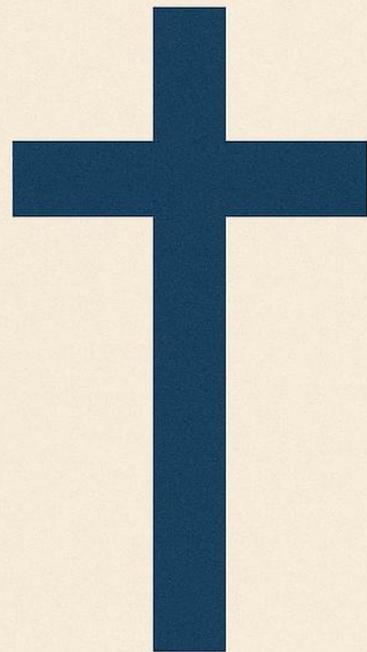


# PANCASILA AND CHRISTIANITY

HARMONY, ETHICS, AND  
NATION-BUILDING IN INDONESIA



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*Rudy C Tarumingkeng: Pancasila and Christianity: Harmony, Ethics,  
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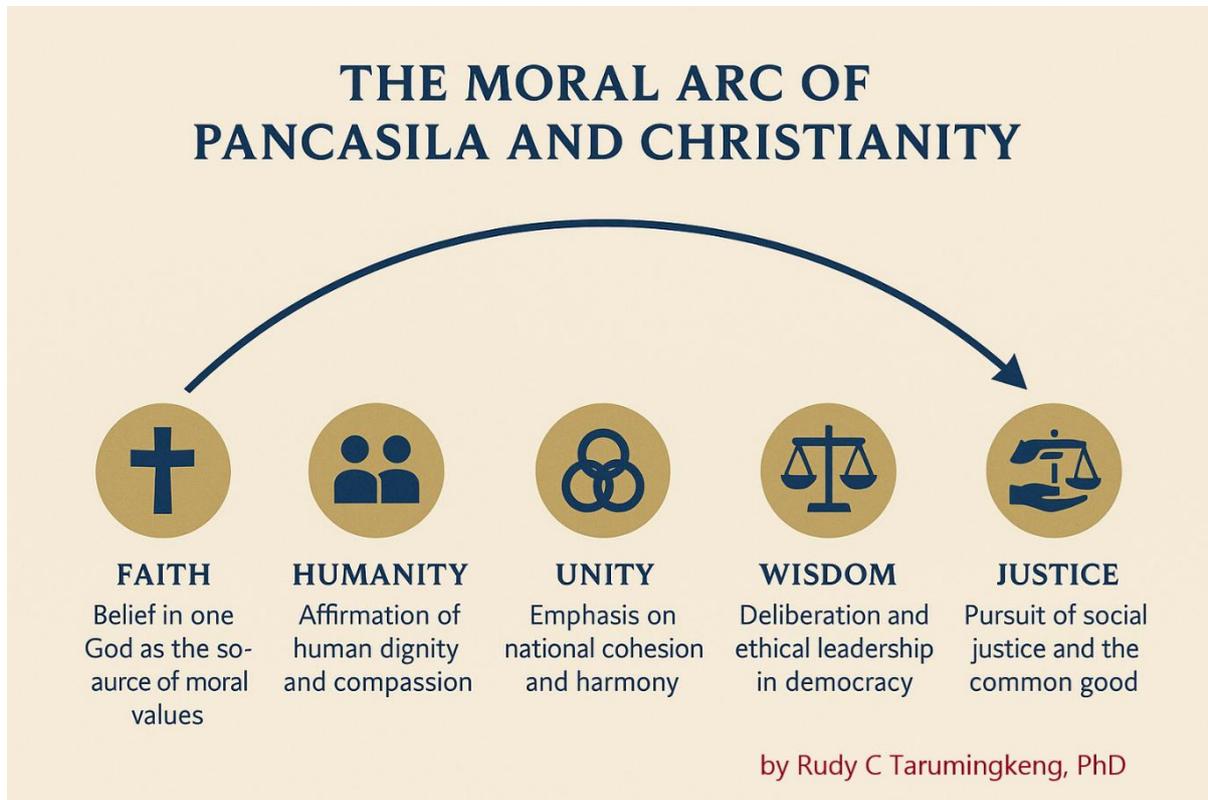
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Bogor, Indonesia

6 November 2025



*Soli Deo Gloria*

# **PANCASILA AND CHRISTIANITY: HARMONY, ETHICS, AND NATION-BUILDING IN INDONESIA**

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## **I. Introduction**

The philosophical foundation of Indonesia, **Pancasila**, and the moral teachings of **Christianity** share profound commonalities in their emphasis on humanity, justice, and social harmony. While Pancasila was formally articulated in 1945 as the bedrock of the Republic of Indonesia, its ethical principles are deeply interwoven with the archipelago's cultural and spiritual mosaic—including the Christian tradition that took root in various regions such as North Sulawesi, Papua, and parts of Java and Nusa Tenggara.

Pancasila, composed of five principles, represents a vision of unity in diversity (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*). Christianity, on the other hand, offers a universal message of love, peace, and service, grounded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The interaction between Pancasila and Christianity is not one of competition, but of **dialogue** and **mutual enrichment**, forming an ethical foundation for nation-building, pluralism, and human dignity in the Indonesian context.

This essay explores the philosophical, theological, and ethical intersections between Pancasila and Christianity. It argues that the synthesis of these two moral frameworks creates a strong spiritual and civic foundation for Indonesia as a pluralistic nation striving for justice, peace, and common prosperity.

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## **II. Historical Context: The Birth of Pancasila and the Role of Religion**

### **1. The Formulation of Pancasila**

Pancasila emerged during the historical deliberations of Indonesia's independence. On June 1, 1945, **Soekarno** articulated five foundational

principles designed to unite the archipelago's diverse peoples and faiths. These principles were later refined and ratified on August 18, 1945:

1. Belief in the One and Only God (*Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*)
2. Just and Civilized Humanity (*Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab*)
3. The Unity of Indonesia (*Persatuan Indonesia*)
4. Democracy Guided by the Inner Wisdom of Deliberation/Representation (*Kerakyatan yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan dalam Permusyawaratan/Perwakilan*)
5. Social Justice for All the People of Indonesia (*Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*)

Pancasila thus became not merely a political ideology, but a **moral compass** and **spiritual consensus**.

## **2. Christianity's Arrival and Ethical Legacy**

Christianity came to the Indonesian archipelago through multiple channels — Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century, followed by Dutch Reformed missions in the 17th century, and later Catholic and Protestant expansions in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Christian communities in Indonesia played a vital role in education, healthcare, and the national awakening.

Many Christian leaders, such as **Dr. G.S.S.J. Ratulangi**, **Dr. Johannes Leimena**, and **Albertus Soegijapranata**, contributed to the moral and social ideals that harmonized with Pancasila's vision. Ratulangi's Minahasan philosophy, *Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou* ("Man lives to educate, tend, and empower others"), embodies the same humanistic and communitarian ethos found in both Pancasila and the Gospel.

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## **III. Philosophical Parallels Between Pancasila and Christian Ethics**

### **1. The First Principle: Belief in One Supreme God**

The first principle of Pancasila, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa*, acknowledges the centrality of divine transcendence in public life. It neither imposes a particular religion nor supports secularism; instead, it establishes **religious pluralism under a theistic umbrella**.

In Christianity, the confession of one God—Creator of heaven and earth—is foundational. The Bible teaches that “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1). This monotheistic worldview forms the moral order upon which all creation stands.

Pancasila and Christianity both affirm that **faith is not private isolation but public responsibility**. Faith inspires moral behavior, social justice, and stewardship. Thus, *Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa* corresponds with Christian theology’s emphasis on divine sovereignty and moral accountability.

## **2. The Second Principle: Just and Civilized Humanity**

Pancasila’s second principle emphasizes human dignity and civilized behavior. It reflects the Christian view that every person is created in the **Imago Dei**—the image of God (Genesis 1:27)—and thus possesses inherent worth and moral capacity.

Both frameworks reject dehumanization, exploitation, and discrimination. Christianity’s ethical teachings—“Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31)—resonate with Pancasila’s aspiration for a humane society. Justice and civility become not only social obligations but **spiritual duties** rooted in divine love.

## **3. The Third Principle: The Unity of Indonesia**

The third principle, *Persatuan Indonesia*, seeks national unity amidst diversity. This mirrors the Pauline vision of the **Body of Christ**: “Though we are many, we form one body” (Romans 12:5). Unity does not erase difference; it transforms diversity into mutual enrichment.

Christianity's inclusive theology of community—based on love, forgiveness, and solidarity—provides ethical grounding for *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity). Both encourage mutual respect, reconciliation, and cooperation beyond ethnic, religious, and cultural boundaries.

#### **4. The Fourth Principle: Democracy Guided by Wisdom**

Pancasila's fourth principle emphasizes **deliberative democracy** guided by inner wisdom. It encourages consultation, collective decision-making, and moral discernment.

This aligns with the Christian concept of **servant leadership** and **communal discernment**, as demonstrated in the early Church (Acts 15). The Christian understanding of leadership is not domination but service (*diakonia*). Authority is exercised through humility, wisdom, and dialogue—mirroring the Indonesian value of *musyawarah untuk mufakat* (deliberation for consensus).

#### **5. The Fifth Principle: Social Justice for All**

The final principle of Pancasila, *Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*, embodies a call to economic and moral responsibility. It parallels Jesus' proclamation in Luke 4:18—"He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor... to set the oppressed free."

Christian social ethics, especially as articulated in Catholic Social Teaching and Protestant ethics of vocation, emphasize **solidarity, equity, and stewardship**. The pursuit of social justice is thus both a national mandate and a Christian vocation—serving the common good and uplifting the marginalized.

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## **IV. Theological Reflections: Integrating Faith and Citizenship**

### **1. The Concept of Common Grace**

The Dutch theologian Abraham Kuyper introduced the idea of **common grace**—that God’s grace operates in all spheres of human life, not only within the church. Pancasila, though not a theological document, reflects this common grace by recognizing divine moral order as the basis for national unity.

Through this lens, Christians can view Pancasila not as a secular imposition but as a **graceful medium** through which God’s justice and peace may flourish in Indonesian society.

## **2. Vocation and Nation-Building**

Christian theology teaches that every believer is called to serve the world (*missio Dei*) through their vocation. In the Indonesian context, this means participating in building a nation that embodies the Pancasila values of justice, unity, and compassion.

Hence, Christians are not passive citizens but **active co-builders** of a just and peaceful Indonesia—fulfilling the biblical mandate to be “the salt of the earth and the light of the world” (Matthew 5:13–14).

## **3. Faith and Pluralism**

Living in a multi-religious society, Indonesian Christians must embody a theology of **dialogue and tolerance**. Pancasila provides a framework for coexistence where faith becomes a bridge, not a barrier.

Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates this ethos: compassion transcends identity. Similarly, Pancasila urges every citizen to uphold respect and empathy toward others. This spiritual and civic harmony reflects the dual love commandment—love of God and love of neighbor.

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## **V. Pancasila as a Framework for Christian Public Ethics**

### **1. Faith in Public Life**

Christianity in Indonesia flourishes within the moral space protected by Pancasila. The first principle legitimizes faith-based participation in the public sphere. Churches, schools, and hospitals are examples of Christian contributions to social development—embodying faith in action.

This engagement reflects a form of **public theology**, where belief informs civic responsibility and social transformation. Pancasila thus functions as a “theological common ground” for public virtue and interreligious cooperation.

## **2. Human Rights and the Dignity of the Person**

The Christian defense of human dignity finds resonance in Pancasila’s second principle. Issues such as poverty, inequality, and corruption are moral, not merely political, problems. They represent violations of human dignity and justice.

By embracing Pancasila’s humanistic vision, Christians are called to promote **integrity, compassion, and responsibility** in leadership and governance.

## **3. Unity and Reconciliation**

The third principle urges unity beyond differences. Christianity contributes to this through its theology of reconciliation—between God and humanity, and among people. Reconciliation is not mere tolerance; it involves forgiveness and renewal of relationships.

In a pluralistic society often divided by politics, ethnicity, or ideology, Pancasila’s unity principle and Christianity’s message of peace converge in the vision of a reconciled, inclusive nation.

## **4. Wisdom in Leadership**

The fourth principle emphasizes deliberation guided by wisdom. Christian ethics provides similar criteria for leadership: discernment, humility, and accountability. Leaders should embody the character of

Christ—the Servant Leader who washes his disciples’ feet (John 13:14–15).

Such leadership promotes *hikmat kebijaksanaan* (wise discernment), ensuring that democracy remains moral, not merely procedural.

## **5. Economic Justice and Stewardship**

The fifth principle aligns with the biblical ethic of stewardship and distributive justice. The Acts of the Apostles depicts a community that shared resources “so that no one was in need” (Acts 4:34–35). Likewise, Pancasila envisions an economy that serves all citizens, not only the elite.

Therefore, the integration of Christian stewardship and Pancasila’s social justice can nurture sustainable development rooted in **equity and compassion**.

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## **VI. Case Studies: Christianity and Pancasila in Practice**

### **1. Dr. Johannes Leimena: The Christian Statesman**

Dr. Johannes Leimena, Indonesia’s longest-serving minister and a devout Christian, exemplified how faith and Pancasila can coexist harmoniously. His leadership reflected Christian humility and Pancasila’s civic ethics. He promoted interfaith dialogue, healthcare for the poor, and education grounded in moral values.

Leimena’s vision of a “Pancasila democracy” based on *hikmat kebijaksanaan* was deeply influenced by Christian principles of justice and compassion.

### **2. Albertus Soegijapranata: Nationalism as an Act of Faith**

Mgr. Albertus Soegijapranata, the first Indonesian Catholic bishop, famously said, “100% Catholic, 100% Indonesian.” This statement encapsulates the synthesis of faith and patriotism. His advocacy for

independence and social justice embodied the Pancasila spirit within Christian moral commitment.

Soegijapranata's life illustrates that Christian loyalty to God strengthens, rather than weakens, love for the nation.

### **3. G.S.S.J. Ratulangi: Humanism and Empowerment**

Dr. Gerungan Sam Ratulangi, a Christian intellectual from Minahasa, combined indigenous philosophy (*Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou*) with Christian ethics and Pancasila humanism. His thought emphasized empowerment, education, and communal welfare—principles rooted in both the Gospel and the second and fifth Pancasila values.

Ratulangi's synthesis offers a model of **contextual theology**—Christian faith embodied in Indonesian culture.

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## **VII. Challenges in Harmonizing Faith and Ideology**

### **1. The Risk of Religious Exclusivism**

While Pancasila encourages belief in God, it rejects the imposition of one religion's dominance. Some Christian communities, however, may be tempted to isolate themselves rather than engage society. Such exclusivism undermines the Pancasila vision of inclusivity.

Authentic faith requires **public engagement and social compassion**, not withdrawal.

### **2. The Misuse of Pancasila for Political Ends**

At times, Pancasila has been politicized, reduced to a state ideology rather than a living moral compass. Christians, alongside other citizens, must resist this instrumentalization by practicing **critical loyalty**—faithful to the nation yet prophetic toward injustice.

### **3. Social Inequality and Corruption**

Economic inequality and moral corruption violate both Pancasila's fifth principle and Christian ethics. Churches and Christian institutions must become agents of transformation—promoting integrity, transparency, and advocacy for the poor.

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## **VIII. Toward a Theology of Pancasila**

A **Theology of Pancasila** envisions an integrative framework where Christian faith illuminates and deepens the moral dimensions of national philosophy. Such theology is not syncretism, but **contextualization**—expressing the Gospel in the cultural and civic life of Indonesia.

This theology includes:

- **Transcendence** (First principle): God as the foundation of moral order.
- **Human Dignity** (Second principle): The Imago Dei reflected in every citizen.
- **Unity** (Third principle): Communion as both spiritual and civic calling.
- **Deliberative Wisdom** (Fourth principle): Leadership as discernment.
- **Social Justice** (Fifth principle): Love translated into structural compassion.

Through this theology, the Church becomes a **moral community** that embodies Pancasila's ideals in practice—schools that educate ethically, hospitals that heal compassionately, and congregations that foster peace.

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## **IX. Contemporary Relevance**

In today's globalized and digitalized Indonesia, the synergy of Pancasila and Christianity remains vital. Both provide an antidote to:

- **Radical individualism**, through communal ethics.
- **Moral relativism**, through transcendent truth.
- **Economic greed**, through stewardship.
- **Social fragmentation**, through unity and reconciliation.

In the era of **Society 5.0** and **AI-driven modernization**, the ethical wisdom of Pancasila and Christianity can guide technological progress toward human flourishing, ensuring that innovation serves humanity, not the reverse.

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## **X. Reflections: Faith as the Soul of the Nation**

Pancasila offers the body of Indonesian nationality; Christianity, alongside other faiths, provides its moral soul. Together they form the “**moral architecture**” of Indonesian civilization—anchored in divinity, humanity, and solidarity.

As Soekarno envisioned Pancasila as a *leitmotif* for Indonesia's future, Christians can embrace it as an expression of God's providence in the nation's history. In doing so, they participate in the ongoing creation of a **just, compassionate, and peaceful Indonesia**.

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## **XI. Conclusion**

The relationship between **Pancasila and Christianity** is one of complementarity, not contradiction. Both affirm the sacredness of life, the dignity of persons, and the necessity of justice and love in community. Together, they offer a moral and spiritual foundation for Indonesia's pluralistic democracy.

The future of Indonesia depends not merely on economic progress or political stability, but on the moral integrity of its people. In this sacred task, the harmony between Pancasila and Christianity stands as a living testament to the possibility of unity in diversity—of faith illuminating citizenship, and citizenship embodying faith.

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## **Glossary**

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>Pancasila</b>	The five foundational principles of the Indonesian state, emphasizing belief in God, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice.
<b>Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa</b>	Belief in the One and Only God; the first principle of Pancasila.
<b>Imago Dei</b>	The Christian concept that humans are created in the image of God.
<b>Bhinneka Tunggal Ika</b>	Indonesia's national motto: "Unity in Diversity."
<b>Musyawaharah untuk Mufakat</b>	Decision-making by deliberation and consensus.
<b>Diakonia</b>	The Christian concept of service-oriented leadership.
<b>Common Grace</b>	The theological idea that God's grace operates throughout society, not only within the church.
<b>Public Theology</b>	A theological approach that integrates faith with public, social, and political life.

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- *RudyCT Academic Series 2025*

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