Stop and Think About It

My description of my self portrait from my previous essay concluded with the idea that I need to give myself to the world. Even in a world becoming more integrated, including a global economy involving multiple countries and a cultural exchange between the people, global schisms still exist, which individuals must address. Economic benefits only reach a small proportion of the population, and discrimination continues among the increasingly diverse populations of the world. As seen by 9/11 these global schisms often lead to violence and retaliation. In a world still divided, how can peace occur? Using education, patience, and the Biblical idea of loving others, an individual Christian student can help build a peaceful world.

The primary source of bringing peace into the world is education. In order to face the issues that separate the people, knowledge of the issues is required. This idea of education is also connected to the concept of loving one’s neighbor. Wendell Berry describes this argument in his article “Thoughts in the Presence of Fear”, writing:

“If our enemies are now to be some nations of Islam, then we should undertake to know those enemies. Our schools should begin to teach the histories, cultures, arts, and language of the Islamic nations. And our leaders should have the humility and the wisdom to ask the reasons some of the people have for hating us” (Hauerwas, 283).

Although this specifically refers to understanding the people who attacked the United States on 9/11, the argument can be applied towards anyone on the other side of the global
schism. In order to bring about peace in the world, it is required to understand what motivates people to their different actions, and what circumstances create this motivation. For instance, even the vicious acts on 9/11 were motivated by political and economic struggles in the Middle East, making the terrorists believe violence was the only option. By understanding why the schism exists, policy changes can strengthen integration and promote peace. As an individual Christian student, this understanding lets me promote peace. As a Christian I am called to not judge others but to love them, and as a student I am called to learn. To love others means to understand their lives and motivations and why they act the way they do. As a result, I am called to consider the viewpoints of those whom I disagree with. As an individual I can share this understanding with others, to help present an unbiased view of world issues. When people have a fundamental knowledge of both sides of the schism that separates the world, it is possible for them to pressure their governments to make decisions to help solve the problem. As an example, when Berry thinks of poverty, he considers, “… we could promote a decentralized world economy which would have the aim of assuring to every nation and region a local self-sufficiency in life supporting goods” (Hauerwas, 281). By learning of the circumstances that motivate the violence of the world, people can help change the circumstances to promote actions for peace.

While education helps create actions for peace, it must be reinforced with patience. According to Rowan Williams in his article “End of War”, patience is required for appropriate action. Rowan writes, “We have the freedom to think what we actually want, to probe our desires for some kind of outcome that is more than just mirroring what we have experienced... trying to act so that something might possibly change” (Hauerwas, 270). Specifically, Rowan raises the idea that Americans had the ability to patiently choose a response to September 11th.
Instead of responding to violence with violence, Americans can carefully choose an action that will produce the desired results of peace. When combined with education, patience has the potential to yield results that can destroy the schisms still separating the world. As Hauerwas himself disapprovingly writes of American desires after 9/11 in his article “September 11, 2001: A Pacifist Response”, “Something must be done. Something must be said. We must be in control. The silence must be broken” (Hauerwas, 426). Americans wanted immediate action in order to regain control from the attack, instead of considering why the attacks occurred. As a student patience is also required to determine appropriate action. Any school assignment requires patience to consider and analyze the question, not reaching a hasty conclusion. By practicing this students enhance their abilities to take time to analyze problems for the best possible answer. To take appropriate action, requires patience to fully reach the right conclusions that are most benevolent to all. Thus patience connects to the Christian idea of loving others, explaining why Biblically patience is an aspect of loving others. Patience is taking the time to fully examine the facts concerning the divided world in order to determine a calculated, not hasty, course of action.

Through patience and education found in loving others, even an individual Christian student can contribute to a more peaceful world. By using education to consider why the world exists in its current state and patiently taking the time to examine the world and determine the appropriate action, accurate decisions to produce peace can occur. Any action to help promote peace requires time taken to understand the problem. Only then will any action be ready to fight the divisions of the world. Otherwise violence will continue. If I were to adjust my portrait I would simply push myself a little to the left, and place a book under the tree behind me with a pair of sneakers on top. Speaking metaphorically, this would represent my willingness to take the time to sit under a tree and consider what it is like in other people’s shoes. As a student I can
make the world a better place by patiently taking the time to accurately learn about the reasons behind the global schism. Then I can use the knowledge to promote actions to change the world. Any action performed in the world to promote peace mandates time to stop and consider why the problem is occurring, and time to develop a solution that can fully address the problem.
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Bibliography

