

Review Essay

Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, New York: Cross Roads Books, 1997 pp. 293, ISBN 0-8245-1464-1 Pbk.

I first encountered the topic of 'Sacred Violence' (*Heilige Gewalt*) at a weekend seminar of the *Evangelische Akademie* in Berlin a couple of years ago. The Lutheran Church in Germany maintains study centres in various regions for conducting regular programmes of short, intensive courses at the highest level of scholarship on a range of theological, political, sociological and historical themes of central relevance to Christian people. There are no conditions applied for participation in these studies; all interested individuals may attend at minimal cost. As an Anglican priest and a historian of Modern Germany I was particularly interested because I knew that until the end of the Second World War, the Protestant Church in Germany had endorsed a version of the doctrine of 'sacred violence'. This derived from the 'neo-Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms' according to which the Church had no right to criticise the State in the prosecution of its policies, either domestic or foreign. As St Paul made clear in Romans 13 the 'Powers-that-Be' were ordained by God, and so the government had the right to pursue policies unrestricted by any apparent moral reservations if it deemed them to be in the long-term interest of the nation. This is essentially the theological rationale for *Realpolitik*.

Here it should be emphasised that this was the *neo-Lutheran* doctrine, not what Luther had originally taught¹. It had, however, become well entrenched in Lutheran thinking from the time of the French Revolution when, of course, in the view of pro-monarchists, the unruly masses arose, driven by the totally illegitimate and un-Christian revolutionary doctrine of liberty, to do violence to the divinely established order. Thereafter the Protestant Churches in Germany functioned to endorse the doctrine of benevolent despotism or absolutist monarchy, called in German *Königtum durch Gottes Gnaden*, or, as we would say in English, the doctrine of the 'divine right of kings'. In the hands of German liberal Protestant theologians and scholars such as Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) and Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), to name but two internationally renowned figures, this doctrine evolved into a justification for imperialism and war, not just defensive wars, but wars of open aggression.²

This was a kind of historical theology according to which the evolution of the State through history was seen as expressing the divine will for the world. It clearly presumed the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel that saw the *Machtstaat*, the power state, as executing God's will for the universe. It is not difficult to see, therefore, that theologians educated in this schema would have great difficulty in making a critique of the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. Indeed, the Lutheran Church split on the difficulty posed by having to recognise the Hitler regime as a legitimate expression of the

'Powers-that-Be'. The pro-Nazi so-called German Christians (*Deutsche Christen*) wanted in fact to go further and see in Hitler a German Saviour, providentially sent to execute God's will for the German people, even to the extent of eliminating all foreign, non-Germanic racial elements, such as the Jews and Gypsies, and of aligning the Church with all the doctrines, both military as well as racial, of the Nazi movement.³ This, of course, was too much for the so-called *Confessing Church* that bridled at the move to destroy the unity of Holy Scripture⁴ and simultaneously to subjugate the Church to the State as a violation of the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. The *Confessing Church* insisted on the historic autonomy of the Church to preach the Gospel without interference from the State. But this did not mean out-right resistance to Hitler as the *Confessing Church* continued to recognise him as legitimate in terms of Romans 13. And that meant tacit acquiescence in both Nazi domestic and foreign policy. There was very little actual resistance to Nazism on the part of the *Confessing Church*, although individuals who, as the Germans put it, went into 'inner emigration' (i.e. withdrew into their private sphere) could be considered to have resisted in a non-collaborative, passive way. However, most Church leaders continued to act and believe as though Almighty God in His inscrutable wisdom endorsed the violence perpetrated by the State, allegedly in the name of the people.

Among the German theologians it was effectively only Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and to some extent Martin Niemöller, under the influence of the Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, who came to understand that the neo-Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms was a disaster since it endorsed, at least indirectly, the doctrine of 'sacred violence'. Bonhoeffer, significantly, was uniquely equipped to critique the doctrine partially through his exposure to the theological thought of foreign scholars whom he encountered at the time of his post-doctoral sojourn at Union Theological Seminary in New York during 1930.⁵ Finally, his critique was spelled out in *Ethics* where Bonhoeffer speaks of 'thinking in two spheres' (*Denken in zwei Räumen*). This pointed to the fallacy of believing that Almighty God had abandoned His sovereignty on earth to the State allegedly to execute His will for humanity. In short, there was not one sphere for the Church and another for an autonomous State. God was sovereign equally over both, indeed all Creation, and consequently demanded obedience equally from Church and State. There was not one moral law for the Church and another for the State, or rather a situation in which the State was NOT, as it were, subject to the law of the Gospel.

Bonhoeffer's thought on this was a breakthrough for German theologians. One must appreciate just how committed to the doctrine of an autonomous State in the sense of the neo-Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms the German theologians really were. Ernst Troeltsch gave a classic endorsement of it in his widely read *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*,⁶ and during the *Kaiserreich* most theologians affirmed a war theology that taught in effect that the State had the right to issue a challenge to weaker neighbouring states to show cause why they should continue to exist. Indeed, the ordering of the world under God presumed the power

struggle of Empires for hegemony over the earth. It was out of this kind of theological background that scholars emerged during the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich who could give a theological endorsement to the Nazi dictatorship.⁷

After the Second World War the German theologians were prevailed upon by the leaders of the then ecumenical movement such as Visser d'Hooft to make a public admission of guilt which they did in October 1945, not ungrudgingly, in the so-called *Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt*.⁸ This was a somewhat coy distancing of the Church leadership from its failure to be more active in protesting against the excesses of the Third Reich. It amounted to little more than a public breast-beating for the benefit of the ecumenical observers. There was no express statement of regret for specific atrocities such as the Holocaust; at best it was a statement of regret that sections of the Church had allowed themselves to be taken in by the claims of the totalitarian state. Remarkably, though, once it was published, it called forth a wave of protest from some leading German theologians who countered by saying that those foreign countries who were responsible for the conditions under which National Socialism took root in Germany were also 'guilty'. The responsibility for the crimes of the Third Reich was not something the German people had incurred alone. It was not surprising, then, that a theologian of the stature and mindset of the Swiss Karl Barth urged a group of his German colleagues to admit that the *Stuttgart Declaration* was quite inadequate. Also leading in this step was the German theologian Hans Joachim Iwand who, like Bonhoeffer, saw the German problem as resulting from the theology that elevated the State to being the key instrument in God's plan for salvation. These men accordingly composed a further declaration known as the *Word of Darmstadt*. This went closer to the nub of the problem by taking a critical look at the evolution of German historical-theological thinking. It frankly admitted that there had been such a thing as a 'dream of a special German mission to the world' that had 'set the nation on the throne of God'.⁹

These phrases encapsulate what had happened in fact. The Germans had quasi deified the State, and theologians claimed to be able to read the mind of Almighty God. It was a shorthand way of saying that the dominant historical theology of the *Kaiserreich* and the Third Reich had been a massive delusion that had crippled the Church's ability to assess the essentially evil nature of the Hitler regime and to do something about it. In fact, the former adulation of the State as *the* agency upon earth commissioned to articulate the will of God for humanity was tantamount to the endorsement of 'sacred violence'. German theologians of formidable scholarship had earlier confirmed the validity of the concept of 'Holy War'.¹⁰ And this is still part of current thinking in some places, despite the best efforts of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as the above mentioned Berlin seminar on 'sacred violence' confirmed. There, leading German professors of theology and church history made it clear that the Bible certainly did endorse 'sacred violence'. It was an inescapable fact in the history of salvation.

What I did not fully appreciate (but strongly suspected) at the time was that this week-end seminar had been a conservative German attempt virtually to discredit the work of the French scholar, René Girard of whom I was, until then, completely

ignorant. Girard, who was not strictly a Biblical scholar in the rigorously circumscribed terms expected in German theological circles, began his American academic career as a professor of Romance Languages. While on the staff of Johns Hopkins University during the late fifties Girard reportedly experienced a momentous spiritual change leading to his conversion to Christianity. He had previously published scarcely anything on the Bible but he soon began to command the attention of the theological world in the seventies with the publication of his pioneering study *La violence et le sacré* (1972), published in English as *Violence and the Sacred* (1977). He followed this with an even more important book in 1978, *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* that came out in English as *Things Hidden since the Foundation of the World* (1987).¹¹

According to James G. Williams, one of Girard's most lucid interpreters, he became simultaneously a *cause célèbre* and a *bête noir* in France,

because his argument for a universal anthropological theory, combined with the position that the deepest insights of Western culture stem from Biblical revelation, shocked and alienated those who held to the assumption of the all-encompassing nature of language and who tended to ignore Christianity or view it with contempt.¹²

Girard embarked on a crusade to revolutionise not only the thinking of Biblical scholars but also that of the entire world of the humanities and social sciences. Simultaneously, he wanted to restore the confidence of Christians in their Scriptures and to re-establish the credibility of Christianity in the eyes of its detractors, because, as he said in his own words,

The current crisis of the modern university began with its failure to do justice to religious texts without conferring on them some *a priori* authority. This interpretative failure has gradually spread to all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, now culminating with a know-nothing nihilism that glories in its own emptiness.¹³

The Girard project is breathtaking in its vision. He wants to show that through a new, essentially anthropological, approach to the Bible, humanity can break out of the apparently endless cycle of violence and come to see the Gospels as revealing 'both the secret and mythic camouflage of violence and the way of liberation through a love that refuses violence'.¹⁴

It is Girard's contention that the Gospel's stories of Jesus as the innocent victim reveal a sovereign God whose essential nature 'threatens and subverts structures of violence'.¹⁵ God is a non-violent deity, and remarkably, He has signalled His presence to humanity by having Himself driven out by violence. In short, the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth demonstrates that this God is not able to reign in the Kingdom of Violence. But precisely because Calvary seems to be the triumph of violence over love and justice, the very fact of the Crucifixion has meant that from that time onwards, the victimisation of individuals or groups or nations is a universal cause for protest,

disgust and abhorrence. Certainly, the culture of the 'free world' has been irrevocably affected by the witness and public execution of Jesus of Nazareth.

It is in this sense that Girard's work calls for re-assessment of the Bible. In the Old Testament there remains a certain ambiguity in the relation of the God of Israel to violence, but in the New Testament, the Gospels witness to a unequivocally non-violent God, a God who is emphatically opposed to the exacting of retribution in human relationships at all levels. But the world is still governed by the revenge motive; retaliation has been the *Leitmotiv* of our so-called Western civilization from time immemorial. Girard wants to turn this situation around through a radical re-assessment of the underlying meaning of the Bible. Indeed, 'Girard points us to a possible re-statement of biblical faith that places it at the centre of a struggle for a culture beyond violence'.¹⁶ This is a key observation about the significance of Girard's project. He is boldly offering us 'grand unifying theory' in an age of post-modernism when unifying theories, such as those of Marx and Freud, have been shown to be fatally flawed.

According to Girard, we have been living under a terrible delusion. The world has endured a history of unrelieved violence and mayhem. (I am writing on 12 September 2001, the day after the "day of infamy" in New York and Washington). As has been pointed out, 'in modern intellectual history, religion has been dismissed or ignored as unimportant or irrelevant. Supposedly outmoded religious forms and functions such as sacrifice are not taken seriously'.¹⁷ Girard insists that they must be, and he has already a formidable discipleship of Biblical scholars willing and able to proclaim his message. The work under review here by Gil Bailie is an eloquent and persuasive example, which Girard endorses, in the most positive terms:

The problem with Christians is that they have lost all confidence in their Scriptures. If they listen to this book, [i.e. Bailie's] they will understand that the Gospels contain an anthropology of religion far superior to anything the social sciences can provide and they will see the shallowness of religious relativism.¹⁸

Bailie, who is founder and director of the Florilegia Institute in Sonoma, California, is an erudite researcher of the literary and scriptural traditions of Western culture. If one requires an introduction into the complexities of Girard's thought it is conveniently summed up in this highly instructive work to which Girard provides the *Foreword*. Here he energetically rejects the notion that, 'The Christian narrative can only be a late version of some universal resurrection myth. What else could be?' So it would appear, until one takes a second look, says Girard. He then recommends Bailie's book as an *unconventional apologia for Christianity*. Indeed, Bailie set out to examine the 'present anthropological, cultural and historical crisis' in the light of Girard's path breaking work on the theme of sacred violence and victimisation.¹⁹

What all the stories assembled in the Bible point to is empathy for the victim. This is what highlights the uniqueness of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and gives the lie to the fashionable notion that that there is nothing but the text and that one text is as good as another. Contrary to this view, Girard's work, as Bailie reports,

articulates the terms under which the critical work might be revived, grounded once again in historical reality and made both anthropologically and spiritually significant. As the criteria for assessing cultural arrangements generally, and literary traditions specifically, *Girard has proposed the victim and the truth about the victim. He has suggested that the real task of literary criticism has just begun, and that at its centre is the Cross.* With the Cross as his hermeneutic principle, Girard's work deconstructs literary deconstruction and replaces its purely literary vertigo with intellectual and moral rigour.²⁰ [Emphasis added]

If ever humanity needed a circuit breaker out of the endless cycle of mayhem, it is now in the nuclear age and the era of anonymous, 'high-tech' terrorism. Indeed, is not the latter phenomenon the latest chilling example of 'sacred violence'? So, the work of Girard and his disciples could not be more timely.

But a word of caution here for Conservative Evangelicals who may be misled into thinking that because of Girard's affirmation of Scripture he has some affinity with them. They should be aware that his method rules out any notion of Scripture as 'God's propositional word'. His approach is strictly anthropological; this will become clear in the way he pursues the theme of violence in the Hebrew Scriptures. Neither does the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, as enunciated by Fundamentalists, have any validity. The notion that we have to do with an angry God who could only be appeased by the violent sacrifice of His own Son is emphatically repudiated by Girard and his followers. What we have to grasp anew is that the Judeo-Christian tradition is unique for other, more humane reasons. As Bailie affirms, 'If I insist on the uniqueness of this tradition, it is only to show that it discloses the universal human predicament in a uniquely powerful way, and it provides an equally unique prism through which to comprehend the spiritual issues of our time'.²¹

The appeal of Bailie's book to the present writer with a strong research interest in Modern Germany has been indicated already above. And Bailie uses a comment by the eminent historian, Charles Maier of Harvard, regarding the violence of the Third Reich. He said that, 'The Nazi experience tests the limits of what history can explain'.²² Of course, the Nazi Holocaust is not the only horror that defies explanation, as 11 September in New York brings home to us with frightening vividness. But historian Maier stands as representative for all secular social scientists writing in the Enlightenment tradition who dismiss religion as the superstition of an irrelevant minority. Maier, however, has been perceptive enough to realise that atrocities such as the Holocaust must have been motivated by forces so dark that they cannot be comprehended through conventional means of historical explanation. These cannot explain away the victims and the violence perpetrated against them. This, as Bailie points out, is precisely because we have become conditioned by Enlightenment modes of thought to dismiss religion or belief systems such as Nazism as merely aberrational.

The fact is, notes Bailie, that if we take another look we shall see that it is *truly religious people who have freed themselves from superstition without abandoning the essence of the spiritual tradition that taught us to be wary of religious superstition in the first place.* [My emphasis] And that for Bailie is the Judaeo-Christian tradition

rightly understood. The problem for the West has been that the Enlightenment placed an “empirical rationalism” at the spiritual centre of our cultural standards. And this will not help us solve the problem of ‘sacred violence’. Bailie wants to show that the West, in particular, is in a double bind ‘because we are the spiritual and moral heirs of a biblical tradition, the historical effect of which is the gradual awakening of a concern for the plight of victims’.²³

Unfortunately, while this may be the concept that gnaws at the vitals of western humanity, we do not yet understand how ‘sacred violence’ came to be and how it can be overcome. Humanity is certainly at the crossroads, and George W. Bush is the representative figure of this dilemma because he has almost automatically adopted the rhetoric of revenge, retaliation, retribution and punishment against the perpetrators of the New York and Washington terrorist atrocities. And thereby he has simply ensured that the cycle of violence will be continued.

Bailie reminds us that deep in the history of the West, the idea took root that out of violence, war, *polemos*, strife, in short conflict, creative and culture forming ideas emerged. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote:

War[*polemos*] is the father of all things; he has shown some to be gods and some mortals, he has made some slaves and others free... Everything originates in strife.... Strife is justice; and all things both come to pass and perish through strife.

The idea that violence was the essential pre-condition for cultural formation, in short the organising principle of progress took root and was echoed in all seriousness by none other than the founder of the discipline of modern history himself, Leopold von Ranke (1794-1886). This he spelled out in a seminal essay from the year 1833 entitled *Die grossen Mächte*, the Great Powers, that sketched the progress of modern history in terms of the power struggles of the then five leading European nations. As each one strove for hegemonial dominance, the others in order to survive had to coalesce in order to ward off the threat of extinction. Alliances shifted from era to era depending on which power at a given time was mounting its hegemonial claim. In Ranke’s youth it had been Napoleonic France. This process, as Ranke affirmed, was not by any means an arbitrary and destructive one, but was in fact the motor of human progress, because the tensions of struggle generated human resourcefulness and ingenuity that produced great benefits for humankind. In short, the peoples of the world need periodically to be existentially challenged in order to bring forth the fruits of the mind and spirit. There was logic in the inbuilt violence. Indeed, violence was the origin of both disorder and order. As Bailie phrases it, ‘Once in play, this *logos* [of violence] turned chaotic and destructive violence into socially stable and hierarchically differentiated social systems.’²⁴

Consequently, right into our own day the great intellectual leaders of the West, in particular G.W.F. Hegel and Leopold von Ranke, have taught us that we have to live with this pattern of violence ; it is not only the way things have always been, it is the way God intended it to be. But, as René Girard has pointed out, this is a fallacy.

Out of his wide-ranging research he noticed that people in the liberal western tradition (behind which was the literature of the Bible) knew that wars of mass destruction and the Holocaust, that were justified by such thinkers as Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), did not and do not bring forth progress. Overwhelmingly, people and nations behaved with an underlying concern for the victims of these events. It was a concern that would not go away.

What Girard and his disciples are now teaching is that the Heraclitian schema of the 500 century B.C. that von Ranke endorsed in A.D. 1833, and which has been paradigmatic until the Holocaust, has to be challenged. Girard also explains why the world lived so long under the spell of Heraclitus.

The passions that lead to violence are the products of what Girard calls *mimetic desire* meaning the *mimetic* passions that include jealousy, envy, covetousness, resentment, rivalry, contempt, and hatred. These are the sources of violence right up to the international level, and they have only been contained within a given community or nation by the mechanism of 'scapegoating'. This means that for a community of human beings to achieve some measure of cohesiveness and stability, the chaos that would normally characterise human relations (because of the envy and rivalry) is regulated by the focussing of collective attention on a scapegoat, either an individual or a group.

Bailie illustrates this by examining the confrontation of Old Testament prophets with the problem. For example, it is vividly exemplified in the book of Joshua. Here, elements that disrupt tribal cohesiveness are slaughtered in order to promote the unity of the tribe. It is the solidarity of the lynch mob, about which, though, the Prophets have grave reservations. Their real concern is to overcome the disruptive consequences of mimetic desire and the rivalry and violence it engenders. Violence to overcome violence is 'sacred'.

Further, the origins of the doctrine of Holy War are examined in the same light. The nation defines itself in wreaking retribution on neighbouring tribes. Always, the aim is to promote internal unity; but it always comes at the cost of destroying fellow human beings. The prophets saw that this was a schizophrenic principle. It was philosophy of Heraclitus dictating the rules of human intercourse instead of the God of justice and peace.

Suffice it to say that the Hebrew scriptures wrestled with this dilemma; the prophets recognised the problem clearly enough but although some come close to proffering the conclusive insight it is not until the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth, recounted in the four Gospels that the circuit-breaker is provided. As Bailie observes,

Ultimately, it was Jesus' public execution and not his public ministry that consummated the biblical revelation, inspired the New Testament, launched the Christian movement, and eventually led to the anthropological crisis in which we now find ourselves.²⁵

The essential message here is that only in a culture pre-disposed to empathise with victims could the crucifixion of Jesus come to full effect. Unfortunately, the parochial ways in which we have appropriated the Gospel have led to our failure to

appreciate its universality. Bailie's objective is that we recover that vision because only in that event will humanity be able to break out of the deadly spiral of revenge and retribution. His book could not be more timely. It teems with illuminating re-interpretation of Scripture. But it contains insights not only for Biblical scholars but also for historians and particularly for philosophers. Its refutation of the post modernists who insist on the inconclusiveness of texts is brilliant, and it restores confidence in Christianity. Bailie counters:

Eventually, we will have to abandon 'the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of signs without fault, without truth, and without *origin*' and discover *origin, fault, and truth*. The venue for that discovery is the Cross.²⁶

Finally, this book is obligatory reading for all who want to equip themselves with scripturally based arguments for the healing of the world. It is the two-edged sword that will drive the secular social scientists in their pseudo-scientific efforts to explain the human condition from the field, and simultaneously discredits all adherents of a nationalistically based theology regardless of their provenance.

John Moses

Endnotes:

²⁷ Günter Krusche, "The Church between Accommodation and Refusal: the Significance of the Lutheran Doctrine of the 'Two Kingdoms' for the Churches of the German Democratic Republic" *Religion, State and Society*, Vol 22, No.3, 1994, pp. 323-32.

²⁸ John A. Moses, 'A Justifying War as the Will of God: German Theology on the Eve of the First World War', *Colloquium*, Vol. 31, No.1, 1999, pp.3-20. See also John Moses, "Incarnation and the State: *The Modern German Example*" in *That Our Joy May be Complete* edited by Marian Free, Rosemary Gill *et al*, Adelaide: Open Book Publishers, pp. 80-96.

²⁹ John Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968 and Doris Bergin, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.

³⁰ The *German Christians* wanted to throw out the Old Testament as well as the Pauline Epistles in their bizarre attempts to produce an Aryanised Christ. See Doris Bergin, *Twisted Cross...* p.1.

³¹ John A. Moses, 'ADietrich Bonhoeffer as Conspirator Against the Hitler Regime: The Motivation of a Protestant Revolutionary', *War and Society*, Vol. 17, No. 1, May 1999, pp.25-45.

³² Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (Louisville Kentucky: Westminster: John Knox Press, 1992, Vol II, pp. 499-500. [First published in German original 1912]

³³ Robert Eriksen, *Theologians under Hitler: Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985; and Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich* (2 Vols) Philadelphia: 1988.

³⁴ Willem A. Visser 't Hooft, 'ADie Wiedergeburt Europas', in *Ökumenische Bilanz. Reden und Aufsätze aus zwei Jahrzehnten*, Stuttgart, 1966 pp. 57-58. The historical context of the *Stuttgart*

Declaration of Guilt and the Word of Darmstadt is provided by Martin Greschart, *Im Zeichen der Schuld: 40 Jahre Stuttgarter Schuldbekennnis*, Neukirchn-Vluyn: Neukirchner Verlag, 1985. [I am indebted to Christine Winter, doctoral candidate at the ANU, for this reference]

³⁵Donald W. Shriver Jr. *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, pp. 85-87. Iwand produced the first draft of the Darmstadt declaration in which he insisted upon the “guilt” of his Church in “placing the nation on the throne of God”. See Greschart, pp. 79-80. His colleagues were apparently in accord with this indictment.

³⁶Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Translated and edited by Marva J. Dawn) Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991. The original German title, *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel*, was published already in 1951. It is the object of Bailie’s book to point out that the Old Testament is ambiguous in its characterisation of God. He is at different times clearly a partisan and warrior God encouraging His people to unleash violence against either a foreign foe or rebellious kinsmen. At other times God is the all-forgiving loving and nurturing father of all. This is not resolved until the witness of Jesus of Nazareth. There are, however, currently, formidable German scholars whose work implies that God has also a “dark side”. They are still wrestling with the problem of theodicy, something, it seems, that Girard and his followers have resolved. See, Walter Dietrichs and Christian Links, *Die dunklen Seiten Gottes*, 2 Vols, Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1995, 2000.

³⁷James G. Williams, ‘A Biographical Sketch of René Girard’ in *The Girard Reader*, edited by James G. Williams, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1996, pp. 2-4.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹René Girard’s Foreword to James G. Williams, *The Bible Violence and the Sacred: Liberation from the Myth of Sanctioned Violence*, New York: Harper Collins, 1992, p. 4.

⁴⁰Williams, 12.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Bailie, pp. 8-9, quoting fellow Girard scholar, Robert Hamerton-Kelly.

⁴³Ibid. p. 2

⁴⁴Girard in the *Foreword* to Bailie, p. xii.

⁴⁵Bailie, p. 275.

⁴⁶Bailie, p. 8. In this context the essential meaning of “the Cross” needs to be highlighted. Bailie means “the Cross” as the supreme example of the institutional violence against innocent victims. It stands, therefore, as an indictment of all institutional violence and oppression of human freedom. See Michael Lattke, “Ten theses on Christian Freedom” *Colloquium*, Vol. 25, No. 1, May 1993, pp. 37-38.

⁴⁷Bailie, p. 9

⁴⁸Bailie, p. 12.. See Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past, History, Holocaust, and German National Identity*, Cambridge, Mass./London: Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 100.

⁴⁹Bailie, pp. 12-17.

⁵⁰Bailie, pp. 241-42.

⁵¹Bailie, p. 217

⁵²Bailie, p. 249