



Interpreting Philippians 4:5 in the efforts to strengthen the moderate attitude of the Christians in Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords:</p> <p><i>Epieikēs</i>; interfaith tolerance; Philippians 4:5; Pluralism; public theology; religious moderation; social cohesion.</p>	<p>This study aims to analyze the contribution of Philippians 4:5 in strengthening religious moderation among Indonesian Christians, particularly in addressing intolerance, radicalization, and social tension within a pluralistic society. Employing a qualitative method and hermeneutical approach, the research explores the theological significance of the term <i>epieikēs</i> in Pauline theology and its relation to the principles of religious moderation in public policy and education. The findings reveal that <i>epieikēs</i> is not merely an individual virtue but a public and intersubjective ethical principle that can serve as a foundation for harmonious interfaith relations. This study affirms that integrating religious moderation values derived from Philippians 4:5 into government policy, religious education, and interfaith praxis can enhance social cohesion and enrich Christian public theology with socially relevant insights. The study contributes to the discourse on public theology, interreligious studies, and value-based policy formulation in religiously diverse societies.</p> <p>Contribution: It highlights the significance of <i>epieikēs</i> as a public and intersubjective ethical principle that extends beyond individual virtue, providing a foundation for fostering tolerance, mitigating radicalization, and reducing social tensions in a pluralistic context.</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Religious life today is often characterized by various dynamics, ranging from numerous inter-religious conflicts, radicalism, and extremism that cause unrest between nations (Lamb, 2024). This phenomenon has caused much chaos in various regions, which can undermine social harmony. Therefore, religious moderation is a key pillar for maintaining peace and harmony with one another and avoiding violence that can arise from differences in belief (Untu, 2023). Religious moderation is a religious attitude and behavior that is balanced, just, tolerant, respects diversity, and upholds human values. This attitude is the antithesis of extremism and radicalism, which tend to absolutize a single interpretation, impose their will, and ignore the rights of others (Mithen, 2023).

In Indonesia's diverse society, where various religions, ethnicities, and cultures coexist, religious moderation is a key requirement for maintaining peace, harmony, and unity (Rantung, 2024). Amidst the rise of intolerance, radicalization, and interfaith conflict, a moderate approach to religion is highly relevant for reducing social tensions and promoting harmony. Religious moderation itself is not only a principle of tolerance that teaches us to respect differences, but also a commitment to peaceful coexistence and building bridges of understanding between different groups. In this context, religious teachings, both those derived from the Bible and other religious teachings, play a significant role in fostering a moderate and inclusive attitude (Nugroho & Sari, 2023).

One of the books in the Bible that contains teachings about the importance of displaying kindness, hospitality, and openness towards others is the Book of Philippians. From the perspective of religious moderation, this book emphasizes that Christians should be able to show an attitude of sincere love, not only in relationships with fellow Christians, but also with those of different beliefs. The kindness mentioned in a text in this book leads to the understanding that living in harmony and peace requires the ability to appreciate differences and create space for mutual acceptance (Subriyanto & Najoan, 2023). A text in the Book of Philippians that has great relevance to religious moderation is Philippians 4:5, which reads, "Let your kindness be known to all men." This text contains a very strong message regarding the attitude of Christians towards others, including in terms of interacting with people of different religions or beliefs (Subriyanto & Najoan, 2023).

In everyday life, religious moderation can be seen as an effort to avoid extremism, whether in the form of intolerance or radicalization. Intolerance often arises when an individual or group feels that their views or beliefs are the most correct, without allowing room for differences (Sagala, 2020). Conversely, radicalization occurs when an individual or group falls into an overly extreme understanding of religion, which can ultimately lead to violent acts. Philippians 4:5 teaches us not to fall into such extremism. Instead, this teaching encourages Christians to live with a more open, loving attitude, and prioritize kindness toward all people, without exception (Harahap et al., 2023). In this regard, this text can serve as an important foundation for building the character of moderate Christians, who always prioritize love and peace in all their actions.

Philippians 4:5's contribution to religious moderation is crucial, particularly in addressing issues that often disrupt interfaith harmony, such as intolerance, radicalization, and conflict (Sinaga et al., 2023). By embodying the virtues of kindness embodied in this text, Christians are expected to serve as role models for the wider community on how to live harmoniously alongside one another despite differences. This is crucial not only in the context of inter-Christian relations but also in interfaith relations (Blois & Lamb, 2024). When religious communities demonstrate mutual respect and appreciation, harmony and unity can be more easily achieved.

Furthermore, applying Philippians 4:5 to the lives of Christians can also have a significant impact on reducing radicalization and intolerance. In many cases, radicalization begins with a narrow and exclusive understanding of religion, which often leads to acts of violence (Lome et al., 2024). Philippians 4:5, by emphasizing the importance of kindness and hospitality toward all people, encourages Christians to develop a more inclusive and moderate view of religion. Thus, this text can help prevent the growth of radical and extreme ideologies that threaten harmony and peace.

The research questions that can be raised from this study are how Philippians 4:5 contributes to shaping Christian religious moderation, and how the application of this teaching can address issues of intolerance, radicalization, and strengthen harmony and unity in society. This study aims to identify how the values of religious moderation contained in Philippians 4:5 can be implemented in the daily lives of Christians, and to what extent these teachings can contribute to the creation of a more peaceful and harmonious society.

The purpose of this study is to delve deeper into the contribution of Philippians 4:5 to religious moderation, particularly in the pluralistic context of Indonesia. It also aims to analyze how the application of the values of religious moderation contained in Philippians 4:5 can help reduce intolerance and radicalization, as well as strengthen harmony and unity among religious communities. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore the role of Philippians 4:5 in building social peace in society.

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A Study on Religious Moderation in Christianity has received considerable attention from theologians and academics, particularly in efforts to respond to the dynamics of religious diversity in Indonesia. Nevertheless, most of these studies remain focused on specific biblical pericopes and have yet to specifically highlight Philippians 4:5 as a theological basis for building a moderate religious ethos. In fact, the verse contains an ethical exhortation highly relevant to this matter—a call to be gentle toward everyone, which implicitly carries principles of dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence.

One study addressing this theme is the research conducted by Setblon Tembang entitled "*Realizing Religious Moderation in a Multicultural Society Based on Christian Hospitality in John 4:1–30*" (Tembang, 2023). This study emphasizes the importance of the principle of hospitality in fostering a moderate religious life. Through the pericope of John 4, Tembang highlights the example of Jesus engaging in inclusive dialogue with the

Samaritan woman as a concrete practice of Christian hospitality. Such action by Jesus is viewed as a representation of the spirit of moderation, prioritizing reconciliation, acceptance of differences, and recognition of human dignity. The study also affirms that hospitality is an essential foundation for building a peaceful and harmonious social life in a multicultural society. However, this research has not extended its theological exploration to other relevant texts, such as Philippians 4:5, which explicitly contains the moral command to demonstrate kindness or gentleness as an expression of faith. Moreover, reflection on the application of these values in the context of Indonesian pluralism has not been comprehensively addressed.

Another significant study is presented by Reni and Broto in their work entitled *"The Construction of Religious Moderation through the Reading of Matthew 23:25–32"* (Triposa & Yulianto, 2022). This study evaluates the phenomenon of religiosity rooted in hypocrisy and religious arrogance as displayed by the Pharisees and scribes. The analysis stresses that religious moderation cannot be built on mere external piety but must grow from an awareness of human weakness and authentic love for others. Thus, moderation is seen as a spiritual necessity for believers, not merely a social response. While offering an in-depth analysis of dysfunctional religious dynamics, this research does not address other biblical passages that explicitly affirm the principle of moderation in the broader context of social relations. Philippians 4:5, for example, offers a moral expression directly related to openness, friendliness, and gentleness in communal life—values that are urgently needed to be actualized amid Indonesia's religious diversity.

From these two studies, it is evident that the discourse on religious moderation in Christianity has begun to develop through theological approaches to certain biblical texts. However, to date, there has been no study that directly positions Philippians 4:5 as a reflective foundation for understanding and formulating the practice of religious moderation in Indonesia's plural society. This indicates an important research gap to be filled, given that Philippians 4:5 contains universal ethical principles capable of shaping the collective consciousness of religious communities to live in balance, avoid extremism, and foster interfaith relations grounded in love and public civility. Therefore, an analysis of Philippians 4:5 becomes a significant contribution to strengthening the theology of moderation in the contemporary Indonesian context.

2. METHOD

This research employed a qualitative method with a hermeneutic approach, focusing on the study of documents and texts. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the deeper meaning of the teachings contained in the Bible (Westa Purba, 2018), especially Philippians 4:5, as well as understanding the social and theological contexts related to religious moderation in the lives of Christians. The hermeneutic approach allows researchers to interpret religious texts in a context relevant to current social challenges, such as intolerance, radicalization, and interfaith conflict (Verdianto, 2020).

The qualitative method in this research aims to understand the phenomenon in depth and holistically, and to reveal the hidden meanings behind the practices and understandings existing within the Christian community. Through a qualitative approach, this research will not only collect measurable quantitative data but will also provide an understanding (Manurung, 2022) about how the teachings of Philippians 4:5 are applied in the daily lives of Christians, especially among the millennial generation who are often involved in complex social and religious dynamics.

To achieve this goal, the researcher will examine relevant biblical texts, particularly Philippians 4:5, using a hermeneutical approach. Hermeneutics is the science and art of interpreting texts, aimed at understanding the meaning contained within texts, especially religious texts (Westa Purba, 2018). In the context of this research, hermeneutics will be used to analyze how Philippians 4:5 is translated and applied in the context of the lives of Christians in Indonesia, especially in relation to the attitude of religious moderation.

Documentary studies will be one of the primary sources in this research. The documents to be analyzed include biblical texts, sermons or theological writings discussing religious moderation, and the views of relevant religious leaders and Christian figures. The researcher will examine how the teachings of Philippians 4:5 are explained and interpreted in these various sources, and how these teachings can be applied in efforts to foster religious moderation among Christians.

In the document analysis process, the researcher will focus on two main aspects. First, the researcher will analyze texts related to Philippians 4:5 using a hermeneutical approach, which refers to the principle of interpreting texts to reveal deeper meanings. Second, the researcher will examine how this teaching is applied in a broader social context, particularly in the face of challenges such as intolerance and radicalization. The researcher will

analyze how these texts can shape Christians' understanding of religious moderation and how this can impact their social lives, especially in their relationships with people of different religious beliefs.

This hermeneutical approach allows researchers to not only understand Philippians 4:5 in its historical context but also to explore its social and theological meanings relevant to contemporary social issues. Through an in-depth interpretation of the text and its social context, this study aims to provide deeper insights into how religious moderation can be applied in the lives of Christians today.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Interpretation of Philippians 4:5

Philippi is a city located in the province of Macedonia, northern Greece, and is strategically located as a meeting point for trade and military routes. It is known as a Roman colony with privileges granted by the Roman Empire (Tangen, 2018). As a colony, Philippi was governed by Roman law, and its citizens were considered Roman citizens with all the rights that came with it. One of these privileges was the freedom to engage in various social and economic activities under the protection of Roman law. The city of Philippi was not only socially and economically important, but also had a very strong cultural influence from Rome, which is evident in the way the Philippians treated the emperor as a religious and political figure. Social life in Philippi was dominated by Roman values, and the government's harsh policies against any form of disobedience to Roman law also had an impact on the city's religious and cultural life (Zoccali, 2023).

The presence of the Christian congregation in Philippi presented significant challenges, as they had to live in a world heavily influenced by Roman domination and reliance on the emperor. The city's people generally valued Roman values, and this provided a challenging backdrop for the growth of the Christian church (Lamb, 2024). The church in Philippi, despite its difficult beginnings, flourished in a harsh environment, with much persecution and uncertainty about its existence as a religious minority (Lamb, 2018). The Christian community in Philippi was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey, as recorded in Acts chapter 16. During the journey, Paul and Silas were imprisoned in Philippi after freeing a woman possessed by a spirit of sorcery, who was causing economic problems for her employer (Lamb, 2024). Although the early days of the ministry in Philippi were challenging, a few individual converts, such as Lydia, a purple cloth merchant, and the jailer, became the foundation for the first Christian congregation in Europe. Thus, the Philippians were deeply rooted in Paul's ministry and filled with strong personal relationships.

The Philippians were known as a community that faithfully supported Paul's ministry. Despite external pressures, such as threats of persecution and internal tensions, they remained committed to their faith and to Paul as their spiritual leader (Hermina, 2025). The Philippians were also known for their generosity, regularly sending material aid to Paul during his difficult time in prison. In his letter to them, Paul expressed his deep gratitude and described them as invaluable fellow servants (Lome et al., 2024).

In this regard, the book of Philippians is unique because of its loving and grateful nature. Paul expresses his joy and gratitude for this close relationship and reminds the Philippians to continue living in joy, humility, and unity amidst the social tensions that exist. This congregation is known not only for their material support, but also for their passion in serving Christ despite facing many challenges. The book of Philippians, short but concise, serves as a vital example of how Paul views this congregation as a solid and loving spiritual family (Giffin, 2020).

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians around 60-62 AD while he was in prison, and this letter was written with several main purposes in mind (La'ia et al., 2022). First, Paul wanted to express his gratitude for the Philippians' continued support, both spiritually and materially. The Philippians had shown great concern for him, even during his suffering. This demonstrated the depth of their love for Paul and for the work of the gospel. Second, Paul wanted to offer encouragement and strength to the Philippians who were facing challenges. Although not facing a major crisis like the other churches, Paul wrote to encourage them to persevere in the faith and continue to rejoice, even in difficult circumstances. One of the most striking features of this letter is the emphasis on the joy that comes from Christ, which is not dependent on external circumstances. Paul affirms that true joy comes from a close relationship with Christ, and that suffering for Christ is part of the calling of faith-filled with eschatological hope (Subriyanto & Najooan, 2023).

In addition, Paul also touches on the internal tensions that arose among some members of the congregation, such as Euodia and Syntyche, who were experiencing disagreements (Gerung, 2018). Although Paul does not adopt a harsh approach in this letter, he still encourages them to reconcile and live in unity in Christ. This approach demonstrates Paul's understanding of the Philippians' fundamentally loving and humble character, as well as their good intentions in serving Christ, despite the occasional internal tensions (Blois, 2024).

The Book of Philippians can be considered a letter of encouragement full of love and hope, and is not intended as a letter of harsh rebuke. Instead, Paul uses this letter to strengthen the Philippians in their faith, reminding them to live humbly, maintain joy in suffering, and continue to love one another in a fellowship filled with the love of Christ (Lamba & Ari, 2024).

In Greek, the text of Philippians 4:5 reads: "τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθήτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις. ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς" (Alkitab, 2002). The Indonesian Bible Society translates it into Indonesian as, "Hendaklah kebaikan hatimu diketahui semua orang. Tuhan sudah dekat!" (Alkitab, 2002). The key term in Philippians 4:5 is ἐπιεικὲς (*epieikēs*), which is translated as "patient," "gentle," and "kind" (Pfeiffer & Harrison, 2001). In Paul's understanding, this term refers not only to a passive, gentle character, but also to an active spiritual quality born of spiritual maturity and inner transformation (Marpaung & Hwang, 2023). Within the framework of Pauline Theology, *epieikēs* represents a balanced, compassionate, and sensitive attitude toward the surrounding social circumstances. It is an ethos of life that rejects violence and extremism, and instead demonstrates a maturity of faith manifested through inclusive and compassionate social behavior (Haryanto, 2025). Paul commands that this *epieikēs* be known to all people, signaling the urgency of the public dimension of this value, and making it a visible witness of the Christian faith.

The theological dimension of the word *epieikēs* also demonstrates its closeness to the values developed in the discourse on religious moderation. In the context of Indonesian national policy, religious moderation is formulated through four main indicators: national commitment, tolerance, non-violence, and accommodation to local culture. These four values resonate in the meaning of *epieikēs* as taught by Paul (Doma, 2023). The *epieikēs* attitude does not contradict steadfastness of faith, but rather demands a mature expression of faith in the form of love and a willingness to engage in dialogue with differences. Moderation in this sense is not theological relativism, but a way of life that emphasizes humanity and justice as manifestations of God's love (Saragih, 2024).

Next, the statement "The Lord is near," which forms the second part of Philippians 4:5, reinforces the ethical and spiritual meaning of *epieikēs*. This phrase carries eschatological overtones that provide a motivational context for the preceding ethical command. Awareness of God's nearness motivates a life of piety and high social responsibility. In this light, the *epieikēs* attitude arises not only from horizontal moral considerations but also from vertical hope in God's presence. The nearness of God means that every human action, including the way one treats others, has spiritual weight and eschatological consequences (Doma, 2023). Thus, religious moderation in the light of Philippians 4:5 is a spiritual practice rooted in Christian faith and hope.

The presence of the concept of *epieikēs* in today's pluralistic and conflict-ridden world demonstrates the high relevance of the values taught in Philippians 4:5. The contemporary world is facing a wave of intolerance and identity polarization that threatens our shared life (Subriyanto & Najooan, 2023). In this context, *epieikēs* becomes a spiritual offering capable of reframing how Christians interact with the world around them. It is a call to present kindness, not only as an internal community value, but as a social witness that reaches out to all. In a society like Indonesia, where diversity is a historical and cultural reality, *epieikēs* can become a guiding principle for Christians to live in harmony with others without losing their identity.

Furthermore, the words found in the text of Philippians 4:5 are not a form of compromise toward the truth of the Gospel. Rather, the verse represents the courage to reveal the face of Christ's love in the midst of diversity. *Epieikēs* can also serve as a bridge between dogma and dialogue, between faith and social action. These two "domains" or "spaces" are connected by *epieikēs*. In addition, *epieikēs* can be adopted as an ethical principle in life and in interfaith relations. Although this text was originally written to the early Christian community, its values possess a universal force. Gentleness, understanding, and tolerance are values appreciated by many other religious traditions. Thus, *epieikēs* can become a meeting point in healthy interreligious dialogue. When Christians make the *epieikēs* their public character, they open up space for constructive, non-judgmental interactions with others of other faiths or beliefs, and can contribute positively to building a more inclusive and peaceful society (Subriyanto & Najooan, 2023).

3.2. Religious moderation from the perspective of Philippians 4:5

Philippians 4:5 serves as a strong theological foundation for understanding and applying the concept of religious moderation within the context of the Epistle to the Philippians (Swandini, 2024). Philippians 4:5 conveys a profound message that remains highly relevant to religious life in a pluralistic society. In this text, Paul emphasizes the quality of gentleness so that it may be experienced by others. This character trait indicates that Christians are called not only to be internally friendly and tolerant but also to manifest these values externally to the wider community (Lome et al., 2024). In today's context, the relevance of Philippians 4:5 becomes even more

profound when connected to the concept of "*Immanuel*"—God with us (Matthew 1:23). The presence of God is not limited to the eschatological future or the second coming of Christ, but is a reality in the here and now, actively present in the lives of His people (Wijaya, 2018). The presence of God in the midst of daily life is a compelling call to live out an active, inclusive, and loving form of religious moderation—not merely as an adaptation to pluralism, but as a response to the nearness of God who is ever among us (Suratman et al., (2020). In the light of the *Immanuel* concept, religious moderation is not simply a theological doctrine but a way of life flowing from the continual presence of God with His people.

The meaning of religious moderation in the light of Philippians 4:5 becomes even clearer when connected to the personal experiences of the congregation. One of the core values of religious moderation is the acceptance of differences (Thomas, 2023). The gentleness referred to in Philippians 4:5 is not merely a passive form of tolerance but an active action of demonstrating love and gentleness toward all (Koronaio, 2024). Therefore, religious moderation can also be regarded as the fruit of a deep relationship with God, who is present in the midst of Christian life. This attitude is not forced, but flows naturally from the awareness of God's presence in every aspect of life. The effect of the kindness that Paul speaks of is not only to bring a positive impact on social relationships but also to serve as a living testimony that reflects an active, peaceful, and inclusive Christian faith (Bennema, 2023). Religious moderation in the light of Philippians 4:5 is not merely about tolerance but rather about an active expression of love that connects people from various religious backgrounds.

Furthermore, religious moderation in the context of Philippians 4:5 is not passive or a compromise of the Christian faith but a call to live side by side in peace and love with others. In a society that is increasingly diverse—religiously, culturally, and ethnically—religious moderation becomes a call to live together without sacrificing the principles of the Christian faith (Supriadi et al., 2020). This moderation also means that Christians must be willing to face existing social and cultural challenges with a non-judgmental attitude, but with a love that brings comfort. The text of Philippians 4:5 clearly teaches that Christians are called to demonstrate the attitude of kindness or gentleness (*epieikes*) not only within the church but also outside it, in the midst of a plural society (Thomas, 2023). In this context, religious moderation is lived out through concrete actions such as maintaining good relationships with neighbors, participating in social activities, and greeting warmly those of different faiths (Bennema, 2023). These actions not only reflect the ethical principles taught in Philippians 4:5 but are also a response to the presence of God who continually accompanies His people in all situations. In other words, religious moderation is not about passively avoiding conflict, but an active call to manifest the love of Christ in everyday life. In a society that is increasingly plural and at times divided by differences, religious moderation becomes a pathway to building bridges of peace, showing that the power of the Christian faith can encourage believers to cultivate harmonious relationships with others.

In the light of Philippians 4:5, the nearness of God also reminds His people to live in love and godliness, providing a foundation for Christians to live not only according to the principles of faith within the church but also in the wider world full of diversity. Religious moderation becomes a response to God's nearness, which moves His people to live in peace and love toward all, regardless of religious or social background. The meaning of religious moderation according to Philippians 4:5 is a theological expression of kindness rooted in the love of God. This attitude is not merely the result of adapting to a plural society but is the fruit of spiritual maturity and a deep understanding of Christ's teachings. Although challenges remain in fully embodying kindness, religious moderation can grow in communities that support one another and live in peace—especially when they realize that God is with us at all times, motivating them to live according to His will and extend love to all without exception. Religious moderation in the light of Philippians 4:5 is also a call to manifest the active love of Christ in everyday life (Walean, 2023). It is not only about accepting differences but also about becoming a living witness to God's love that continually accompanies His people in an increasingly plural society.

Religious moderation, with the understanding of "God with us," points toward a life that demonstrates that faith is not only practiced within the church or in private spaces but also in social interactions with others—both fellow believers and those of different religions, cultures, and social backgrounds (Truna & Zakaria, 2022). Thus, religious moderation is not only about reconciling differences but also about serving as a foundation for better relationships, mutual respect, and bringing peace into daily life (Zega, 2021).

3.3. Religious Moderation in the Context of Indonesia's Pluralistic Society

In Indonesia's pluralistic context, religious moderation plays a crucial role in maintaining interfaith harmony. Indonesia, with its ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, requires principles that support harmonious coexistence. (Jeniva & Tanyid, 2025). Religious moderation applied in daily life will reduce social tension and strengthen

national unity. Philippians 4:5, with its teaching on *epieikēs*, or kindness, offers a highly relevant foundation in this context. (Flemming, 2021). This text not only teaches about good personal attitudes, but also invites Christians to show love and understanding to others, regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, or social background.

In Philippians 4:5, the word *epieikēs* is more than just gentleness. In Paul's understanding, *epieikēs* refers to an active, mature, and wise spiritual quality. It is an attitude that emphasizes balance in action, not too much and not too little, and always prioritizing love for others (Bertschmann, 2020). In the context of Indonesian society which is full of differences, this attitude is very relevant, because it can be a guideline for Christians to live side by side with people of other religions peacefully and with respect.

The attitude of religious moderation taught in Philippians 4:5 can contribute significantly to interfaith harmony in Indonesia. In many cases, interreligious conflict arises from a lack of understanding and tolerance of differences (Eko & Putranto, 2019). *Epieikēs*, with its profound meaning, invites Christians to prioritize kindness in interacting with others, regardless of religion or beliefs (Hauerwas & Pinches, 2022). In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, this attitude is very important to reduce tensions between religious communities and create space for constructive dialogue.

The main challenge in implementing religious moderation, particularly *epieikēs*, is changing the mindset of society, which often views religious differences as a threat, not a blessing. Often, religious differences are seen as a trigger for conflict or a source of division. However, by living the values of *epieikēs*, Christians are invited to change this perspective. The word *epieikēs* teaches Christians to live in peace with others, respect differences, and treat others with sincere love, without prejudice or hatred (Gaukroger, 2020).

The diversity in Indonesia is unavoidable. The attitude of religious moderation born of *epieikēs* can strengthen interfaith harmony. *Epieikēs* invites Christians to demonstrate love and gentleness in the face of differences. This is not only an internal principle of the church but also a value that can be applied in social life outside the church (Keown, 2022). In this way, religious moderation rooted in the teachings of Philippians 4:5 can become a solid foundation for strengthening the unity of a nation consisting of various religions and beliefs.

This *epieikēs* attitude is crucial in strengthening the unity of the Indonesian nation. Religious moderation applied based on this principle will create an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation, which is essential for maintaining national unity (Nugroho, 2024). When Christians live out the teachings of Philippians 4:5, they not only maintain harmony within their own communities but also make a positive contribution to the wider society. In this regard, religious moderation serves not only as a teaching to improve relations among Christians but also as a contribution to improving interfaith relations in Indonesia (McDonald, 2025).

Epieikēs emphasizes an attitude that prioritizes understanding, gentleness, and love, which is the basis for Christians to establish harmonious relationships with people of other religions, without sacrificing their own beliefs (Prahasan, 2025). The religious moderation born of this teaching is not a form of theological relativism that reduces religious differences to insignificance. Rather, religious moderation is an attitude of respecting and accepting differences while remaining steadfast in the Christian faith. This not only creates a peaceful atmosphere within the church but also in the wider public sphere (Syarif, 2021).

In an increasingly connected world often rife with religious conflict, religious moderation rooted in Philippians 4:5 offers a highly relevant solution. The *epieikēs* attitude invites Christians to live not only with love within the church but also in every social interaction with others (Gadamer et al., 2022). Thus, religious moderation serves as a bridge between faith beliefs and concrete social action, where Christians can play an active role in creating a more inclusive and peaceful society (Liu, 2025).

The application of religious moderation as embodied in Philippians 4:5 can also strengthen the unity of the Indonesian nation by providing a framework that emphasizes understanding and love for others. The *epieikēs* attitude can be a meeting point that allows Christians to engage in constructive interfaith dialogue, one that not only champions differences but also values diversity as a shared strength (Gamaleal, 2024). In Indonesian society, which is often marked by social tension, religious moderation can be a basic principle that helps reduce the potential for conflict and promote social peace.

Thus, the attitude of religious moderation taught in Philippians 4:5 is not only relevant to the personal lives of Christians but also has a broad impact on social and political life in Indonesia. The *epieikēs* attitude serves as an ethical foundation that strengthens unity and harmony among religious communities and makes a positive contribution to building a more harmonious and peaceful society (Ekanayaka & Yong, 2025). Christians who live these values will become agents of change who bring love and peace into a pluralistic society, thereby strengthening the unity of the Indonesian nation.

3.4. Practical Implications for the Government's Religious Moderation Policy

In the study of religious moderation, one important aspect that needs to be considered is the integration of religious moderation into government policy, which functions to strengthen social harmony and peace in a pluralistic society like Indonesia (Kawangung, 2019). This study provides in-depth insights into the application of the principles of religious moderation, particularly those contained in Philippians 4:5, in the context of public policy. As a country with diverse religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds, Indonesia faces significant challenges in creating adequate social balance (Hutabarat, 2023). Therefore, the application of the principle of religious moderation which is based on the teachings of Philippians 4:5 is very relevant to help create policies that encourage tolerance, diversity, and harmony between religious communities.

The text of Philippians 4:5 teaches Christians to live with an *epieikēs* attitude of kindness, gentleness, and understanding towards others, regardless of religious differences (Kreider & Svigel, 2019). These values align perfectly with Indonesia's vision as a pluralistic nation, where differences in religion and belief should not be a source of division, but rather a richness that enriches our shared life. In this context, the principle of religious moderation, rooted in the teachings of Philippians 4:5, can make a significant contribution to the development of government policies aimed at strengthening interfaith harmony and promoting social integration (Ahmed & Adnan, 2024).

One policy that can be implemented to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia is the integration of religious moderation values into the religious education curriculum. Religious education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' character and attitudes toward other religions, especially within the context of Indonesia's diversity (Pujianti & Nugraha, 2024). As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia also has a significant number of Christians, along with Buddhists, Hindus, and followers of other religions (Hefner, 2017). Therefore, it is essential for educational policies to instill the values of tolerance and religious moderation from an early age, particularly within the framework of religious education.

The text of Philippians 4:5, with its emphasis on *epieikēs*, can be applied in religious education to encourage children and young people to understand the importance of tolerance and understanding of differences (Gamaleal, 2024). In practice, moderate religious education not only teaches about one's own religion exclusively, but also encourages students to learn about and respect other religions. The government can introduce a curriculum based on the values of religious moderation, emphasizing the importance of gentleness, love, and understanding toward others, while avoiding extremism and violence that often arise from ignorance and an inability to interact with differences (Mala & Hunaida, 2023).

An educational curriculum that focuses on religious moderation must include materials that teach the basic values of communal life, such as respecting individual rights, treating others with respect, and building inclusive social relationships (Mahrus & Afandi, 2024). Through this education, students will learn to view religious differences not as a threat, but as an opportunity to enrich their social and spiritual lives. This can help reduce the interfaith polarization that often arises among the younger generation, especially those influenced by intolerant attitudes, sometimes exacerbated by extreme narratives on social media or in their local communities (Arifah et al., 2025).

In addition, government policies can also encourage the implementation of religious moderation in the context of social and political policies, by prioritizing the values of tolerance, harmony, and diversity in every public decision. Policies that encourage social integration between religious communities are crucial to ensuring that all religious groups can coexist safely and peacefully (Haq, 2025). The government can implement programs that promote interfaith dialogue, strengthen cooperation in social activities, and create space for religious communities to understand and learn from each other.

Applying the principle of Philippians 4:5 in social policy will encourage the creation of a more inclusive society, where every individual feels valued, accepted, and has the space to express their religious beliefs without fear or threat (Bulan & Manik, 2024). The government can create more opportunities for religious communities to participate in interfaith social activities, such as community service programs, environmental cleanup efforts, or humanitarian programs involving people from various religious backgrounds. Such activities not only help build social peace but also strengthen a sense of solidarity and togetherness among groups of different faiths.

Furthermore, the government can also utilize interfaith training programs as part of its efforts to strengthen religious moderation in Indonesia. Such training programs can be designed to introduce the values of religious moderation, as taught in Philippians 4:5, to religious communities throughout Indonesia (Mulyana, 2023). This training can involve various elements of society, including religious leaders, community leaders, teachers, and young people, with the aim of fostering more tolerant and moderate attitudes toward religious differences. The

training program can include discussions on how to manage religious differences peacefully, how to respond to extremism with compassion, and how to build social cooperation between religious communities.

One way to apply Philippians 4:5 in government programs to combat intolerance is through strengthening social integration that prioritizes humanitarian values and peace. Intolerance often arises when individuals or groups feel threatened by religious differences, leading them to isolate themselves or even discriminate against other groups (Verkuyten & Kollar, 2021). Therefore, it is crucial for government policies to ensure that every individual, regardless of their religion, feels valued and accepted in society. Policies that support this social integration can include the development of public facilities that accommodate the needs of all religions, the promotion of joint activities between religious communities, and the active participation of religious communities in building peaceful communities (Anas et al., 2025).

Through policies based on religious moderation, the Indonesian government can create a safer and more harmonious environment for all its citizens. Religious moderation is not merely about reducing tensions or conflicts between religious communities, but also about creating a space where differences can be accepted with understanding and compassion (Hasenclever & Rittberger, 2000). The application of the principles of the text Philippians 4:5 in government policy can shape a more inclusive societal attitude, where every individual and group feels valued, and harmony between religious communities can be well maintained.

In this context, government policies can involve various programs that support religious moderation across various sectors of life, including education, social affairs, and politics. Education that teaches the values of religious moderation, social policies that encourage integration between religious communities, and interfaith programs that strengthen social cooperation all contribute to creating a more peaceful and harmonious society (Gule, 2025). By integrating the values of religious moderation into government policy, Indonesia can ensure that its diversity is not only a source of challenges, but also a strength that enriches the social and spiritual life of society (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

Furthermore, specific government policies—particularly through the Ministry of Religious Affairs—that support religious moderation based on the teachings of Philippians 4:5 can serve as an important foundation for building a more inclusive, tolerant, and harmonious society (Nugroho, 2024). In an increasingly interconnected world, often marked by religion-based conflicts, the application of religious moderation principles derived from Philippians 4:5 will help strengthen interfaith harmony and reinforce the unity of Indonesia's pluralistic nation.

In the concept of public religion, José Casanova shows that religion, instead of being pushed into the private sphere, is playing an increasingly active role in shaping public policy discourse (Casanova, 2009). In the Indonesian context, the values of moderation derived from Philippians 4:5, particularly the principle of *epieikēs* (gentleness and understanding), reflect how Christian teachings can constructively contribute to strengthening social cohesion and the country's multicultural policies. If these values are systematically integrated into the curriculum of interfaith education and training, it will create citizens who have the capacity for healthy and productive dialogue within diverse communities.

In the global realm, the approach to religious moderation in Indonesia has similarities with the postsecularism trend, where religion still has legitimacy in the modern public sphere as a source of ethics and social solidarity (Cakir, 2021). The teachings of *epieikēs* are not merely sectarian values, but can instead be interpreted as universal and contextual public ethics. This is also reflected in Eboo Patel's interfaith engagement approach, which emphasizes the importance of interfaith literacy and social cooperation amidst differences. From the perspective of critical multiculturalism, as proposed by Will Kymlicka, the Indonesian government's policy of supporting social integration based on religious values can be read as a form of active recognition of the identities of minority groups, not merely passive tolerance, but strengthening participation in an equal socio-political space (Kymlicka, 2022).

These concepts are not only relevant domestically but also contextually relevant in the international landscape. For example, Indonesia's policy of religious moderation education parallels the Religious Education approach in the UK and Australia, which introduces various faith traditions in an open and inclusive manner (Kitching, 2024). In fact, this approach is in line with the spirit of the Marrakesh Declaration, which calls for the protection of the rights of religious minorities in Muslim-majority countries (Marinò, 2023). Indonesia, as a country with a complex experience of pluralism, has the potential to emerge as a global model for implementing inclusive and transformative religious-value-based policies. Thus, religious moderation is not only a strategy for mitigating conflict but also a moral and social force for building a just, peaceful, and civilized society, both nationally and globally.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the text of Philippians 4:5, through the teaching of *epieikēs*, which reflects kindness, gentleness, and understanding toward others, has strong theological and social relevance in encouraging religious moderation in a pluralistic Indonesian society. In the national context, this teaching is not only a source of personal spiritual values but also can serve as an ethical foundation for building peaceful and inclusive interfaith social relations. Its application in the context of education, social policy, and the public sphere can overcome the tendencies of intolerance and radicalism that threaten the nation's social cohesion. By positioning *epieikēs* as an expression of faith that is inseparable from social responsibility, Christians are encouraged to become agents of transformation in a multicultural society. The main contribution of this study lies in its effort to connect the exegetical study of the text of Philippians 4:5 with the reality of religious practice, while also addressing the need for a relevant and applicable theological approach in facing contemporary national and humanitarian challenges.

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