

Impacts of the Religious Policies Enacted from 1965 to 1980 on Christianity in Indonesia

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Abstract

Between 1965 and 1980, the Indonesian government issued three religious policies. These had both positive and negative impacts on Christianity in Indonesia. As a positive impact, the Indonesian Council of Churches (DGI) and the Supreme Council of Indonesian Bishops (MAWI) were motivated to work together in lobbying the government. The policies also boosted the growth of local leadership in Catholic churches. However, the policies also brought a negative impact in that it became difficult for churches to obtain an IMB (Building Permit). In mid-eighties, Christianity could still perform religious services in churches without any disturbances, but after the 1990s, churches

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with no Building Permit were banned by some radical Islamic organizations. Preaching the gospel was considered violation of the law and a Christian could be sent to prison for performing this activity.

Keywords

religious policies – conversion – Protestantism – Catholicism – Islam – building permit – Minister of Religious Affairs

Indonesia is a country that recognizes the existence of five major religions, namely Islam, Protestantism,¹ Catholicism, Hinduism and Buddhism. In the course of Indonesian history, the relationship among adherents of these five religions is quite frequently disturbed by tensions that can escalate to physical conflicts among adherents of the same religion or between adherents of one religion and those of another. For example, conflicts occurred between the *abangan*² and *santri*³ groups from 1948 to 1965 (Geertz 1960), between Muslims and Christians in Meulaboh Aceh and Makassar Ujung Pandang in 1967 (Sukamto 2013). These conflicts called for state intervention to manage

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- 1 Based on the explanation of the Decree of the President of Republic of Indonesia No. 1 1965, especially article 1 mentioned that the religions embraced by the population in Indonesia are “Islam, Kristen, Katolik, Hindu, Budha dan Khong Hu Cu (Confusius).” Kristen are distinguished from Katolik. In this article the term Kristen is translated with Protestantism to distinguish it from Catholicism, while Christianity and Christian terms are used when referring to both.
 - 2 These terms are used by Geertz in his book *The Religion of Java* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), in which he categorizes Javanese Muslims into three groups, namely *abangan*, *santri*, and *priyayi*. A study by Tholkhah mentions that the word *abangan* comes from the Arabic *aba'a-aba'a* meaning “unwilling” to pray, pay alms and fast. In addition, the term *abangan* is also associated with the red (*abang* in Javanese) color symbolizing the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) (2001:70). Elsewhere, the *abangan* are also referred to as Islam *marmoyo* (less serious or flippant Muslims). They are called Muslims because of a general perception that by being circumcised, they automatically become Muslims. Another term used to refer to *abangan* is *nabiti*, which stands for *sunat-rabi-mati* (circumcision, marriage, death). They are called Muslims because they observe three types of life event ceremonies marking conversion into Islam in the phase of life: when they are circumcised, when they get married and learn to recite the *Shahada*, and when they die and are buried in accordance to Islamic funeral rites (Hamdi 2009:71–73). *Abangan* is different from traditional groups. For example, although NU is more tolerant of some practices and beliefs that have no clear basis in fundamental Islamic doctrine (Saleh 2001: 97) but on the level of doctrine and religious practice (eg, *sholat*, fasting) they are very obedient compared to *abangan*.
 - 3 Muslims who take their religious duties seriously (Saleh 2001:97).

religious life in the country, which was manifested in the formulation of a political decision concerning religious policy. Between 1965 and 1980, the state issued three religious policies which significantly influenced the development of Christianity in Indonesia and whose impacts are still felt until today.

This article discusses the processes which gave birth to these three religious policies: (1) Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 01/BER/MDN-MAG/1969 (hereinafter SKB No. 1 1969) concerning the Building of Houses of Worship, (2) Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 70 1978 concerning Guidelines for Propagation of Religion (hereinafter SK No. 70 1978); (3) Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 77 1978 concerning Overseas Aids to Religious Institutions in Indonesia (hereinafter SK No. 77 1978) . The article also elaborates on the impacts of these three policies on Christianity in Indonesia and how Protestantism/Catholicism responded to them.

1 Pre-1965 Religious and Political Contexts in Indonesia

There were two remarkable phenomena related to the religious and political contexts in Indonesia before 1965. The *first* was the rise of *aliran kepercayaan*⁴ (mysticism) in Indonesia and the *second* was the growing number of sympathizers of The Indonesian Communist Party following the first general election in 1955, most of whom came from the *abangan* group.

In the 1950s, *aliran kepercayaan* (mysticism) underwent a quite significant revival. The phenomenon emerged not only among the *priyayi* but also among the *abangan*. In 1951, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded the existence of 73 groups of adherents of mysticism (Subagya 1989:9). In 1956, the Minister of Religious Affairs announced in Yogyakarta, Central Java, that there were 63 religious sects in Java Island, of which 35 were based in Central Java, 22 in West Java and 6 in East Java (Kroef 1961:18). The number grew so significantly that according to the East Java Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, it reached 100 (Kroef 1961:18) and it continued to rise to no fewer than 300 in 1965 (Subagya 1989:9).

4 "The term *Aliran Kepercayaan* has been used to refer to groups of people who, drawing upon Javanese culture traditions, tried to define their own belief system which fell outside of Indonesian's official religions like Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The term came into use after the National Symposium of the Javanese mystical groups at Yogyakarta on November 7–9, 1970" (Patty 1986:1).

Seen from the perspective of their political orientation, the *abangan*, also called nominal Muslim group – though not all – were inclined towards the Indonesian Nationalist Party (hence PNI) or the Indonesian Communist Party (hereinafter PKI), which were politically opposed to the *santri* group, whose political orientation slanted towards with Islamic ideology, such as Masjumi (Consultative Council of Indonesian Moslems) or Nahdatul Ulama (Ulama Association). Most of those belonging to the *abangan* group had close relationship with farmers and the *priyayi*, all of whom were also opposed to the *santri* group.

2 The Social and Political Situation in Indonesia after 1965

The social and political situation in Indonesia before 1965 was heavily influenced by the development of Communist ideology. In the 1955 general election, the first in the Republic of Indonesia, PKI won a significant number of votes, namely 6,176,914 or 16.4 percent of the total voters and ranked fourth among the 118 political parties, organizations, groups and individuals contending (Feith 1971:58–59; Suprayitno 1993:33).

PKI was backed by grass-root voters (farmers) because of its land reform campaign. In a study conducted in East Java, Achmad Habib claims that:

The issue of land reform was used by PKI to polarize two opposing groups of village people, namely landowners “village devils” and landless farmers. Furthermore, PKI also used the issue to gain more rural memberships (2004:46).

TABLE 1 The results of the parliamentary elections 1955

	Number of valid votes	Percentage of total vote	Number of seats
P.N.I (Indonesian Nationalist Party)	8,434,653	22.3	57
Masjumi (Consultative Council of Indonesian Moslems)	7,903,886	20.9	57
Nahdatul Ulama (Ulama Association)	6,955,141	18.4	45
P.K.I (Communist Party)	6,176,914	16.4	39

FEITH 1971:65

The land reform program was initiated by D.N. Aidit with an objective to organize farmers' power in rural areas. The program was introduced because according to Aidit, only 7 percent of the 90 percent successful farmers had been organized (Edman 2005:123). The rationale behind the land reform program according to Aidit was that despite its sovereignty, basically the State of Indonesia still had a status as a colonized and semi-feudal nation. Residues of colonialism were still evident in the monopoly rights enjoyed by rich landlords (Edman 2005:124). Feudalism or individual ownership of land was a major problem that the PKI was fighting against through its land reform program. For PKI, feudalism benefited only regional rulers, officials, Islamic *kyais*, and other rich people. This fact was justifiable because according to Margo L. Lyon, who conducted a lot of research in Indonesia during those years,

In most Javanese villages, there was disparity in the area of owned land in the villages. The total area of *bengkok* land was probably much bigger than the average land owned by villagers. *Wakaf* endowment land could span hundreds of hectares in places where there were rich Muslim communities or big Islamic schools (2008:210).

PKI and all its affiliated organizations were the loudest in voicing support for the land reform program. Sometimes, like in East Java, plots of land were grabbed by force (Kasdi 2009). Because vast areas of rural land were mostly owned by *kyais*, sometimes conflicts broke between Muslim groups and those who supported PKI. The land reform movement certainly promised benefits particularly to people who lived in villages. This explains the strong support that PKI gained from them. The grass-root people who supported PKI belonged to groups of lay, non-congregational, *kejawan* or *abangan* Muslims. They were contrasted to proponents of such Islamic political parties as NU and Masyumi, who were referred to as pious, congregational, or *santri* Muslims (Tholkhah 2001:121).

The growing support for PKI ended with the G30S attempted coup, which broke on 30 September 1965. PKI was accused as the mastermind behind the abortive coup and following the aftermath, the communist ideology has been banned in Indonesia until today. The banning was imposed under Decree Number XXV/MPRS/1966. This prohibition caused massive killing that resulted in the loss of lives of PKI supporters. Mass killings have occurred in almost all areas of Indonesia such as in Bali (Robinson 1995; Webb 1986), Karo North Sumatera (Pederson 1970:188–189), Toraja South Sulawesi (Schie 2000:236–237), Southeastern Islands nowadays are called *Nusa Tenggara*

Timur (NTT) (Kolimon and Wetangterah, 2012; Klinken 2015:283–314). In an area where Christianity is the majority religion (Nusa Tenggara Timur) the army commander provoked youth organizations to kill those who were known and suspected as PKI supporters. In Maumere, for example, Catholic youth leaders were intimidated by the military into taking part in an orchestrated campaign of killings between February and May 1966 (Farram 2010:393). In islands of Timor the “killer squads” were similar to the black-shirted Ansor youth of the Nahdatul Ulama in Java who killed with religious fanaticism (Webb 1986:98–99). Prior, Steenbrink, and Wellem states that: “This ethnically fired political massacre involved the Catholic youth organization while most clergy stood aside as silent bystanders” (2008:155).⁵ Of course, there were a few Catholic leaders who forbade Catholic participation in the killings for example Archbishop Gabriel Manek, Yosef Frederikus Pede, Isaak Dura (Prior, Steenbrink, and Wellem 2008:254).

In Java, Muslims who were affiliated with either NU or Muhammadiyah had a firm stance in supporting the annihilation of those who supported PKI (Duta Masyarakat 7 October 1965 quoted by Feillard 1999:72; Boland 1971:146–147). This killing, which was justified by Muslim groups (NU and Muhammadiyah), was committed not only by ABRI personnel, but also by some Muslim groups, for example NU, with its youth activists, known as the Ansor youths (Feillard 1999:73). Especially in Java it was this stance that later sparked dislike among PKI members who were victimized. *Bu Yeti*, for example, expressed her aversion to Islam as follows:

I really hate Muslims. My family members are all Muslims. They all help me, but not sincerely. They call me *kafir*. My father is a Muslim. He performs fasting and prayer. He doesn't like my being close to the church. We are often at variance.

LUCAS 2000:388

A different stance, however, was shown by Protestantism or Catholicism. The Catholic Church obviously disagreed and even opposed PKI's doctrines. Their rejection of PKI was reflected in the attitude of Kasimo, who refused the idea of accepting communists in the cabinet (Adisubrata 1980:83–84). Despite this attitude, the Catholic Church disagreed with the acts of violence against PKI members. The church in fact called for protection and help for victims regardless of their affiliation with PKI (Subagya and Subanar 2011:353). The

⁵ In North Sulawesi (Celebes) the Christians were the executioners (May 1978:123).

Archdiocese of Semarang wrote a letter to the priests and members of the religious groups under its episcopacy. The letter appealed to priests and religious group members not to take part in military actions to search and hunt down PKI members. A third letter was addressed to lay Catholics, urging them to support the army-backed search but to refrain from getting involved in any act of violence (Subanar 2005:149). The attitude shown by the church and Christian people projected a good image of Christianity and this was the reason that many former PKI members converted to Christianity. Badriyah, for example, explained her experience as follows

Go back to where I came from? I didn't think it would be easy. It would've been too risky. I don't think it an exaggeration to say that my hometown was a "green city", the city of fanatic Muslims. Faced with a dead end, I finally found myself seeking protection in the church which indeed opened wide its door and lent me their loving hand. It was then that I started to dedicate my life to the Christian church and decided to be a true Christian.

NADIA 2007:169

To suppress PKI's power, the New Order administration obliged every Indonesian citizen to adhere to any of the five state-recognized religions. Disappointment with the image of Islam shown by those who took part in the massive killing, many of the *abangan* people who supported PKI, particularly in East and Central Java, converted to Protestantism, Catholicism and Hinduism.

3 Conversion to Christianity

To protect the people from communism's influences the New Order administration, through the Indonesian Army, imposed a policy requiring every citizen of Indonesia to adhere to any of the state-recognized religions. Scholars have argued that the Decree of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly Number (MPRS) XXVII/1966 was the basis for the policy. A more thorough examination of the decree, however, would reveal that the decree actually puts emphasis on the requirement of Religious Education as a compulsory subject to be taught from primary school to the level of state university. Article 1 Chapter 1 on Religion of Decree of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly Number XXVII/1966 stipulates as follows:

To amend the dictum of Decree of MPRS Number II/MPRS/1960 Chapter II Article 2 clause (3), by omitting the words "... with an understanding that students have the right to not participate should the guardian of a student/an adult student express his or her objection ...", altering the clause into "to establish religious education as a compulsory subject from primary school up to the level of state university".

The combined effect of the prohibition of PKI, the widespread interpretation of Decree of MPRS Number XXVII/1966, and the fear of being accused as a PKI supporter or an atheist caused a large number of Indonesian people to convert to the religions recognized by the state. Disappointment with the way Muslim groups treated them, especially in Java, led PKI members and sympathizers to embrace Protestantism or Catholicism.⁶

A study by Sukamto⁷ reveals that in some churches, membership of congregation grew significantly since 1965.⁸ In the Diocese of Jakarta, for example, a positive growth of 8.5 percent was recorded in 1960 (28,549 members). The percentage of growth increased to 67.8 percent in 1970, when the congregation grew to 70,520 members. The year 1980, although percent membership rose to 163,042, the growth actually began to decrease (55.1 percent) and the percentage continued to go down after 1985 to 43.4 percent (2015:96–99).

Since 1965, membership of the Catholic Diocese of Semarang rose significantly. Between 1964 and 1965, there was an increase of only 2,019 members.

6 In some areas of Java Islam also got new believers. Pranowo in his research in a village in Magelang, Central Java shows that many *abangans* are converts to Islam. This is due to violent incidents to *abangan* people which occurred in various places (especially in East Java) (Pranowo 1998: 47–50). In Banyuwangi, East Java, Hinduism also received new converts (Beatty 1999: 217).

7 Based on several books such as Heuken 2007; Budijanto 2009; Cooley 1976; Gunawan 1989; Kumaat 1976; Lemp 1976; Soekotjo 2010; Subanar 2005. Almost all churches in different parts of Indonesia have significantly increased the number of Christians after the G30S 1965 (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008: 308, 330, 402, 439, 513, 594).

8 The development of the number of adherents of Christianity also occurred among the Chinese, Indonesia. After the exit of government regulations (Presidential Instruction No. 14 th 1967 on Chinese religion, beliefs and customs on December 6, 1967) restricting the religious activities of ethnic Chinese only within family circles, has encouraged them to embrace other religions, especially Christians (Coppel 1994: 207–211). So that by the end of the nineteenth century only a few Chinese Christians even according to Rauws there were only 4,099 Protestant Chinese who covered 0.3 percent of Chinese population (1935: 163 cited by Jones 1985: 124), but after 1965 the number increased to approximately 10 or 15 percent (Cooley 1968: 98–99). The growth of Catholics in East Java from 1966 and 1969 was also very high, if in 1966 there were about 16.7 percent of the total Chinese Catholic Indonesian population in East Java, then in 1969 it increased to 26.7 percent (Coppel 1994: 209–211).

After 1965, a five-fold increase of 11,243 new members was added. Since then, more and more people were baptized until 1971. The period between 1969 and 1970 witnessed the highest growth of church membership. The growth, however, began to decline after 1972 (Sukamto 2015:104–105).

Before 1965, the Javanese Christian Church (Gereja Kristen Jawa or GKJ) in Celengan Hamlet, Lopait, Tuntang Sub-district, Salatiga, Central Java had only six Protestants families in its membership. But between 1966 and 1968, the Protestant population in Celengan Hamlet grew significantly. At the end of 1968, most Celengan villagers were Protestants (Purnomo and Sastrosupono 1986:101–103; Budijanto 2009:150–161). There was also mass conversion in Nalen Village, Tuntang. According to the minister Soesilo Darmowigoto, 150 adults gathered on 30 December 1965 and confessed that they wanted to convert to Protestantism. In Rembes Hamlet near Nalen, 60 families also gathered on 4 January 1966 for the same purpose. On 11 December 1966, 222 people were converted in a mass baptism (Soekotjo 2010:314–315). The same phenomenon was also recorded in the entire Surakarta Classis, where 814 people were baptized in 1965 (Soekotjo 2010:326).

In North Sumatera, the Karo Batak Protestant Church (Gereja Batak Karo Protestan or GBKP) the number of Baptists grew from 0 to 5,000 within a period of 50 years between 1890 and 1940. During the periods of Japanese occupation and the physical revolution (1942–1950), however, membership was stagnant. Yet, between 1950 and 1971 GBKP membership increased from 5,000 to 94,085. Although growth had begun since before 1965, it had never been as significant as that which occurred since 1965. After 1968, however, the annual percentage of church membership growth decreased from 39.33 percent to 7.7 percent during the period between 1969 and 1971 (Cooley 1976:69). Lempp claims that GBKP membership grew to 15 percent between 1940 and 1963, 43 percent between 1964 and 1968, but was recorded at only 7 percent between 1969 and 1971 (1976:46).

4 Response of Muslim Groups to Post-1965 Conversion to Christianity

The rapid growth of the Christian population in the mid-1960s caused anxieties among Muslim groups. There were Muslims who believed that there was some kind of foul play by Christians behind such massive conversion. For many Muslims, by providing protection to former PKI members, churches were fishing in troubled waters, taking advantages out of the political crisis at the time (Natsir 1969:188–190; Rasjidi 1967). These anxieties then rose to the surface and found their expressions in different ways (Sukamto 2013:36–38).

4.1 *Physical Conflicts at Grass-root Levels*

From 1945 to 1965, no physical conflict was recorded between Muslims and Christians, but after 1965, tensions between Christians and Muslims began to escalate into physical conflicts involving acts of violence. In 1967, for example, tensions sparked when the Ulama Council of West Aceh and some political parties, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (PSII), Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah (PERTI), and mass organizations, such as Muhammadiyah protested against the construction of a small Methodist church in the middle of a Muslim settlement in Meulaboh (West Aceh) (Hasyim 1977:291). On 1 October 1967, some Muslim youths in Makassar (South Sulawesi) threw stones at a church following an alleged blasphemy by a Christian Religion teacher (H.K. Mangumbahang) against Prophet Muhammad (Hasyim 1977:314; End and Aritonang 2008:205).⁹

4.2 *Political Responses*

The Meulaboh incident triggered J.C.T. Simorangkir, S.H. and his Protestant and Catholic colleagues to raise an interpellation before the House of Representatives of Mutual Assistance (hence DPR-GR), claiming that “the acts committed in West Aceh compromised the purity of the implementation of Pancasila” (Hasyim 1977:293). A group of Muslims led by Lukman Harun and 31 other DPR-GR members from, among others, Muhammadiyah, Pemuda Ansor/NU, Al-Washliyah and NU also raised an interpellation on 10 July 1967 concerning the Muslim-Christian conflict. Lukman Harun raised three demands urging the government to take necessary measures to: first, control and regulate procedures for building houses of worship; second, to direct that Christian teaching be conducted in a proper manner; and third, channel overseas financial or material aids through a government institution (Puar 2000:91–95).

Aware of the possibility of the tensions escalating, on 30 November 1967, the Minister of Religious Affairs K.H. Muhammad Dachlan (a prominent Muhammadiyah figure), on behalf of the government, convened an inter-religious meeting in Jakarta (Boland 1971:234). As a basis of reference for the meeting, the government formulated a draft chart which was then handed over to J. Leimena, J.L. Ch. Abineno and T.B. Simatupang as representatives of the Indonesian Council of Churches (DGI). The chart aimed to establish an interfaith consultative body with responsibilities to: (a) assist the Government in providing advice concerning settlement of problems arising in the life of

9 End and Aritonang states that there were 14 church building, 3 schools (including one theological school), 1 monastery destroyed by a large gathering of Muslim Youth (2008:205).

adherents of different religions; (b) exert all possible efforts to build mutual understanding and respect among adherents of different religions; (c) work together spiritually and materially and exert the utmost efforts to convince atheists to believe in the One Supreme God and prevent adherents of religions from being targeted by missionaries of other religions (Sairin, ed. 2000:100–101).

Since 28 November, debates had ensued among Muslim and Christian groups concerning the contents of the Chart, particularly point ©. Muslim groups were inclined to accept the contents of the chart, which is understandable because the chart protects Muslims from being targeted by Christianizing missions. However, Christian groups objected to the Chart. Their objection was evident from the content of the speech by A.M. Tambunan, because, as he stated in his speech:

... as Christians we are bound by a divine command, which, among others, requires us as follows: “and you shall be My witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Elsewhere [in the Bible], it is said: “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mark 16:15).

SAIRIN ed., 2000:118

As predicted from the beginning, the deliberation ended without any satisfactory result. The Christian groups remained steadfast in their refusal to sign the chart, particularly due to their objection to the clause on preventing adherents of religions from being targets of missions of religions other than theirs.

5 Three Religious Policies Issued between 1969 and 1978

5.1 *SKB No. 11969*

Despite its objective to settle the prevailing tensions, the Deliberation in fact worsened the relation between Muslims and Christians. The following is Hamka's comment on the rejection of the Christian groups:

The deliberation brought a positive result for the Christian groups because since Independence until today, it was only recently that they finally admitted openly before Muslim leaders, ulama, that proselytizing Muslims into Christianity was their sacred mission. In the past, the colonizers said that they also had come to Indonesia with a sacred mission,

now that the colonizers are gone, the task is taken over by the groups of Christians of our own nation, with the financial and personnel support from the West.

HASYIM 1977:333

NU claimed that adherents of other religions were not honest in implementing tolerance of religious life (Duta Masyarakat 21-12-1967). The failure of the deliberation brought the tensions between Muslims and Christians to a higher level. Natsir even commented that since then it became a “free fight for all” and “survival of the fittest” era of religious life (1969:248). At the grass-root level, another incident of church vandalism occurred in 1968 in Jatibarang (West Java) (Naim 1983:73) and early in 1969, a Protestant Church in the Slipi area Jakarta was also vandalized (Natsir 1969:238). A similar incident was reported in Purwodadi (Central Java) (Boland 1971:231).

Amidst the heated situation, the government eventually issued SKB No. 1 1969 concerning the Implementation of Government Mandates for Ensuring Law and Order and the Effective Administration of the Practice of Religion and Worship by Adherents of Religions. The policy was issued to ensure that a permit was obtained from local residents and the regional office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs prior to constructing a house of worship. Some Christians claimed that the policy was intended to discriminate against them and prevent them from building churches. On the other hand, however, Muslims believed that Christians deliberately built churches in areas with a scarce Christian population in order to establish Christian bases there where they could run their proselytizing mission. The following excerpt is quoted from the Joint Decree.

Article 4

- 1) Every construction of a house of worship is subject to a prior permit from the Head of Region or a Government official appointed for the issuance of such a permit;
- 2) The Head of Region or official referred to in clause (1) of this article shall issue a permit after considering:
 - a. the opinion of the local Head of the Ministry of Religious Affairs Representative Office;
 - b. the existing town plan;
 - c. local condition and situation.
- 3) Should it be deemed necessary, the Head of Region or official appointed can request the opinion of local religious organizations and ulema/spiritual leaders.

5.2 *Two Decrees Issued by the Minister of Religious Affairs in 1978*

Toward the end of the 1970s both Christianity and Islam in Indonesia experienced quite a number of important developments. Since 1966 new churches have emerged, especially among evangelical and pentecostal churches, and each of these churches wants to build and own their own church building. As a consequence, in the 1970s many church buildings were built (End and Aritonang 2008:209; see also Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008:867–902). The main characteristic of these two groups is the emphasis on preaching the gospel to the whole world and the obligation of winning unsaved lives so that they are very active in evangelism.

On the other hand, Muslims also experienced various developments, for example, among the educated Muslims the Circle of Limited Group Discussions began, with core members such as Muhammad Dawam Rahardjo, Djohan Effendi, and Ahmad Wahib. In 1971 some members of the Circle of Discussion Limited Group moved to Jakarta and then they formed a discussion in Jakarta at Dawam Rahardjo's house which was attended by several young people such as Nurcholish Madjid, Dawam Rahardjo, Djohan Effendi, Ahmad Wahib, Utomo Danandjaja. Among students in the late 1970s a campus worship movement rapidly developed, at the Bandung Institute of Technology, named the Salman Movement. Hefner states:

In the 1950s and early 1960s Indonesia's national universities had been bastions of secular nationalism, and the *santri* community was the weaker of the factions in the student body. But the late 1970s saw a rapid growth of the so-called Salman movement (*gerakan Salman*) and similar Muslim student groups on state campuses (2000:123).

In the early 1980s this movement became the hallmark of college life in almost every state university in Indonesia.

Radical Islam in Indonesia also came to the fore since 1977 in the form of Komando Jihad. This organization is considered to be inclined to use violence to achieve its goals and has the ideals of establishing an Islamic state (Ricklefs 2005:597). Radical Islamist violence came to the surface in the 1980s, for example in March 1981 the Immigrant Jemaah group attacked a police station in Cicendo, West Java. In that same year (28 March 1981) this group hijacked Garuda DC-9 aircraft to Bangkok.

These developments greatly influenced the political power of Islam over state policy, as it appeared when Soeharto was re-elected president in 1977, the government put forward a plan to endorse the *aliran kepercayaan* as a

religion (Feillard 1999:200). This government plan had been heavily criticized by Muslims. Muslim students in Jakarta, Bandung, and Yogyakarta held a demonstration against the policy (Ismail 1999:156). Members of the Partai Persatuan Pembangunan faction walked out of the MPR as suggested by K.H. Bisri Sjamsuri, since they were worried about being trapped in *syirik* (Radi 1984:150). The issue was finally decided by Decree No. IV / MPR / 1978 Chapter IV No. 13, when *aliran kepercayaan* was declared not to be a religion.

To gain the trust of the Muslims, Suharto appointed General Alamsyah Ratu Perwiningara with a military background to become Minister of Religion (Feillard, 1999:203). Some policies issued by General Alamsyah Ratu Perwiningara in 1978 included: (1) The *aliran kepercayaan* is not placed under the Ministry of Religious Affairs but under the Ministry of Education and Culture. (2) Marriage according to the procedure of *aliran kepercayaan* is not allowed. (3) In the Identity Card in the religion column there should be no mention of the *aliran kepercayaan*. In the same year several policies were published concerning religious life in Indonesia such as: SK No. 70 1978 and SK No. 77 1978.

On 1 August 1978 Minister of Religious Affairs H. Alamsyah Ratu Perwiningara issued SK No. 70 1978 concerning Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion. The main provisions of the decree are that religion must not be propagated: (a) to an individual or individuals who already adhere to another religion; (b) in manners that involve persuasion/material gift of money, clothes, food/drinks, medicine and others with an intention to entice people into adhering to a religion; (c) under any pretext by visiting the houses of those who already adhere to another religion. Still in the same month, the Minister of Religious Affairs issued SK No. 77 1978 "Concerning Overseas Aids to Religious Institutions in Indonesia." Articles 2 and 3 of the decree make the following provisions:

Article 2

Such overseas aids as referred to in article 1 clause a of this decree can only be executed after the agreement/approval of and through the office of the Minister of Religious Affairs.

Article 3

1. In order to foster, develop, propagate religion to Indonesian people, the use of overseas workers shall be limited.
2. Foreign Nationals who reside in Indonesia and whose main duties are not related to religion can only perform a religious activity on an occasional basis after a permit is obtained from the Minister of Religious Affairs or an appointed official.

The decree was directed to curb the propagation of Christianity by Christian organizations which at the time received generous financial aid from overseas sources. The administering of overseas aid was also obviously related to the construction of houses of worship (churches). The SKB No. 1 1969 concerning the Implementation of the Tasks of Government Apparatuses in Guaranteeing the Order and Effectiveness of the Development and Practice of Religions by Their Adherents could thus be enacted properly if financial aid for Christian organizations was minimized. The joint decree was also issued in order to limit the spread of Christianity by missionaries. The limitation of the number of foreign missionaries certainly affected the spread of Christianity in Indonesia. The development of Christianity could be contained provided that the number of Christian missionaries was limited and their work was restricted.

According to Pranowo, the joint decree was welcomed enthusiastically by Muslims because it was aimed at Christian missionaries who were actively spreading Christianity to Muslims (Pranowo 1990:493). Conversely, however, Christian groups, through DGI and the High Council of Indonesian Bishops (Majelis Agung Waligereja Indonesia or MAWI), protested against the policy because, they claimed, it was prejudicial to them. Their protest was expressed in a sixty-page document called *A Review on the Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 70 and 77 Year 1978*. The government, however, ignored the objections of the Christian organizations and in 1979 the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs even issued a Joint Decree Number 1 1979 concerning Procedures for the Implementation of the Propagation of Religion and Foreign Aids to Religious Institutions in Indonesia.

6 Religious Policies and Their Impacts on Christianity in Indonesia

6.1 SKB No. 11969

The joint decree mainly concerned permits for constructing houses of worship. The policy does not explicitly refer to the construction of churches and should have applied to the construction of houses of worship for all religions. In its implementation, however, it mostly effected church construction. As a result of the policy, many churches were built without official permission from the government. Efforts had actually been made to request the Building Permit (hereinafter IMB) for churches. Some requests have even been submitted tens of years ago and have not been responded to until today. The *Jawi Wetan* Christian Church on Kiai Ageng Gribig Street, Malang, East Java, for example, which was established in 1967, had originally been a house. The IMB request had long been submitted but a permit was never issued. As a minister of the

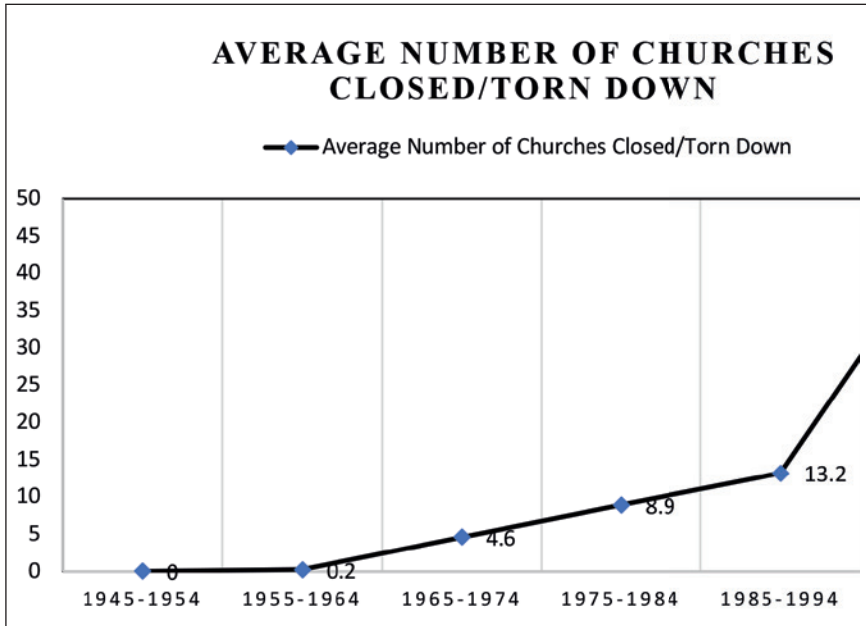


FIGURE 1 Average number of churches closed/torn down per year from 1945 to 1997
TAHALELE & SANTOSO 1997:40

church, Priyono admitted as follows: “We have submitted a request for an IMB, but no permit is issued because they say there has to be a permit from the local people in the neighborhood” (Abidien, et al. 2005:120). The church was eventually torn apart in February 2005. The difficulty in obtaining IMB was also felt by some church administrators in West Java. The Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) in Dayeuhkolot Bandung, established in 1965, well before the issuance of SKB 1969, submitted a request for an IMB in 1983, but no permit has been granted until today (Marsiela 2005).

The impact of the policy was still felt in the mid-1980s by many churches in Indonesia. Before the 1980s, many churches were built without any IMB, but they were still able to perform rituals without any problem. The situation changed in the second half of the 1980s. Based on the facts gathered by FKKI, the average number of churches that were closed, torn apart or burned down every year rose significantly, compared to that of the period between 1945 and 1984 (See figure 1).

The emergence of radical Muslim groups after Suharto’s fall, for example the Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama’ah Communication Forum (FKASWJ), known for its Jihad Troops; The Mujahidin Council of Indonesia (MMI), Jamaah al-Ikhwan

al-Muslimin Indonesia (JAMI) and Jamaah Islamiyah (JI), has to a great extent affected the life of churches. These radical Muslim organizations generally raise anti-Christian, anti-Jewish, and anti-Western issues. A study in Surakarta by Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta Research Institute on such Radical Islamic movements as Majelis Ta'lim Al-Ishlah, Islamic Defenders Front Surakarta (FPIS), Barisan Bismillah, the Hisbullah Brigade, the Kaba Youth Movement, Sunan Bonang Hizbullah Troops, Jundullah, and Jihad Troops, concludes that the issues highlighted by these movements are related to Christians/Christianity (Fananie, Sabardila, dan Purnanto 2002:34). They also believe in the central issue of the existence of international Zionist-cum-Christian forces that are attempting to destroy Islam in Indonesia by Christianizing the entire country (Hasan 2002:165). As a result of this widespread belief, at least until the end of the 1990s, many churches were vandalized, burned down, or bombed.

Following the fall of the New Order regime, Indonesia was in a very vulnerable situation from May 1998 until 2000. Bomb blasts occurred in a number of places across the country. Between May and December 1998, there were six occurrences of bombing. In 1999, nine bombings occurred and twenty occurrences were recorded in 2000. Churches were the main targets of these bomb attacks. On 28 May 2000 in Medan, South Sumatra, another bombing occurred in a Protestant Church, injuring 47 people. On Christmas day in 2000, a number of church bombings occurred in 10 cities in Indonesia, which took the life of 18 people and injured 36 others (ICG 2001:4).

After the transition from the New Order to the Reform Era, Indonesia regained its strength as a nation as the situation was becoming more stable. The pattern of pressures against churches also changed during this period. Between 2002 and 2005, cases of church burning were still reported, but they were not as bad as those occurring in mid-1990s. However, church closing actions continued to be done by a number of Muslim groups in West Java. On 6 September 2002, for example, the local government of Bandung issued a letter instructing the closing of a HKBP (Batak Protestant Christian) Church that had been active for 11 years. Between 2004 and 2005, the number of churches being closed down in West Java rose significantly as shown in the data from various newspapers presented in Table 2 below.

In most cases, the closing of churches in West Java during 2004 and 2005 were done by local governments upon being pressurised by radical Muslim groups. The case of Sang Timur, for example, began with pressures from about 150 people who called themselves Karang Tengah Islamic Youths Front (Suseno 2004:8), while the closing of some churches in the Cimahi area on 14 August 2005 was done by the Alliance of Anti-Apostasy Movements (AGAP) under the

TABLE 2 Churches that were closed down in West Java from 2004 to 2005

Date	Name of church
29 May 2004	A Church located at PT Veri Semopil factory area in Tlajung Udik Village, Gunung Putri Sub-district, Bogor Regency. Triggered by some villagers who objected to the presence of a non-Islamic house of worship (Media Indonesia 2004a:6).
6 June 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ellem Church, Ciputat b. Zion Hill Church, Pondok Cabe, Pamulang c. The Indonesian Protestant Church (GPI), Pondok Cabe Pamulang d. Followed by violent assault against Rev. Jonathan Wijaya and Roli (church member) (Media Indonesia 2004b:4)
3 October 2004	The temporary Sang Timur school building, also used as a place of worship of the St. Bernadette Catholic Congregation, Ciledug Tangerang, was closed down by the Karang Tengah community. The place was no longer used for religious services but the Sang Timur school gate was still closed. Vehicles could only drop students on a street about 350 meters from the school area (Patria and Cipta 2004:38).
3 September 2004	<p>The Regent of Bandung issued Letter Number 4522/1829/Kesbang dated 3 September 2004, which forbade residential houses to be used as places of worship and restored the buildings to their original purpose. Namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pasundan Christian Church (GKP) b. Batak Protestant Church (GBP) c. Christian Church of Indonesia (GKI) d. Pentecostal Church (GP) e. Catholic Church f. Gospel Tabernacle Church of Indonesia (GKII) g. Independent Baptist Church of Indonesia (GBII) h. Oikumene Christian Church (GKO) i. Tabernacle Pentecostal (GPT) j. Pentecostal Church in Indonesia (GPDI) k. Javanese Christian Church (GKJ)

TABLE 2 Churches that were closed down in West Java from 2004 to 2005 (*cont.*)

Date	Name of church
14 August 2005	<p>At 09.45 Western Indonesia Time, the following churches in Permata Complex, Cimahi, Tani Mulya Village, Ngamprah Sub-district, Bandung Regency were attacked and closed down:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Anglican Church b. Pentecostal Church c. Pentecostal Church in Indonesia d. GSPdI e. GKI Anugrah f. Bethel Full Gospel Church <p>(Radar Bandung 2005, Galamedia 2005).</p>

leadership of Muhammad Mu'min. AGAP was supported by 27 Muslim mass organizations including FPI, Persis Youths Front, Jamaah Tabligh, and Hizbut Tahrir (Rulianto et al. 2005:32).

In 2005, a movement called BAP (Anti-Apostasy Front) appeared in Bandung and its vicinities. The movement emerged from a Quran study group in Al-Fajar Mosque in Buahbatu, Bandung, initiated by Dai Athian Ali M., chair of the Indonesian Umah Forum of Ulema (FUUI) (Rulianto et al. 2005:30). The main goal of the movement was to provide a forum to discuss an issue that they called the mission to lead Muslims in West Java towards apostasy. They believed that the establishment of churches was a strategy to Christianize Muslims. In April 2005, BAP and 27 other Muslim mass organizations formed AGAP (Alliance of Anti-Apostasy Movements). AGAP was led by Muhammad Mu'min, a lecturer at Bandung School of Economics (STIEB) (Rulianto et al. 2005:31).

The closing down of churches by local governments can mean two things: *first*, Islamization of bureaucrats that has been taking place in Indonesia since the 1980s has created new bureaucrats with a stronger Islamic ideology. This view was reflected in the statement pronounced by the Head of Sub-district when addressing the masses before Sang Timur school gate right after the act of vandalism: "Our fight has achieved its goal!" (Suseno 2004:8). There is a growing view among bureaucrats that extermination of places of worship of other religions is some kind of fight. *Second*, churches have been closed down as a way to advance political interests. Muslims are the majority in Indonesia

and taking their side is seen as a strategic way for bureaucrats to *perpetuate* their political standing, even if the interests of the minorities are sacrificed.

More and more churches have been vandalized or closed down. For example, Taman Yasmin (Jasmine Garden) Christian Church of Indonesia (GKI) in Taman Yasmin, Bogor, West Java was closed down in 2008 (Hidayat and Surbakti 2012:83–86, Ali-Fauzi et al. 2011, Silaen 2012). The Conference Seventh-Day Adventist Church (GMAHK-KJB) in West Java was vandalized in 2013 despite the fact that an IMB for the church had been issued (Pikiran Rakyat 25 March 2013:20).

6.2 SK No. 70 1978

Primarily, the decree bans proselytizing to those who belong to another religion, the use of material (money, clothing, food/drink, medicine, etc.) inducements to encourage conversion, the dissemination of reading materials (pamphlets, bulletins, magazines, books, etc.) to houses inhabited by people of another religion, and missionary activities in the form of door-to-door visits to the houses of those who already adhere to another religion.

As a result of this decree, the preaching of gospel by Christians began to be limited. According to Boelaars, such regulation “can be used in such a way that any radio broadcast program, every pamphlet, every instance of distribution of medicine or other social aids to adherents of another religion can be interpreted by the ministry as acts of proselytizing, which is banned under the decree” (2005:177). For example, Rebecca Zakaria, Ratna Bangun, and Ety Pangesti, were sentenced to two years imprisonment for allegedly violating the decree (Crouch 2006; Companjen, 2007).

6.3 SK No. 77 1978

The aim of the decree was to limit not only overseas financial aid but also the number of foreign missionaries working in Indonesia. Limitations imposed on missionaries certainly had a lot to do with the growth of Christianity in Indonesia. Limiting the number and work of missionaries would curb the growth of Christianity in the country.

Christians felt that the Minister’s decree caused a major limitation of their religious life in Indonesia. Since mid-1970s, entry into Indonesia became more difficult for foreign missionaries. Even missionaries who had for some time been working in Indonesia were threatened to return to their home countries or change their nationalities to Indonesian. All foreign Jesuit priests and friars were to submit request for Indonesian citizenship (Heuken 2009:163). The decree also caused confusion among Catholic Churches because by July 1979, the

temporary stay permits of 169 of their foreign missionaries would all expire (Boelaars 2005:178).

The same concern was also felt by the Mormons. According to Jones:

In the middle 1970s the Indonesian government began to enforce its policy of replacing foreign missionaries with Indonesian nationals. On 24 October 1979, when six missionaries departed, Mission President Lester C. Hawthorne stated: "They will be the last group of missionaries to serve a full two years in the Indonesian Jakarta Mission." The next day, October 25, six missionaries transferred back to the United States and five to the Philippines because the government refused to extend their visas (1982:80).

Yet, there was a blessing in disguise behind the unfortunate situation. DGI and MAWI, for example, met and worked together to lobby the government by visiting the Minister of Religious Affairs, the other cabinet members, and the vice president. On 31 August 1979, DGI and MAWI requested an audience with the president (Boelaars 2005:177–180).

Above it all, a significant development, namely Indonesianization of churches, ensued particularly among Indonesian Catholic churches. As Boelaars reveals:

The process of development towards a national union of churches was suddenly accelerated. A sense of collective awareness, reflection, and willingness to act together began to grow. Perhaps, we can consider the shock given by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a "blessing in disguise". There was no attitude of waiting passively for what possible development was to come. A committee established by the Secretariat General of MAWI began to draft a concept on "Plan to Indonesianize Catholic Churches in Indonesia" (2005:183).

After a long process of improvement in several conferences of bishops, a master plan was finally approved by MAWI. The plan was called "Program to Accelerate Indonesianization of Catholic Church Workers in Indonesia". The program can be summarized as follows.

Process of Indonesianization of cadres. The following measures were suggested: within five years' time, 80 to 90 percent of the total number of bishops should be native Indonesians. Rome had to be notified about

the program because ordination was subject to a decree from there. Furthermore, MAWI encouraged that the functions and leadership of all commissions and bureaus at the national level be handed over gradually to Indonesians. At the regional levels, Indonesianization would be accelerated particularly with regard to the primary functions in all dioceses. At the sectoral level, MAWI would appeal to all orders and congregations and chapters to begin to gradually entrust positions to Indonesians. In short, if the program worked as planned, the top leadership of Catholic churches in Indonesia would be held by an Indonesian.

BOELAARS 2005:184

The program proved to be successful. In 1970, of the total 1,462 priests, 27 percent (400) were Indonesians and 73 percent (1,062) were foreign nationals, but in 1990, the situation reversed. Of the total 1905 priests, 81 percent (1,535) were Indonesians and only 19 percent (370) were non-Indonesians (Boelaars 2005:236).

Among the Protestant churches the process of indigenization had been going on largely since the time of political Independence of the nation. However, these decrees accelerated that process, and stimulated the growth of indigenous Protestant theology. In the 1960s Protestant theologians began to appear who developed a *theologia religionum* by writing dissertations on Islam and interfaith dialogue. These included Walter Bonar Sidjabat who wrote a dissertation on Religious Tolerance and the Christian Faith (1960), Djaka Soetapa who dealt with the concept of *Ummah* as a religious, social and political community within the Qur'an (1986), Victor Tanja, who wrote a dissertation on the Islamic Students' Movement (1979), Th. Sumartana together with Eka Darmaputera, Daniel Dhakidae, Zulkifly Lubis, and Djohan Effendi established *Institut Dialog Antariman* (Institute for Interfaith Dialogue) in Indonesia on December 20, 1991 in Yogyakarta.¹⁰

Conclusion

Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. The period after the G30S 1965 incident was an important period in all aspects of Indonesian life, including the aspects of political and religious life. Since the 1965 incident, anything related to communism was banned in Indonesia and to fortify the community

¹⁰ More detailed explanation as outlined in Aritonang and Steenbrink (2008:778–789, 791–803, 810–813).

from the communist influence the Indonesian government required every citizen to embrace a religion recognized by the government. As a result of this policy issued after 1965 all religions in Indonesia, including Christianity, received new converts. Almost throughout Indonesia the church got a significant number of new believers. This massive increase of Christians raised concerns among Islamic leaders such as Natsir, Rasjidi, Lukman Harun, etc. They said that Christians had taken advantage of the 1965 incident. As a result, the physical conflict between Islam and Christianity was inevitable as happened in Makassar, Sulawesi and Meulaboh, Aceh. To overcome these problems in November 1967 the government held meetings between religious leaders but ultimately no agreement was reached in this meeting and conversely the conflict between Islam and Christianity got worse.

In the midst of the situation the government finally fulfilled several demands of Muslims as proposed by Lukman Harun and his colleagues to the House of Representatives by issuing several religious political policies such as: (1) Joint Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs Number 01/BER/MDN-MAG/1969 (SKB No. 1 1969) concerning the Building of Houses of Worship; (2) Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 70 1978 concerning Guidelines for Propagation of Religion (SK No. 70 1978); (3) Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 77 1978 concerning Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions in Indonesia (SK No. 77 1978). These religious policies brought both positive and negative impacts on Christianity in Indonesia.

The positive impacts are as follows: (a) SK. No. 70 and SK No. 77 1978 posed difficulties to and limitations on the life of Christians and Catholics in Indonesia. Yet, on the other hand, it encouraged DGI and MSWI to work together to lobby the government. (b) SK. No. 77 1978 concerning overseas aid to religious institutions in Indonesia and limitation of the number of foreign missionaries in Indonesia in fact stimulated the growth of local leadership in Catholic churches. In 1970, of the total 1,462 priests, 27 percent (400) were Indonesians and 73 percent (1,062) were foreign nationals, but in 1990, the situation reversed. Of the total 1905 priests, 81 percent (1,535) were Indonesians and only 19 percent (370) were non-Indonesians.

However, the religious policies imposed by the New Order government also brought some negative impacts: (a) It was very difficult for churches to obtain an IMB (building permit). In mid-1980s, many churches were still able to perform religious rituals and services without any problems. But, in the 1990s, many churches with no IMB were closed down by radical Muslim groups. (b) The preaching of Gospel was considered a violation of the law and Christians could be sent to jail because of it.

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摘要

1965 年至 1980 年间，印尼政府颁布了三项宗教政策。这些宗教政策对印度尼西亚的基督教产生了积极和消极的影响。作为一个积极的影响，印度尼西亚教会理事会 (DGI) 和印度尼西亚主教最高委员会 (MAWI) 共同努力组织团体游说政府。这些政策还促进了天主教堂地方领导层的发展。然而，这些政策也带来了负面影响，因为教会很难获得 IMB (建筑许可证)。在 80 年代中，基督教仍然可以在没有任何干扰的情况下在教堂中进行宗教仪式，但在 90 年代之后，一些没有建筑许可证的教堂被一些激进的伊斯兰组织所禁止。宣讲福音被认为是违反了法律，基督徒可能因执行这项活动而被送进监狱。

Resumen

Entre 1965 y 1980, el gobierno de Indonesia promulgó tres políticas religiosas. Estas políticas religiosas ocasionaron impactos positivos y negativos en el cristianismo en Indonesia. Como impacto positivo, el Consejo de Iglesias de Indonesia (DGI, por sus siglas en indonés) y el Consejo Supremo de Obispos de Indonesia (MAWI, por sus siglas en indonés) fueron motivados a trabajar juntos para organizar grupos de presión ante el gobierno. Las políticas también impulsaron el crecimiento del liderazgo local en las iglesias católicas. Sin embargo, las políticas también tuvieron un impacto negativo ya que se hizo difícil para las iglesias obtener un IMB (Permiso de construcción). A mediados de los años ochenta, el cristianismo todavía podía realizar servicios religiosos en iglesias sin ningún tipo de molestias, pero después de la década de los noventa, las iglesias sin permiso de construcción fueron prohibidas por las organizaciones radicales islámicas. Predicar el Evangelio se consideraba una violación de la ley y un cristiano podía ser enviado a prisión por realizar esta actividad.