


Fostering fraternity in humanity: the Church's efforts to bring compassion within the framework of religious moderation

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Abstract: The nature of religion which refers to etymological studies clearly aims so that human life is not chaotic, so it is not surprising that all religions teach goodness. Only the lofty ideals of each religion cannot be adequately implemented among the grassroots so that it is presented precisely as violence and intolerance between adherents of one religion with another religion. Abuse in the name of religion occurs and becomes the beginning of the legitimacy of acts of violence in the cloak of religion. Reconciliation efforts are the church's responsibility because the church has significant power in society and the church becomes a representation of God that brings the mandate and spirit of reconciliation to the world. The church is also the holder of the baton of Jesus' ministry on earth. In the historical reality of human life, Jesus is the only one who can do good and right throughout His life. The angel called him "Holy, Son of God" (Luk. 1:35), which is confirmed in Hebrews 4:15 "...but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." While other humans are only able to implement the bad, or the combination of good and evil, because of human sinfulness. Only by faith in Jesus is a man justified and put before God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit that exists within believers, a wrong thread can be decided and enabled to live life as a new creation, that is, as children of God. The study aims to look at the extent of the church's role in preparing congregation spirituality within the framework of religious moderation, and at the same time reconcile congregations who experience intimidation. The method used in this study was a mix-method, where for some parts that need enrichment, structured interviews were carried out, but in the general part, generalizations were carried out as a result of quantitative data. The respondents in the study numbered 30 people from churches in potentially intolerant areas. In the results of the data with SPSS, it is known that the church's role in cultivating a system of values, spiritual principles, and a solid theological foundation for the congregation influenced religious moderation by 89.3%, while other factors influence the other 10.7%. Further, it is shown that only 30% of respondents feel equipped with the content of religious moderation in a structured and "prepared" spiritually in case of clashes/friction with other religious people.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a diversity of tribes, cultures, and religions. Referring to the data released by the Central Statistics Agency, there are 1340 tribes and sub-tribes spread throughout the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. While from the aspect of language, according to the results of the Mapping Language Agency, there are 652 regional languages in Indonesia, not including dialects and sub-dialects. At one point this is a gift from God to be grateful for, but at the same time as a challenge because of the potential for horizontal conflict in it.¹

¹ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Moderasi Beragama*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: Badan Litbang dan Diklat Kementerian Agama RI, 2019).

Of all these distinguishing elements, religion is often a source of conflict, even not infrequently accompanied by violence. Its nature is loaded with emotional attachment and accompanied by subjectivity, making it able to give growth to emotional bonds for its adherents. It is not too surprising that fanatical adherents even make it something sacred, so it is no longer reassuring but causes infighting. Conflict is very likely, between the intra-religious sphere (one religion but different groups) and the inter-religious sphere (different religions). Various conflicts that occur, both in the form of stereotypes until open conflict shows the vulnerability of multicultural conditions are used as commodities of various interests.²

The high intensity of interaction in Indonesian society needs to be balanced with education on affiliation, cooperation and conflict resolution, kindness, care, and affection skills. This full understanding will erode the assumption that conflict is mere as a destroyer, a black and white struggle, good and evil. Though it cannot be denied that successful conflicts managed well actually strengthen the unity of a multicultural nation. Ethnic differences emphasize cross-cultural concepts, while in multicultural concepts it is precisely the differences of individuals who experience an expansion of coverage. In the multicultural concept, a plurality will be found as a pluralistic social reality, as well as moral bonds in society to implement the mutual agreement.³

The task of realizing the plurality that becomes a mosaic that beautifies the existence of the Indonesian nation in the eyes of the world is not without obstacles and bringing the public to the understanding that "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" is an inevitability for the history of the Indonesian nation. The threat of disharmony caused by fundamental understanding needs to be countered with a moderate and open religious life, which is understood as religious moderation. Religious moderation makes religion, and local wisdom can walk side by side, without negating each other. The two go hand in hand while looking for solutions of various problems in the community. Religious moderation is a point of view in religion in moderation, namely understanding and practicing religious teachings with no extremes, both extreme right (very rigid understanding of religion) and extreme left (very liberal understanding of religion).⁴

The growing phenomenon of fanaticism, radicalism, and faith-based extremism is almost evenly distributed worldwide, including Indonesia, forcing the government to make religious moderation the main agenda in the ministry of religion. It seems clear that the government is not messing with it, with the launch of a religious moderation guidebook a few years ago. Trace the history of the Indonesian nation, religious tolerance is not a new thing in this country. The complexity of the problem with the escalation that tends to expand often involves the state apparatus in a vortex of problems, complete with socio-political interests that are full of ambition and power thirst.

Religious moderation must be in line with the essence of the church's existence, which is a compassionate representation of God and seeks to present the Kingdom of God in the world. In principle, compassion refers to sympathy for the suffering of others, often including a desire to help.⁵ Instead of being a big agenda for the church, which is in harmony with the government, this agenda is suspected only as a form of graft. This theme of religious moderation must be a theological theme rooted in Christianity to be implemented at the grassroots level.⁶

Looking at the history of Christian thought, religious moderation intersects slightly with Thomas Aquinas's doctrine of the mean, although not entirely the same. The doctrine of the virtue of the mean place between two vices. This doctrine is only applied as an attempt to mediate excess and deficiency. That is why moderation should be a virtue based on the ratio medium.

² Rhenald Kasali, *Disruption* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2017).

³ Ismatu Ropi, *Religion and Regulation in Indonesia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

⁴ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Moderasi Beragama*.

⁵ Daniël Louw, "Compassion Fatigue: Spiritual Exhaustion and the Cost of Caring in the Pastoral Ministry. Towards a 'Pastoral Diagnosis' in Caregiving," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (2015): 39–48.

⁶ Jonathan A. Draper, "If Those to Whom the W/Word of God Came Were Called Gods...– Logos, Wisdom and Prophecy, and John 10:22–30," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1–8.

Theologians generally agree on the importance of reason in determining a moderate. Be a standar reference to always pay attention to aspects of propriety and contextuality in determining the middle path taken.⁷

As a representation of God in the world, the church is called and sent amid the pluralistic society, and at the same time, coexists in the public sphere. Of course, this is a challenge for Christianity, whether Christianity seccessfully interprets the public space and the interaction of the encounter theologically. At least the meaning is an extraction from the three dimensions that refer to the presence of religion in public sphere, namely ideas, structures, and practices. The meaning of religious moderation will be carried out at the grassroots if it is translated well into egalitarian and democratic nuances, because it is not easy to remain radical in carrying out the Great Mandate for the lost world but still in the corridors of truth and without exposure to radicalism.⁸

The nature of religion, which refers to etymological studies, clearly aims so that human life is not chaotic, so it is not surprising that all religions teach goodness. Only, in fact, the lofty ideals of each religion cannot be adequately implemented among the grassroots, so it is presented precisely as violence and intolerance between adherents of one religion with another religion. Abuse in the name of religion occurs and becomes the beginning of the legitimacy of acts of violence in the cloak of religion.⁹ The same thing happened in Indonesia, the various violence experienced by the church, in form of sealing and forced closure, was all carried out in the robes of religion.¹⁰

In the New Testament the word that refers to moderation, *μετριοπθεια*, can be found in Hebrews 5:2 "Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (KJV) - *μετριοπαθεῖν δυνάμενος τοῖς ἀγγοῖς ἀγγοῖς ἀγγοῖς ἀγγοῖς ἄσθένειαν*.¹¹ Although Jesus did not explicitly mention it in His teaching to His disciples, the spirit of moderation was evident in his conversation with the Samaritan woman in John 4. The long history of the struggle between the Jews and Samaritans was successfully bridged with love, until finally the inhabitants (who were Samaritans) asked Jesus to stay with them and Jesus stayed two days with them (Jn 4:40).

Reconciliation efforts are the church's responsibility because the church has significant power in society and the church becomes a representation of God that brings the mandate and spirit of reconciliation to the world.¹² The church is also the holder of the baton of Jesus' ministry on earth. In the historical reality of human life, Jesus is the only one who can do good and right throughout His life. The angel called him "Holy, Son of God" (Lk 1:35), which is confirmed in Hebrews 4:15 "...but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." In contrast, other humans, can only able to implement the bad, or the combination of good and evil, because of the nature of human sinfulness. Only by faith in Jesus, is a man justified and put before God. Through the power of the Holy Spirit that exists within believers, a wrong thread can be decided and enabled to live life as a new creation, that is, as children of God. The study aims to look at the extent of the church's role in preparing for congregational spirituality within the framework of religious moderation, and at the same time reconcile congregations that experience intimidation.

⁷ Ryan A Brandt et al., "New Models of Religious Understanding," *Journal of Biblical and Theological Studies* 3, no. 1 (2018).

⁸ McConnell Walter L, "Book Review of Walter C. Kaiser Jr. Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations. 2nd Ed.," *Themelios* 39, no. 2 (2014): 307–308.

⁹ Jarvis J. Williams, "Sermon: 'Don't Be Surprised When You Suffer for Christ, But Rejoice!' (1 Peter 4:12-19)," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 18, no. 1 (2014): 145–151.

¹⁰ SantosoThomas, *Kekerasan Politik Agama: Suatu Studi Konstruksi Sosial Tentang Perusakan Gereja* (Surabaya: Lutfansah Mediatama, 2018).

¹¹ Leo Koffeman, "Costly Tolerance," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 72, no. 1 (2016): 1–8.

¹² Wim Dreyer, "The Real Crisis of the Church," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 3 (2015): 1–5.

METHOD

Extracting information is done through in-depth interviews with several church members, so that factual data can describe the local context (social setting). The data obtained is then interpreted, quantitatively and qualitatively (mix-methods). Quantitative data obtained through the dissemination of questionnaires to 40 respondents. A questionnaire method is several written questions used to obtain information from the respondent in the sense of a report about his person, or things he knows. The questionnaire used here is a type of closed questionnaire because the answer is in the form of assent. The scale used to give a score in each problem item, id est using the scale Likert: Strongly Disagreed Answers got a score of 1 (one), No Consent answers get a score of 2 (two), Hesitant answer gets a score of 3 (three), Agreed Answer gets a score of 4 (four), and Strongly Agreed Answers gets a score of 5 (five). Data processing was done with SPSS, and was presented in straightforward sentences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for the main variables. The adjustment of the model was calculated through several indices, all within parameters considered good.

Table 1. Variables Entered/Removed^a

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Role of the Church	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Religious Moderation

b. All requested variables entered.

Table 2. Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.945 ^a	.893	.889	2.481

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role of the Church

b. Dependent Variable: Religious Moderation

Simple regression analysis was used to explore the relationship between the role of the church in cultivating a system of values, spiritual principles and a solid theological foundation for the congregation and religious moderation. With reference to the table above, it appears that the correlation that occurs between the two variables is 0.945. In column R square, it appears that the effect of the role of the church is 89.3%, while the other 10.7% is influenced by other factors. In the other part, only 30% of respondents feel equipped with content of religious moderation in a structured and "prepared" spiritually in case of clashes/friction with other religious people.

When we look at the letter written by Paul to the Romans, it appears that Paul seemed to be trying to describe two very different and contradictory principles, namely living according to the flesh and according to the Spirit. Paul describes that living according to the flesh is identical to the worldly/human pattern of life. In this regard, Paul is not talking about the physical human body, but is referring to the nature of being prone to sinning. This sin is identified with the opposite and even against God.¹³ The statement is affirmed by the phrase, "For the desire of the flesh is death, but the desire of the Spirit is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

A very real contrast is shown with living according to the Spirit, whose whole aspect of life is ruled by the Spirit of God. By living in the Spirit of God, man has the ability to resist the impulses of sin. By parading "sarx" and "ruakh" Paul brought the church in Rome back to Old Testament theology. In the Old Testament, the Spirit of God (*Ruakh Elohim*) is described as having

¹³ Scott F Sanborn, "The End in the Beginning: A Biblical-Theological Catechism for Young and Old," *Kerux The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 32, no. 2 (2017): 18–21.

a powerful power, capable of giving strength and having the power to renew. Thus, those who live by the Spirit of God are enabled to renew their lives day by day to the perfection of life according to God's will. The pattern of life mastered and led by the Spirit of God enables man to turn off desires derived from satan's flesh and intervention, thus making man gain life. This is the advice Paul wrote about it, "For if you live according to the flesh, you will die. But if by the Spirit you shut down the works of your body, you will live" (Rom. 8:13).

In parading these two principles of life, Paul considers that the law is incapable of empowering man to live in truth and to do God's will completely and perfectly. In Rom. 7:4 Paul writes, "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am flesh, sold under the power of sin." This shows that attempts to carry out the law with human power only led to distress and despair. The effort to love God with all your heart, soul, strength, and reason becomes impossible to do with human power alone. Just as the effort to love one's fellow man as one loves oneself will only lead to failure and frustration if it is not done at the leadership of the Spirit of God. This is an important point that should get full attention for the church. The Church must prepare the church for difficult times (even persecution) by first emphasizing the importance of a life ruled by the Spirit of God.¹⁴ Living according to the Spirit is a choice that must be made by church members because this attitude of life is in harmony with the spirit of religious moderation.

Paul viewed his experience of faith as so precious that he concluded that having Christ in the heart and making Christ the fully sovereign King of man's life alone made man the ability to love (Rom. 8:10, "Christ is in you"). Paul carries the dimension of faith far beyond ritual and mere rationality, but to personal encounters with Jesus and personal communion. This is what makes one another different in the implementation stage. The more a person opens his heart and allows Jesus to be sovereign over his life, the more he is enabled to overcome sin and the desires of the flesh, because of the Spirit of Christ that is in it.¹⁵

This is in accordance with what Paul said, "But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is your life because of righteousness" (Rm 8:10). Furthermore, the life of the Spirit of God will bear fruit in the Spirit as described in Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law." This kind of life pattern form is not something that suddenly appears but is the result of continuous "spiritual practice." This spiritual practice is based on a system of values, spiritual principles and a solid theological foundation. This is where the function of the church becomes very dominant. The congregation needs "training" from a church that is charged with a value system, spiritual principles, and a theological basis.¹⁶

On the contrary, pride and a sense of superiority are also not something natural and spontaneous ironfat. It is also a product of the concept of thinking and even theological teaching, known as verticalist theology, that places relationships with others as superior-inferior, thus negating horizontal and equal relationships. This way of thinking and being very vulnerable to the sin of pride is like putting oneself in line with God, and thus distancing man from God's grace. This kind of theological model becomes a dogmatic belief that transforms the essence of faith that should glorify God into an act that harasses God's glory. Placing vertical and horizontal theology in a balanced manner becomes a wise choice if the goal to be achieved is the peace of religious life.¹⁷

Not infrequently, adherents of this theology have the idea that destroying people who are considered infidels is something that is legitimate to do. It is ironic indeed, but as it is, they seek

¹⁴ Benjamin Lee Hegeman, "Persecution and the New 'Normal' World: 'When Persecuted, We Endure' (1 Cor 4: 12)," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 18, no. 1 (2014): 99–123.

¹⁵ Stella D. Potgieter, "Communities: Development of Church-Based Counselling Teams," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 2 (2015): 1–8.

¹⁶ Paul B. Decock, "Philo of Alexandria: A Model for Early Christian 'Spiritual Readings' of the Scriptures," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1–8.

¹⁷ Stephen J. Wellum, "Proclaiming the Gospel to Islam," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, no. 2 (2016): 5–8.

to glorify God by negating the majesty of God's creation which is considered incompatible with him according to the principle of his religious beliefs. This is what makes the adherents of this teaching easily fall into acts of violence. On the one hand it is as if diligently upholding the majesty of God, while on the other hand it fails to establish God's love.

It has been explained earlier that the church is most responsible for "training" the congregation with the content of a value system, spiritual principles, and a true theological basis. This basis can be used as a foothold for the church to participate actively in religious moderation. Congregations must be brought to the point of understanding that they must have universal love, which does not distinguish religion, creed, ethnicity, or culture. The congregation was brought to know and practice brotherly love, as found in Hebrews 13:1 "Let love of the brethren continue." The author of Hebrews certainly did not intend to teach the love that was limited to the Christian only. This is evident in the next verse the author of Hebrews says, "Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). This advice certainly reminds us of Abraham who welcomed the guest, who was 3 strangers, kindly and generously. Genesis 18:1-15 says that Abraham finally realized that his guests were angels of the Lord. The theological message preserved until the time of the New Testament, that God also revealed Himself through others (in this case strangers) who could have been different tribes, religions, and languages. Through it can also be learned a valuable lesson that God the Greatest and Glorious, the transcendent is also present amid human life (immanent).

Vertical theological models often fail in seeing the existence of God in one another. For them, performing various religious rituals and religious laws is far more important than loving different neighbors. Whereas religion means talking to God, not about God. Then brotherly love will be implemented to anyone who is around it, despite different beliefs, tribes, religions, and so on. This will be in harmony with Jesus' words in Matthew 25:40, "Surely everything you have done for one of my least brothers, you have done for Me."

Matthew 25:40 shows Jesus' seriousness in placing relationships with others as indicators of the quality of relationships with God. Failure to love one another represents a failure to believe in the Lord Jesus. From here can be drawn a common thread of urgency to implement religious moderation. This means also being ready to love even if they respond to it with something bad, such as trying to forbid worship, closing / sealing the church, and many other bad things. Loving sincerely is done without the motive of expecting a good reward and even though they are unable to repay our kindness and generosity, as Jesus said, "for they will repay it by inviting you too and thus you will be rewarded" (Lk 14:12b).

Repeatedly the Gospels record the real actions of Jesus based on compassion (*esplagkhnisthe*). For example, Matthew 13:14, "He saw a large crowd, so he was moved by compassion for them, and he healed those who were sick" is a real form of compassion that is always accompanied by the real action of the Lord Jesus in response to the problem. Whenever Jesus was moved by mercy, He acted immediately to help. This attitude becomes the basis of all His works, in other words Jesus Christ can be identified with compassion.¹⁸ Hebrews 13 and Luke 14 show a pattern of complementary relationships. Implementing fraternal love to others becomes an important part of believers' spirituality. The goal to be achieved is to be able to look at others who hurt us as Jesus saw, because Jesus came into the world and died for them as well. Through the knowledge of Jesus' work of salvation and redemption our lives are filled with God's love and compassion. For the Christian faith, it is God's compassion that enables every believer to unconditionally impose God's love.¹⁹

Religious moderation becomes easy to do, not just on a conceptual level, because its implementation is rooted in Jesus' teachings. Jesus acted immediately to help, this is the simple

¹⁸ Sandy Ariawan, Kristyana Kristyana, and Sri Wahyuni, "Measuring Spirituality above Religiosity: Efforts to Suppress the Procrastination of Teachers of Christian Education through the Internalization of Love," *Kurios (Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* 7, no. 1 (2021): 195–202.

¹⁹ Stephen J. Wellum, "'Solus Christus': What The Reformers Taught And Why It Still Matters," *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 19, no. 4 (2015): 79–105.

implementation in religious moderation. God's compassion in every believer can produce holistic empowerment, including authentic meaning and purpose in life. The restoration of the image of oneself from sin through Jesus' redemptive work enables every believer to see and respond to the reality of religious life with a true and holy understanding.²⁰ That is why through the redemption of Jesus, every believer has God's compassion which is a gift of empowerment that renews his life, including in the perspective and attitude of his life amid religious pluralism in Indonesia.

God's compassion needs to be nurtured and continually cultivated in every God's people so that the empowerment of spirituality continues to be renewed, because "the spirit is obedient, but the flesh is weak" (Mt 26:41). It is not uncommon for God's people to feel burning to follow the will of the Spirit, but instantly the desire quickly turns into the desire of the flesh. The weight of following the will of the Spirit is not enough just to pray and read the Bible, but it also takes an open attitude of faith to hear God's will and be willing to be led day by day through the events of human life. The same was shown by the sensitive and open Paul when guided by the Spirit through his vision of faith in Macedonia. Paul experienced the empowerment of spirituality by directing his vision out, not always moving on himself. God's compassion for others followed by concrete actions makes the spirituality of God's people optimally empowered.²¹

In Christianity, God's miracles work in many aspects of life, not just limited to spectacular events. That is why the presence of God with His compassion is the main emphasis of the testimony of the Bible. Because of His love, God continues to work until now in every one of His people. This theological principle has logical consequences in the faith of every God's people, that is, that everyone who believes in Jesus and recognizes Jesus as his Lord and Savior should be characterized by God's compassion. Thus, every of God's people is willing wholeheartedly to participate in God's work of salvation to help others. The form of loving others of different religions, tribes, and languages in the frame of religious moderation becomes a tangible manifestation that God's people take part existentially and manifestly in God's work in the world.²²

The form of God's love and compassion embodied in religious moderation is also a challenge for God's people. The challenge in question is whether church members show something different from the unbelievers? In general, a humanistic form of love, which is a form of love that is only sympathy without being willing to be involved in the form of action, is also able to be shown by people who do not know God. God's people are required to do more. In 1 Kings 17:17-24 it can be seen how Elijah, with the compassion of God, begged God to raise the dead son of a widow. God heard and was willing to answer Elijah's prayer because Elijah earnestly prayed with sincere love and compassion.²³

In the Old and New Testaments, there is a continuity process related to God's compassion. This form does not change and should be the basis for every of God's people in thinking, speaking, and acting. Every ethical moral decision is always based on God's compassion. That is why the theology of God's people is compassion's theology expressed operatively in the form of concrete actions on others, thus becoming a spirituality that reflects Jesus' compassion totally, both in the realm of thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds. This contrasts with the compassion commonly possessed as a human being, who is satisfied because he has done a virtue. God's people do good with the encouragement of respect for God, the Owner of Life. Thus, God's people learn to glorify God through actions that are compassionate to others.

²⁰ Louw, "Compassion Fatigue: Spiritual Exhaustion and the Cost of Caring in the Pastoral Ministry. Towards a 'Pastoral Diagnosis' in Caregiving."

²¹ Pieter De Vries, "Living in Truth: Unmasking the Lies of Our Postmodern Culture – Southern," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 2, no. 2015 (2015): 135–148.

²² Tony Costa, "The Sabbath and Its Relation to Christ and the Church in the New Covenant," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 20, no. 1 (2016): 123–147.

²³ Mitchell L Chase et al., "From Dust You Shall Arise: Resurrection Hope in the Old Testament," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 18, no. 4 (2014): 9–29.

Learning from Christ's compassion we realize that compassion is aimed at saving sinners and making them Christ's instrument so that they may experience the gift of forgiveness from God. God's people practice compassion in the form of religious moderation with the same goal, which is to bring their fellow religions and beliefs to experience an encounter with Christ. By God's mercy, every God's people is enabled to bring others to Christ until they experience God's forgiveness, and thus his life is renewed. It is legitimate if we hate his evil deeds or actions, for example trying to shut down the church, inciting society to hate church members, etc. But our vocation as God's people must always love that person, whomever Christ died for as well.

Thus, it can be concluded that the compassion that every God's people have arises from a heart that loves one's neighbor unconditionally. This attitude also shows that every person in God's church has been able to come out of love for himself. Furthermore, with that pure compassion, every of God's people finds God's calling in his or her neighbor who is guilty of himself, and even leads his neighbor to an encounter with God personally.

In Matthew 18:22 we find Jesus' teaching about infinite forgiveness and conditions. Jesus contrasted his teaching with the retaliatory attempts demanded by Lamech or the law of "an eye for an eye." The forgiveness that Jesus taught came from God's boundless love. In His teaching pattern, man is positioned as a person who owes an unsanctified amount to God. In His mercy, God has always had compassion for man in his sinfulness. This shows that God not only enacts justice, but also positions Himself as a God full of mercy.

The parable told by the Lord Jesus about the king or master who forgave his servant who had owed as many as 10,000 talents was not only driven by feelings of justness, but most importantly his mercy. For if he applies the principle of justice, the servant who owes 10,000 talents will never be able to pay his debts. The value of 10,000 talents today can reach the value of billions of Rupiahs. So that the servant who has been forgiven by his master because he owes as much as 10,000 talents should also be willing to forgive his neighbor who only owes 100 dinars. But in fact, the servant who owed 10,000 talents had absolutely no mercy, so he imprisoned his fellow who could not afford to owe him 100 dinars.²⁴ The parable aims to awaken every of God's people to always have generosity and compassion, because we ourselves have received God's forgiveness, which we should not be able to afford. Any form of spiritual achievement, worship, piety, and any action will not be able to pay off our debt to God. But God with His mercy gives grace to each of us so that every of God's people will have salvation and receive eternal life.

The Lord's Prayer teaches every God's people to forgive others as God has forgiven us, "and forgive us of our iniquities, just as we forgive those who wrong us" (Matt. 6:12). That is why, in the context of religious moderation, forgiveness, grace, and compassion of God, we respond with a heart that forgives others. Successfully interpreting God's holistic forgiveness in life will have an impact on our success to forgive those who wronged us. On the other hand, a person who has not experienced total generosity is very difficult to forgive his fellow guilty. In fact, without realizing it, the person is shackled with heartache and disappointment. One can get out of that feeling by opening one's heart so that one can see all the grace of God's forgiveness in Jesus.²⁵

The foundation of our spirituality is built on the understanding that all our infinite debts of sin have been forgiven by the Lord Jesus. So, in the context of religious moderation, it is not difficult to accept the differences in religion and beliefs of others, while releasing forgiveness when someone tries to suppress or even close our churches. This means forgiveness is essentially a complete expression born of generosity, with the aim that the forgiven person may experiencing recovery and living in repentance; open opportunities to reflect and evaluate yourself; enjoy the visit of God's love; and give awareness that even in a position as a victim who suffers,

²⁴ Betty A S Pakpahan et al., "Improving Teacher Creativity and Innovation Through The Supervision of The Principal," *International Research Journal of Advanced Science Hub* 03, no. 09 (2021): 202–209.

²⁵ Sandy Ariawan et al., "The Long and Winding Road of Christian Education Teachers in Fulfilling the Divine Vocation: Should You Run Away or Give Up with Circumstances?," *Regula Fidei: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 6, no. 2 (2021).

but we refuse to avenge crimes with crime or violence by violence.²⁶ A person who is forgiven gets a chance to change. This certainly means a change in a better direction. Thus, forgiveness is given in the compassionate corridor can lead to repentance. Forgiveness is not an easy thing to do, but the willingness to forgive is the highest quality of spirituality. It is also an indicator that the person is ready to be used as "an instrument." It may seem to the world that it seems a weakness, but the person has a huge wealth of spirituality.

Failure to win the hearts of others for Christ, for we are often unwilling to enact the unserved and boundless love and forgiveness of Christ. To be precise we often limit Christ's infinite love, so that we fail to accept the weak of his faith. That's why in Roman 14:1 the apostle Paul said, "Accept the weak man of his faith without expressing his opinion." It is difficult for us to accept people who are weak in faith because we are more likely to judge others, especially those we find guilty. This means that if we still tend to judge others, then we will not be able to forgive those who hurt us.²⁷

It may be considered something small or trivial, but without realizing it every child of God who does it is becoming heroes of faith. Doing small things for big results, all it takes is loyalty. Each of us is reminded to be faithful to the little things God has entrusted. In Matthew 25:14-30, a master who entrusts wealth to three of his servants, each obtains 5 talents, 2 talents, and 1 talent according to his ability, each servant who obtains 5 talents and 2 talents does not remain silent. They manage the talent money entrusted by their master with full responsibility and optimal. So that the servant who gets 5 talents can get 100% profit, and the servant who gets 2 talents also gets 100% profit. But the servant who has one talent does absolutely nothing. He only kept his talent money so that no one would steal it. As a result, the amount of money he received remained the same and did not develop in the slightest. Though the meaning of quality life will be realized when we really want to manage all the potential that God entrusts to us to produce something that benefits others. This means doing simple things in everyday life staying in the corridors of talents that God has given us.

CONCLUSIONS

As the conclusion, church has a very significant role in the frame of religious moderation, that is in cultivating a system of values, spiritual principles, and a solid theological foundation for the congregation. The role of the church influenced religious moderation by 89.3%, while 10.7% is influenced by other factors. It is necessary to equip the congregation with content of religious moderation in a structured and "prepared" spiritually in case of clashes/friction with other religious people. God never requires us to do "great" things that go beyond our ability. He only asks that we be willing to manage all the potentials and gifts that exist optimally, so that our moral life, expertise, intellectual and spiritual abilities are growing. If all aspects of our personality develop healthily, then we will be able to contribute to our beloved country, Indonesia.

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²⁶ Dirk van der Merwe, "Early Christian Spirituality of 'Seeing the Divine' in 1 John," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, no. 1 (2015): 1–11.

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