

The Resistance of The Congregation of Liberal Catholic Church Saint Albanus Bandung in Preserving Existence amid Marginalization and Discrimination

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Received: 2021-06-26; Accepted: 2021-12-11; Published: 2021-12-22

Abstract: The Liberal Catholic Church (LCC) has existed in Indonesia since pre-independence. It was brought by the Dutch to Indonesia along with the movements of Theosophy and Freemasonry. However, not many Indonesians know of its existence, let alone recognize it. Even many Catholics themselves do not know the intricacies of its presence in Indonesia. This is due to the common notion that Catholicism is the Roman Catholic religion that possesses the highest authority, the Pope, in Rome. If it's compared to other Catholic sects in Indonesia, the number of adherents of the Roman Catholic religion is the largest (majority). The General Directorate of Catholic Community Guidance has always been held by Roman Catholics. The existence of LCC was never known or even acknowledged. Historically, the Roman Catholic Church has determined it to be outside the Roman Catholic Church because of its heresy. Concerning Theosophy teachings which tend to be syncretistic, not only the Roman Catholic Church is disturbed, but also religions that intend to purify their teachings. This article presents the impacts of identity politics on the existence of the LCC in Bandung and how it maintains its existence. This article is expected to open a critical understanding of the socio-political consequences of state policies on religious identity, especially for minority groups. The type of research conducted is a combination of field research and literature research. The field research method used is a qualitative method using deep conversation as a tool to collect information. The LCC has experienced marginalization and discrimination which forced them to carry out resistance to maintain their existence.

Keywords: Coexistence; discrimination; marginalization; politics of identity; resistance.

Abstrak: Gereja Katolik Bebas (LCC) ada di Indonesia sejak pra-kemerdekaan. LCC dibawa oleh orang-orang Belanda ke Indonesia beriringan dengan gerakan Teosofi dan Freemasonry. Namun, tidak banyak masyarakat Indonesia yang tahu akan keberadaannya, apalagi mengenalnya. Bahkan banyak orang Katolik sendiri tidak mengetahui seluk-beluk kehadiran LCC di Indonesia. Hal ini disebabkan oleh pemikiran umum bahwa Katolik adalah agama Katolik Roma yang mempunyai pimpinan tertinggi, Paus, di Roma. Di Indonesia jumlah pemeluk agama Katolik Roma adalah mayoritas dibanding dengan aliran-aliran Katolik lainnya. Direktorat Jenderal Bimbingan Masyarakat Katolik selalu dipegang oleh penganut Katolik Roma. LCC tidak pernah diketahui atau bahkan tidak pernah diakui eksistensinya. Dalam sejarah, Gereja Katolik Roma telah menetapkan LCC berada di luar Gereja Katolik Roma karena kesesatan ajarannya. Berkenaan dengan ajaran Teosofi yang cenderung sinkretisme, tidak hanya Gereja Katolik Roma yang merasa terganggu, melainkan juga agama yang ingin memurnikan ajaran. Artikel ini menyajikan bagaimana pengaruh politik identitas terhadap eksistensi LCC di Bandung dan bagaimana LCC mempertahankan eksistensinya. Artikel ini diharapkan dapat membuka pemahaman kritis akan konsekuensi sosial-politis dari kebijakan-kebijakan negara tentang identitas agama khususnya bagi kelompok minoritas dari minoritas. Jenis penelitian yang dilakukan adalah kombinasi penelitian lapangan dan penelitian literatur. Metode penelitian lapangan yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif dengan menggunakan *deep conversation*

sebagai alat untuk mencari informasi. LCC mengalami marjinalisasi dan diskriminasi yang memaksa mereka untuk melakukan resistensi untuk mempertahankan eksistensi.

Kata Kunci: Diskriminasi; koeksistensi; marjinalisasi; politik identitas; resistensi.

1. Introduction

Indonesia can't take the form of a secular state that does not give space to the contribution of religion to the life of the nation and state because almost the entire population of Indonesia, from the highest authority holders to the common people, are adherents of a religion or belief (Khalimy, 2020). It is also impossible for Indonesia to take the form of a theocratic state (religious state) which bases its government system on one religion because the Indonesian population adheres to different religions and beliefs. There are so many religions and sects of a belief that it is impossible to uniform them (Apriani et al., 2018). Indonesia needs a state system that places power under God and the people but does not fuse it. In the history of ideological dynamics in Indonesia, Indonesia has determined that the state system following the spirit of the nation is the Pancasila democratic system, a democratic system that upholds the values of divinity, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. Therefore, the democratic system of Pancasila is different from the democratic systems of secular countries. The Pancasila democratic system is a democratic system that is lived in harmony with the soul or personality of the Indonesian nation, namely Pancasila. It is a middle way to regulate the relationship between religion and the state, a middle way between fusion and separation. In it, the relationship between religion and the state can be explained as follows. Existing religions and beliefs contribute divine values and universal moral values to become the basis for running the wheels of government and maintaining the stability of the life of the nation and state. Every religion and belief fosters its people to be able to become good citizens by being actively involved in the process of advancing the life of the nation and state. From the stateside, the state provides every adherent of religion and belief with protection and guarantees for the freedom to live a life of religion and belief. No religion or belief may be forced or prohibited in terms of carrying out their worship. All religions and beliefs are protected by the state as long as they do not violate the values of Pancasila (Latif, 2011, pp. 114–117; Riyanto, 2015, pp. 18–19). So, religion has a state responsibility and the state has a religious responsibility. Although religion and the state are autonomous, they cannot be separated and cannot be merged. Religion cannot take over the role of the state in politics and the state cannot take over the role of religion in theology (Darmaputera, 2001, pp. 128–129).

It is undeniable that almost everyone who sits in the seat of the Indonesian government, both at the central and regional levels, is a religious person. They must have the ability to differentiate between their obligations as religious people and their obligations as citizens. When in carrying out its authority, the government mixes between obligations as a religious person and obligations as a citizen, then there is a possibility that marginalization, discrimination, and even persecution of religion or belief will occur. Religious people who hold power in government can use their power to incorporate the interests of their religious groups into general government policies. Here are some examples of public policies that promote the interests of certain religious sects to prohibit the activities of other religious groups: Keputusan Bersama Menteri Agama, Jaksa Agung, dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Republik Indonesia Nomor: 3 Tahun 2008, Nomor: KEP-033/A/JA/6/2008, Nomor: 199 Tahun 2008 tentang Peringatan dan Perintah Kepada Penganut, Anggota, dan/atau Anggota Pengurus Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia (JAI) dan Warga Masyarakat, Peraturan Gubernur Jawa Barat Nomor: 12 Tahun 2011 tentang Larangan Kegiatan Jemaat Ahmadiyah Indonesia Di Jawa Barat (Simun, 2012, pp. 5–6). This happens as if the state has the power to determine which religion or belief qualifies to be called religion and as if the state has the authority to determine the true religion and the false religion. In this case, it is usually the minority religions and beliefs who will be the victims. In Indonesia, the distance between the ideal and the reality of the relationship between religion and the state is still far.

In this study, in particular, the author conducted a case study on the experience of the LCC in Bandung which was never brought up in existing studies. The LCC is a religious minority group of a minority religion. The congregation of the LCC is not free from acts of marginalization and discrimination.

In this study, the author tries to explore the process of marginalization and discrimination experienced by the LCC as a consequence of the rules set by the government and how the resistance of the LCC congregations in struggling to maintain their existence. By raising this issue, the author hopes that the Indonesian people and in particular the Indonesian government can reconsider critically the relationship between religion and the state that has been going on and together reformulate it so that all religions and beliefs in Indonesia have the same position and receive equal treatment before state law. The approach used in this research is historical, theological, and phenomenological. The historical approach aims to look at the history of the development of the LCC in Europe and Indonesia. The theological approach aims to understand the beliefs held by the LCC which led to her excommunication from the Roman Catholic Church. The phenomenological approach aims to explore what members of the LCC think and feel as far as they are aware.

2. Results

The Schism of Liberal Catholic Church

The LCC is a sect of the Church that separated itself from the Roman Catholic Church. The LCC is a subdivision of the Roman Catholic Church. True to its name as the LCC, this Church is not at all bound by the ecclesiastical laws established by the Roman Catholic Church. The LCC does not recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church so it is not included in communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, the LCC has the freedom to formulate its ecclesiastical laws. The LCC has a hierarchical system, hierarchical education system and standards, and the management system of congregations that are different from the Roman Catholic Church. These systems can also differ from one LCC to another. Because of the freedom that is the main spirit in it, it is not surprising that the LCC was eventually divided into various sects.

In the history of the development of the Church, in general, the Catholic Church has been divided into two major parts, namely: the Western Church and the Eastern Church. Based on the recognition of the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church, these churches are further divided into two major sections, namely: the Church that recognizes the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church and the Church that does not recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Eastern Churches that recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church are Armenian Catholic Church, Belarusian Catholic Church, Bulgarian Catholic Church, Byzantine Catholic Church, Chaldean Catholic Church, Coptic Catholic Church, Croatian Greek Catholic Church, Ethiopian Catholic Church, Georgian Catholic Church, Greek Catholic Church, Hungarian Greek Catholic Church, Italian-Albanian Catholic Church, Maronite Catholic Church, Melkite Catholic Church, Romanian Catholic Church, Russian Catholic Church, Ruthenian Catholic Church, Slovak Greek Catholic Church, Syrian Catholic Church, Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, and Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. These churches are called by the name of the Catholic Church with the names of the rites added before them and usually, these churches are bound to a particular nation and culture so they cannot spread easily. Meanwhile, the Eastern Church that does not recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church is the Orthodox church with its' various sects. Western churches that do not recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church even though the Church continues to use the Catholic name are the American Catholic Church, the Ancient Apostolic Communion, the Holy and Apostolic Catholic Church (Arian Catholic), the Brazilian Apostolic Catholic Church, the National Apostolic Catholic Church (USA), Apostolic Catholic Church, Apostolic Catholic Church in North America, Celtic Catholic Church, Charismatic Episcopal Church, Chinese Patriotic Catholic Society, LCC, Mariavit Church, Old Catholic Church, Palmarian Catholic Church, Brazilian Latin Episcopal Church, the Independent Church of the Philippines, the Polish National Catholic Church, the True Catholic Church, and the Levebre Catholic Church (derived from the name of a bishop who rejected the decisions of the Second Vatican Council which were deemed heretical). These Catholic churches are not tied to a particular nation or culture so they can spread more easily. The LCC is included in the Western Church which calls itself Catholic but refuses

to recognize the primacy of the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. The LCC has a free outlook. In its worship, the LCC combines the form of worship of the Catholic Church with very broad intellectual freedom (Suhardi, 2020, pp. 4–5).

The history of the LCC can be traced to the history of the development of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands. In 696, Saint Willibrordus, who succeeded in converting the Netherlands, was appointed Bishop of Utrecht by Pope Sergius I. In 1145, Pope Eugene III complied with the request of the Roman Emperor Conrad II and the Bishop of Utrecht Heribertus to authorize the Bishop of Utrecht to elect and ordain his bishops. In 1215 this authority was reaffirmed at the Fourth Lateran Council. Pope Leo X granted the 57th Bishop of Utrecht Philip of Burgundy a privilege as well as his successors to exercise their tribunal authority. After the Netherlands was ruled by the Reformed Church, the Catholic Church was destroyed and Catholics were scattered. The Pope of Rome appointed Apostolic Vicars in Utrecht to serve the remaining Catholics. In 1700, the Apostolic Vicar of Utrecht, Petrus Codde, was accused of embracing Jansenism, a sect considered heretical by the Roman Catholic Church, and summoned by Pope Clemens XI for trial. In 1701, Codde was removed from office but refused and remained in power until his resignation in 1703. Cornelius van Steenoven was chosen as his successor and ordained on October 15, 1724. However, since this ordination had not been approved by the Pope, the status of the ordination became *valet sed illicit* (legitimate but not approved). Since the day of ordination was born the movement of the Old Catholic Church (The Old Catholic Church). Although Van Steenoven and the bishops he ordained were excommunicated, they retained their position and decided to break away from the Roman Catholic Church. This movement received support from the Reformed Churches movement which was ruling the Netherlands at that time. In 1853, Pope Pius IX re-established the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands and side by side with the hierarchy of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht on guarantees from the Kingdom of the Netherlands (MacCaffrey, 1914, pp. 273–274; Suhardi, 2020, pp. 8–8; Thomsett, 2011, pp. 226–227).

The schism in the Roman Catholic Church occurred again after the Vatican Council I in 1870 because Catholics in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, rejected the teaching of the infallibility of the Pope as a result of the decision of the Vatican Council I. The Catholic churches in this country separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church. They are supported by the Church of Utrecht to ordain their bishops because the Church of Utrecht already has Bishops who legally continue the apostolic succession of the Roman Catholic Church. These churches were later united in the Union of Churches in Utrecht. In 1871, they held a convention in Munich, Germany, and decided to form the Old Catholic Church to distinguish it from the Roman Catholic Church. In 1874, they abandoned the demand for celibacy for their clergy. In 1877, Latin was no longer used in liturgical celebrations and they used the local languages instead. From 1915-to 1916, in Great Britain, the Old Catholic Church movement carried out a complete reorganization based on more liberal principles. This movement eventually resulted in the LCC (Suhardi, 2020, pp. 9–10; Thomsett, 2011, pp. 227–230).

The LCC does not have a central leadership like the Pope. There is no celibacy for the clergy. Women deemed eligible could be ordained as clergy. The LCC is also divided into various sects that have various teachings. Each province of the LCC is headed by a regional bishop. Each province has its Clerical Synod consisting of bishops, priests, and deacons as members. The clergy do not receive financial compensation from the Church. The money obtained from congregational contributions may only be used for the needs of worship in the Church and the needs of the congregation. Therefore, the clergy of the LCC to fulfill their daily needs must work and have their livelihood. They are allowed to marry and own personal wealth. Clerical education systems and standards differ in each province depending on local needs and local Church policies (Suhardi, 2020, pp. 11–13).

The principles or doctrines of the LCC, in general, are briefly as follows. *First*, God's existence is infinite, eternal, transcendent, and immanent. It is from this God that all the existence of all that exists originates. *Second*, God manifests Himself in the universe as a Trinity. Three Persons one God. *Third*, humans consist of body, soul, and spirit. The Spirit is given to man in the image of God and is divine or immortal. *Fourth*, Christ once lived on earth as a spiritual presence that has the power to guide and direct his people. The divinity of Jesus slowly unfolds in every human being until each human being

becomes a perfect human being. *Fifth*, the basis of spiritual development is the law of cause and effect, who sows will reap what he sows. This law can be called the law of karma. What humans do has an impact on their life in the intermediary world or heavenly world and their next birth (reincarnation). In the circle of reincarnation, people who are already in a higher place can help those who are below them. This is called the fellowship of the saints. The fellowship of these saints greatly helps humans in the reincarnation process to achieve the highest perfection. *Sixth*, humans have ethical obligations to others and themselves. Love for God and love for fellow human beings are two things that cannot be separated. It is the basis of fraternity and humanitarian service to all mankind and all living things. *Seventh*, there are 7 sacramental rites in the LCC, namely: baptism, confirmation, Holy Eucharist, forgiveness, holy anointing, holy marriage, and holy ordination. The LCC gives freedom to its members in the interpretation of creeds, scriptures, traditions, liturgies, and doctrines. All differences must be expressed politely. The interpretation of scriptures is never singular and even inspirations from the scriptures of other religions are considered necessary because they can help understand and illuminate Christian doctrine (Degenaaars, 2004). The uniqueness of the LCC lies in the combination of Catholic, Platonic and Neoplatonic teachings with absolute freedom of thought and belief (Ellis-Jones, 2009, pp. 35–36).

Liberal Catholic Church, Theosophy, and Freemasonry in Indonesia

The LCC is very open to exploring and learning the truths of all religions and beliefs. The word "catholic" means universal or general. This word is often misunderstood to refer to the Roman Catholic Church. In Greek, "katholikos" refers to a faith that embraces all, is open to all, is tolerant, and has a traditional relationship with the apostles (apostolic succession) (Cargo, 2014). This understanding of the universality of the faith made the LCC very close to the Theosophical movement and even Theosophy became the soul of the LCC. Theosophy comes from the Greek words "theos" meaning God and "sophia" meaning wisdom. Theosophy is generally understood as the wisdom of God or divine wisdom. Three major figures in the early emergence of the Theosophical Society movement were Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), Henry Steel Olcott (1832–1907), and William Quan Judge (1851–1896). The Theosophical Society itself was founded in New York in 1875. The Theosophical Society has the motto "There is no religion higher than truth". Theosophical Society had a passion for the reconciliation of all religions, sects, and nations. Theosophical people believe in Hindu beliefs, such as karma, reincarnation, and subtle energies. Madame Blavatsky was particularly interested in the teachings of every religion. The teachings of these religions are called the Religion of Wisdom or the secret doctrine. Theosophy itself is not a religion. Theosophy is the essence of religion itself. Religion in the true sense is not a collection of dogmas and beliefs, but a bond that unites all of humanity together. According to Madame Blavatsky, religion itself comes from the Latin words "relegere" (to unite, collect) and "religare" (to tie back). Religion in its broadest sense is a bond not only of all human beings but also of all that exists in the entire universe into one great whole. Theosophy is a religion in the broadest sense and Society is the one Universal Church. The Theosophical Society has members in 70 countries (Ellis-Jones, 2009, p. 4; Pat & Rinehart, 2017, pp. 472–473)

Theosophy is not only the spirit of the LCC but also the spirit of the Freemasonry organization. Freemasonry comes from two words, namely "free" which means free-not bound, and "masonry" which means mason or builder. Freemasonry is the organization of freemasons and their beliefs and practices. Freemasonry is a 'secret' international fraternity. In Dutch, Freemasonry is translated by the word "Vrijmetselarij." Brotherhood in Freemasonry is based on bonds of love (love), faith (faith), and generosity (charity), and each member can communicate with each other through various rituals and complex systems (elaborate rituals and systems) in the form of secret signs. The beginning formation of Freemasonry is in the Netherlands in 1756 with the establishment of the Great Lodge of the Netherlands (Arifin, 2018). Because they are interrelated with one another, the presence of the LCC in Indonesia in the 19th and 20th centuries cannot be separated from the movements of Theosophy and Freemasonry.

Dirk van Hinloopen Labberton, who in 1912 became general secretary of the Theosophy association in the Dutch Indies, was instrumental in developing the Theosophy movement in the Dutch Indies. With Labberton's association with several national movement figures, the Theosophy movement became the spirit of the national movement. Several national movement figures who are officially registered as members of the Theosophy movement are Agus Salim, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo, Goenawan Mangoenkoesoemo, and Muhammad Yamin. Hans van Miert (2003), in his article "Dengan Semangat Berkobar: Nasionalisme dan Gerakan Pemuda di Indonesia 1918-1930" stated that the theosophists contributed a lot to the development of the indigenous people by being protectors for indigenous students, providing shelter, food and clothing, and especially ideas. In Bandung, there are several heritage edifices from the Theosophy movement and the Freemasonry movement. The ancient edifices inherited by the Theosophy movement are: 1) The edifice of LCC Saint Albanus located on Jalan Banda was designed by F.J.L. Ghijsels in 1918 and was originally used as the center for Theosophy Lodge activities in Bandung; 2) Olcott Park, a housing complex which was inaugurated in 1930 to honor one of the founders of the Theosophical movement Henry Steel Olcott and is now Bandung Indah Plaza (BIP) shopping center on Jalan Merdeka. The ancient edifices inherited by the Freemasonry movement are: 1) the Bandung city museum edifice was founded in 1920 which was originally functioned as a Froberschool (kindergarten) owned by Sint Jan Lodge, 2) the Bandung Polrestabes edifice which was originally functioned as a Kweekschool (Teacher's School) which part of the edifice was used for Sint Jan Lodge activities in 1881-1884; 3) the Sint Jan Lodge edifice was founded in 1896 for the Sint Jan Lodge activities and is now the edifice of the Al Ukhuwah Mosque on Wastukencana street; 4) the edifice now known as the Potato House on Jalan Aceh used to function as a meeting place for the Hermes Lodge (Wiryanan, 2014).

Liberal Catholic Church Congregation in Bandung

LCC exists in several places on the island of Java, including the LCC of Saint Willibrordus in Depok, LCC of Saint Albanus in Bandung, LCC of Saint Bonifacius in Surabaya. In Semarang, there is a movement with the same theosophical spirit, namely the Theosophical movement at the Wijaya Kusuma Theosophy Studio. In this study, the author has conducted intensive online discussions (due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation) with Mrs. Est (not her real name), 36 years old, twice, namely on Monday, June 14, 2021, at 17.00 - 18.30 WIB and on Friday, June 18, 2021, at 16.00-18.00 WIB to find out the current situation and condition of the LCC congregation in Bandung. Mrs. Est is a member of the LCC since 2010. She decided to join the LCC because she felt that she understood the God she had been looking for all this time in the Theosophical teachings in the LCC. She felt that she had experienced enlightenment and a new life after becoming a member of the LCC. The rejection of her decision came mainly from her family members and from members of the congregation of the religion he had previously embraced.

In 2013, she married Mr. Erw (not his real name), age 36, who has been a member of the LCC since childhood. This is understandable because Mr. Erw was born in the family of LCC. Mr. Erw's grandfather was a priest of the LCC and Mr. Erw's father was a bishop of the LCC. Mr. Erw inherited the teachings of the LCC from his family. At the beginning of Mrs. Est's joining, the LCC congregation numbered about 20 people. At that time, the Church no longer held mass celebrations because the bishop who was the father of her husband was seriously ill, while a successor who had the authority to preside over mass celebrations did not yet exist. Regular meetings are held only in the form of simple services held at the edifice of LCC St Albanus Bandung. Currently, the LCC in Bandung consists of five members, namely: Mrs. Est, Mr. Erw, the younger brother of Mr. Erw, the mother of Mr. Erw, and a friend of Mr. Erw. We generally know that Roman Catholicism is one of the minority religions in Indonesia. However, the LCC has far fewer adherents than the Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, the author calls the LCC members a minority group of a minority religion (Catholicism).

Marginalization and Discrimination of the Liberal Catholic Church Congregation

Understanding of religion in Indonesia is strongly influenced by Islam as the religion lived by the majority of the Indonesian population. Islam is the prototype or standard for other religions. Religion can be called a religion if it has monotheistic teachings, prophets, and the Holy Scriptures (Maarif, 2016). The LCC which is based on Theosophy has a much broader understanding of religions. Religion is a bond of the brotherhood of all mankind, the universe, and God. Religion can be called a religion if it has these ties. However, the Indonesian government itself in 1965 has determined which religions can be called religions. In the explanation of article 1 of Penetapan Presiden No.1/PNPS/1965 concerning Prevention of the Abuse and/or Blasphemy of Religion, the government stated that the religions embraced by the population in Indonesia are Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Bagir, 2016). Understanding religion in this political construction is, of course, a big problem for the LCC congregation because the Catholic religion is referred to as the Roman Catholic Church which recognizes the Pope as its highest leader, and other Catholic Churches that are still affiliated with Her. The government at that time probably did not take into account that in its history of development, the Roman Catholic Church also experienced many schisms or divisions. Many sects of the Church had separated from the Roman Catholic Church. As explained earlier, there is a sect of the Catholic Church that remains in communion with the Roman Catholic Church by recognizing the primacy of the Pope and there is a sect of the Catholic Church which is completely separate from the Roman Catholic Church and does not recognize the primacy of the Pope. The LCC is completely separate from the Roman Catholic Church. Even the teachings of the LCC from the beginning have been considered not the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church because of their interconfessional nature which greatly endangers the purity of the faith of the Roman Catholic Church (Kristiyanto, 2004, p. 206).

Based on Mrs. Est's statement, the above issue has consequences for identity and state administrative matters. The LCC is experiencing difficulties in various administrative matters due to a dilemma regarding which directorate general of community guidance oversees or protects the existence of LCC. The Directorate General of Catholic Community Guidance is structurally held by people who are Roman Catholics and are subject to the legitimate hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church. By itself, the LCC has no place in it and is not included in its auspices. The LCC is not part of the Roman Catholic Church. This forced the members of the LCC to negotiate regarding their identity as Catholics. As a solution, the members of LCC were included under the auspices of the Directorate General of Guidance for Protestant Christians although they assume that their identity is Catholic which is different from Protestant Christians. They have to negotiate with themselves to face this dilemma situation. To maintain their existence, they accept the reality that they must be under the auspices of the Directorate General of Guidance for Protestant Christians. However, in matters of civil registration, they are still considered Roman Catholic congregations for the sake of the smooth process because the name of the Catholic Church is still attached to their religious identity. This situation seems to force the members of the LCC to rejoin the Roman Catholic Church to get these facilities. Otherwise, they will still be considered one of the sects of the Protestant Christian Church. From this perspective, the author can analyze the impact of the hegemonizing and homogenizing process on the understanding of religion constructed by the state.

Dispute in The Ownership of The Edifice of Liberal Catholic Church Bandung

According to Mrs. Est, there was an internal conflict in the management of the LCC's assets which caused the LCC in Bandung to lose their only edifice of worship, namely "Geredja Katolik Bebas 'S. Albanus' ". Mrs. Est explained that Mr. Erw's grandfather was a member of Freemasonry from Sint Jan Lodge. As a result of an exchange in the 1950s with the previous owner who was a Dutchman who would return to his homeland after Indonesia's independence, he obtained ownership and usufructuary rights to the edifice of LCC Saint Albanus along with the parish house (now the Ambrogio café, on Jalan Banda) which is not far from the church edifice. The edifice was then passed on to his son

who was the father of Mr. Erw who later became bishop of the LCC in Bandung. When Mr. Erw's father was sick, the management of the church and worship was held by Mr. Erw and his wife, Mrs. Est, who had taken the position of a deacon who had the authority to serve simple worship. However, in May 2015, the Saint Albanus LCC edifice and its contents were taken over and sealed by a certain person from the LCC outside Bandung on the pretext that the edifice is an asset of the Australian LCC. Furthermore, the person admitted that he had the authority from the Australian LCC to manage all of its assets in Indonesia. In the end, this person managed to win the entire civil lawsuit trial process in court, so that in September 2017, the person managed to sell the edifice to another Church. However, in the use of the edifice, it seems that the new Church is experiencing difficulties in terms of licensing because the permit for the use of the edifice is only given to the LCC congregation in Bandung. Finally, the edifice was temporarily closed until now. The congregation of the LCC in Bandung could no longer continue the trial process because the costs required were very large. With this incident, the LCC congregation in Bandung has lost their place to gather and worship. They gradually lost contact with each other. Nowadays, news spread that the LCC congregation in Bandung no longer existed. In fact, until 2021, there are still five members of the LCC congregation in Bandung and they are still trying to stick to their beliefs. The worship of the remaining LCC congregation until now is carried out in the private homes of Mr. Erw and Mrs. Est because buying land and building a new church along with the permit is not an easy thing in Indonesia. Apart from that, all those things cost a lot of money, even though Mr. Erw himself supports his family by opening a small motorcycle repair shop, and Mrs. Est herself works as a lecturer at a private university in Bandung. So, building a church in such a short time was impossible for them.

Resistance to Maintain Existence

The LCC, which bases its teachings on the esoteric teachings of Theosophy, greatly values the teachings of all religions and beliefs in the world. The existence of one religion never eliminates the existence of another religion. All the existence of the teachings of the religions in the world are coexistent and mutually illuminate. Indeed, almost all religions in Indonesia as an institution do not approve of such teachings because they are considered syncretism and destroy the purity of the teachings of all religions. Therefore, based on Mrs. Est's explanation, the LCC itself forbids its members from proclaiming the esoteric teachings of the Theosophical LCC. The LCC allows people to come and see for themselves what the LCC is, how it teaches and how to achieve perfection in living within it. People do not need to leave their religion to become members of the LCC sympathizers, except for those who decide to become permanent members of the LCC congregation. Those of other faiths are also allowed to attend the services or a mass celebrated in the LCC and are even allowed to receive Communion at the celebration of mass (this is strictly prohibited in the Roman Catholic Church). The spirit of the LCC is the spirit of universal brotherhood. This universal fraternity is celebrated in worship and at the celebration of mass. Mrs. Est as a clergy (deacon) believes that even though the LCC in Bandung is in a state of "apparent death", someday there will be people who will come again to ask, live, and revive it.

3. Conclusions

The presence of the LCC in Indonesia is a reality that cannot be denied. In the history of the Church, the LCC is considered a heresy by the Roman Catholic Church for adopting the teachings of various religions and beliefs. The Roman Catholic Church has excommunicated the LCC. This historical trail brings the consequences of marginalization and discrimination both directly and indirectly. This situation is made worse by the establishment of formal religions by the government. With this stipulation, religions that are not included in formal religions are considered non-religious and their adherents need to be nurtured and directed to a decision to enter into formal religions if they want to get legal protection from the government. The benchmark for determining the correct definition of religion is Islam (in the East) and Christianity (in the West). This of course negates the commitment to a more pluralistic religious freedom (Hefner, 2014, p. 33). This kind of definition simplifies such a

complex reality (reification). The LCC is also not included in one of the formal religions set by the government because what is meant by Catholicism by the government is the Roman Catholic Church. This can be proven by the refusal of the LCC to be under the auspices of the Directorate General of Guidance for the Catholic Community. The LCC must be under the auspices of the Directorate General of Guidance for Protestant Christians. The Roman Catholic Church Herself does not recognize the LCC as part of Her. What the government has not noticed is that formal religions are not singular, meaning that formal religions also have various sects within them. The dominant sect in formal religion is usually the sect that has the largest number of adherents. This kind of situation can be abused by the majority group to dominate, marginalize, discriminate, and even eliminate minority groups. Moreover, when the majority group occupies the seat of government, the way to dominate, marginalize, discriminate, and even eliminate minority groups is increasingly wide open by incorporating their interests into public policies set by the government. The state, government, and community groups do not have juridical or moral rights to judge whether or not a sect or religion is deviant because there are no legal juridical criteria that can be used by the state, government, or community group to determine it. Religious truth is closely related to the belief of the heart and is not at all related to juridical provisions (Hadiwardoyo, 2013, pp. 121–122). The state in state affairs must first prioritize humanity and concern for fellow citizens and not prioritize the truths of certain religious dogmas.

Acknowledgments: The author would like to thank the lectures of Doctoral study at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University because they have broadened the horizons of the author's thinking so that the author can understand the problems of religion and belief in Indonesia. In addition, the author can understand various terms that are often used in discussing these problems. The author would like to thank Parahyangan Catholic University Bandung, especially The Faculty of Philosophy, who supported this research. The author would like to thank Mrs. Est for taking the time to have an in-depth discussion with the author regarding the theme of the LCC congregation in Indonesia and Bandung in particular. With the information provided, the author can understand the situation and condition of the LCC congregation. Finally, the author can finish this article. The last but not least, the author would like to thank the family who has ceaselessly encouraged the author to complete this research.

Conflicts of Interest: This research was prepared by taking into account the standards of the scientific method so that there is no element of plagiarism in it.

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