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Cross-Identity Hospitality in Luke 10:25-37: Reconstructing a Christian Ethic for Interreligious Relations in Multicultural Indonesia

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Abstract
Indonesian society is marked by religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity, yet interreligious relations are often reduced to passive coexistence that does not necessarily produce solidarity. Christian studies frequently use the parable of the Good Samaritan to promote tolerance and religious moderation, but rarely combine close exegesis of the text with a systematic theological-ethical reconstruction of hospitality across identity boundaries. This library-based biblical-theological study reconstructs a Christian ethic of cross-identity hospitality from Luke 10:25-37 as a foundation for interreligious relations in multicultural Indonesia. It combines historical-grammatical exegesis of the Greek text (NA28), narrative analysis, and contextual theological reflection, engaging major commentaries and peer-reviewed studies published between 2021 and 2026. The analysis shows that Luke presents Samaritans as people at the boundary of Israel whose responses to God's work disclose the reach of salvation. The parable shifts the question from who qualifies as a neighbour to who acts as one, and presents hospitality as an active, costly, and reciprocal practice rooted in divine mercy rather than as mere non-interference. Unlike previous Indonesian studies that derive general values of tolerance from the parable, this study builds an integrated ethic from the narrative structure of the text, recent scholarship on Samaritans, and the Indonesian debate on religious moderation. The proposed ethic consists of a theological foundation, five narrative movements, and three ethical dispositions: rooted identity, active openness, and reciprocal humility. It offers a text-based framework for Christian participation in interreligious solidarity and for churches, theological education, and empirical research.

Keywords: Christian ethics; good samaritan; hospitality; interreligious relations; religious moderation

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is one of the most religiously and culturally diverse nations in the world: the 2010 population census recorded more than 1,300 ethnic groups, a Muslim majority, and significant Protestant, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, and Confucian communities (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011). The national motto *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* and the state ideology of Pancasila affirm unity in diversity, yet everyday interreligious relations continue to face prejudice, segregation, and periodic conflict. The SETARA Institute recorded 260 events and 402 acts of violation of freedom of religion or belief in 2024, an increase from 217 events and 329 acts in 2023 (SETARA Institute, 2025), and Menchik (2016) shows that tolerance in Indonesia has often taken a communal and conditional form. In response, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has promoted religious moderation as a national programme (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019),

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later strengthened through Presidential Regulation No. 58 of 2023 (Peraturan Presiden Republik Indonesia Nomor 58 Tahun 2023, 2023). Singgih (2023) evaluates this programme critically and reframes religious moderation as a pursuit of the good life, while raising concerns about the role of the state in religious affairs, religious freedom, and human rights. Tobing and Tamonob (2025) further argue that tolerance, as one of the indicators of religious moderation, tends to be passive, and that interreligious life requires a more active and intentional form of hospitality. These discussions show that the church in Indonesia needs a theological ethic that moves beyond coexistence toward genuine solidarity with religious others.

Within Christian theology, hospitality has been recovered as a central practice of the Christian tradition. Pohl (1999) shows that hospitality, namely welcoming strangers and making room for them, was a fundamental practice of the early church that later became marginalised, and Jipp (2017) demonstrates that divine and human hospitality form a central theme of Luke-Acts and of early Christian identity. Yong (2008) develops a theology of hospitality grounded in Pentecost, in which Christians act both as hosts who welcome religious others and as guests who receive from them. Theologians of interreligious relations have also examined the limits of the metaphor. Moyaert (2011) proposes interreligious hospitality as a response to the fragility of religious identities, while the distinction between conditional and unconditional hospitality (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000), developed further by Kearney and Fitzpatrick (2021), exposes the ambivalence and power asymmetry between host and guest. This asymmetry is pertinent to Indonesia, where Christians are a minority in most regions and therefore often relate to others as guests rather than hosts. In Indonesia, several scholars have connected hospitality with religious moderation. Siahaan and Kause (2022) present early church hospitality as a way of life for the church within the frame of religious moderation, while Silalahi et al. (2024) place divine hospitality at the centre of the Bible and argue that welcoming religious others is a participation in the mission of God. Siahaya and Siahaan (2026) describe religious moderation as a dialectic between rootedness in identity and radical openness to the other. Other studies root hospitality in local wisdom, such as the Torajan *raputallang* tradition (Rerung, 2022), the Javanese *bancaan* tradition (Panuntun & Susanta, 2021), and the *pela-gandong* relationship in Maluku (Nanuru et al., 2025).

The parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 is one of the biblical texts most frequently used in Indonesian discussions of interreligious relations. Songgono (2022) reads the parable to build tolerance in a multireligious and multicultural society, Ermiatia et al. (2024) derive values of tolerance for religious moderation education, and Rerung and Hermanus (2024) propose religious moderation education for the Toraja Church based on the parable. Tembang et al. (2025) connect the text with religious maturity in a multireligious society through the psychology of religion. The studies most closely related to the present research are those of La'bi et al. (2023) and Silvia and Hermanus (2026). La'bi et al. (2023) use a descriptive qualitative theological analysis of the text to describe Christian hospitality and its implications for preventing religious conflict, while Silvia and Hermanus (2026) construct hospitality values from the parable in response to racism and overlapping ethnic and religious identities. Both

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studies confirm that the parable can ground hospitality, but they concentrate on deriving values or attitudes rather than on a sustained analysis of the Greek text and of recent scholarship on Samaritans in Luke-Acts, and neither proposes an integrated ethical model that links the narrative movements of the parable with the Indonesian debate on religious moderation.

At the international level, scholarship has long read the parable as a story about intergroup boundaries. Esler (2000) interprets it through social identity theory as a narrative that subverts the categorisation of in-group and out-group, and Bauckham (1998) argues that the parable engages the interpretation of the purity law in relation to the command to love. Snodgrass (2018) surveys the history of interpretation and cautions against allegorical readings. Recent scholarship has revisited the historical and narrative portrayal of Samaritans. Ryan (2021) warns that many Christian readings of the parable misrepresent Judaism and hinder Jewish-Christian relations. Brown and Yamazaki-Ransom (2021) argue that Luke portrays Samaritans as part of a restored Israel rather than simply as Gentiles, while Davies (2025) places the parable within the Lukan hope for the restoration of the kingdom. Saleh and Hombana (2025) read the parable in light of first-century purity boundaries and apply it to ethnocentrism through the perspective of Ubuntu, and Mashau and Maponya (2026) interpret it as a call to embodied solidarity with the marginalised.

A mapping of these studies, based on the literature search described in the Methods section and summarised in Table 1, reveals a research gap. Indonesian studies on Luke 10:25-37 tend to emphasise tolerance and religious moderation education, with limited engagement with Greek exegesis, narrative structure, and recent scholarship on Samaritans. Conversely, Indonesian studies on hospitality and interreligious relations are usually based on other texts, such as Acts (Siahaan & Kause, 2022; Rante Salu et al., 2023; Siahaya & Siahaan, 2026), John 4 (Tembang, 2023), or systematic theologies of hospitality (Silalahi et al., 2024; Tobing & Tamonob, 2025), rather than on Luke 10:25-37. Furthermore, no study within the literature mapped here integrates the exegesis of the parable with the Indonesian debate on tolerance, hospitality, and religious moderation in order to reconstruct a systematic ethic of cross-identity hospitality. This gap matters because without a text-grounded ethical framework, the use of the parable risks becoming a general moral appeal that neither respects the historical meaning of the text nor provides clear direction for interreligious practice.

Table 1. Previous Studies on Luke 10:25-37 in the Indonesian Context and the Position of the Present Study

Study	Approach	Main focus	Aspect not yet addressed
Songgono (2022)	Thematic reading of the parable	Tolerance in a multireligious and multicultural society	Sustained Greek exegesis; a model of hospitality
Ermiatia et al. (2024)	Hermeneutical study	Values of tolerance for religious moderation education	Recent scholarship on Samaritans; an integrated ethic
Rerung & Hermanus (2024)	Hermeneutical study	Religious moderation education in the Toraja Church	An ethic beyond the educational setting
Tembang et al. (2025)	Psychology of religion	Religious maturity and moderate attitudes	An exegetical-ethical framework

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La'bi et al. (2023)	Descriptive qualitative theological analysis	Christian hospitality and the prevention of religious conflict	Link between narrative movements and ethical dispositions
Silvia & Hermanus (2026)	Construction of values	Hospitality values in response to racism	Dialogue with the debate on religious moderation
Present study	Historical-grammatical exegesis, narrative analysis, contextual reflection	Ethic of cross-identity hospitality for interreligious relations	Integrates foundation, five movements, and three dispositions

Source: Author's mapping of the literature (2026).

This study therefore addresses the question of how Luke 10:25-37 can be interpreted as a foundation for an ethic of cross-identity hospitality in interreligious relations within a multicultural society. The objectives of the study are (1) to describe the historical and social context of Jewish-Samaritan relations in Luke; (2) to analyse Luke 10:25-37 exegetically with respect to love and the identity of the neighbour; (3) to formulate hospitality as a theological-ethical principle that moves beyond identity boundaries; (4) to examine its relevance for interreligious relations in Indonesia; and (5) to reconstruct an ethic of Christian hospitality for a multicultural society. These five objectives correspond, in order, to the five subsections of the Results and Discussion. The novelty of the study lies in a reconstructed ethic of cross-identity hospitality that is derived from the narrative movements of the parable, informed by recent scholarship on Samaritans, and placed in dialogue with the Indonesian discourse on tolerance and religious moderation. The study is expected to contribute theoretically to biblical theology and Christian ethics, and practically to churches, theological education, and interreligious engagement in Indonesia.

METHODS

This library-based biblical-theological study employed three complementary approaches: historical-grammatical exegesis, narrative analysis, and contextual theological reflection. Historical-grammatical exegesis, following the steps outlined by Gorman (2020), was used to establish the meaning of Luke 10:25-37 in its historical, linguistic, and literary setting. Narrative analysis, drawing on Resseguie (2005), was used to examine the plot, characterisation, setting, point of view, and rhetorical movement of the dialogue and the parable within the narrative of Luke. Contextual theological reflection followed the synthetic model of contextual theology described by Bevans (2002), which holds the biblical tradition and the contemporary context in mutual dialogue without allowing either to absorb the other. The three approaches were integrated sequentially and dialogically: exegesis and narrative analysis established the meaning of the text, and contextual reflection brought that meaning into conversation with the Indonesian context of interreligious relations. The move from text to ethics was guided by the four tasks of New Testament ethics proposed by Hays (1996), namely the descriptive, synthetic, hermeneutical, and pragmatic tasks.

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The primary data of the study were the Greek text of Luke 10:25-37 in the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition (NA28; Aland et al., 2012). The variants listed in the NA28 apparatus were consulted, and none of them affects the argument of this study. Lexical and grammatical analysis used the standard lexicon BDAG (Danker, 2000) and the grammars of Wallace (1996) and Runge (2010). Translations of Greek words and phrases are the author's own, and Greek terms are given with transliteration and translation on first occurrence following the SBL Handbook of Style (Society of Biblical Literature, 2014). The secondary data consisted of major commentaries on Luke (Bovon, 2013; Edwards, 2015; Green, 1997; Levine & Witherington, 2018; Wolter, 2017), studies of Samaritans and of the parable (Bauckham, 1998; Esler, 2000; Pummer, 2016; Snodgrass, 2018), foundational works on hospitality, identity, and toleration, and peer-reviewed journal articles. Monographs and commentaries were selected for their standing in the field regardless of publication date, whereas the search for journal articles was limited to the period 2021-2026 in order to capture the most recent Indonesian and international discussion. Older foundational journal articles identified through citation tracking in the commentaries were also included.

Journal articles were searched in Google Scholar, the Garuda portal, and the websites of national and international journals in 2026, using the search strings “Luke 10:25-37” OR “Lukas 10:25-37” OR “Good Samaritan”, combined with AND “hospitality” OR “hospitalitas” OR “interreligious” OR “religious moderation” OR “moderasi beragama”, as well as “Samaritans” AND “Luke-Acts”. After the removal of duplicates, the titles and abstracts of the retrieved records were screened against the criteria below, and the full texts of potentially relevant articles were then assessed. Articles were included if they (a) were published between 2021 and 2026, (b) had undergone peer review and were accessible through a DOI or an official journal page, and (c) addressed Luke 10:25-37, Samaritans in Luke-Acts, or Christian hospitality in relation to interreligious relations. Articles were excluded if they were not peer-reviewed, used the parable only as a passing illustration without analysing it, or discussed hospitality only in the sense of tourism or business services. In total, 23 journal articles met these criteria and form the core corpus of the study; the studies that read Luke 10:25-37 in the Indonesian context are summarised in Table 1. Additional sources on the Indonesian social context, such as census data, monitoring reports, and regulations, were consulted separately. Indexed theological databases such as the ATLA Religion Database and Scopus were not searched systematically; this limitation was partly offset by citation tracking in major commentaries, which identified foundational studies such as Bauckham (1998) and Esler (2000).

The analysis proceeded in five stages, each corresponding to one subsection of the Results and Discussion. First, a historical-contextual analysis examined Jewish-Samaritan relations and the portrayal of Samaritans in Luke-Acts (historical-grammatical exegesis). Second, the literary context and structure of Luke 10:25-37 were identified (narrative analysis). Third, key Greek words and phrases were analysed grammatically and lexically, and the narrative movements of the characters were traced (historical-grammatical exegesis and narrative analysis; the

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descriptive task). Fourth, the exegetical findings were synthesised into theological-ethical principles (the synthetic task). In this stage, a dimension of hospitality was accepted only if it met three criteria: it was grounded in an explicit textual feature of the passage, it was consistent with the wider narrative of Luke-Acts, and it was supported by at least one major commentary or study. Fifth, these principles were related to the Indonesian context by analogy and placed in dialogue with Indonesian studies on interreligious relations in order to reconstruct an ethic of cross-identity hospitality and its practical implications (contextual theological reflection; the hermeneutical and pragmatic tasks). To ensure credibility, the interpretation was checked through intersubjective comparison with several standard commentaries and through explicit hermeneutical controls: the meaning of the text was distinguished from its contemporary application, and each theological-ethical claim was traced back to an identified textual feature and to its supporting sources. The study did not involve human participants; therefore, ethical approval was not required.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical and Social Context of Jewish-Samaritan Relations in the Gospel of Luke

The historical-contextual analysis provides the basis for the exegesis by clarifying the relationship between Jews and Samaritans that Luke and his audience presupposed. The tension between the two communities had deep roots. The Samaritans regarded themselves as descendants of the northern tribes of Israel, accepted only the Pentateuch as Scripture, and worshipped on Mount Gerizim rather than in Jerusalem (Pummer, 2016). Some Jewish texts portray them as a mixed population whose worship was illegitimate (2 Kgs 17:24-41; Sir 50:25-26), although Jewish views of Samaritans were not uniform and such polemical accounts do not reflect Samaritan self-understanding (Pummer, 2016). The destruction of the Samaritan sanctuary on Mount Gerizim by the Hasmonean ruler John Hyrcanus (Josephus, *Ant.* 13.254-256) deepened this hostility; its date is debated, since the account of Josephus points to around 128 BCE whereas the excavations on Mount Gerizim suggest a date around 111-110 BCE (Pummer, 2016). Incidents of mutual hostility continued into the first century CE, including the defilement of the Jerusalem temple by Samaritans under the prefect Coponius and the killing of Galilean pilgrims in Samaria under Cumanus (Josephus, *Ant.* 18.29-30; 20.118-136). Levine (2014) emphasises that, for the original audience of Jesus, a Samaritan hero would have been shocking, comparable to a contemporary story in which the hero comes from a group regarded as an enemy.

However, recent scholarship warns against simplifying this picture. Brown and Yamazaki-Ransom (2021) argue that Luke does not portray Samaritans as Gentiles but as part of biblical Israel that is being restored through the ministry of Jesus. Davies (2025) similarly reads the parable within the Lukan hope that the divided people of God, North and South, Samaritan and Jew, would be reunited through divine compassion. This perspective means that the boundary crossed in the parable is not merely ethnic but also religious and covenantal: it concerns who belongs to the people of God and who is entitled to receive and give mercy. At

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the same time, Ryan (2021) and Levine (2014) caution that interpretations which portray the priest and the Levite as representatives of a legalistic Judaism easily become anti-Jewish. A responsible reading must therefore avoid replacing one form of exclusion with another.

Within the narrative of Luke, Samaritans appear at significant moments. Shortly before the parable, a Samaritan village refuses to receive Jesus because he is going to Jerusalem, and James and John wish to call down fire from heaven; Jesus rebukes them and continues to another village (Luke 9:51-56). This episode shows that hostility existed on both sides and that Jesus rejected retaliation against those who rejected him. Later, among ten lepers who are healed, only a Samaritan returns to give thanks, and Jesus calls him a foreigner (Luke 17:11-19). In Acts, the risen Christ sends the disciples to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8), and Samaria receives the word of God through the ministry of Philip (Acts 8:4-25). Green (1997) observes that Luke consistently portrays the gospel as reaching people at the margins of social and religious boundaries, a reading shared by other major commentaries (Bovon, 2013; Levine & Witherington, 2018).

The parable therefore stands in a narrative where Samaritans are both strangers and potential recipients of salvation. Luke places it at the beginning of the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, immediately after the rejection by the Samaritan village. This placement is significant: the one who has just been rejected by Samaritans tells a story in which a Samaritan becomes the model of love. The historical and narrative context thus prepares the reader to understand the parable as a challenge to the boundaries that define who is inside and who is outside the community of love.

Exegetical Analysis of Luke 10:25-37 on Love and the Identity of the Neighbour

Turning to the text itself, Luke 10:25-37 consists of two parallel rounds of dialogue between Jesus and a lawyer, with the parable placed in the second round, a structure widely recognised in the scholarship (Green, 1997; Bovon, 2013; Snodgrass, 2018). The structure of the passage and the key Greek terms, with transliteration and translation, are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Structure and Key Terms of Luke 10:25-37

Section	Verses	Key Greek terms (transliteration, translation)	Narrative function
Dialogue 1: question on eternal life	25-28	νομικός (*nomikos*, "lawyer"); ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω (*zōēn aiōnion klēronomēsō*, "shall I inherit eternal life"); ἀγαπήσεις (*agapēseis*, "you shall love")	The law is known; the issue is practice
Dialogue 2: question on the neighbour	29	δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν (*dikaiōsai heauton*, "to justify himself"); τίς ἐστίν μου πλησίον (*tis estin mou plēsion*, "who is my neighbour?")	Seeks the boundary of obligation
Parable: the victim	30	ἄνθρωπός τις (*anthrōpos tis*, "a certain man"); ἡμιθανῆ (*hēmithanē*, "half dead")	An unclassified human being in need
Parable: priest and Levite	31-32	ἰδών (*idōn*, "having seen"); ἀντιπαρῆλθεν (*antiparēlthen*, "passed by on the other side")	Seeing without acting
Parable: the Samaritan	33-35	ἐσπλαγχνίσθη (*esplanchnisthē*, "was moved with compassion"); προσελθών (*proselthōn*, "having	Compassion expressed in costly,

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		approached"); πανδοχεῖον (*pandocheion*, "inn"); ἐπεμελήθη (*epemelēthē*, "took care")	sustained care
Closing question and command	36-37	πλησίον γεγονέναι (*plēsion gegonenai*, "to have become a neighbour"); ἔλεος (*eleos*, "mercy"); ποίει ὁμοίως (*poiei homoiōs*, "do likewise")	Neighbourliness enacted through mercy

Source: Author's analysis (2026).

As shown in Table 2, the first round (vv. 25-28) begins with a lawyer, a νομικός (*nomikos*, "lawyer"), an expert in the law of Moses, who stands up to test Jesus with the question τί ποιήσας ζωὴν αἰώνιον κληρονομήσω; (*ti poiēsas zōēn aiōnion klēronomēsō*, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"). Jesus responds with a counter-question about what is written in the law, and the lawyer answers by combining Deuteronomy 6:5 on loving God with the whole person and Leviticus 19:18 on loving the neighbour as oneself. Jesus affirms the answer and commands him to do it so that he will live. At this point, the issue is not lack of knowledge, since the lawyer already knows the law. The issue is how that knowledge is put into practice.

The second round (vv. 29-37) begins when the lawyer, wishing to justify himself (θέλων δικαιῶσαι ἑαυτόν, *thelōn dikaiōsai heauton*), asks καὶ τίς ἐστίν μου πλησίον; (*kai tis estin mou plēsion*, "and who is my neighbour?"). The word πλησίον (*plēsion*) literally denotes one who is near and, as a substantive, a neighbour or fellow human being (Danker, 2000, s.v. πλησίον). In Leviticus 19:18, the neighbour is primarily a fellow Israelite, although Leviticus 19:34 extends the command of love to the stranger who lives among Israel. The question of the lawyer therefore seeks to define the boundary of obligation: who counts as a neighbour, and who does not. Green (1997) notes that this question presupposes that the world can be divided into those who deserve love and those who do not.

Jesus answers with a story. A certain man (ἄνθρωπός τις, *anthrōpos tis*) goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho and falls among robbers, who strip him, beat him, and leave him half dead (ἡμιθανῆ, *hēmithanē*). The man is not identified by ethnicity, religion, or social status; he is simply a human being in need. This anonymity is important, because the wounded man cannot be classified, and the characters who meet him must decide how to respond without knowing whether he belongs to their group. A priest and then a Levite, both associated with the temple, see him and pass by on the other side (ἀντιπαρῆλθεν, *antiparēlthen*). Levine (2014) argues that explanations based on the fear of ritual impurity do not satisfactorily account for their behaviour, and the text itself gives no reason. Bauckham (1998), by contrast, argues that the question of purity is relevant, because the parable addresses how the purity law relates to the command to love the neighbour. This study follows Levine's caution because the narrator supplies no motive and because purity-based explanations easily turn into anti-Jewish caricatures, while acknowledging with Bauckham that the parable is concerned with the interpretation of the law. In either case, the narrative focus is not on their motives but on their failure to act.

The turning point occurs in verse 33, where the subject is placed before the verb: Σαμαρίτης δέ τις ὁδεύων (*Samaritēs de tis hodeuōn*, "but a certain Samaritan, while

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travelling"). Such fronting, together with the developmental particle δέ (*de*), marks the Samaritan as a new and contrastive topic (Runge, 2010), so that the reader is invited to compare him with the priest and the Levite. Like them, the Samaritan sees the man, but unlike them, he is moved with compassion (ἐσπλαγχνίσθη, *esplanchnisthē*). The verb σπλαγχνίζομαι (*splanchnizomai*) denotes being moved in one's inward parts, that is, having pity or compassion (Danker, 2000, s.v. σπλαγχνίζομαι). In Luke, the same verb is used for Jesus when he sees the widow of Nain (Luke 7:13) and for the father when he sees his returning son (Luke 15:20). On the basis of this verbal parallel, the Samaritan may be read as embodying the compassion of God revealed in Jesus, an interpretation that remains a theological inference rather than a direct statement of the text (Green, 1997).

The compassion of the Samaritan is expressed in a series of concrete actions. He approaches the man (προσελθών, *proselthōn*), binds up his wounds, pours on oil and wine, sets him on his own animal, brings him to an inn (πανδοχεῖον, *pandocheion*), and takes care of him (ἐπεμελήθη αὐτοῦ, *epemelēthē autou*). The next day he gives two denarii to the innkeeper (πανδοχεύς, *pandocheus*), asks him to take care of the man, and promises to repay any additional expense on his return. The noun πανδοχεῖον occurs only here in the New Testament and, in ordinary usage, simply denotes an inn (Danker, 2000, s.v. πανδοχεῖον). Although the word is formed from elements meaning "all" and "to receive," its meaning in first-century usage cannot be derived from its etymology (Barr, 1961), and there is no clear evidence that Luke exploits that etymology. The significance of the inn therefore lies not in the word itself but in the narrative imagery: the story moves from a road where people pass by to a place of shelter, and the care of the Samaritan extends from immediate rescue to sustained responsibility involving another person.

At the end of the parable, Jesus reformulates the question of the lawyer: τίς τούτων τῶν τριῶν πλησίον δοκεῖ σοι γεγονέναι τοῦ ἐμπεσόντος εἰς τοὺς λῃστάς; (*tis toutōn tōn triōn plēsion dokei soi gegonenai tou empesontos eis tous lēstas*, "which of these three, do you think, became a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?"). The perfect infinitive γεγονέναι (*gegonenai*, "to have become"), used in indirect discourse after δοκεῖ (*dokei*), presents the outcome of what happened in the story (Wallace, 1996); the tense form itself should not be loaded with theological meaning. The decisive shift lies rather in the reversal of the question: in verse 29 the lawyer asks who is the object of his love, whereas in verse 36 Jesus asks who acted as a neighbour (Bovon, 2013; Snodgrass, 2018). Being a neighbour is thus presented less as a fixed status to be identified than as a role to be enacted. Saleh and Hombana (2025) describe this as a shift from asking who qualifies as a neighbour to asking to whom one must become a neighbour. The lawyer answers, "the one who showed mercy" (ὁ ποιήσας τὸ ἔλεος μετ' αὐτοῦ, *ho poiēsas to eleos met' autou*), identifying the neighbour by his action rather than by his group; the text does not state whether this phrasing also reflects a reluctance to name the Samaritan. Jesus concludes, πορεύου καὶ σὺ ποίει ὁμοίως (*poreuou kai sy poiei homoiōs*, "go and do likewise").

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The exegesis yields three key conclusions. First, love of neighbour in the parable is not limited by the identity of the one in need, since the wounded man is unclassified. Second, through the reversal of the question, the identity of the neighbour is reframed from a category to be determined into a role to be enacted, and the model of that role is someone from outside the group of the questioner. Third, love is expressed through a sequence of concrete, costly, and sustained actions. These conclusions form the exegetical basis for understanding hospitality as an ethical principle that crosses identity boundaries.

Hospitality as a Theological-Ethical Principle Beyond Identity Boundaries

Building on these exegetical conclusions, the parable presents hospitality as a theological-ethical principle that moves beyond identity boundaries. Hospitality in this sense is not limited to receiving guests in one's home. Pohl (1999) describes hospitality as making room for the stranger, recognising the dignity of the other, and offering care and fellowship, and Jipp (2017) shows that in Luke-Acts hospitality toward strangers is a central expression of God's saving welcome. In Luke 10:25-37, the Samaritan makes room for the wounded man on his own animal, in the inn, and in his own resources and time. The parable thus illustrates hospitality as an embodied practice of welcoming and caring for a stranger in need.

Applying the criteria described in the Methods section, this study identifies four dimensions of hospitality in the parable, each anchored in a specific textual feature: the verb of compassion (theological dimension), the anonymity of the wounded man (anthropological dimension), the persisting identity of the Samaritan (identity dimension), and the location of the moral exemplar outside the group of the questioner (reciprocal dimension). The first is the theological dimension. The compassion of the Samaritan may be read as mirroring the compassion of God revealed in Jesus, as suggested by the use of the same verb for Jesus (Luke 7:13) and for the father in Luke 15:20. Hospitality is therefore rooted in the character of God, who receives sinners and strangers (Jipp, 2017). Silalahi et al. (2024) similarly place divine hospitality at the centre of the biblical narrative and describe human hospitality toward religious others as participation in the mission of God.

The second is the anthropological dimension. The anonymity of the wounded man shows that the basis of hospitality is shared humanity, not shared membership. In Christian theological anthropology, this conviction is grounded in the creation of every human being in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27), which Kilner (2015) interprets as the basis of a dignity that does not depend on a person's capacities, status, or affiliation. Every person, regardless of religion or ethnicity, therefore bears a dignity that calls for a response of love. In the passage itself, the double commandment (Luke 10:27) binds love of God and love of neighbour together, so that the theological and anthropological dimensions belong together.

The third is the identity dimension. Volf (1996) argues that the reconciliation of identities in conflict requires a movement from exclusion to embrace, in which one opens oneself to the other without losing oneself. The Samaritan does not abandon his identity in order to help; he remains a Samaritan, yet his identity does not prevent him from approaching the wounded man.

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Siahaya and Siahaan (2026) express a similar idea through the dialectic of *radix* and *hospitium*, namely rootedness in identity and radical openness to the other. Hospitality across identity therefore does not require the erasure of religious identity, but the transformation of identity from a boundary that excludes into a place from which one reaches out.

The fourth is the reciprocal dimension. One of the most striking aspects of the parable is that the moral model comes from outside the group of the questioner. The lawyer, and by extension the reader, is invited to learn love from a Samaritan. Yong (2008) argues that Christian hospitality includes not only acting as hosts toward religious others but also being willing to act as guests who receive from them. This reciprocal dimension challenges any form of hospitality that positions Christians only as givers and others only as recipients. Interreligious hospitality requires the humility to recognise that goodness, mercy, and wisdom may also be found among people of other faiths.

This reciprocal dimension raises a hermeneutical question. If Luke portrays Samaritans as part of the wider Israel that is being restored (Brown & Yamazaki-Ransom, 2021; Davies, 2025), the Samaritan is an intra-Israelite other rather than a member of another religion in the modern sense. Applying the parable to relations with Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Confucians, or adherents of local belief traditions in Indonesia is therefore an analogy, not an identification. In the terms of Hays (1996), this move belongs to the hermeneutical task, in which the text functions paradigmatically: what is transferred is not the identity of the Samaritan but the structure of the encounter. The Samaritan differed from the lawyer in sanctuary, canon, and communal belonging, and each community regarded the worship of the other as illegitimate; the boundary crossed is therefore a religious boundary in the sense that matters for the analogy, namely a boundary that defines who belongs to the people of God and who may give and receive mercy. Social identity readings of the parable support this transfer, since the story subverts the categorisation of in-group and out-group as such (Esler, 2000). The analogy is further warranted by the trajectory of Luke-Acts, which moves the gospel from Israel to Samaria and to the nations (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8), and by the unclassified identity of the wounded man, which grounds the obligation in shared humanity. The analogy also has limits: it must not equate any contemporary religious community with the Samaritans, must not turn people of other faiths into mere objects of Christian benevolence, and must respect their own self-understanding.

These dimensions also clarify the relationship between hospitality and tolerance. Tolerance is not a single concept. Forst (2013) distinguishes several conceptions, ranging from a permission conception, in which a dominant authority merely allows minorities to exist, to a respect conception, in which citizens recognise one another as equals. In the Indonesian framework of religious moderation, tolerance is one of four indicators, alongside national commitment, anti-violence, and accommodation of local culture, and it is understood as giving space to and respecting the beliefs of others rather than as mere non-interference (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019). Tobing and Tamonob (2025) nevertheless observe that tolerance in practice tends to remain passive. The parable does not portray the priest and the Levite as tolerant; passing by a dying man is neglect, not tolerance. The contrast in the story is therefore not

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between religious groups, nor between tolerance and hospitality as such, but between two modes of response to a person in need: keeping one's distance and drawing near. This contrast illuminates the difference between a minimal, distance-keeping practice of tolerance and hospitality, which approaches, makes room, and takes responsibility for the well-being of the other. The difference is presented as a heuristic typology in Table 3.

Table 3. Minimal Tolerance and Hospitality in Interreligious Relations: A Heuristic Typology

Aspect	Minimal tolerance	Hospitality	Illustration in Luke 10:25-37
Basic attitude	Allowing others to exist	Making room for and approaching others	The Samaritan approaches the man
Nature	Passive, non-interference	Active, initiative-taking	Keeping distance (vv. 31-32) versus drawing near (v. 34)
Relation to identity	Boundaries maintained	Identity becomes a place to reach out	A Samaritan acts as a Samaritan
Cost	Low	Time, resources, and risk	Oil, wine, animal, two denarii
Duration	Not necessarily sustained	Sustained and shared	Inn, innkeeper, promise to return
Goal	Absence of conflict	Presence of solidarity	Became a neighbour (v. 36)

Source: Author's heuristic typology based on the analysis of Luke 10:25-37 (2026).

As Table 3 indicates, hospitality does not reject tolerance but builds on and extends it. Tolerance in its respect conception is a necessary basis for coexistence, while hospitality is an expression of love that builds solidarity. This distinction is important for the Indonesian context, where public discourse on religious moderation often foregrounds tolerance among its four indicators (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Tobing & Tamonob, 2025).

Relevance of the Theology of Hospitality for Interreligious Relations in Indonesia

In the Indonesian setting, the studies reviewed in the Introduction already show that hospitality is a fruitful theological category for interreligious relations (Siahaan & Kause, 2022; Rante Salu et al., 2023; Tembang, 2023; Rantung, 2024). The question here is what the exegesis of Luke 10:25-37 adds to this discourse.

The exegesis contributes in three ways. First, it provides a narrative pattern for hospitality that is concrete and practical. Whereas several studies discuss tolerance or hospitality primarily as general values (e.g., Songgono, 2022; Siahaan & Kause, 2022; Ermiatia et al., 2024), the parable offers a sequence of actions, reconstructed below as five narrative movements, that can guide interreligious engagement. Second, it grounds hospitality in the redefinition of the neighbour. In a society where religious identity often determines social circles, the question of who became a neighbour challenges Christians to evaluate their relationships not by religious affiliation but by their response to those in need. Third, it provides a critical perspective on religious moderation. Singgih (2023) reframes moderation as the good life rather than mere state policy, and Siahaya and Siahaan (2026) criticise moderation that is merely accommodating. The parable supports these critiques by showing that genuine love is neither passive nor merely balanced, but actively crosses boundaries for the sake of the other.

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The relevance of hospitality is also evident in local wisdom, and the correspondence can be specified. Rerung (2022) identifies values of the Torajan *raputallang* tradition, which binds Muslim and Christian families through ties of kinship, as a resource for maintaining Muslim-Christian harmony; this tradition corresponds to the disposition of rooted identity, since belonging to a shared family does not require the erasure of religious difference. Panuntun and Susanta (2021) find values of Christian hospitality in the Javanese *bancaan* tradition, a simple communal meal of gratitude, held for instance on a child's birthday, to which neighbouring children are invited to pray together; this practice concretises the movements of approaching and caring through ordinary table fellowship. Nanuru et al. (2025) show how the Protestant Church of Maluku practises religious moderation rooted in the *pela-gandong* relationship, an alliance between villages of different religions with obligations of mutual help, after the Maluku conflict, explicitly framing the question of who is my neighbour as central to plural Maluku; this relationship illustrates the movement of sustaining, because solidarity is institutionalised across generations. At the same time, these traditions challenge the ethic: they are not Christian possessions but are shared across religious communities, so that Christians often take part in them as participants and recipients rather than as hosts. They therefore strengthen the reciprocal dimension and confirm that a Christian ethic of hospitality should be developed in dialogue with these traditions rather than in isolation from them.

At the same time, empirical research shows that hospitality in Indonesian congregations is not uniform. Ratag et al. (2026) identify three types of congregational hospitality toward strangers in North Sulawesi, namely inclusive, cautious or boundary-keeping, and discipleship-oriented transformative hospitality. This finding indicates that churches experience tension between openness and the protection of identity. The parable speaks directly to this tension. The Samaritan acts from within his identity, yet he does not let identity become a reason to pass by. The theology of hospitality based on Luke 10:25-37 may therefore offer resources that could help congregations move from cautious hospitality toward a form of hospitality that is both rooted and open, although this possibility still requires empirical testing.

Finally, the parable provides a basis for interreligious solidarity in addressing shared problems. Mashau and Maponya (2026) read the parable as a call to embodied solidarity with those who are wounded by inequality and marginalisation. In Indonesia, interreligious cooperation offers concrete spaces where people of different faiths can become neighbours to one another. The Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama (FKUB, Forum for Religious Harmony), established at provincial and regency levels under the 2006 Joint Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs, provides an institutional platform for interreligious dialogue and cooperation (Peraturan Bersama Menteri Agama dan Menteri Dalam Negeri Nomor 9 dan 8 Tahun 2006, 2006), and interfaith responses after disasters such as the 2004 Aceh tsunami and the 2018 Central Sulawesi earthquake have been documented, from the interfaith encounters in Mennonite relief work in Aceh (Fountain, 2016) to the psychosocial support programme in Palu that trained Qur'an recitation teachers and Sunday school teachers together (Sokang et al., 2024). Songgono (2022) and La'bi et al. (2023) have

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shown that the virtues of the Samaritan can be applied to building tolerance and preventing religious conflict. This study extends their findings by emphasising that the goal of interreligious hospitality is not only the absence of conflict but the presence of solidarity.

Reconstruction of a Christian Ethic of Hospitality for a Multicultural Society

The final stage of the analysis reconstructs a Christian ethic of cross-identity hospitality. The reconstruction is built from the exegetical findings, the theological dimensions of hospitality, and the dialogue with the Indonesian context. It consists of three components: a theological foundation, five narrative movements, and three ethical dispositions. Figure 1 presents the structure of the reconstruction and the relationships between its components.

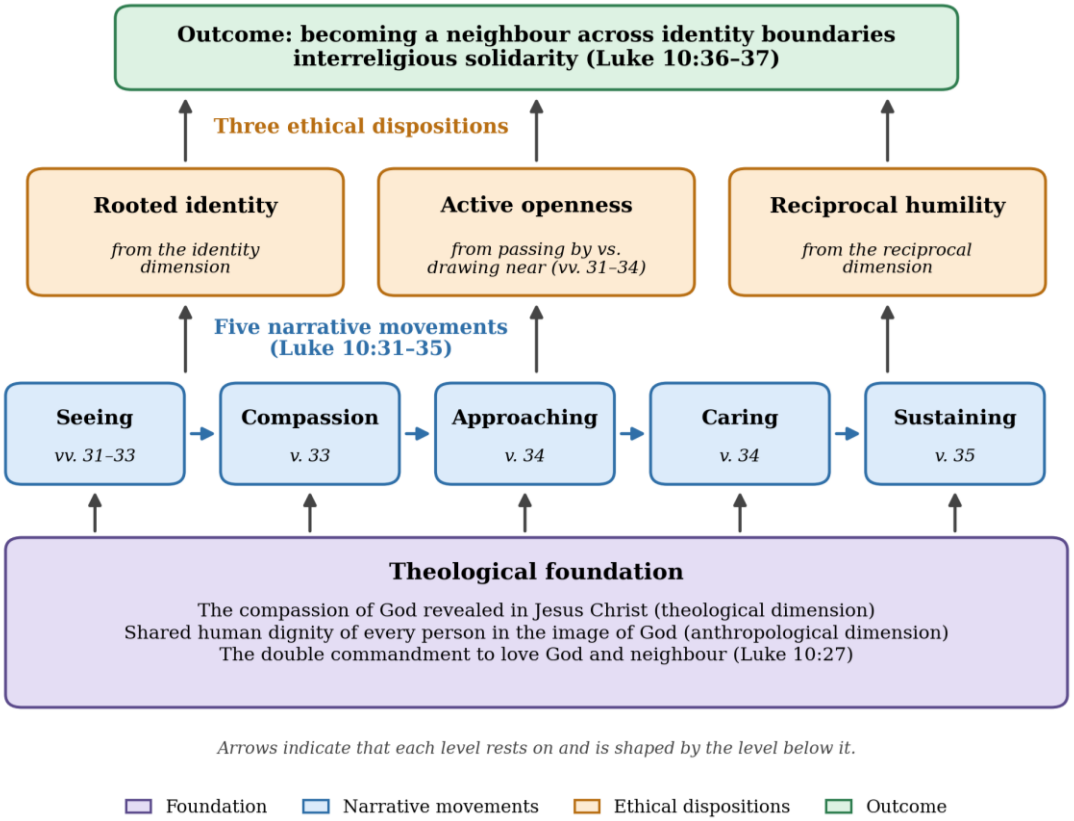


Figure 1. Reconstructed Ethic of Cross-Identity Hospitality Based on Luke 10:25-37
Source: Author's conceptual synthesis (2026).

As shown in Figure 1, the components of the reconstruction are derived from the four dimensions identified above. The theological and anthropological dimensions form the foundation, the identity dimension yields the disposition of rooted identity, and the reciprocal dimension yields the disposition of reciprocal humility. The disposition of active openness is derived from the narrative contrast between passing by and drawing near (vv. 31-34) and from the analysis of tolerance and hospitality summarised in Table 3. The five movements, in turn, are drawn directly from the sequence of verbs in vv. 31-35. The theological foundation of the ethic is the compassion of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The ethic does not begin with a social

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strategy but with the conviction that God has shown mercy to all people, and that those who have received mercy are called to show mercy (Luke 10:37). This foundation includes the affirmation of the dignity of every human being and the double commandment to love God and neighbour (Luke 10:27).

This foundation also provides a point of genuine interreligious contact. In 2007, 138 Muslim scholars and leaders addressed the open letter *A Common Word Between Us and You* to Christian leaders, proposing love of God and love of neighbour as common ground between Muslims and Christians (Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, 2007). The Muslim and Christian contributions gathered in response to the letter (Volf et al., 2010) show that the double commandment cited by the lawyer in Luke 10:27 can serve not only as a Christian foundation for hospitality toward others but also as a shared space in which Christians and Muslims learn from each other. Engaging this interlocutor prevents the ethic from becoming a purely Christian monologue about others, although the meanings of love of God and love of neighbour in the two traditions are not identical and must be respected in their difference.

From this point onward, the discussion moves explicitly from the meaning of the text to its contemporary ethical application. On this foundation, the ethic is expressed through five narrative movements derived from vv. 31-35 of the parable. The first movement is seeing. All three travellers see the wounded man, but only the Samaritan allows what he sees to change his course. In interreligious relations, seeing means paying attention to the presence, experiences, and suffering of people of other faiths rather than ignoring them. The second movement is compassion. Being moved with compassion means allowing the suffering of the other to touch one's own heart, so that the religious other is perceived not as a threat but as a fellow human being. The third movement is approaching. The Samaritan crosses the road toward the man, while the others pass by on the other side. Approaching means taking the initiative to build relationships, dialogue, and cooperation across religious boundaries.

The fourth movement is caring. The Samaritan binds wounds, uses his own resources, and brings the man to a place of reception. Caring means concrete, costly action for the well-being of others, such as solidarity in disasters, defending the rights of minorities, and opposing discrimination regardless of the religion of the victims. The fifth movement is sustaining. The Samaritan does not end his involvement after the initial rescue; he entrusts the man to the innkeeper, provides resources, and promises to return. Sustaining means building lasting structures of solidarity that involve other people and institutions, such as interfaith forums, joint community programmes, and networks of mutual care.

These movements are accompanied by three ethical dispositions. The first is rooted identity, namely a secure Christian identity that does not need to exclude others in order to be faithful, in line with the dialectic of rootedness and openness described by Siahaya and Siahaan (2026) and the movement from exclusion to embrace described by Volf (1996). The second is active openness, namely a disposition that goes beyond passive tolerance toward intentional hospitality, as argued by Tobing and Tamonob (2025). The third is reciprocal humility, namely the willingness to receive from and learn from religious others, as emphasised by Yong (2008)

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and as illustrated by the fact that the moral exemplar of the parable is a Samaritan.

Compared with previous studies, the reconstruction makes three contributions. First, it derives the ethic directly from the narrative and grammatical structure of the text, whereas many Indonesian studies extract general values such as tolerance or compassion (Songgono, 2022; Ermiatia et al., 2024; Rerung & Hermanus, 2024). Second, it integrates recent scholarship on Samaritans (Brown & Yamazaki-Ransom, 2021; Ryan, 2021; Davies, 2025) and social identity readings of the parable (Esler, 2000), which allows the reconstruction to avoid both the simplification of Samaritans as mere enemies and anti-Jewish readings of the priest and the Levite. Third, it places the parable in dialogue with the Indonesian debate on tolerance, hospitality, and religious moderation (Singgih, 2023; Tobing & Tamonob, 2025; Siahaya & Siahaan, 2026), thereby extending the work of La'bi et al. (2023) and Silvia and Hermanus (2026) from the prevention of conflict and racism toward a positive ethic of interreligious solidarity.

The reconstruction has practical implications. For churches, it offers a pattern for evaluating and developing ministries that engage religious others, such as diaconal service that is open to all, participation in interfaith forums, and solidarity programmes in local communities. For theological education and Christian religious education, it provides a framework for teaching the parable not only as a moral story but as a model of cross-identity ethics. For Christians in public life, it encourages active involvement in building a just and inclusive society in which people of different faiths can become neighbours to one another.

These implications also depend on the social location of the church. In most regions of Indonesia, Christians are a minority (Na'im & Syaputra, 2011) and more often relate to others as guests than as hosts, so that hospitality includes the humility to receive and the courage to approach without the security of majority status. In regions where Christians form the majority, such as East Nusa Tenggara, North Sulawesi, and Papua, the same ethic calls churches to use their position as hosts to protect religious minorities and to avoid the asymmetry of power that critics of the language of hospitality have identified (Derrida & Dufourmantelle, 2000; Kearney & Fitzpatrick, 2021).

This study has several limitations. First, the reconstruction is based on textual and literature analysis and has not been tested empirically in congregations or interfaith communities. Second, the mapping of previous studies relied on purposive searching without systematic coverage of indexed databases such as ATLA and Scopus, and may not be exhaustive. Third, the study is written from a Christian perspective, and its usefulness for interreligious relations would be strengthened by fuller dialogue with the perspectives of other religious traditions on hospitality. Fourth, the application of the parable to contemporary religious others rests on an analogy, since the Samaritan in Luke is an intra-Israelite other; although this analogy has been justified above, its limits must be kept in view. Future research could test the reconstructed ethic through field studies in congregations, develop it into curricula for theological and religious education, and conduct comparative studies on hospitality across religious traditions in Indonesia.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Luke 10:25-37 offers a coherent textual basis for a Christian ethic of cross-identity hospitality in interreligious relations. The answer to the research question lies in the reversal at the heart of the passage: by shifting the question from who qualifies as a neighbour to who acts as one, and by placing the moral exemplar outside the group of the questioner, the parable turns identity from a boundary that limits love into a place from which love reaches out. Read analogically, and with attention to the intra-Israelite status of the Samaritan, the text grounds hospitality in divine compassion and shared human dignity and presents it as active, costly, sustained, and reciprocal, going beyond tolerance understood as mere coexistence.

The novelty of the study is an integrated ethic, consisting of a theological foundation, five narrative movements, and three ethical dispositions, namely rooted identity, active openness, and reciprocal humility, that is derived from the narrative and grammatical structure of the text, informed by recent scholarship on Samaritans, and placed in dialogue with the Indonesian debate on religious moderation and with local traditions of solidarity. Theoretically, the study connects careful exegesis with contextual ethical construction; practically, it offers churches, theological education, and Christians in public life a framework for interreligious solidarity that takes their minority or majority location into account. Because the study is textual and conceptual, future research should test the ethic empirically and develop it in dialogue with other religious traditions, so that the call to go and do likewise can be realised in concrete solidarity within a multicultural society.

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Author Contributions

Devrialdo Daniel Paat; contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, formal analysis, and writing, original draft. Andrea Elfata Ratulangi; contributed to validation and writing, review and editing. Both authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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