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# Combating Religious Divisiveness with Cosmopolitanism

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Eastern Kentucky University

Combatting Religious Divisiveness with Cosmopolitanism

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By

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## Abstract

This thesis examines cosmopolitanism as a potential means of preventing conflicts between religious groups. In order to effectively determine what cosmopolitanism might be capable of accomplishing in this regard, religious interactions are examined during two major historical events – the Crusades and World War II. This thesis studies both of these events with the intention of identifying cosmopolitan behaviors and non-cosmopolitan behaviors, and determining how these behaviors impacted the relationships between the religious groups involved. Later, obstacles that stand between religious groups and cosmopolitanism are acknowledged, and methods of overcoming those obstacles are discussed. This thesis finds that the proceedings of the two aforementioned events suggest that cosmopolitanism does indeed possess the potential to reduce the frequency and severity of interreligious conflicts. However, it concedes that cosmopolitanism might be incapable of preventing such conflicts before certain changes are made to some modern religions.

## Introduction

Throughout history, religion has proven to be a catalyst for hostility and war between differing cultures. During various historical events, religion has given people feelings of entitlement or superiority. For example, during the Crusades, religion separated people into two warring factions when both groups came to believe that their own respective religion made them superior to the other group. In other societies, religion has given people a set of demanding moral standards by which they believe all humans are obligated to abide. This behavior can be seen in the more recent violent actions of Islamic extremist groups in the Middle East. In response to these unfortunate, but recurring situations, one might begin to wonder if there are actions that could be taken (either by religious groups, or by external parties) to reduce hostility between religious groups.

It goes without saying, however, that plenty of religious groups bear little – if any – resemblance to those described above. While certain religions have driven people to violent, intolerant actions, other religions have motivated people to help others and tolerate groups and individuals with whom they disagree. On multiple occasions, people have used religions as excuses to commit violent and intolerant actions. However, on other occasions, people have found inspiration from the same religions to do selfless things that they would not have otherwise done. Religious groups such as these serve as proof that religion has the ability to encourage people to perform great acts.

Although there exists a nearly unlimited selection of potential solutions to the issue of interreligious divisiveness (a term that will be used henceforth to refer both to intolerance and hostility), this paper will focus entirely on the set of beliefs known as cosmopolitanism, and examine its potential as a means of suppressing that divisiveness. While certain forms of

motivation certainly exist for religious groups that act violently (e.g. holy texts, corruption of individuals who hold power), the actions taken by those violent religious groups suggest a blatant disregard for the human rights of diverse individuals. With that in mind, cosmopolitanism – the belief that all people are of moral importance, but that there are also multiple different respectable ways to live – could eliminate religious divisiveness by encouraging communication and tolerance between religious communities. By encouraging communication and tolerance between different groups, cosmopolitanism has the potential to bridge the gap between these groups to some extent.

Despite the promise that cosmopolitanism holds, the ideals of religious groups that harbor hostility toward other groups often leave no room for common ground. With these ideals influencing the behavior of religiously divisive individuals, extremist groups could be hard to communicate with, given their current absolute intolerance of individuals who do not share their beliefs. Therefore, even cosmopolitanism could prove fruitless as a means of combatting interreligious divisiveness in these situations.

### Background

Before cosmopolitanism can be discussed as a means of reducing religious divisiveness, it should be noted that the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ will henceforth refer specifically to cosmopolitanism as defined by Kwame Appiah in his book, “Cosmopolitanism.” In the first pages of Appiah’s book, he notes that cosmopolitanism is not globalization, nor is it multiculturalism. Rather, cosmopolitanism refers to a specific set of beliefs that promotes tolerance and acceptance of people across thousands of communities, each with their own differences (Cosmopolitanism, xiii). In the eyes of a cosmopolitan, these differences in beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles need not create hostility between people or groups. As Appiah notes,

“people are different, and there is much to learn from our differences. Because there are so many human possibilities worth exploring, we neither expect nor desire that every person or every society should converge on a single mode of life” (xv). Appiah’s cosmopolitanism does not create or encourage the concept of a global community. Even though cosmopolitanism is founded upon the tolerance and acceptance of a wide array of lifestyles, Appiah never refers to a global community because cosmopolitans can respect that groups with certain beliefs prefer to remain isolated.

While Appiah’s cosmopolitanism does not push for the idea of a global community, Appiah states that cosmopolitanism “begins with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association” (xix). Even though cosmopolitans encourage most groups to preserve their traditions and beliefs, communication between these different groups is vital to their coexistence. In addition to communication, it is also important for diverse groups to have the desire to coexist, regardless of differences.

Appiah uses Sir Richard Francis Burton, a Victorian adventurer and linguist, as a model for what cosmopolitanism is not. Burton was not a cosmopolitan, but he did possess many cosmopolitan traits. For instance, he was well traveled, and spoke at least seven different languages. Although Appiah states that Burton was regarded as “a Mohammedan among Mohammedans, a Mormon among Mormons, a Sufi among the Shazlis, and a Catholic among the Catholics,” by W.H. Wilkins in *The Romance of Isabel Lady Burton*, Appiah also points out that Burton “had many of the standard racial prejudices of his society” (Appiah 6).

Cosmopolitanism implies familiarity and interaction with individuals from other cultures. Burton managed to live a cosmopolitan lifestyle in that respect. However, it is not fair to

consider Burton a cosmopolitan because cosmopolitanism also requires a tolerance and respect for those individuals. As such, there is no room for discrimination within cosmopolitanism.

By accepting others' differences, and living with an openness to their beliefs and traditions, cosmopolitans embrace two principles that serve as a foundation for their ideology. The first of these principles is the belief that all humans are of moral importance. The second is pluralism – the belief that there are multiple respectable ways to live. Without either one of these principles, one cannot call himself a true cosmopolitan.

Groups who reject the second of cosmopolitanism's two principles are referred to by Appiah as "counter cosmopolitans." In other words, counter cosmopolitans share the cosmopolitan belief that all people are of moral importance. However, the only lifestyles that they deem worthy of respect are those that align with their own. Unlike cosmopolitans, counter cosmopolitans do seek a single global community. In this single global community, all of the members would share a single set of beliefs and live without the cultural differences that cosmopolitans celebrate. One recent historical example of counter cosmopolitan groups is the middle-eastern Muslim extremist groups responsible for acts of terrorism in 2001 and onward. However, other examples include mainstream groups within modern Christianity, Islam, and other widely-practiced religions. After all, the term "counter cosmopolitan" does not specifically refer to violent groups and individuals (Appiah 137-143). The vast majority of counter cosmopolitan groups and organizations are made up not of murderers, but of nonviolent, peace-seeking religious individuals. People within these two vastly different kinds of groups fit under this same broad classification, "counter cosmopolitan." They share one key trait. Both believe that individuals who fail to share their group's beliefs are wrong for failing to adopt them. This belief results in divisiveness between religious groups.

On the other hand, Appiah refers to groups who reject *both* principles as “anti-cosmopolitans.” Not only do anti-cosmopolitans respect only a single way of life, but they also only place moral importance upon people within their own communities. Without a doubt, the most prominent example of an anti-cosmopolitan group in recent history is the Nazi party. This set of beliefs results in divisiveness between groups on an even greater level than counter cosmopolitanism does. Additionally, Appiah notes that “There is little hope for direct dialogue with the anti-cosmopolitans of any faith. They are against conversation save in the service of conversion. But we can be in touch with them indirectly through our dialogue with their more cosmopolitan brethren” (*Causes of Quarrel* 60). Counter cosmopolitanism is far more common than anti-cosmopolitanism in the modern world. Therefore, this paper will focus upon dealing with counter cosmopolitanism rather than anti-cosmopolitanism.

Despite their differences, both cosmopolitans and counter cosmopolitans have a place for universal moral values. Cosmopolitans do not believe that there is one single perfect way to live, but they do believe that certain moral values are important across all cultures. To some extent, the golden rule – do unto others as you would have them do unto you – serves as a fair summary of a cosmopolitan’s universal moral values. With this rule in mind, cosmopolitans do not support lifestyles that involve the mistreatment of others. Two key traits set the cosmopolitan apart from the counter cosmopolitan in terms of universal moral values. One of these traits is pluralism. Appiah emphasizes that “cosmopolitans think that there are many values worth living by, and that you cannot live by all of them” (144). As previously mentioned, counter cosmopolitans are separated from cosmopolitans by their belief that there exists only one acceptable way to live. The second of these traits is fallibilism – “the sense that our knowledge is imperfect, provisional, subject to revision in the face of new evidence” (144). In addition to

believing that there are multiple respectable ways to live, cosmopolitans also accept that they could be wrong in their beliefs, and that their beliefs could be missing something. Appiah states, “We cosmopolitans think we might learn something even from those we disagree with” (146). On the other hand, by rejecting sets of beliefs that are not their own, counter cosmopolitans reject fallibilism as well.

Counter cosmopolitans only respect one single way of life, but that is not to say that they seek to control humanity’s every thought and motion (143-144). Most counter cosmopolitan groups have no interest in controlling the smaller details of people’s lives. Although counter cosmopolitans respect only a single way of life, many of the elements that make up one’s way of life are fairly insignificant. Thus the parts of one’s lifestyle that counter cosmopolitans seek to change are generally limited to a set of central elements. These central elements generally exclude a list of desserts that are acceptable to eat, or a list of articles of clothing that are forbidden. Rather, they tend to deal with more controversial issues, such as the holding all people to a certain moral code.

By encouraging the adoption of a certain moral code, religious groups have a tendency to shape the values of the individuals involved with them. However, differing groups do not always have an entirely separate set of values. Often, these values are reflected in the laws that serve as the foundations of modern societies. For example, one of the Bible’s “Ten Commandments” expresses Christians’ belief that murder is wrong, while another commandment says the same of theft. Whether they practice Christianity or not, most human societies share this belief with Christianity. In fact, these are beliefs that several other religions’ holy texts – such as Islam’s Quran – uphold as well. Therefore, the central elements that shape a religious group are not

necessarily exclusive to one religion, and need not suggest that others' ways of life are entirely unacceptable.

Even though religious groups might share certain beliefs and values, many such religions possess beliefs that discourage their followers from placing equal moral worth upon individuals whose religious beliefs differ from their own. Some people might refer to this belief as an "excludability clause." An excludability clause devalues nonbelievers by stating that those who do not subscribe to the beliefs of the religious group are not 'saved.' Furthermore, the only way to become 'saved' is to adopt the beliefs of that religious group. Appiah writes:

Given the actual texts and the actual histories of most of the world religions, people consumed by religious certainty and bent on coherence will likely find themselves unable to live at peace with others because they will insist that everyone ought to recognize a singular truth (59).

Naturally, this kind of mindset among religious individuals has a tendency to result in the creation of prejudices toward those who do not share one's own religious beliefs. This, in turn, results in religious divisiveness.

#### History's Evidence

In terms of interreligious hostility, few historical events can compare, either in scale or duration, to the Crusades. The Crusades took place between the years 1095 and 1291 C.E. This nearly two hundred year war began with the Catholics fighting the Muslims for Jerusalem – the Christians' 'holy land' – which both groups had occupied for centuries. Despite taking place almost one thousand years ago, the Crusades remain relevant to this day for several reasons. First, the Crusades were a key part of not only European history, but also of the histories of two of the world's largest modern religions – Christianity and Islam. The wars represent a time when

Catholic authority demonstrated an immense level of corruption as well. The Crusades also provoke an examination of post-war relations between Christianity and Islam. Additionally, the Crusades remain infamous among historical religious conflicts both for their sheer duration and for the violence and lack of humanity with which they invited Christians to act. To this day, there are still lessons that can be learned from studying the Crusades as a piece of religious history. For instance, ‘what events led to the Crusades?’ and ‘how can we avoid an event like the Crusades in the future?’

Incentives were offered to the Catholics in order to encourage them to serve in or support the Crusades. At Clermont, Pope Urban is reported to have made the following proclamation to the crusaders:

I speak to those who are present, I shall proclaim it to the absent, but it is Christ who commands. Moreover, if those who set out thither lose their lives on the journey, by land or sea, or in fighting against the heathen, their sins shall be remitted in that hour; this I grant through the power of God vested in me (Munro 348).

Pope Urban's words spurred an enormous number of Catholics to action. Also convincing, however, was his threat to excommunicate any Christians who failed to answer the call of the Church. Considering both of these incentives, all 11<sup>th</sup> century Christians who valued their faith had clear reasons to support in the Crusades in any way possible. Any Christians who might not have valued their faith were given their own incentive to participate in the Crusades, as the Church granted protection from state authorities to those who participated (350). This was made possible both by the lack of state power relative to the influence of the Church, as well as the involvement of the state in the Crusades. All of these incentives, combined with the preaching of

the Crusades, served to increase religious enthusiasm among Catholics (349). This increased level of religious enthusiasm encouraged support for the war effort through both enlistment and contribution of resources.

Despite the positive attitude toward Christianity that the Crusades brought to the Catholics, they brought only tragedy to the Muslims and other groups who opposed them. And despite being a war between two religious groups founded upon a desire for peace, the Crusades shared most of the characteristics that come with any war, religious or not. This included actions such as pillaging, murder of innocents, and mass executions. Once the Catholics had conquered it, Jerusalem did not even end up serving as the head of a Church state, as the Pope had originally intended (353). Additionally, the holy wars did not end with the conflict between the Catholics and the Muslims. After conquering Jerusalem, the Christians proceeded to attack other territories as well. As a result of this enormous level of brutality, the Crusades might today be viewed as the standard by which religious counter cosmopolitanism is measured.

One example of a Crusades-era atrocity was the Rhineland Massacres. As the crusaders marched toward Jerusalem during the First Crusade in 1096, they passed through Jewish territory and massacred villages full of Jews within the Rhineland.

Crusaders passing through the Rhineland on their way to Jerusalem attacked Jews in towns throughout the region surrounding Heidelberg. Many Jews were killed or converted to Christianity, and many took their own lives in order to avoid baptism (Nirenberg 279).

Although the Jews had not provoked violence from the Christians through their actions, Tyerman writes that “the ideology of crusading encouraged violence against them” simply because they

were not Christians (*Short Introduction* 50). Although some aspects of the Crusades could be argued to have been justified, or provoked on some level, the Rhineland Massacres represent a side of the Crusades that is difficult to defend, given the harshness of the crusaders' actions.

Today the Crusades are generally treated as an atrocity that began and ended purely with the aggression of the Catholics. However, the Muslims also played a considerable role in sparking the metaphorical fire that brought on the two-hundred year holy war. Even before the Crusades began, the relationship between Islam and Christianity was far from healthy. The poor quality of this relationship can be partially attributed to the Arab Conquest of Spain, which took place about three hundred years earlier, from (approximately) 710 to 797 (Collins). This invasion of Christian territory by the Muslims spelled an end to Visigothic Spain and marked the beginning of Muslim occupation in Spain. This occupation continued for hundreds of years after the conquest's end.

The Muslim invasion damaged the relationship between the Christianity and Islam. It also exposed the Christians to the new concept of crusading. Thomas Madden illustrates the impact of this Muslim invasion in his work, *The New Concise History of the Crusades*:

Was it not self-evident that a Christian who fought to reclaim lands conquered by unbelievers was himself fighting for Christ? Thus, it was in dealing with the Muslim presence in Spain that Western soldiers and theologians first cut their teeth on the idea of holy war. The *Reconquista*... was the training ground for the theological and moral justification of the crusading movement (4).

Apart from exposing Christians to the idea of crusading, the Muslim invasion served as a platform for rewarding crusaders. Many modern sources on the Crusades make reference to the

glory and forgiveness promised to crusaders, as well as the concept of defending the Holy Land. Additionally, Madden's idea of "fighting for Christ" also adds Christian responsibility to the list of motivations used to encourage Crusade-era Catholics to partake in the Holy War.

Much closer to actual occurrence of the Crusades, in the early eleventh century, Muslim ruler Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (whose name meant "Ruler by God's Command" in Arabic) further worsened relations between Christianity and Islam by ordering the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. This church's level of significance to Christianity was immense because it contains, according to Christian beliefs, the sites of Jesus' crucifixion and burial. To make matters even worse, the Muslim ruler did not stop there; "The destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was begun in 1009 and became the signal for the destruction... of Christian Churches... throughout Syria" (Tyre). The Muslims' hostile counter cosmopolitan actions toward Christians provoked Christian retaliation.

These atrocities committed by both the Catholics and the Muslims might have been avoided if both groups had become familiar with the other group's beliefs and practices. It was previously mentioned that a cosmopolitan believes that communication between two groups is essential if they wish to coexist peacefully. This is because communication enables groups to find similarities between themselves and establish a healthy relationship. Islam and Christianity do, in fact, share a fair number of characteristics. However, this may not have been widely known at the time of the Crusades, in part due to the lack of communication between the two groups. Bernard Hamilton writes that "a good deal of information about Islam was available in the West before the crusades, both in written and oral sources, but because there was a general lack of interest in the subject, no attempt had been made to coordinate this knowledge" (373). If the Catholics had communicated with the Muslims and become familiar with Islamic beliefs,

then a greater level of interest in Islamic practices might have been discovered in the west. This might have led to Islamic practices becoming public knowledge, and potentially, more widely accepted.

If the Catholics had been interested in Islam at the time of the Crusades, they would have discovered a number of similarities between themselves and the Muslims. For example, Craig Considine writes:

A special place is reserved in Islamic scripture for Christians as well as Jews. In the Qur'an, beliefs in the truth of Christian and Jewish doctrine are encapsulated in the term *ahl al kitab* ("People of the Book"), or people who have received and believed in earlier revelations from the prophets of the Abrahamic tradition (6).

The Prophet Muhammad believed that "Jews, Christians, and Muslims follow one and the same book" (6), rather than multiple conflicting religious texts, demonstrating his respect for people of these non-Muslim religions. Furthermore, Considine states that "in addition to encouraging Muslims and Christians to form bonds of solidarity, he [the Prophet Muhammad] advises individuals in each group to vigorously defend each other" (12). Therefore, these two groups should logically have been able to coexist peacefully on religious grounds. These are ideas that the Catholics would have likely embraced if they had known of them. However, at the time of the Crusades, Hamilton suggests that the average Catholic did not have access to such information. Interestingly enough, Hamilton states that "it was the crusades which in the long term led to a deeper knowledge of Islam in the West" (374).

Despite the presence of pluralistic, cosmopolitan beliefs in Muslim ideology, the events that took place preceding the Crusades suggest that the majority of Muslims thought, or knew

little of these elements of their religion. After all, the Qur'an also includes passages that conflict directly with these teachings. For example, the Qur'an (9:29) states that Muslims must "Fight those who do not believe in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden, nor follow the Religion of Truth" (Considine, 11). In the context of the Crusades, it would have been entirely appropriate for the Muslims to interpret this passage to have meant that the Christians were their enemy, by divine proclamation. Today, however, Considine writes that "Scholars of the Qur'an tell us that verses dealing with "infidels" are not meant to encourage the use of violence among Muslims," and furthermore, that "such an interpretation is completely false and contradicts authentic Islamic teachings" (11). Ahmed al-Tayeb, president of the world's oldest Muslim university, states that "God created diverse peoples. Had He wanted to create a single *ummah*, He would have, but He chose to make them different until the day of resurrection. Every Muslim must fully understand this principle" (*Causes of Quarrel* 60).

Even though the Crusades involved an immense amount of religious counter cosmopolitan activity, but the two hundred year struggle also featured moments of cosmopolitanism. For example, by the time of the Sixth Crusade (the goal of which was the reclamation of the Holy Land once more), many Christians began to interact with the Muslims in a peaceful manner. In her book, "The Popes and the Crusades," Dana Munro writes:

The Christian conquests in Syria, instead of being the home of garrisons ever ready to propagate the faith by the sword, soon became commercial centers whose inhabitants were intent mainly on living in peace and carrying on trade with the infidels. Even members of the military Orders, whose main purpose was

supposed to be the defence of the Holy Land, formed friendships with the Moslems, whom they entertained in their castles and allowed to pray to Allah in their chapels (354).

Even after hundreds of years of rivalry and hostility, the Christians and the Muslims still possessed the ability to interact in a friendly manner. These crusaders' peaceful behavior would certainly have been deemed unacceptable by Catholic authorities, given the resentment toward non-Christians that they had built up among the crusaders. However, the Crusades had lasted over one hundred years when Pope Innocent III became Pope, and control of the holy land had changed hands several times over the years. By the time Innocent sent crusaders to Syria (1228 C.E.), much of the religious enthusiasm that the Crusades originally stirred among Christians had begun to dwindle. This resulted in a decrease in papal influence, which caused the Crusades to lose the direction that the Popes had intended for them (354). This decrease in religious enthusiasm may have opened the crusaders' minds toward the Muslims, who they were previously only able to recognize as enemies, in light of the circumstances under which the Sixth Crusade began. Secondly, these Crusaders were stationed in Syria, far from the influence of the papacy. With this in mind, crusaders would likely face little risk of consequences for acting against the Church, should they have found any reason to do so.

The rebellious cosmopolitan behavior among the crusaders did not end in Syria. Even in the Holy Land, Jerusalem, the orders of the Pope began to carry less weight. When left to make their own decisions, the Crusaders, led by Frederick II, who had, in fact, been excommunicated from the Catholic Church, defaulted to peace. Munro states the following:

Despite the efforts of the Pope and of the leading churchmen in the Holy Land he [Frederick II] made peace with the Mohammedans

and secured Jerusalem by diplomacy. The crusaders who settled in the Holy Land soon ceased to be as devout and narrow as their brethren in the West. They intermarried with the natives, both heretics and Moslems, adopted the customs of their wives, and some of their superstitions (354).

The way that the crusaders turned to peaceful methods of religious interaction once their leader approached the situation in a diplomatic manner, rather than a violent one, demonstrates that the crusaders were capable of seeing the Muslims as their equals. These friendly, and even romantic interactions between the Christians and the Muslims suggest that perhaps the two religions had always possessed the potential to coexist peacefully. However, it should be noted that the crusaders' desire to overtake Jerusalem still implies that the crusaders were far from pure cosmopolitans.

All religious groups would do well to take example from groups such as the Protestants of the village of Le Chambon. The residents of Le Chambon, a town located in the south of France, risked their own lives to hide and protect Jewish people from the Nazis during World War II. They would not have considered doing so without the cosmopolitan principles that they learned from Protestantism. The author of a book detailing this period in Le Chambon, Phillip Hallie, recalls the message of a sermon that moved the village's residents to action: "our obligation to diminish the evil in the world must begin at home; we must not do evil, must not ourselves do harm. To be against evil is to be against the destruction of human life and against the passions that motivate that destruction" (85). However, unlike other forms of nonviolent resistance that are characteristic to religious groups, the sermons did not call the citizens of Le Chambon to fight hatred with love. Rather, the sermons encouraged the Protestants to "work and

look for ways, for opportunities to make little moves against destructiveness” (85). It was sermons such as these that drove the Chambonnais, the people of Le Chambon, to invite Jewish people to live in their own homes for shelter from the Nazis. As a result of their efforts, the lives of hundreds to thousands of Jews were saved.

One might think that helping the Jews was simply the obvious choice to make for all religious groups that lived by Christian morals within Europe at the time of World War II. However, this was not so; the Huguenots of Le Chambon were a special case. The members of Le Chambon’s own Catholic Church, for instance, sided with Vichy France as the events of World War II unfolded, despite the government’s Nazi affiliation. However, the Catholic Church’s decision might not come as a great surprise, given the Church’s long history with the French Government. Hallie writes that when the Edict of Nantes (which gave many equal rights to Protestant French citizens) was revoked in 1685, the French government “destroyed temples, laid down crushing fines, took children from their parents, and imprisoned, worked to death, or killed adults outright, all for the purpose of making the Protestants abjure their faith and go back to the religion of the majority and of the government” (97). The French government had associated itself directly with the Catholic Church for hundreds of years prior to World War II, and the bond between church and state was no secret in this case. As a result of this connection, the Catholics were given no reason to worry about themselves, or about others during the holocaust. The Protestants, on the other hand, knew what it was like to be discriminated against on the grounds of religious beliefs. The abuse that they faced in 1685 likely helped to bring them to action in 1940 when they saw people facing that same abuse on an even greater scale all across Europe.

As the events of World War II unfolded, and the Chambonnais hid more and more Jews within the town's borders, Le Chambon gained a reputation among refugees for being "the safest place in Europe" (73). Regarding the reputation of Le Chambon, Hallie writes:

In the south of France, people called the village the "Republic of Le Chambon" because somehow it managed to remain a world of its own, an impregnable fortress in a murderous world, a place that could not be made a party to the compromises and murders of the France around it (30).

Despite its reputation as the safest place for refugees, the town was by no means safe from Nazi influence. Thus, protecting the Jews hiding in homes throughout the town required serious commitment and work from the Chambonnais. Hallie writes that "The French police were, in their national policy if not in their local behavior, as anti-Semitic as the Nazis could have wished them to be" after the rise of Vichy France in 1940 (31). Therefore, the danger that the Jews in Le Chambon faced, if caught, was as great as the danger faced by Jews caught in Nazi German-occupied areas. Despite the danger that the Chambonnais faced as the Jews' protectors, they did all that they could to ensure the safety of the Jewish people in their town. For example, in order to effectively conceal the Jews within Vichy France, the Chambonnais had to make each Jewish resident a false identity and ration cards (125). Many Jews also had to change their names to respectable French names in order to blend in effectively. Hallie summarizes the Chambonnais's commitment to their cause with the following quote:

Under the moral leadership of André Trocmé and Édouard Theis, the people of Le Chambon would not give up a life for any price – for their own comfort, for their own safety, for patriotism, or for

legality. For them, human life had no price; it had only dignity  
(274).

The Chambonnais appear to have been willing to go to any length to protect the lives of the Jews, even if it meant acting against the law and risking their own lives every day. Furthermore, the citizens of Le Chambon did not wait until it was opportune, or safe to help the Jews. For instance, Hallie states that "When the Germans were suffering defeats, it would be self-serving, practical to resist them. But in these early days only fools and people of principle resisted" (86).

#### Application of Evidence

If the world's religions truly wish to coexist peacefully with the many other religious groups that surround them, a neutral third party might argue that the incorporation of cosmopolitanism into every religious group's beliefs would serve as a promising first step. However, selling religious pluralism – one of the key elements of cosmopolitan, openness toward beliefs that do not match one's own – to religious groups is easier said than done, given the nature of many modern religions. After all, the very concept of religious pluralism conflicts with fundamental teachings of many such religions.

Pluralism is an essential element of cosmopolitanism, but it should also be kept in mind that, to some extent, commitment to a single set of beliefs is just as important to cosmopolitanism as an openness to religious pluralism. While completely closing one's mind to the possibility of religious pluralism is indeed problematic, no good necessarily comes from abandoning one's ideology in favor of becoming completely flexible with religious beliefs. Thus, absolute flexibility in one's beliefs is not essential to embracing cosmopolitanism.

An immense number of religious groups exist, and plenty of these groups' teachings create numerous opportunities for any religion to conflict with another religion. With this in

mind, incorporating religious pluralism into religious groups could require massive changes. For example, if, for example, the Catholics refused to tolerate religious groups that did not believe in the process of “transubstantiation” – the process by which the bread and wine are believed become the body and blood of Jesus Christ – most (if not all) non-Catholic religious groups in the world would find themselves at odds with the Catholics. With this in mind, it is important to note that the widespread incorporation of pluralism into religion is heavily dependent on religions’ willingness to accept that disagreements are inevitable. Appiah supports this claim by saying that “In understanding the possibilities of cosmopolitan cohabitation with people of different faiths, we need always to recall that toleration is a practice, and that, like most practices, it can survive despite theoretical incoherence” (*Causes of Quarrel* 59). Appiah acknowledges that religious differences might not make relations between religious groups any stronger. However, many of the differences that set religious groups apart need not create conflicts between them. As a matter of fact, a true cosmopolitan would embrace those differences, provided they did not prevent other groups from living peacefully.

For the sake of this paper, religious teachings will be divided into two separate groups: moral teachings and doctrinal teachings. The moral teachings category consists of teachings that define specific behaviors as moral or immoral. An example of a religious teaching that would fall under the moral teachings category is the belief that murder is wrong. The doctrinal teachings category consists of a variety of different teachings. These teachings examine the history and foundational beliefs of a religion, as well as interpretations of specific passages from a religious text. An example of a doctrinal teaching is the Christian belief that Jesus was the son of God.

In spite of the countless differences that exist between the world's religions, many religious beliefs and teachings lack the potential to transform these disagreements into full-blown interreligious conflicts, be they violent or not. There are beliefs among most religions' teachings that fail to meet this description and do in fact provoke interreligious conflicts. Religious teachings that define certain behaviors as acceptable or unacceptable, in particular, have the ability to cause people to question the morality of their own lifestyle. More concerning is that these kinds of teachings also have a tendency to question the morality of others' lifestyles. Appiah notes, however, that differences such as these are not necessarily fair to judge with the perspective of an outsider:

It is now widely accepted – for a great variety of different reasons – that even where a society has a majority of one religious identity, it does not follow that all questions should be settled according to the view of that religious tradition. More than this, in the world as a whole, it is understood that no religious group has the power to settle things on its own terms (55).

As Appiah implies in this quote, differences in culture come with differences in socially-acceptable behaviors. The dominant religions of each respective culture tend to reflect those differences. With respect to human response to such differences, Appiah points out that “What is reasonable for you to think, faced with a particular experience, depends on what ideas you already have” (57).

One moral teaching in particular has the potential to prove problematic in the process of incorporating religious pluralism (the belief that there are multiple acceptable ways to live) into modern religions. This teaching was previously referred to within this paper as an “excludability

clause.” One might argue that a religion’s excludability clause exists to discourage religious individuals from accepting the beliefs of other religions, and many religions include this same clause. Given the nature of the excludability clause, it can create problems for the possibility of religious pluralism within a religion. By criminalizing the belief in another religion’s teachings, an excludability clause has the ability to also alienate anyone who fails to adhere to the teachings of a religion. Bearing this in mind, as long as an excludability clause remains an accepted teaching within any given religion, that religion is more likely to reject the idea of religious pluralism. This is because religious pluralism, by definition, requires the acceptance of, as well as an openness toward beliefs other than one’s own.

Countless other moral beliefs have the ability to rouse conflict between religious groups as well. One of the most popular modern sources of disagreement deals with the morality of the use of contraception. Some divisions of Christianity, such as the Catholic Church, discourage the use of birth control. Meanwhile some other denominations believe that the right to choose to have – or to not have – children belongs to the parents. Therefore, these denominations create less strict rules regarding the use of birth control. Disagreements regarding moral teachings such as this one serve to further separate the many denominations of Christianity.

Doctrinal obstacles also stand between religious groups and religious pluralism. Moral teachings are not the only element of multiple religions that could hinder religions from keeping an open mind toward religious pluralism. An example of a potentially problematic doctrinal belief is the aforementioned process of transubstantiation (the belief that, once blessed, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus) within the Catholic Church. This belief conflicts with the other Christian denominations’ beliefs regarding the tradition of consuming bread and wine during church services. Unlike the Catholics, other Christian groups believe that the

consumption of bread and wine during church services is purely a symbolic tradition. Major differences in beliefs such as these have the potential to create rifts between religious groups, regardless of whether or not they are open to others' beliefs.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle that stands in the way of religious groups' adoption of religious pluralism is the fact that there exists a plethora of religious groups in the world. Each of these groups has its own set of unique beliefs, and they use those beliefs to attempt to explain reality. Since it would have been impossible for every single religious group to collaborate with every other religious group when they shaped their respective religious beliefs, the earth's religions consist of countless different moral and doctrinal teachings. The sheer number of potential differences between any two religious groups makes disagreements between religious groups unavoidable.

As long as religious groups have differences in beliefs, disagreements are inevitable. Even though one of the most important characteristics of cosmopolitanism is the desire to embrace differences between different groups, many groups hold beliefs – both moral and doctrinal – that hinder their own ability to coexist peacefully with other groups. Therefore, in order for these groups to take steps toward becoming more cosmopolitan, they would have to change some of their beliefs first.

At first, it may seem difficult for religious groups to alter some of their beliefs. However, not every religious belief is a matter of life or death; there are different levels of centrality to different teachings. The belief that Jesus was the son of God is an example of a religious belief that is central to every denomination of Christianity. Another central Christian belief is the belief in God. Needless to say, not every belief within Christianity carries as much significance as these two beliefs. For example, Catholics, among several other divisions of Christianity, used

to abstain from eating meat on Fridays. While this practice was no doubt treated as important by the Christians who practiced it, (up until the Second Vatican Council, when it was done away with) no Catholic with even the weakest understanding of his or her own religion would dare suggest that this belief was as important to Catholicism as the belief in God. Similarly, no Catholic would be likely to assert that one who eats meat on Fridays could not possibly be a Christian. This shows that not every teaching is essential to the existence of the religious group with which it is associated.

Not every belief is vital to the existence of a religious group. In fact, there are plenty of beliefs that could be done away with altogether without changing a religious group's central beliefs. The Catholic Church serves as an interesting historical example of changes being made to a religious group's beliefs. In addition to banning the consumption of meat on Fridays, the Catholic Church also required women to wear veils to mass and forbid anyone but priests from touching the Eucharist (believed to be Jesus' body and blood) during communion. However, all of these teachings were changed during the Second Vatican Council. Aside from the fact that none of them are widely practiced today, all of these beliefs have something in common. They were all non-central beliefs to Catholicism. Despite these changes, the Catholic Church has, to this day, managed to retain the core beliefs that it was founded upon. The abolishment of these non-central practices serves as proof that changes to certain religious beliefs or teachings need not pose any threat to a religious group.

While non-central religious teachings set denominations of the same religion apart, these teachings do not necessarily need to be eliminated in order for a healthy relationship to be formed between two religious groups. In most cases, it could be enough simply to recognize that these beliefs are not central to one's religion. Religious beliefs belong to one of two categories:

central, or peripheral. Central beliefs are part of the core of a religion. Peripheral beliefs are non-essential teachings that are often specific to a religious denomination. Differences in peripheral beliefs between religious groups are less significant than differences in central beliefs between the groups. If two religious groups were both to believe all of their holy text's teachings to be central to their beliefs, there would be no hope for change or tolerance between the two groups.

The rejection of religious pluralism might indeed prevent religious groups from becoming true cosmopolitan groups. However, it is worth noting that a group does not need to fully adopt a cosmopolitan lifestyle in order to coexist peacefully with the groups that surround it. Recall the example of the Protestants of Le Chambon. Although the teachings of their religion did not include religious pluralism, the Chambonnais still saw great value in the lives of the Jewish people in spite of the many differences between the two groups' beliefs. In fact, the Chambonnais were willing to protect the Jews' lives at the risk of losing their lives.

The people of Le Chambon officially fall into the counter cosmopolitan category in light of their non-pluralist religious beliefs. However, through their actions they serve as a perfect example of a near-cosmopolitan counter cosmopolitan group. In fact, the same Protestant beliefs that gave the Chambonnais their lack of pluralism also called them to rescue the Jews from the Nazis, like true cosmopolitans. Without their religious beliefs, the Chambonnais would have almost certainly chosen to act in the best interest of their own safety, just as their Catholic neighbors chose to when they expressed their unity with the corrupted state of France (95). In an attempt to explain the Protestant Chambonnais's commitment to helping those in need, Hallie makes the following statement: "Solidarity and resistance not only in the face of persecution but against the national establishment of France, the law of the land, combined with devotion to the pastors who have maintained that solidarity and have led that resistance, are central to

Protestantism in France" (26). Much like the Catholics' commitment to the first few Crusades, the Protestants' commitment to their own teachings was absolute. However, unlike the Catholics' commitment to the Crusades, the Protestants' commitment to their religious principles served a cosmopolitan purpose.

In order to avoid conflicts like the Crusades in the future, a number of changes to organized religions like Christianity might be necessary. In Christianity's case, the religion possesses certain counter cosmopolitan elements that make coexistence with other religions difficult. Among these elements is the aforementioned "excludability clause," which, in this case, suggests that only those who subscribe to Christian beliefs and practices have the hope of entering heaven after death. Christianity's next conflict-provoking value can be found within the Ten Commandments. The first commandment makes the following statement: "I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before Me." This first of the ten laws believed to have been presented to Moses by God himself reflects Christianity's intolerance of the possibility of other gods. Needless to say, this belief alienates non-Christian religions by portraying them as an enemy to Christianity. The mere existence of religions other than Christianity poses no inherent threat to Christianity as a religion. However, the belief that subscribing to non-Christian religious beliefs is a sin gives the impression that this is not true.

In order to avoid future holy wars, it would also be wise to keep religion away from power, and vice versa. Appiah writes that "Once you want your national identity to cohere with your religious identity, you will aspire for its rituals to become national rituals, its morals to be embodied in law, its gods to be honored in public ceremonial" (54). This was the case during the Crusades, when it was common for states to be formally associated with a specific religion. The immense level of authority granted to the Catholic Church between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries

allowed the Crusades to take place as they did. Without this level of authority, the Church would not have possessed the manpower required for assembling armies nor waging wars, especially on the scale of the Crusades. Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, however, the Church held more power than the monarchs of Western Europe. Munro writes, "because of the weakness of most of the monarchs in Western Europe during the first half of the twelfth century, the Church, and especially the Pope, were allowed... to encroach upon the sphere of the temporal authorities" (350). The political power that the Church was allowed to acquire further empowered it as a hugely influential force in Western Europe.

Returning to the Islamic idea of Jews, Muslims, and Christians all being *ahl al kitab*, or "people of the Book," one should note that these three religions all share a belief in the same god. Therefore, Christianity's First Commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me," does not, in fact, forbid subscription to the beliefs of either religion. However, in the case of the Crusades, other factors proved to be problematic to the groups' peaceful coexistence. These factors included the Muslims' desire to not only control the Holy Land, but also limit Christian pilgrims' access to it. Once the Muslims had proven to be enemies of Christianity, the Christians began to question the moral value of other religious groups as well (Madden 4). As a result, Judaism, too, quickly became seen as an enemy to Christianity. Despite their beliefs in the same god, the number of differences between the three groups in terms of traditions, values, and other beliefs, are fairly numerous. In times of religious conflict, the differences, rather than the similarities between the three groups have a tendency to become the focus of the individuals who associate with each religion.

In examining conflicts – such as the Crusades – that bud from disagreements between neighboring religious groups, tolerance might be thought of as the end goal. However, it is

important to observe that there is a notable difference between tolerance in the minimalist sense, and tolerance founded upon both groups' desires to understand the other. While tolerance alone might indeed prevent negative interactions between groups, it does little to encourage positive actions between them. Tolerance inspired by a desire to understand the other group, on the other hand, both discourages negative interaction and encourages positive interaction. The latter approach is the more cosmopolitan of the two, as it encourages communication between groups. By communicating, and establishing a healthy connection, the two groups become less likely to resolve disagreements in a violent manner.

Based on the actions of the Chambonnais, cosmopolitanism could serve as a possible solution to religious divisiveness. However, there are several conditions that must be met in order for cosmopolitanism to prove effective as such a solution in any situation. Examples of the violation of some of these conditions can be seen during the Crusades. First, if the members of a religious group fail to establish and maintain peace-seeking communication with groups with whom they live in close proximity, cosmopolitan methods are likely to fail. This was the case between the Christians and Muslims during the Crusades when they both occupied Jerusalem. If either group had reached out to the other in order to establish a friendly connection, disagreements between the two groups might not have resulted in violence. Second, if the members of a religious group refuse to keep an open mind toward the beliefs of another religion, cosmopolitan strategies are once again likely to fail. If the Crusades-era Christians and Muslims had put aside differences in their doctrinal beliefs, they might have instead been able to focus on the many moral beliefs that they share. As a result, they might have found tolerance for one another since they share some of their most central religious beliefs.

## Conclusions

Cosmopolitanism could help to eliminate interreligious hostility in the modern world, but in order for it to be effective, humanity should be aware of several potential obstacles that stand between modern-day religious groups and cosmopolitanism. As proven by the Crusades, corruption among those in positions of religious power has the potential to corrupt religious individuals as well, especially when religious teachings are treated as infallible. Certain beliefs, such as excludability clauses, can be used to portray certain individuals as the enemy of a religious group, and therefore also promote conflict. As long as these obstacles remain in place, cosmopolitanism will likely remain out of reach for numerous religious groups.

The aforementioned obstacles currently act as a wall between some religious groups and cosmopolitanism, but achievable solutions to those obstacles exist. One promising solution involves increasing cross-culture education in schools. By educating people on cultures other than their own at a young age, people are encouraged to keep an open mind toward the lifestyles led by people of differing backgrounds. This form of education would discourage conflicts between religious groups and individuals by discouraging misconceptions and prejudices, and helping people to find common ground between their own culture and others'. This solution does not directly address the previously-mentioned problematic beliefs that can be found in religious groups throughout the world. Ideally, however, it would not need to. By eliminating misconceptions about other lifestyles, people would be taught to view the beliefs, values, and traditions of other cultures as acceptable, encouraging them to at least keep an open mind toward the religious beliefs of others. In turn, this has the potential to cause religious individuals to place less importance upon conflict-provoking beliefs such as the excludability clause.

Appiah notes that the world is full of religious groups, each with their own traditions, values, beliefs, and histories (59). Throughout history, however, many individuals who have failed to adhere to the religious beliefs of the majority have been labeled as blasphemers or heretics. In keeping an open mind toward the differing beliefs of others, it is crucial to recognize that those beliefs belong to a different religion entirely. As such, judging them by the standards set by one's own religion is unfair, and encourages interreligious conflict and intolerance. However, this kind of intolerance stems from a lack of familiarity between groups, reinforcing how important cosmopolitan communication is to peaceful coexistence between groups. An example of a time when behavior seen as blasphemy was treated with tolerance can be seen during the period of Muslim dominance in Spain. During this period, Spanish Christians directly challenged the beliefs of Islam, but their behavior was pardoned because the Muslim rulers respected them for the similarities that existed between their religions as "People of the Book" (*Causes of Quarrel* 55). As a result, Christians were offered mercy on multiple occasions (*Causes of Quarrel* 41). Although this outcome might not be typical for interactions between less similar religious groups, it serves as evidence of all that communication can do for groups that would otherwise find themselves at odds.

Putting an end to religiously-fueled conflicts is also vital to the successful elimination of harmful counter cosmopolitan behavior. A modern example of such a conflict can be seen in the Middle East. Given the religious affiliation of certain groups involved in these conflicts, they have a tendency to spread prejudices. This becomes especially true when groups allow their national identities to become entangled with their religious identities, as is the case with the wars in the Middle East (*Causes of Quarrel* 45). However, it is unlikely that history can provide much insight on the topic of religious identity, due to the newness of the concept, as noted by

Appiah. Although ending a war is no small task, it should simply be noted that changes in favor of cosmopolitanism will be difficult to bring about within warring religious groups.

In order for cosmopolitanism to be effectively incorporated into religious groups, it could also be helpful to use the Huguenots of Le Chambon as models. Without sacrificing their religious beliefs, the Chambonnais risked their lives in order to save the lives of thousands of people whose beliefs differed from their own. Rather than representing an impossible-to-achieve ideal (as the idea of cosmopolitanism might represent on its own), the Chambonnais serve as proof that individuals who belong to counter cosmopolitan religious groups can lead cosmopolitan-approved lifestyles. Thus, the Protestants of Le Chambon prove that religious individuals need not abandon their core religious beliefs in order to lead more cosmopolitan lives. When considering the possibility of harmful counter cosmopolitan groups becoming cosmopolitan-approved groups, it is important to recall that all counter cosmopolitan groups share the essential cosmopolitan belief that all people are of moral value. Therefore, all counter cosmopolitan groups possess the beginnings of the ethics of Le Chambon's Protestants.

Also instrumental in spreading tolerance between cultures is missionary work. Missionaries have the ability to open people's minds to cultures that they might know little of, and thus have the potential to serve as representatives of cosmopolitan ideals. However, it is important to distinguish between humanitarian missionaries and evangelical missionaries. While humanitarian missionaries purely aim to make a positive impact on the lives of others, evangelical missionaries conduct their missionary work with a desire to convert those that they aim to help. This practice might indeed embrace the cosmopolitan belief that all people are of moral importance, since it involves reaching out to those who need help, regardless of their religious beliefs. However, the ulterior motives associated with this practice violate

cosmopolitanism's other most essential belief – that there are multiple respectable ways to live. Despite the cosmopolitan potential that missionary work holds, this approach to such work fails to adhere to cosmopolitan morals because the very idea of evangelism lacks pluralism – one of cosmopolitanism's key traits.

In accepting a variety of beliefs and lifestyles, it is important for a cosmopolitan to possess a certain amount of impartiality. However, while the impartial cosmopolitan is the purest cosmopolitan, the need to accept others' beliefs that comes with cosmopolitanism does not require impartiality toward all of the world's cosmopolitan-approved religious groups. Cosmopolitans recognize that it is natural to have a preference for one's own group, as opposed to the group of a stranger. However, partiality toward certain groups becomes problematic, and non-cosmopolitan when it implies a disrespect for other groups.

Changes in favor of cosmopolitanism by religious groups will probably not come about in the next decade, or the next century, or maybe even the next millennium. However, the modern state of the relationship between Christianity and Islam at least suggests that small steps have been made toward cosmopolitan tolerance between these two religions (the two biggest religions on Earth) since the Crusades drew to a close in 1291. Although the process will almost certainly be slow, if religious groups continue to make small steps toward cosmopolitanism, they will someday reach it.

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