

Love or Tolerance? A Virtue Response to Religious Violence and Plurality

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Abstract:

Violence is a threat to human flourishing and religious violence is of particular concern. Despite the United Nations issuance of several documents addressing religious freedom, and declaring 1995 “The United Nations Year for Tolerance,” religious violence continues rising worldwide in a global culture increasingly committed to promoting religious tolerance. Although promoted as a virtue in modern liberalism, I argue that the tolerance encouraged in society presently does not function as virtue and propose that caritas, the theological virtue of love, functions in a way that tolerance cannot. I contend that tolerance is an ideology, and then contrast that ideology with caritas. Next, I suggest that hospitality, the moral virtue associated with caritas, can function in the broader culture, achieving what tolerance alone cannot, a positive resolution of conflict arising from the presence of others. Finally, I conclude with a brief critique of my position and offer suggestions for further discussions.

Introduction

“**A**ll of humanity is alienated when too much trust is placed in merely human projects, ideologies, and false utopias. Today humanity appears much more interactive than in the past: this shared sense of being close to one another must be transformed into true communion. The development of peoples depends, above all, on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.”¹

Violence in any form establishes itself as a threat to human flourishing and religious violence is of particular concern. In the second chapter of *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope emeritus Benedict XVI addresses the issue of religious violence, “Violence puts the brakes on authentic development and impedes the evolution of people towards greater socioeconomic and spiritual well-being.”² Responding to rising incidences of religious violence, in the 20th century the United Nations issued several documents addressing religious freedom, along with declaring 1995 “The United Nations Year for Tolerance.”³ Nonetheless, Holland and Indonesia, two countries historically known for tolerance have struggled with religious violence in recent years.⁴ In the post 9/11 United States strong anti-Muslim sentiment is having negative psychological effects on Muslims.⁵ Tragically, religious violence continues rising worldwide in a global culture increasingly committed to promoting religious tolerance.

What contributes to rising instances of religious violence amidst increasing emphasis of religious tolerance? Defiance, insensitivity, and being faithful to one’s own tradition all seem plausible explanations. However an apparently unsuspected, but significant, reason is the emergence of tolerance as an ideology which communicates a message that all beliefs systems must be acknowledged and accepted.

Opposition to such a message yields violent reactions as people believe their beliefs must be diminished in order to accept the presence of other belief systems. In efforts to “defend the faith” some religious followers resort to violent means, although such people may sincerely believe they are responding faithfully to a perceived attack on their beliefs. Thus, such responses to tolerance yield outcomes diametrically opposed to the aims of tolerance, and inconsistent with the beliefs being defended. The problem, simply, is that tolerance lacks the theological impetus required to prompt religious believers to exhibit internally consistent responses to the growing plurality of religious beliefs and practices, thereby avoiding violent behavior. So, is there a better response than tolerance to addressing religious violence?

I believe so, and suggest that *caritas* is that response. Although tolerance is promoted as a virtue in modern liberalism, I argue that the tolerance encouraged in society presently does not function as a virtue. Therefore, I aim to show that *caritas*, the theological virtue of love, functions in a way that tolerance does not. To do so I will argue that tolerance is an ideology, and then contrast that ideology with *caritas*. Next, I offer that hospitality, the moral virtue associated with *caritas*, can function in the broader culture, achieving what tolerance alone cannot, a faithful response to the presence of others. Finally, I conclude with a brief critique of my position and offer suggestions for further discussions.

Definitions of Religious Violence and Tolerance

Religious Violence:

Religious violence includes not only overt acts of terrorist bombings and warfare attributed to religious extremism but also covert acts of coercion and threats to religious expression.⁶ As defined, religious violence occurs in either overt physical attacks or in covert ways such as harassment, psychological issues and prejudicial treatment resulting when people are viewed as inferior because of their religious beliefs and practices.

Tolerance:

The United Nations declared 1995 to be “The United Nations Year for Tolerance” and developed *The Declaration of the Principles of Tolerance (Principles of Tolerance)*. Article One of *Principles of Tolerance* offers a detailed definition of tolerance. Consisting of four sub points the Article defines what tolerance is and is not. Tolerance includes:

respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world’s cultures” while not being a “concession, condescension, or indulgence” and involves the “rejection of dogmatism and absolutism and affirms the standards set out in international human rights instruments,” and “means that one is free to adhere to one’s own convictions and accepts that others adhere to theirs.”⁷

Thus, to offer a definition based upon the *Principles of Tolerance*, tolerance is the state of being respectful and appreciative of all types of diversity which resists dogmatic absolute standards so that all persons may express beliefs and convictions of their own choosing.

Tolerance: Virtue or Ideology?

The emergence of tolerance as a virtue to violence attributed to religious plurality developed over several centuries with the rise of democracy in Western Europe.⁸ In positing tolerance as a political response, John Locke clearly believes individual restraint, laws and government protection are needed. Locke argues civil magistrates bear responsibility to protect against the infringement of human rights, including infringements caused by religious intolerance. He states, “Men have but two ways of working out conflicts: one is by law, the other by violence; and in the nature of the case the latter begins where the former ends.”⁹ Thus, Locke defines tolerance as the removing of force to convert people to any religion.¹⁰ Locke views the use of force against people holding differing religious beliefs as antithetical to the nature of religion itself, and sees tolerance as a political means to shaping religious behavior.

Championed by Locke, erected in the disestablishment clause of the United States Constitution, and endorsed further by John Stuart Mill, tolerance has taken root in the Western world, prompting a movement to extend tolerance globally. However, over time a favored response risks becoming an ideology. Robert Paul Wolff identifies two problems with ideology. First, ideology often overlooks “unpleasant facts” related to policies, and, secondly, ideology dismisses the presence of revolutionary forces under the guise that believing a situation to be stable actually makes the situation stable.¹¹ Religious tolerance suffers from the problems Wolff identifies. Proponents of religious tolerance often refuse to acknowledge the “unpleasant fact” that while major religions share many similarities, distinct differences exist which cannot be dismissed or reconciled. As an ideology, tolerance actually promotes religious indifference, an impediment to authentic development noted by Benedict.¹² Masking such differences and promoting indifference, religious tolerance presents a narrative of stability in hopes that stability becomes reality.

The current narrative of tolerance fails to acknowledge that plurality exposes religious groups to the potential instantiation of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic. Upon encountering another’s presence, persons “become aware of [themselves] as factually and objectively self-existent...”¹³ Each knows existence as the object of another’s consciousness; to be recognized as subject and not merely an object is the struggle. The irony of the master-slave dialectic rests in the master’s dependency upon the slave in order to exist as master, revealing an interdependent but *unequal* relationship, which always comes with the price of subjugation for the one treated as object.

The same dynamic can be applied to groups. As key differences exist in major religious systems, in some sense, one religious group achieves identity through the presence of those with alternative viewpoints.¹⁴ Resolving the master-slave dialectic negatively, one religious group sees other groups as objects to be mastered, rather than subjects to be respected, minimally ensuring instability while potentially fostering overt and covert religious violence.

Ideologies, then, pose problems rather than providing complete solutions. According to Slavoj Žižek, as an ideology tolerance recognizes real problems, but “mystifies them precisely by perceiving them as problems of tolerance” of which sexism, racism, and religious intolerance are examples.¹⁵ Intolerant belief and behavior directed at others appear to indicate a lack of tolerance, and thus emphasizing tolerance overcomes the intolerance. However, the ideology simply masks the problems: different beliefs about reality, truth, the human condition, and which belief system best offers the most comprehensive, yet internally consistent worldview. By advocating forced acceptance of other beliefs, tolerance minimizes beliefs of any one system. Religious adherents

view tolerance then as a threat to belief. Since threats are a form of violence often producing violence in return, tolerance actually encourages believers to react negatively towards those holding other viewpoints.

Borrowing terminology from Edward Tenner,¹⁶ I suggest that, as an ideology, religious tolerance yields its own “revenge effect” of intolerance and ignorance, outcomes diametrically opposed to the aims of religious tolerance in two distinct, but interrelated, processes. First, because tolerance promotes a passive acceptance of other religious beliefs as legitimate, no understanding of another’s beliefs is required. Believers simply acknowledge the diversity of religious belief, but are not required to seek understanding of differing belief systems. Secondly, believers need not understand *their own* set of beliefs because passive acceptance of alternative views does not necessarily foster dialogue between people holding differing views.¹⁷ If, as I have argued, tolerance actually promotes a lack of understanding of others’ religious viewpoints, and the lack of understanding contributes to intolerance of divergent beliefs, then we should not be surprised to see the revenge effect of increased intolerance and violence in the midst of more tolerant cultures.

In spite of the significant shortcomings which tolerance as an ideology experiences, nonetheless tolerance enjoys widespread acceptance as a virtue.¹⁸ The *Principles of Tolerance* states “Tolerance, the virtue that makes peace possible, contributes to the replacement of the culture of war by a culture of peace.”¹⁹ I suggest that tolerance settles for coexistence, not communion, and thus does not and indeed cannot, achieve the excellence associated with virtue.

Virtue

Important to virtue ethicists is not just the outcome of an act and guiding principles used in determining actions, but the inner dispositions which contribute to the observed behavior. By stressing the metaphysical state of character, virtue ethics not only addresses behavior, but also affective and cognitive dimensions and therefore, addresses the whole person. Although virtue ethicists present different approaches, generally virtue refers to the concept defined by the Greek word *arête*, which is sometimes translated as excellence.²⁰ The problem with classifying tolerance as a virtue then, is determining to what extent, if any, that tolerance yields the excellence necessary for authentic virtue.

Recent efforts targeting prejudicial behavior have yielded various enactments of “hate crime” legislation. Such laws impose punishment for persons charged and convicted of violent behavior directed towards persons based on racial, gender, religious, or other reasons. Suppose I find myself involved in some type of conflict with another person. Legislation and business policies provide external restraints and may be sufficient to ensure that I do not direct a racial or gender related epithet towards the other person for fear of reprisal. To any persons who may happen to observe the altercation, my actions may be deemed tolerant if the actions of my antagonist were of the kind that typically produces violent verbal or physical responses. My behavior may seem virtuous, but what about my dispositions? External restraints do nothing to address my *attitude towards or thinking about* the other person which influence behavior.

Caritas

Thus, we may now examine why the theological virtue of love is vastly superior to tolerance. In the introduction to *Caritas in Veritate* Benedict XVI states

Love—caritas—is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origins in God, Eternal Love, and Truth...Charity is at the heart of the Church's social doctrine. Every responsibility and every commitment spelled out by that doctrine is derived from charity which, according to the teaching of Jesus is the synthesis of the entire Law (cf. Mt. 22:36-40). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbor; it is the principle not only of micro relationships (with friends, with family members, or within small groups) but also of macro-relationships (social, economic, and political ones).²¹

Originating in God the Father, embodied in Jesus Christ, and gifted to humans through the Holy Spirit, love is a virtue which makes possible human flourishing both of self and of others, most fully expressed in love of God and neighbor.

In discussing the theological virtues, Rachel Amiri and Mary Keys note such virtues are “performative, transforming for the better personal and social life... in an important way faith in God's love rests on a person's willingness to love and to serve others for their own sakes, as persons and in communities.”²² So, in returning to my earlier example, suppose I find myself in conflict with another person. Clearly, if I exhibit tolerance and refrain from exhibiting an oppressive or hostile act, I have acted justly to the extent that I have not outwardly violated the other's individual rights or liberties, nor broken any civil laws or policies.

But inwardly, have I honored the other as person *qua* person? The question remains, “Does love function in a way that hate crime laws or policies of tolerance do not?” Benedict supplies the answer, “Charity always manifests God's love in human relationships as well, it gives theological and salvific value to all commitment for justice in the world.”²³ Love goes beyond the notion of justice as defined by external restraint and forces one to wrestle with the question “Is there justification to treat the other as an object to be manipulated rather than a subject to be respected?”

By now, the difference between tolerance and love should be sharpening. While tolerance undergirds laws and policies aimed at protecting individuals from infringements of rights and liberties because of different, conflicting, or alternative beliefs, obedience to such laws and policies are more for the sake of the one obeying, than for ones protected by such constraints. The *telos* of obeying such laws and policies is not valuing the other who is different. The *telos* of tolerance is avoiding punishment or reprisal, thus entrenching the value of self over others. At best, the end for tolerance, it seems, is coexistence.

In contrast, *caritas*, and not a selfish imitation, affects not only the subject, the one loving, but also the object, the one being loved despite the existence of significant differences. Thus *caritas* has communion as its end. While coexistence is better than strife and conflict, the absence of conflict dispelled by communion makes *caritas* superior to tolerance.

Theological Love and Hospitality in a Secular Society

Encouraging to me is the critical re-examination that tolerance is receiving. C.W. Von Bergen et al. address the current understanding of tolerance as forced acceptance within the broader U.S. culture.²⁴ Within my immediate area of concern, Gustav Niebuhr advocates moving beyond the concept of religious tolerance.²⁵ Since Von Bergen

et al. address the broader social context we perhaps would be surprised to find any discussion of love. However, insofar as I can determine, in Niebuhr's work discussion of love is noticeably absent in his exposition of interfaith relationships in the post-9/11 United States. So then, given the shortcomings of tolerance as currently practiced, how might *caritas* function in pluralistic secular societies such as the United States, or cross-culturally in an increasingly global society?

Obviously, the theological nature of *caritas* makes proposing *caritas* as a solution to religious conflict in secular societies problematic as opponents could argue that in doing so, religion receives privileged support. Instead, I propose that hospitality offers a way to overcome religious conflict while moving persons and groups holding differing and competing worldview towards genuine communion and hence, towards *caritas*, *without* imposing a theological paradigm on society.²⁶ Etymologically, the concept of "stranger" or "guest" lie at the root of the modern English word "hospitality"²⁷, defined as "the cordial and generous reception and entertainment of guests socially or commercially."²⁸ Such openness is requisite to the building of genuine relationships that avoid elements of dominion. Hospitality, then, requires an active response to the presence of others, the initial step in the process of establishing and building relationships that move from alienation to communion. Further, although hospitality may lead to communion and the experiencing of *caritas*, hospitality can be practiced by all of society as an end in itself, rather than as a means to the end of mandating *caritas*.

Historically hospitality enjoys recognition as a virtue in the Abrahamic traditions. Within the scriptures of the three Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we find attention given to the just treatment of strangers. Abraham's entertainment of three strangers in Genesis 18 results in the Lord's promise to give Abraham and Sarah a child. The story becomes the rationale for extending hospitality to all nations.²⁹ Although more prominent within the Catholic than within Protestant Christianity, and overshadowed by Jewish-Christian-Muslim tensions, nonetheless, the Abrahamic traditions expect hospitality to be an important behavior exhibited by followers.

Similarly, hospitality within secular cultures has a long history, although that history is now overshadowed by economic interests. While Kevin O'Gorman acknowledges the development of hospitality had a religious foundation within ancient Greece, Rome and Judeo-Christian cultures, he also traces the emergence of hospitality as an economic venture. Whether grounded in ancient religious practices or modern commercial enterprises, Gorman concludes, "It [hospitality] is an essential part of human existence, especially as it deals with basic human needs (food, drink, shelter, and security)."³⁰

Honored within religious and secular worldviews, hospitality provides common ground on which to address the presence of other beliefs systems within a pluralistic culture. Theoretically, meeting together to celebrate similarities while exploring differences may foster genuine respect towards those holding other beliefs. Thus hospitality also offers the possibility that one's own practice of hospitality may be formed further by interaction with other cultures and customs.³¹ Hospitality promotes relationships with strangers and enemies, and provides a standard of excellence in treating others as relationships transform from that of others and strangers to neighbors and friends.

The renewed interest in hospitality is due in large part to the influence of Jacques Derrida.³² In typical fashion, Derrida exposes incoherence in conditional hospitality introduced by Plato and magnified by Kant³³: the presence of political structure. Hospitality to the stranger is extended as an act of honor to Zeus, the patron of strangers, yet

in establishing conditions on both hosts and guests, Plato inserts power into the relationship when hosts place preconceived expectations on the guest or stranger. In contrast, the guest or stranger may abuse power by refusing to reciprocate appropriately. Hospitality then becomes an obligation to extend and reciprocate. In order to curb the abuse when one uses another merely as a means to an end, Kant restricts hospitality to nothing more than protection of life *unless* a stronger relationship exists. However, the restrictive hospitality likely impedes development of relationships that might resist corruption caused by the political structure within the host-stranger relationship. Thus, Derrida challenges the Platonic and Kantian politicization of hospitality.

Particularly influential is Derrida's call for unconditional hospitality expressed in the work *Of Hospitality* in which Derrida is in conversation with Anne Dufourmantelle. In meeting the conditions required for receiving hospitality, the stranger is not completely foreign to the host; those not meeting the conditions are considered barbarians and are not afforded hospitality.³⁴ Thus conditional hospitality imposes a power structure that limits hospitality to those persons meeting the conditions determined by the host. In contrast, Derrida proposes unconditional or absolute hospitality.

To put it in different terms, absolute hospitality requires that I open up my house to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names. The law of absolute hospitality commands a break with hospitality by right, with law or injustice by right...³⁵

Absolute hospitality fully embraces the other without regard to preconditions, thus extending a place to the foreigner. The absoluteness of this unconditional hospitality challenges power structures which conditions place upon those disadvantaged by being guests in strange places.

Yet, Derrida recognizes a potential problem in the practice of unconditional hospitality. He ends his discussion in *On Hospitality* by mentioning the problem encountered by the biblical character Lot told in Genesis 19. Lot is hosting some guests and the townspeople come to Lot's house expecting to engage in sexual relations with the guests. To protect his guests, Lot instead offers his daughters to the townspeople. Derrida recognizes that the practice of hospitality raises ethical questions. How do people practice hospitality that fully embraces the presence of others? How should hospitality function in the midst of conflict?

The questions bring into discussion the tension between the limited contractual conceptions of Platonic and Kantian hospitality and the Derridean emphasis of absolute, or unconditional, hospitality. Thus, while tolerance has inherent problems, so does hospitality. A common criticism is that virtue theory is more descriptive than prescriptive.³⁶ How might emphasizing the virtue of hospitality as a response to religious plurality address concerns of religious intolerance and violence lead to the type of love expressed by *caritas*? I propose that the virtue of hospitality is the mean between the deficiency of resistance and the excessiveness of openness, the excellence of which contributes to the *telos* of the mutual wellbeing of host and other. The virtue of hospitality requires rejecting a resistant disposition to the presence of others that inhibits the development of relationship while refusing absolute openness that might expose self or others to harm.

In offering the proposal, I want build on the distinction between negative peace and positive peace, first discussed by Johan Galtung. For Galtung, negative peace connotes the absence of personal violence while positive peace refers to the absence of structural or institutional violence.³⁷ Other philosophers such as Ronald Glossop and William Gay have expanded on the distinction with Gay defining the terms as the absence of violence and the presence of justice.³⁸ In the present context, I suggest negative peace describes coexistence, accomplished by toleration of the other while positive peace is communion with the other. The path to positive peace requires dialogue and relationship with the other with whom conflict exists. Genuine exploration of different beliefs requires discussion and examination for the sake of understanding and cannot take place unless the parties involved actively pursue relationships with the other. The virtue of hospitality promotes active pursuit of relationships with others. What, then, can be done to foster relationship with persons of other faiths that might result in genuine expressions of hospitality leading to potential resolution of conflict resulting in positive peace? To answer that question, I now offer the following examples of ways in which people might move from coexistence to communion through practicing the virtue of hospitality.

First, I draw on my experience as a humanities instructor at a community college, teaching among other subjects, *Introduction to World Religions*. Most of the students, if they hold religious beliefs, are followers of one of the three Abrahamic religions. While the majority of participants are Christian, one or two Muslims along with one or two Jewish students may be present. Thus, in the classroom we have an interesting dynamic. Present in one class are members of three of the major world religions, which at various times throughout history have been engaged in conflict and war against each other. Not surprisingly, current tension between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam inevitably surfaces during class discussions. Although the course examines the subject of religion from an academic perspective, students invariably express their own beliefs while occasionally asking me to present my personal beliefs.

What am I to do? As Hunter Brimi observes, “Teacher nonparticipation is understandable in an era when we are careful not to impose unwanted beliefs on others.”³⁹ Rather than redirecting the discussion back towards easily quantifiable and measurable bits of information, I ask students to name core teachings each religion holds in common with the others. Typically, I find that students who are often very vocal struggle to articulate answers to such questions.

Next, I share verses of scripture related to love and patience.⁴⁰ Typically, Jewish and Christian students are surprised to learn that the Qur’an contains verses such as “*Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient*”⁴¹ and “*And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives, that would truly be from the things recommended by Allah,*”⁴² or, “*It may be that God will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies. For God has power (over all things), and God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. God does not forbid you, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just.*”⁴³

Still, the image of Islam as a violent, warring religious system that mandates world-wide conquest often overshadows discussions of love and patience. To counter the negative stereotypes associated with Islam, I introduce students to Alfarabi, the tenth century Muslim philosopher who argued for religious plurality due to the concept of monotheism and the limits of human knowledge.⁴⁴ Thus, the inaccurate perception of Islam as a completely intolerant religion focused on forced conversion of all people can be countered by active engagement with Islamic sources, an engagement which nurtures patient reflection and conversation about differences.

Further, while one approach to providing students with direct contact with other religious practices requires students to attend religious services outside of class, I prefer inviting religious leaders and scholars to speak to the class for several reasons. First, requiring students to attend worship services may blur the distinction between an academic study of religion and implicit promotion of religion. Secondly, requiring students to attend worship services outside of their traditions teaches students to regard others as objects to observe rather than subjects to respect.⁴⁵ Thirdly, and more pertinent to my concern to foster genuine community, inviting a members of other religious traditions to speak to the class exemplifies the practice of hospitality associated within an academic setting, while allowing students to see genuine dialogue that promotes understanding. So, to demonstrate the practice of hospitality, I now invite a local Muslim imam to speak to the class. In the environment of the classroom, as guest the imam is subject, not the object of students' off-site assignment. Further, the classroom setting allows students to act as host to the stranger.

Thus I aim to guide students towards this discovery: if students are interested in being faithful to their respective traditions, then that faithfulness expects them to be willing to love, patient with, and indeed, hospitable towards people of other religious beliefs, as well as with those who hold no religious beliefs. Using the legitimate content of the course, students may well discover the virtues of love, patience, and hospitality, which contribute towards them flourishing as human beings *and*, if they regard themselves religious, as followers. Further, if they are open to such learning students have their own faith and practice informed by other traditions, all the while avoiding elevating one religion at the expense of others, and demonstrating to students without religious beliefs that people of different beliefs systems can have dialogue in relationship with one another.

A more vexing problem is practicing hospitality outside the classroom in situations in which followers of the Abrahamic traditions often view the other as stranger, if not enemy. Can followers of Abrahamic religions move towards communion with one another? Increasingly, the answer is yes. For example, Mark McCormack addresses interfaith relations in the United States from a psychological perspective. He suggests a three-tier level of interfaith engagement. The microsystemic level focuses on interpersonal relationships, the mesosystemic level addresses intergroup relationships, while the macrosystemic level pertains to communities and societies.⁴⁶ McCormack then addresses the Interfaith Mission Service of Huntsville, Al that includes Christian, Jewish, and Muslim congregations. The service provides opportunity for encounters at a personal, congregational, and community level that foster interfaith relationships and dialogue aimed at addressing common concerns "from medical transportation for the homeless to litter pick-up for various community neighborhoods and centers" with the goal of "problematizing widely held perceptions of homogeneity and strangeness in the religion of the other, in addition to challenging individuals and organizations to rethink how they live in a community comprised of diverse religious traditions."⁴⁷ Secondly, Jonathan Haidt points to the concept of youth charter movements promoted by William Damon as a means of inculcating virtues in persons with the goal of promoting happiness.⁴⁸ Summer youth camps promoting peace and justice issues among Arabs and Jews attempt to overcome barriers of division.⁴⁹ Similar in concept, intentional interfaith community ministries and youth charter movements are provide opportunities for building relationships that remove barriers which inhibit communion with others.

I suggest that such approaches ranging from classroom introduction to the presence of the religious other, to informal youth charters, to the more intentional interfaith movements aimed at addressing common social concerns offer opportunities to practice the virtues of hospitality and *caritas* that lead to positive peace, the absence of conflict. Drawing from the nonviolent, communitarian examples of Gandhi and King, beginning at the personal and community levels can yield significant changes at the societal and political levels. As followers of

different faiths express hospitality towards the other in their midst, people recognize the other as subjects worthy of respect rather than objects to manipulate. With momentum such movements may impact political structures similar to the way in which Gandhi and King challenged the structures and institutions supportive of colonialism and racism at national and international levels. Such a context will likely foster the development of humanity that Benedict XVI suggests rests “...on a recognition that the human race is a single family working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side.”

Evaluation

The theological virtue of love and the moral virtue of hospitality offer advantages over merely emphasizing toleration of conflicting religious beliefs. John Esposito, a leading scholar on Islam, notes emphasizing family connection between Judaism and Christianity has resulted in decreased tension among Christians and Jews as those groups learned to live and interact with each other in mutual cooperation, yet very little emphasis has been given to the connection Islam shares with Judaism and Christianity.⁵⁰ Given the hostility Christianity once held towards Judaism, we may hope a similar approach between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam will promote better appreciation while lessening fear of Muslims.

Further, while I have focused on the broader issue of violence between religions, practicing love and hospitality encourages patience when confronting dissenting beliefs among groups within the same religion. Religious conflict and violence occurs within groups when believers clash over controversial issues such as abortion, homosexuality, or causes of and responses to poverty. Practicing patience and hospitality fosters conversation as doctrinal issues are debated and clarified, potentially leading to more peaceful resolutions. Thus, emphasizing love, patience, and hospitality encourages religious followers of the Abrahamic traditions to be faithful to the tenets of their respective faiths.

Although advocating *caritas* and hospitality as a fuller response to religious violence, I concede the following shortcomings, though readers may recognize others which I have failed to consider. First, religious adherents must recognize love of others as an appropriate and faithful response to religious plurality. Thus, the extent to which love and hospitality as virtues become an accepted and practiced response to religious plurality and violence depends upon religious leaders and followers willing to confront the status quo and exhibit love to persons outside the religious community and through non-violent responses to religious conflicts.

Secondly, developing love as the proper and faithful response to religious conflict and violence offers no quick solution. Virtue develops over time. However non-violent methods advocated and practiced by Gandhi and King provide credible evidence that over time simple and faithful responses yield considerable influence and change.

Thirdly, even emphasizing hospitality as a virtuous act towards strangers is not without challenge. The degree to which modern society has downplayed the significance of hospitality as a personal response to the presence of others is evidenced by several factors including the commercialization of hospitality as a sector within the global economy, the immigration debate, and even by the fact that xenophobia, fear of strangers, may be found in the dictionary while *philoxenos*, love of strangers enjoys no such presence.⁵¹ The commercialization of hospitality encourages shifting the location of housing and feeding guests from individual homes to neutral sites of lodging for hire and public restaurants, potentially limiting the amount of personal interaction between hosts and guests. Perhaps xenophobia is more common due to confusion that hospitality requires unbounded, optimistic openness

towards *any* stranger or guest. To the contrary, authentic hospitality does not require one to overlook behavior detrimental to the well-being of self and others.

Conclusion

While intolerance certainly qualifies as a vice, tolerance fails to achieve the excellence required to be a virtue. The perceived threat of acknowledging the equality of all religious expressions, which tolerance implies, often yields hostility towards out groups rather than increased civility. Dismissing the religious beliefs of other persons is often a prelude towards dismissing, or at least diminishing, the value of *persons* holding different religious beliefs, and is a leap often made without an adequate understanding of how large the leap is. Once the value of the other is dismissed or diminished, the potential towards violence, whether overt or covert, increases. Even when practiced, tolerance settles for coexistence—groups of subjects living side by side—not communion. While promoted as a virtue, tolerance does not achieve the flourishing required to be a virtue and thus, tolerance is an incomplete response to the problem of religious violence.

In contrast, *caritas* sees others as subjects in conversation and prompts active engagement with others resulting in better understanding of other religious traditions while increasing clarification of one's own tradition. The theological virtue of love and the moral virtue of hospitality, combined with patience, supplement civil laws encouraging tolerance while addressing the shortcomings of tolerance as an ideology, presenting a positive resolution to the master-slave dialectic and a more promising solution to the social injustice of religious violence caused by the presence of other beliefs. Abrahamic traditions present love, patience, and hospitality as virtues which promote faithfulness within believers while fostering a humanitarian regard for others who do not share such beliefs. Thus, the moral virtues of hospitality and patience allow secular people to participate in just treatment of others, while enabling believers to respect others as an authentic response to God. The virtues of love and hospitality, I argue, *directly* address issues concerning proper relationships with people holding different beliefs and offer the theological motivation needed to address religious violence and plurality. Ultimately, love, not tolerance, is “the virtue that makes peace possible” and spurs us on towards authentic human development – communion with one another—a *single family working together*.

Endnotes

¹ Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate*. Encyclical letter on Integral Human Development n Charity and Truth. June 29, 2009." All references are to the digital edition, October 2011.

² Ibid. par. 29.

³ See Derek H. Davis. “The Evolution of Religious Freedom as a Universal Human Right: Examining the Role of the 1981 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.” *Brigham Young Law Review* (2002): 217-236.

⁴ See, Ian Taylor in Uden, “Holland Mourns Loss of Tolerance as Religious Violence Spirals.” *Irish Times*, 13 November 2004, and Lucien van Lier, “Gestures of the Evil Mind: Interpreting Religion-Related Violence in Indonesia after 9/11.” *Exchange* 38 no 3 (2009): 244-70.

⁵ Marilyn Elias. “USA’s Muslims under a Cloud.” *USA Today*. 10 August 2011.
<http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-08-09-muslim-american-cover_x.htm>. Accessed 10 November 2011.

⁶ See Newton Garver. "What Violence Is," *The Nation*. 209 (June 24, 1968): 821. In defining religious violence, I draw from the work of Newton Garver who argues the term "violence" can apply to situations in which overt physical force is absent. Force can be psychological and, therefore, often covert.

⁷ *Declaration of Principles on Tolerance*, 1995.

<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/peace_library/UNESCO/HRIGHTS/124-129.HTM> accessed 5 March 2013

⁸ For a detailed historiography, see Perez Zagorin *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁹ *Ibid.* 34. Locke's assertion that violence begins where the law ends reflects a paradigm influenced by his Christian heritage and an emphasis on natural law. Arguably violence both precedes laws designed to curb its expression, and continues in covert ways once such laws are enacted. For example, beliefs about and attitudes towards people identified in some way as different exist prior to, and continue after, enactment of legislation criminalizing violent behavior towards people because of real and/or perceived differences.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 68.

¹¹ Robert Paul Wolff. "Beyond Tolerance." *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*. Robert Paul Wolff, Barrington Moore, Jr. and Herbert Marcuse. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969): 39-40.

¹² *Caritas in Veritate*. Par. 32.

¹³ G.W.F. Hegel. *The Phenomenology of Mind*. trans. J.B. Baillie (New York: Harper and Row, Torchbooks, 1967): par. 196.

¹⁴ See James K. Wellman, Jr. and Kyoko Tokuno. "Is Religious Violence Inevitable?" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43:3 (2004): 292.

¹⁵ Zizek, Slavoj. "Ecology." in *Examined Life: Excursions with Contemporary Thinkers*. ed. Astra Taylor (New York: The New Press, 2009): 156-57.

¹⁶ Edward L. Tenner. *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 6. In writing about technology, Edward Tenner discusses "revenge effects," or unintended consequences of technology. For example, improved word processing and printing technologies facilitate multiple edits of documents, such as this paper, thereby increasing paper consumption.

¹⁷ For an excellent article describing the benefit of dialogue and debate in increasing understanding of one's own beliefs see, Constant J. Mews "Peter Abelard and the Enigma of Dialogue," *Beyond the Persecuting Society: Religious Toleration before the Enlightenment*. eds. John Christian Laursen and Cary J. Nederman. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

¹⁸ See Barry Barnes, "Tolerance as a Primary Virtue." *Res Publica* 7 (2001): 231-45, and David Heyd, ed. *Toleration: An Elusive Virtue*, pp. 23-43, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. The debate as to whether tolerance is a virtue is far more complex, and issues of values and normativity are beyond the scope of this paper. My concern at present is to challenge the extent to which tolerance is capable of achieving the flourishing associated with virtue theory.

¹⁹ *Principles of Tolerance*. A point for future development would be to examine the type of peace that tolerance makes possible: negative peace identified as the absence of violent activities, or positive peace defined as the resolution of conflict.

²⁰ Richard Parry, "Ancient Ethical Theory", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2009 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2009/entries/ethics-ancient/> Retrieved May 6, 2010.

²¹ *Caritas in Veritate*, pars 1 & 2.

²² Rachel A. Amiri, and Mary M. Keys. "Benedict XVI on Liberal Modernity's Need for the 'Theological Virtues' of Faith, Hope, and Love." *Perspectives on Political Science* 41 no.1 (2012): 15. See also Meghan J. Clark, "Love of God and Neighbor: Living Charity in Aquinas' Ethics." *New Blackfriars*, (2011): 415-30, and Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Love Alone is Credible*. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), for further discussion of the way in which love compels one to serve other persons.

²³ *Caritas in Veritate*, par. 6.

²⁴ C.W. Von Bergen, et.al. "Authentic Tolerance: Between Forbearance and Acceptance." *Journal of Cultural Diversity* (2012) 19 (4): 111-17.

²⁵ Gustav Niebuhr. *Beyond Tolerance: Searching for Interfaith Understanding in America*. (New York: Penguin group, 2008).

²⁶ I am indebted to the comments of Richard Kyte who suggested hospitality as a possible avenue towards the development of *caritas* in cultures not open to discussion of theological virtues following presentation of an earlier draft of this paper at the Viterbo Conference on the Theological Virtues, March 15, 2013.

²⁷ Kevin D. O'Gorman. "Modern Hospitality: Lessons from the Past." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. Vol. 12, no. 2, (Aug 2005), 142.

²⁸ Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary. s.v. "hospitality," accessed 30 Sept 2013; available from <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/hospitality>.

²⁹ Amos Yong. *Hospitality and the Other: Pentecost, Christian Practices, and the Neighbor*. (New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 112-17. See also Carolyn M. Jones, "Hospes: The Wabash Center as a Site for Transformative Hospitality." *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 10 no. 3 (2007): 157.

³⁰ O'Gorman, 148.

³¹ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2007), 222-23, for discussion of how practices of one culture may inform and be shaped by practices of other cultures.

³² See Ciro Augusto Floriani and Fermin Roland Schramm, "How Might Levinas' Concept of the Other's Priority and Derrida's Unconditional Hospitality Contribute to the Philosophy of the Modern Hospice Movement." *Palatative and Supportive Care* 8 (2010): 215-20, and Carolyn M. Jones, "Hospes: The Wabash Center as a Site of Transformative Hospitality." *Teaching Theology and Religion* 10 no. 3 (2007): 150-55 for articles drawing insight from Derrida's work.

³³ See Plato. *Laws*. trans. by Benjamin Jowett., p. 155. Kindle Edition, and Immanuel Kant. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay (With Active Table of Contents)*. 2011. Kindle Edition. (Kindle Locations 492-500) for the development of a contractual understanding of hospitality.

³⁴ Dufourmantelle, Anne. *Of Hospitality: Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond*. trans. Rachel Bowlby. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002, 25.

³⁵ *Ibid*.

³⁶ See Robert B. Loudon. "On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 21 no. 3 (July 1984): 227-36 and John M. Doris. *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002, for discussions of virtue theory's limitations in prescribing behavior.

³⁷ Johan Galtung. "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research." *Journal of Peace Research*, 6, no. 3, (1969): 183.

³⁸ See Ronald J. Glossop, *Confronting War: An Examination of Humanity's Most Pressing Problem*. 3rd edition. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1994, 12-14, and William C. Gay "Language of War and Peace," in

Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, and Conflict, Oxford: Elsevier Science & Technology, 2008.

http://search.credoreference.com/content/etnry/estpeace/language_of_war_and_peace_the/0 (accessed April 9, 2014) for other applications of negative and positive peace.

³⁹Hunter Brimi. "Academic Instructors or Moral Guides? Moral Education in America and the Teacher's Dilemma," *Clearing House* 82 no3 (Jan/Feb 2009): 129.

⁴⁰ I have found that "patience" does not carry the negative connotations associated with tolerance. Since patience is listed in several Bible verses, the openness to "patience," as opposed to tolerance, may be due to students raised in an area heavily influenced by conservative Protestant Christianity. In response to comments offered in response to the presentation of an earlier draft of this paper, I now follow discussions of love and patience with the practice of hospitality.

⁴¹ Surah Al-Anfaal: 46.

⁴² Surah Ash-Shura: 43.

⁴³ Surah Al-Mumtahanah 60:7-8.

⁴⁴ Joshua Parens. *An Islamic Philosophy of Virtuous Religions. Introducing Alfarabi*. (Albany: State University of New York Press), 121. . For Alfarabi, the truth associated with a monotheistic god is too great to be understood by humans, and a great injustice occurs when that truth is limited to just one religious system. See Mohamed El-Tahir El-Mesawi and Tesnim Khriji. "Islam and Terrorism: Beyond the Wisdom of the Secular Paradigm." *Intellectual Discourse* 14, no. 1 (2006): 49. "Islam has laid down at a very essential level the basis for sustainable plurality and multiplicity in human socio-cultural life both within and without the abode of Islam."

⁴⁵ See Naomi Southard and Richard Payne, "Teaching Introductions to World Religions: Religious Pluralism in a Post-Colonial World," *Teaching Theology and Religion* vol.1:1 (1998): 55 for a discussion of the ethical implications associated with required site visits.

⁴⁶ Mark McCormack. "Interfaith Relations in the United States: Toward a Multilevel Community Psychology Approach," *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology*. 23: (2013), pp. 177-80. DOI: 10.1002/casp.2107.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 180-82.

⁴⁸ Jonathan Haidt. *The Happiness Hypothesis: Finding Modern Truth in Ancient Wisdom*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, 180.

⁴⁹ See < <http://www.middleeastpeacecamp.org/Index.html> > for one example of summer youth camps aimed at building relationships among Arab and Jewish youth.

⁵⁰ John L. Esposito. *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 119.

⁵¹ *Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary*. s.v. "xenophobia," accessed 30 Sept 2013; available from <http://unabridged.merriam-webster.com/unabridged/xenophobia>. The search for *philoxenos* yielded no entry.

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