

Indonesian entrepreneur donates \$5 million to divinity school for global Christianity studies

Tandean Rustandy, a business graduate of the University of Chicago, is funding scholarship at the Divinity School to broaden how Christianity is taught.

People in the [May 23, 2018](#) issue



Tandean Rustandy. Photo by Heidi Zeiger.

Tandean Rustandy, an Indonesian Christian entrepreneur, gave \$5 million to the Divinity School at the University of Chicago to endow a chair in global Christianity.

A goal for the position is to make the experiences of Asian, African, and South American Christians more fully part of how Christianity is taught and studied, according to the university.

“As a Christian in a majority Muslim nation, it is of vital importance to me that I fund this critical work,” Rustandy said. “In many religions, we are called to be stewards of this world, to serve not just those of the same religion, but to serve all people. The need for religious diversity and understanding is key to world harmony.”

Rustandy, who was the first in his family to go to college, graduated from the university’s business school. He founded PT Arwana Citramulia Tbk, headquartered in Jakarta, which is among the most successful ceramic tile manufacturing and distribution companies in the world.

Rustandy gave an additional \$125,000 for the Divinity School to host conferences and visiting scholars in global Christianity. The first of those conferences, held on April 25 when the gift was announced, was Global Christianities: New Directions for the 21st Century.

Kevin Hector, professor of theology and the philosophy of religions at the Divinity School, noted the shift in Christianity’s “center of gravity” in recent decades to the Eastern and Southern Hemispheres.

Opportunities created by the endowed chair “will enrich our understanding not only of Christianity, but of the complex interactions among religions, cultures, geographies, and the like.”