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Five Orientations of Indonesian Christian Scholars' Role: A Reflection Based on Joel A. Carpenter's Thought

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Abstract

Christianity has grown to become the largest of world religions today. One of the strategic roles that Christianity has done so far is the role of its scholars. However, as the direction of its development is moving to the Southern and Eastern hemispheres of the world, Christianity is facing new challenges. The role of the Christian scholars in that area is facing new ones as well. The important question is not how large the extent but how the deep and fruitful Christianity is in the south and the east. In the end, these developments and fruits will have a reverse impact on the world globally. Indonesia is in an area where Christianity is developing and experiencing all these developments. How have Indonesian Christian scholars responded to this? This paper reflects Joel Carpenter's thoughts about Christian scholars' new orientation that the author tries to relate to the Indonesian context. Carpenter's points of thought are very important and relevant to be implemented seriously in Indonesia. Its implementation becomes a concrete form for Indonesian Christian scholars to carry out their intellectual mandates.

Keywords: Indonesian Christian scholar; intellectual mandate; role of scholar.

Abstrak

Agama Kristen telah berkembang menjadi yang terbesar dari agama-agama dunia saat ini. Salah satu peran strategis yang dimainkan agama Kristen selama ini adalah peran para cendekiawannya. Namun, seiring arah perkembangannya bergerak ke belahan dunia Selatan dan Timur, agama Kristen menghadapi tantangan baru. Yang pasti, peran cendekiawan Kristen di wilayah itu menghadapi tantangan juga. Pertanyaan pentingnya bukanlah seberapa luas tetapi seberapa dalam dan berbuah kekristenan di selatan dan timur. Pada akhirnya, perkembangan dan hasil ini akan berdampak pada dunia secara global. Indonesia terletak di wilayah dimana agama Kristen berkembang. Semua perkembangan tersebut juga dialaminya. Bagaimana tanggapan para cendekiawan Kristen Indonesia terhadap hal ini? Tulisan ini merefleksikan pemikiran Joel Carpenter tentang orientasi baru cendekiawan Kristen yang dihubungkan dengan konteks Indonesia. Pokok-pokok pemikiran Carpenter tersebut sangat penting dan relevan untuk diterapkan secara serius di Indonesia. Pelaksanaannya menjadi wujud konkrit cendekiawan Kristen Indonesia untuk menjalankan mandat intelektualnya.

Keywords: cendekiawan Kristen Indonesia; mandat intelektual; peran cendekiawan.

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Introduction

As the center of Christianity is shifting from North to South and East, Christian scholars have to put attention to this issue. They should anticipate the new direction and the new dynamic along with this shifting. Joel A. Carpenter tries to give a big picture of Christian Scholarship in the early 2000 and relates that with the Christian Scholarship responsibility in the past, now, and the future. His passion for the study of World Christianity along with the global mission and Christian higher education is, a good combination to bring the right picture when thinking about Christian scholars' role.¹ Through the picture that he has presented, this article is attempting to relate and to see how the implementation of those points in the Indonesian context.

Why Indonesia? The uniqueness of Christianity in Indonesia is an important factor. The history of the presence of Christianity in Indonesia has almost reached five centuries. There are even records that point to Christianity being present in Indonesia in the 7th century AD.² The Indonesian archipelago for centuries has also witnessed the tensions of European Christianity (globally in the last two centuries) and global Islam in the form of trade competition, socio-political forces, and encounters between Islamic da'wah and Christian mission. Christianity in Indonesia appears to be a unique face comparing to other countries. Because local Christians in Indonesia are not passive groups that only accept the process of religious change but are part of acting, deciding, and taking the opportunity to interpret the Christian religious system.³

Another important thing is the uniqueness of Indonesian society in terms of the diversity of religions and beliefs, ethnicity, and language as well as the geographical conditions of the archipelago are the factors that shape Christians in Indonesia who are flexible with differences, adaptable and creative in cross-culture and different background relation. This is certainly a strong point for Indonesian Christians in engaging and contributing to a friendly, creative, and down-to-earth global Christian mission.

Christianity Become a World Religion

In world Christianity, there is a great demographic shifting. According to David Barret and Todd M. Johnson, in 1900, 80 percent of the world's Christians lived in Europe

¹ Joel A. Carpenter is the director of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A scholar of American religious history.

² Jan Sihar Arintonang dan Karel Steenbrink (eds), *A History of Christianity in Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 5-6.

³ Arintonang, *A History of Christianity*, vii-viii.

and North America. In 2000, 60% of them are lived in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Recently there are 390 million, and it is expected that by 2025 there will be 600 million Christians in Africa.⁴ In an Asia context let's see Christianity in China and Indonesia. Christians were 4 million before 1949 (3 million Catholics and 1 million Protestants) and are reaching 67 million today. Several statistic resources have found that between 2% and 4% of the Chinese identify as Christian. Christianity is reportedly the fastest-growing religion in China with an average annual rate of 7%. Christianity is Indonesia's second-largest religion, after Islam. Indonesia also has the second-largest Christian population in Southeast Asia after the Philippines, the largest Protestant population in Southeast Asia, and the fourth-largest Christian population in Asia after the Philippines, India, and China. Indonesia's 23.44 million Christians constitute 9.87% of the country's population in 2010.⁵

Christian adherence is rising in the South and East. This rise of non-Western Christianity is surprising to the secular West. Even so, the notion that Christianity in the South and the East is a Western import remains strong. However, as time goes by Christianity takes root in the South and the East, it is being transformed according to each unique context. No wonder a West African theologian Tite Tiénou said that the future of Christianity no longer depends on developments in the North.⁶ In line with this Andrew Walls concludes that the Christian norm, the mainstream of the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries will be represented by Christians in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Shortly, the rise of Christianity in the South and East is changing the whole church which for sure will impacting the world globally as well.⁷

How do Christian Scholars should respond to this changing situation? It is very important to know what the strategies of Christian Scholars have in trying to implement their intellectual mandate.

Western Christian Scholars Strategies Last Three Centuries

Carpenter observes that the main strategies that Western Christian scholars have used in implementing the Christian scholarship mandate, particularly at post-

⁴ David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 2004," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 28, no. 1 (January 2004): 25.

⁵ "Penduduk Menurut Wilayah dan Agama yang Dianut" in Badan Pusat Statistik available from <https://sp2010.bps.go.id/index.php/site/tabel?tid=321&wid=0>; retrieved April 9, 2021.

⁶ Tite Tiénou, "Christian Scholarship and the Changing Center of World Christianity," in *Christian Scholarship... for What?* ed. Susan M. Felch (Grand Rapids: Calvin College, 2003), 91.

⁷ Andrew F. Walls, "Christian Scholarship in Africa in the Twenty-first Century," *Journal of African Christian Thought* 4, no 6 (December 2001): 47.

Enlightenment secularity with strategies that are high contextualized to the North Atlantic situations are⁸:

1. Fostering Christian humanism recovering and reapplying the cultural wisdom of the Christian past, mostly with the European Christendom in mind i.e., The Erasmus Institute at Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.
2. Highlighting the religious factors by questioning the secular assumptions of the academy by uncovering the religious dimensions and dynamics of culture in the past and present, i.e., The Paul Henry Institute for Study of Christianity and Politics at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, USA.
3. Promoting theism by arguing for the rationality and coherence of theistic beliefs, outlooks and actions i.e., The Center for Philosophy of Religion at Notre Dame, Indiana, USA.
4. Serving the present age by putting Christian beliefs, perspectives, and values to work as critical tools for reforming the working society. i.e., The Center for Law and Religion at Emory University, Atlanta, USA.
5. Building strong movements to advance these strategies by finding ways to stimulate and support Christian scholar's activity and productivity by creating sustainable networks, programs, and institutions to foster such networks i.e., The Pew Evangelical Scholars Initiative.

Reflecting on those strategies in Indonesia actually, we can find some similarities. For example, the first strategy we can find implemented by Leimena Academy. The second strategy we can see as a ministry approach of the Reformed Center for Religion and Society. The third one we can find as the main of the way of *Sekolah Tinggi Filsafat Driyarkara*. The fourth strategy we can see as the way group is called Perkantas Indonesia (*Persekutuan Kristen Antar Universitas* or Intervarsity Christian Fellowship), as well as the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Pelita Harapan University (UPH). And the fifth strategy we can find is implemented by the Graduate Centre of Perkantas as well by *Persekutuan Intelegensia Kristen Indonesia* (PIKI).

He stated that those strategies above are all good and did not want to abandon any of them. However, they need some "reorienting". How he would like to "reorienting" those strategies? How does the new orientation could be related in the Indonesian context?

⁸ Joel A. Carpenter, "The Christian Scholar in an Age of World Christianity" in *Christianity and the Soul of the University*, eds. Douglas V. Henry and Michael D. Beaty (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 75.

Now we are going to elaborate on Carpenter's thoughts on "reorienting" and to relate them with the Indonesian context. According to him, five new orientations need to be considered seriously and try hard to implement regarding strategies that have been trying to implement by Christian scholars. Right after each of Carpenter's new orientation ideas, I will try to reflect it in the Indonesian context.

1. Decentering Christian Humanism

According to Carpenter, for a millennium, secular and religious scholars alike have assumed that European civilization and Christianity are fundamentally linked. In the face of multiplied attacks, Christian humanist has fought to preserve and uphold the insights of the Western Christian past. However, Christianity has become a predominantly non-Western faith, and the Western Christian heritage now looks much less central, standard, and normative. Western Christian humanists will be tempted to resist this decentering because it resembles one of the most influential lines of secular assault. For three centuries, scholars have used knowledge of the world's great non-Western civilizations to attack Christianity's claims to a "comprehensive, unsurpassable, and central account of human life and the world."⁹

What has happened? He continues, the main problem of Western humanism is that the West is not very Christian anymore. Christianity can be seen as a fading tribal religion. The blessing in disguise of this situation is Christianity has a chance to break out of this cultural-religious essentialism. It has the opportunity to release itself as a Western religion. Fortunately, Christian humanism is now free to do its discerning and converting cultural work all over the world. However, it does not mean that studying Christianity in the West should be neglected.

Christianity like other religions is always in a context. Unfortunately, often its context which should be understood as a relative thing becomes absolute and universal. So, when Christianity was introduced and planted to other parts of the world, missionaries often forgot about the unique context of the new place which receives it. It certainly harms the Christian faith and understanding of local new believers who receive it. As a result, local people received a copy package of the teachings of the Christian faith and the missionary origin context without being prepared to sort out the substance from its packaging. Furthermore, this caused Christianity to become "foreign" in its new fields. In

⁹ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 76.

the context of Indonesia, the thing above has happened for centuries and, is still ongoing today.

Before jump to the Indonesian context deeper, let's see a wider picture in the Asian Christianity context first. Over the last few hundred years, the Church in the Western world has not only brought the gospel to Asia but also done so in a deeply encultured Western form. Hwa Yung in his effort to quest for an authentic Asian Christian Theology had risen several reasons for dissatisfaction with Western Theology which leading him to see urgently need to develop an authentic Asian one. Those reasons are first, the presupposed different histories and realities wherefrom the Western theology came, cannot adequately address the existential realities of the rest of the world. Secondly, a different worldview presupposed which has been heavily influenced by the enlightenment. Thirdly, the negative impact of enlightenment thought such as rationalism and empiricism which together have combined to produce a climate of skepticism that hampers the genuine expression of biblical faith. And fourthly, an 'unengaged' theology regarding with lack of the power for human and social transformation.¹⁰

Paying close attention to the strategy offered by Carpenter, Christians in Indonesia, especially leaders and theologians need to be aware of this. Christians in Indonesia must do their theology and implement the gospel as early as possible in their Indonesian context with a sense of understanding that Christianity is not as same as Western. Every Western thing does not mean a Christian thing. Looking back around over one hundred years ago, there were two local Christian leaders name Tunggul Wulung (1802-1885) and Sadrach Suropranoto (1840-1924) both converted Muslims. Both were very effective in winning thousands of new believers. Unfortunately, the Protestant Church ministers and most missionaries looked with suspicion at their activities. Without enough support from missionaries and even in Sadrach's case came into conflict with the foreign missions, later these two leaders faded into the background.¹¹

Learn from cases of both leaders above again both sides, missionaries and local people have to come to a similar understanding and mutual respect. The foreign missionaries need to reduce over control on one side and the other side, local people need to develop as early as can uniqueness of Indonesian Christianity which covers teaching, tradition, art, education, etc. They need to develop Christian humanism which answers

¹⁰ Hwa Yung, *Mangoes or Bananas? The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (Oxford: Regnum 1997), 1-9.

¹¹ Aritonang, *History of Christianity*, 173

Indonesian primary issues such as nationalism-religion relationship, cultural tradition, and Biblical values in daily life, identity, politic, etc.¹²

2. *Understanding the Desecularization of the World*

The social sciences still work in the shadow of the Peace of Westphalia¹³, the bargain struck to keep religion out of European public affairs. Some scholars expect that modernization and globalization would lead to secularization. In the secularized society, they believe that features of society such as government, education institution, the economy, etc are more distinct and less influenced by religion. However, looking back to the tragic event of September 11, 2001, following what we used to call as Arab Spring in the early 2010s, there are indications that it is false. Further, this paradigm is less sustainable when we are focusing on the global South and East. One big prove is rising of Christianity in the global South. Instead of modernity lessen the religious influence globally interactive modernity such as faster and cheaper transportation to mobile people and stuff, more easy and quick in transferring funds to other parts of the globe have proved to be a vehicle for religious interaction and competitive expansion as traditional religious and communal boundaries have broken down.¹⁴ Along with this, all of the big ideas in modern social science—modernization, secularization, globalization, democracy, pluralism, human rights, and capitalism—are ripe for revision.¹⁵

In the Indonesian context even though Christianity came over four centuries ago, its influence in Indonesian society needs to broader and deeper. Recently, seems like it begins getting momentum. Indonesian Christians grow in their theological understanding and reflection. Their worldview in integrating Christian faith with learning and life also growing better. This is influencing the way they see history, politics, society, economy, education included their involvement practically in those areas.¹⁶ Also, this will influence

¹² Hwa Yung concludes that there can be no authentic theology that is not properly grounded in the pastoral and missiological practice of the church, and which does not also demand a personal commitment from Christian, *Mangoes or Bananas?* 26.

¹³ It was a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648 in the Westphalian cities of Osnabrück and Münster that ended the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch and the German phase of the Thirty Years' War.

¹⁴ Peter L Berger, "The Desecularization of the World: A Global Overview," in *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*, ed. Peter L. Berger (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 2.

¹⁵ Carpenter, 77

¹⁶ M. Malcolm. "Perspective of lecturers on liberal art in Indonesia" *Education Research and Perspectives* no. 44 (2017): 21-42. For example, Pelita Harapan University in this last decade has been implementing its higher education based on Liberal Arts which build on the Christian worldview.

wider Indonesian society as well. Carpenter said that "Christianity's entry as a new social, political, and economic factor in many places need careful attention. It is one of the greatest worldwide development of our time. Christian scholars should take the lead in examining its impact and implications".¹⁷

As mention above that not only among Christian but also other religions experience desecularization. Indonesia in this last decade and clearer recently, as the country with the largest Muslim population, Islamic revival is happening. Its influence could be sensed very strongly in politics, economy, education, etc. So, for Christianity in Indonesia, their "battle-field" becomes harder and more complex. They are facing secularization and also with Islamic revival externally and internally the growing of Christian fundamentalism which both could harm the effectiveness of Christian witness.

So, this situation should become a wake-up calling for Christianity in Indonesia. They need to catch the momentum. Echoing what Carpenter said that all the big ideas in modern social science—modernization, secularization, globalization, democracy, pluralism, human rights, and capitalism—are ripe for revision may Christian scholars in Indonesia to contribute to this momentum. Build up Christianity on teaching, education, engagement with society in politics, economy, technology, social work, marketplace, etc which lay on strong Biblical truth through creative ways are a must, important and urgent.

3. Changing Debates: from Unbelief to Rival Spiritualities

The third strategy for Christian Scholarship is promoting theism. Currently, Christian philosophers and theologians need to argue not just with naturalism only, yet with plenty of theism and spirituality around as well. The more insistent questions are arising from rival revelations. So, they should give more attention to testing the coherence of Christianity against other religious and ethical systems, not just focus on secularity. Otherwise, European theology became overly abstract and disembodied. The day is coming, instead of encouraging African, Asian, and Latin American doctoral students to dissertate on F. Schleiermacher or Karl Barth, Euro-American Theologians will be running to African, Asian, and Latin American theological centers to gain a fresh understanding of how to apply the wisdom of the Scripture and the premodern or 'conservatives' theologians.¹⁸

¹⁷ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 77-78

¹⁸ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 78-79.

In the Indonesian context, looking back long before Independence Day, the thing above has already become something which is drawn attention to discussion. Mister C. Th. van Deventer once delivered an important speech at the Upper Chamber of the Dutch Parliament in December 1891 about the educational policy of government in Dutch colonies (Dutch East Indies). He asked a basic question: "What is it to be the foundation of the education of the natives? Is it to be based on religion or general humanism? Is it to be confessional or neutral?" His choice was decidedly in favor of a neutral, generally humanistic education. The reasons behind, Indonesia's circumstances are quite different from the Netherlands. In Indonesia even though parents do greatly desire a Western education however in Muslim areas is hard to assume that they will prefer a Christian education.¹⁹

To complement the above, Professor Snouck Hurgronje says,

"that orthodox Muslim today trusts our Dutch public education because in those schools, religion is left alone. But if a strong missionary action should be carried out and supported by the government this would certainly generate a reaction sooner or later, causing a most serious conflict in the Dutch relationship and creating a difficult opposition."²⁰

Back to Mister van Deventer, he liked to see Java's Muslims become Christians very much but the reality and what history shows that where Islam has established, chances for Christianity are as good as nil. He suggests the mission would be much wiser to concentrate its efforts on the regions that have not been taken yet by Islam. And in meantime let Western humanism—which need not be irreligious as a witness by the positive book by Raden Adjeng Kartini²¹—continue to awaken the spirit, placate the emotions, and ennoble morals. Perhaps by following this pathway, an attitude will be made among Muslims that will make them more receptive to the teaching of Christ.²²

Back to Carpenter's term he offered Rival Spiritualities, did not have to be understood, and felt negative. Conversely, as fellow human beings on a spiritual journey in this world, these spiritualities rivals can enrich us, showing an unconscious blind spot in living our religious spirituality. Especially in a pluralistic Indonesian context, seeing fellow Indonesians of different religions as dialogue partners will certainly reduce tension in

¹⁹ Report of the Acts of the Upper Chamber of the States-General, 1911-1912, 10th meeting, December 29, 1911, as cited in Herman Bavinck, *Essays on Religion, Science and Society* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 81.

²⁰ Bavinck, 82.

²¹ R.A. Kartini (1879-1904) was a Javanese noblewoman who became a pioneer in the education and emancipation of women in Indonesia. Her famous book title is *Out of Darkness Comes Light*.

²² Bavinck, *Essay on Religion*, 82-83.

interactions between different religions. Instead, this will make the process of communicating the gospel relaxed and friendly. And in the present, it is such a great blessing for Indonesia to have Pancasila²³—the five ultimate principles—as a "shared house or umbrella" and guidance for a pluralistic Indonesian society to live together in equality and harmony. Further, as Pancasila is an open ideology each element of Indonesian both individual and group can contribute a fresh interpretation. This will help Indonesian able to put it into practice relevantly with each of his or her unique contexts.²⁴ Of course, this idea required certain guidance and clear common sense that Pancasila is our umbrella not just for certain people or groups.²⁵ Hopefully, more Indonesian commit themselves to live Pancasila out in their daily life. For sure, it will bring more common goods as one nation.

4. *Renewing and Reforming the Academy*

The main mandate and strategy for Christian scholarship are to do intellectual work for the divine project of straightening the world's crookedness, making rough places plain, and making all of life fruitful in fulfilling its created purpose. They can and should participate in these efforts to serve the present age. The question is, do we have anything singular to offer to this great enterprise?²⁶ Andrew Walls sees growing corruption within the house of learning. The earlier excitement over major discoveries and new fields of inquiry seems to be giving away. Professors are choosing research topics based on their market value. Doctoral students chat cynically about how to pad their *vitae* with more publications. Government funders channel their reduced appropriations toward immediate payoffs for the national economy. Researchers increasingly depend on corporate funding. In turn, their research on which funding by biscuit manufacturers end up with "dunking cookies", from tobacco companies for "an academic school of business ethics". He calls

²³ The five principles are 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 in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives (*Kerakyatan Yang Dipimpin oleh Hikmat Kebijaksanaan, Dalam Permusyawaratan Perwakilan*), 5. Social justice for all of the people of Indonesia (in Indonesian, *Keadilan Sosial bagi seluruh Rakyat Indonesia*).

²⁴ Artonang, *A History of Christianity*, 768. He cited that according to Eka Darmaputera's dissertation *Pancasila and the Search for Identity and Modernity in Indonesian Society* (1982, English publication 1988), the *Pancasila* is mainly an "operating ideology. It is operating because it reflects, or to be more exact, embodies the cultural values orientation of the Indonesian people".

²⁵ Artonang, *A History of Christianity*, 781-782.

²⁶ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 79-80.

Christian scholars to cleanse scholarship of these polluting forces and reorient according to Christian vision to serve the present age.²⁷

These days in Indonesia, this issue of commercialization of higher education is becoming bigger and broader. Running universities with a “corporation style” of management is common and trendy. On the one hand, effectiveness, efficiency, and performance are important values that driving the higher education institution with this style bring more sustainability which, a lot of Indonesian universities struggling. On the other hand, blindly implementing them in universities will turn the higher education institutions into “manufactories” to produce cheap and obedient workers instead of mature men and women who able to cope with complicated life problems correctly and well. Also, be willing to contribute to making life around them better. Instead of just taking advantage of as many as can for themselves.

We need more Christian scholars who commit themselves to God first and His calling when entering higher education institutions. This will help them able to stand firmly in universities even though the face of pressing hard from corporation way of running it. They can voice loudly for things that have to be said, stay calm and silent for unnecessary things. They have to work hard in using their intellectual gifts, applying their talents and energies in a direction that better correspond with the outlook and concerns of world Christianity and in common goods. We need Christian scholars who can consistently see from and commit his or her scholarship mandate as part of God’s cultural mandate. They are not submitting themselves blindly to corporate’s agenda which heavily penetrating academics. However, able to see and invite them as equal partners in working on the cultural mandate. We need more Christian scholars who through their research and teaching called to propagate perspectives, skill, and understanding that as Christian scholars we are battling in this field for shalom or peace, universal wholeness, and rejoice.

5. Relocating Christian Scholarship

Carpenter said, "Christian scholars are quite naturally absorbed in their own work, our own immediate situation." It is right though. He tries to persuade the Northern scholars to reorient their scholarship, focusing on what new interest they might develop, new strategies might pursue. He is continuing to say that the heart of the matter is to serve the faith and its intellectual mission, not to serve ourselves. They continue to assume the right

²⁷ Walls, “Christian Scholarship”, 45-48.

to intellectual rule, and the southern one remains stunted. Unless they can develop just and reconciling a relationship with their Southern colleagues, the reorientation will become yet another occasion for intellectual imperialism. So, talking of the North American Scholars need most, is to become good listeners. He also adds that the true Christian scholarship requires humility and mutual dependency, letting agendas arise from the insights of the whole group.²⁸

These are ideas that Carpenter would like to propose, first, with the current context of new private universities worldwide focus on technical, commercial, or professional programs with few courses that offer a broader knowledge of the world, seems like the new Christian universities mostly will following them. They tend to reflect the secular and instrumental values that drive Western intellectual hegemony. They do not acquaint students with the depth and breadth of the Bible's *shalomic* vision. So, no other way these new universities urgently need to develop an education that partakes of Christ's lordship over all of creation. Second, as there is a promising non-Western movement to study the faith's cultural mission, it should grow and broaden. It is so important for this movement to emphasize the willingness and take real action to mentor a new generation of artists and scientists.

For this, I do agree with Carpenter when he emphasized the reason for doing this reorientation. His reasons first, the health and integrity of each Christian calling depend on vital ties to God's mission in the world. And that mission has taken some dramatic turns to east and south. Second, as long as the history of redemption continues to unfold, we have much more to learn about the fullness of Christ, about the gospel's full range and power.²⁹ Similarly, Gideon Yung, former Associate General Secretary of International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) once said that if IFES could be re-started the way its ministry to be done and which focuses on that need to choose, very important to focus with students who have passion and strength or called in the art field. This area has become very strategic in penetrating the current culture globally and bringing the gospel to influence and transform it.³⁰ His thought was emphasizing the same thought as Carpenter's. Of course, choosing this way is a "sacrificial way" seen from the economical side. Till now music, painting, dancing, drama and other forms of art studies are difficult for self-

²⁸ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 81-83.

²⁹ Carpenter, "The Christian Scholars," 83-84.

³⁰ Gideon Yung shared his reflection during IFES East Asia General Secretaries annual meeting in Tokyo in November 2012. In Indonesia, IFES is recognized as Perkantas – *Persekutuan Kristen Antar Universitas*.

sustained funding. Of course, throughout history, there have always been artists who became rich, but the number is very limited. The art world is a world that is always very interesting. And indeed, humans cannot be separated from art because art impulse is a very spiritual impulse even an impulse from God himself. Nowadays, the art trend is very twisted with the direction of the business world.

Reflecting those above in the Indonesian context, John M. Prior and Alle Hoekema try to portrait briefly the history of Indonesian Christian both among Protestants and Catholic regarding Architecture, Literature, and Dancing.³¹ More in detail Volker Küster, Karel Steenbrink, and Rai Sudhiarsa also try to explore Christian Art in Indonesia back to the early days in the 1920s when Indonesian artists try to express their faith through art media until 2000.³² Particularly in the last three decades, we are happy to see its development. Persekutuan Gereja-gereja di Indonesia (Communion of Churches in Indonesia) has published the *Many Faces of Christian Art in Indonesia*. In the introduction, Eka Darmaputera explains, "Art not only enables us to see what we see with precision but also enables us to participate in what we see. Through art, we see the unseeable. The transcendent becomes immanent. Or, to be more precise, that which is immanent has a transcendental dimension. It is at this point that art and religion merge. Theology becomes an artistic experience, and art becomes a theological expression."³³

While on the one hand art education that purely serves for the advancement of civilization is never cheap. On the other hand, the economic value that can be gain from such idealistic art is very limited and unpredictable. So, it is very difficult to run an art education with high idealism yet sustainability. Seldom higher education institutions prioritize these studies with very well quality. However, as this is a very important part of human life and as well very effective instruments bringing the gospel to the world, no other way, reorient and endure walking in this way absolutely a right commitment and important strategy.

Every time the gospel is translated into a different culture, we learn new things about it. From Jews came the truth of Jesus the Messiah; from the Greeks, Christ the cosmic Lord, from Romans and Northern Europeans, Jesus came as the justifier of the guilty; to African Americans, Jesus is the liberator of the captives.³⁴ How about the

³¹ Aritonang, *A History*, 808-810.

³² Aritonang, *A History*, 925-940.

³³ As quoted in Aritonang, *A History*, 809.

³⁴ The idea from Andrew Walls in line with Lamin Sanneh as quoted in Carpenter, "Christian Scholars...", 84.

cultures of the South and East? Through this perspective helps us to see the new horizon is opening up. The scope and range of Christian intellectuals' calling become broader and greater. This is helping them to more in line with the cultural mandate which God has given to human beings which the Christian intellectual part of this.

Conclusion

First, after we pay close attention to Carpenter's ideas, these things are relevant to the situation in Indonesia. Christian scholars need to pay close attention to these matters. Second, four of the five new orientation points as Carpenter's thoughts, namely decentering Christian humanism, understanding the desecularization of the world, renewing and reforming the academy, and relocating Christian scholarship, still need more serious attention in its implementation in Indonesia.

Third, the new orientation of the role of Christian scholars on changing debates from unbelief to rival spiritualities has begun to be carried out by Indonesian Christian scholars quite well. Fourth, with the uniqueness and strategic value of Christianity in Indonesia, if the role of Christian scholars is carried out properly in the Indonesian social, cultural, and political context, it will ultimately have a positive impact both in the Indonesian and global context. This is certainly a strong point for Indonesian Christians in engaging and contributing to a friendly, creative, and down-to-earth global Christian mission.

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