel because they were more interested in the material gain than the inner message of the church” (1989: 19).

19. For example, D.A. Carson, a famous confessional Evangelical scholar in the United States, argues that it is necessary to insist on the proclamation of the Gospel when doing interfaith dialogue; otherwise it would be a betrayal of the Gospel (1996: 509). Another renowned American Christian scholar, Thomas C. Oden, criticized dialogue as a "chimerical dream" and "an instrument of manipulation" of the liberals, whom he referred to as "ecumeniacs" (2006: 63-4).

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