

- 21 Cf. *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 280: 'How do we speak...in a "secular" way about God?'
- 22 Bonhoeffer *Christology*, pp. 61–65. 23 Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, p. 83.
- 24 From the perspective of 'secular' interpretation, it seems likely that even Bonhoeffer mistakes his own approach. Bonhoeffer's suggestion for the 'starting point of our secular interpretation' is God's weakness; that is, 'secular' interpretation begins from the cross (see Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 361). But such a claim suggests a programme which we have seen repeatedly in this paper fails to grasp the many dimensions of nature. (Even Bonhoeffer resists appealing to the cross in the discussion of nature in *Christology*, see pp. 64–65.) The cross in the economy of reconciliation is not the place to start a 'secular' interpretation of nature.
- 25 I am grateful to Alistair McFadyen, Stanley Rudman and Haddon Willmer for their comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Sölle, Girard and the Religion of Substitution

James Girdwood

In recent years and in separate spheres Dorothee Sölle and René Girard have developed work relating to a theological account of the Cross of Christ which amounts to a strong refutation of substitutionary atonement. Both these thinkers come from distinct backgrounds. Sölle, a political theologian, was a student of Bultmann and has often referred to his importance for her theological development.¹ Girard is not a theologian as such, but rather, a literary critic with strong sociological influences and considers his work to be influenced by Emil Durkheim.² Nevertheless there are strong implications in his work for theology and especially christology. These two thinkers are compared here because their work has consequences for theological praxis which carries us beyond the more 'privatised' accounts of the Cross of Jesus Christ in many contemporary religious settings.³

The work of both thinkers shall be interpreted here and then a discussion on the relevance of that work will follow. This is especially important when it comes to the issue of violence and religion. Violence

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is used broadly here and refers not only to physical violence, but also to psychological violence within interpersonal relationships and human communities. Both argue against substitution as a christological concept since it reflects sacred or divine violence. Both see the Cross of Christ as a refutation of violence rather than the sacred justification or sanctioning of that violence. It seems, especially in Sölle, that the Cross is intimately linked to the concept of God, as far as Christian faith is concerned. If one perceives God in the face of the crucified, then it is all too easy to think of God as the one who sanctions the violence done to Christ on the Cross. This, for Girard as well as Sölle, is theologically unacceptable. Both go to great lengths to refute this kind of thinking and consequentially substitutionary atonement.

Dorothee Sölle

Sölle wishes to expose the superficiality associated with the religious life which leads to apathy and powerlessness. She sees many forms of Church life as non-obligatory and bereft of concern for social justice. She wishes then to reveal the privatising tendency in religion and Church. In her book *Suffering* (1975), she examines Jesus' passion and traditional notions of suffering. She thinks that if Jesus' suffering is understood only from the standpoint of *endurance*, then this is theological sadism. The God who gives up Jesus to death is, for Sölle, a sadistic torturer.

The God who produces suffering and causes affliction becomes the glorious theme of a theology that directs our attention to the God who demands the impossible and tortures people....Calvin can give this drastic answer to the question why the ungodly have it so good: 'Because the Lord is fattening them up like pigs for the slaughter.' The resurrection to glory means for the ungodly the resurrection to destruction. This hatred against the ungodly, destined for punishment, is rooted in a deep self-hatred.⁴

The 'logic' of theological sadism, Sölle says, consists of three points: 1) God as the almighty ruler; 2) God acts justly and 3) all suffering is punishment for sin. This has a counterpart in theological masochism, which can be summarised also in three points: 1) God is almighty; 2) God is loving and just and 3) all suffering serves to punish, test or train. Both schemes it seems flounder on the rocks of theodicy, since the suffering of the innocent is not accounted for and the theism behind such a theology is insensitive to human misery.

Sölle even criticises, controversially, Moltmann's trinitarian theology of the Cross. She thinks that in this theology Christ still suffers at God's hands. A God who crucifies is a sadistic God and does not deserve our adoration.⁵ She claims that in Moltmann's theology one

person of the Trinity underwent suffering whilst the other caused that suffering. She claims, 'The ultimate conclusion of theological sadism is worshipping the executioner.'⁶ It is in the contrast between the work of the Father and the Work of the Son that Sölle detects theologically the dangers of substitutionary atonement. This doctrine, for her, is the justification of violence through divine murder. This criticism of Moltmann is controversial and we shall return to it later.

Sölle has also criticised Barth for the same.⁷ In Barth's approach to the topic, for Sölle, one is substituted by Christ whether one likes it or not. She feels that helplessness and weakness cannot be expressed in Barth without furthering the depersonalisation of human beings. They appear as helpless pawns in a divine chess game where the moves are predictable and lives dispensable. The language of substitution is unacceptable and simply enhances theological sadism.

Summarising Sölle: substitution involves a conception of a cruel God who is an idol rather than the God of love. This God is a projection of human sado-masochistic tendencies. It involves the notion of a God who condemns and inflicts wrath as punishment for sin. The doctrine of substitution treats our sins as over and done with. It lets the sinner 'off the hook' as far as responsibility is concerned.

Sölle, in an essay written in 1967, offered an alternative vision of Christ as Representative, rather than substitute. In this scenario, Christ represents us before God as intercessor and not as a substitute. Christ represents us for the time being, but not absolutely. Sölle claims that the loss of criteria of *personality* and *temporality* in the Christian tradition has been dehumanising. Individual dignity has been lost since personality has been overlooked. Temporality has been sacrificed in favour of a timeless salvation mechanism. The depersonalised individual is once again a helpless pawn in the divine chess game in which substitution is the mainstay of theological sadomasochism. What does she mean then by *Representation* in Christ. She states:

The answer given by the Christian faith to the quest for one who acts and suffers in my place is misunderstood if it is presented in perfectionistic and final terms. This tears identity apart. Identity degenerates into a substitutionary act on the part of Christ, ... But Christ represents us for a time, conditionally and incompletely. Christ does not substitute himself for us; he represents us for a time ... in opposition to all forms of Christocratic perfectionism.⁸

Christ as our Representative speaks for us before God, but we also have to speak. Christ believes for us, but we also must believe. The Spirit intercedes for us, but we must also pray. In distinction to this a doctrine of substitution treats our sins as over and done with. It lets the individual 'off the hook' as far as responsibility is concerned. For Sölle,

Christ acts for us incompletely and not absolutely. 'Christ died in our place, but we also must learn to die. In the Christian faith we learn to die, in which physical death is only one way and not the most concrete way of dying.'⁹ In this way we 'die to self'. This is something which is learned afresh each new day. It is not something which is over and done with once and for all. The representative who degenerates into a substitute destroys the provisional character of reconciliation before God. The denial of provisionality is the recourse to substitutionary theories of atonement and therefore the denial of personality and temporality.

Behind this theological sado-masochistic scenario which Sölle criticises so radically one can detect an image of an almighty King who is vengeful and punishes His subjects that His wrath might be appeased.

When punishment is seen from the standpoint of the injured good (as it is by Anselm) rather than as the restoration of a broken relationship, this inevitably gives rise to all these strange theological controversies about law and grace....When God has to look to his honour, then the agent and the acted upon continue to confront one another irreconcilably in a system of domination and servitude. But this system collapses when the Lord identifies himself representatively with the servant. A real identification is only possible when the one who punishes suffers no less under the punishment than the one being punished. Representing us provisionally, Christ punishes us in such a way that he suffers himself.¹⁰

The image of God behind such a scenario is one of love and care, not one of unending impersonal judgement. The influence that Sölle calls punishment here works through the whole causal network of social relationships which we are all involved in. In this network those who destroy hope punish themselves because they live in hopelessness. They inflict pain on others and consequently upon themselves. Christ suffers with those who suffer. This involves a move away from the language of Classical Theism and what Sallie McFague has called the King-Realm model.¹¹ This does not involve a God who swoops down to conquer our foes. This looks more like the God whom Bonhoeffer claims, helps us in weakness:

The God who is with us is the God who forsakes us... The God who lets us live in the world without the working hypothesis of God is the God before whom we stand continually... Before God and with God we live without God. God lets himself be pushed out of the world and onto the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us.¹²

For Sölle then, Christ represents us before God, but we also

represent the world before God and have responsibility for it. A naive belief in providence will not safeguard us if we do not take seriously our own responsibilities. Those who understand the Cross of Christ in *absolutist* terms will believe Christ's work to be over and done. Timelessness enters the system here and its child is apathy. Christ represents us provisionally before God, but only for a while. Judgement is still an important principle here. We will be held to account for what we have done, or have not done.

René Girard

Girard's understanding of the Cross involves an underlying anthropology which asks a basic question regarding human experience. Why is reciprocity so fundamental for human beings. Why are 'tit for tat'; 'giving and getting'; 'exchanging'; 'imitation'; 'what's in it for me?' so fundamental to human behaviour?¹³ Girard claims that this is because human culture originates in rivalry. As the brain capacity of humanoids increased, so *mimesis* increased.¹⁴ *Mimesis* involves internal group rivalry: the constant effort to have more power, prestige and property than a rival. This mimetic desire is fundamental to human behaviour for Girard. The end result of this rivalry is violence. The violence continues until the group agrees on something.

Resolution of group violence is found through the *scapegoat* mechanism. Mimetic activity is resolved in differentiation, exclusion and victimisation of the one, so that the 'all' (group) may exist in harmony. Culture and religion become the concealment of this basic scapegoating process. Girard understands sacrifice as the sanctioning of this kind of violence.

The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself...there is a common denominator that determines the efficacy of all sacrifices...internal violence — all dissensions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of the sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.¹⁵

In principle both human and animal sacrifice appease internal violence. The more critical the situation, the more precious the victim. Seen in this light religion is a method of controlling violence. Culture and religion have devised ways to conceal the scapegoat mechanism by giving it sacred sanctioning. Sacrifice in primitive religion is a way of justifying the violence done to the scapegoat, whether human or animal. Despite this apparently negative view of religious origins, Girard takes a positive view of the Judaeo-Christian Scriptures. He

believes that these Scriptures help unmask this scapegoating mechanism at the heart of religion and culture. In the Bible Girard sees, '...the revelation or disclosure of a God who does not want victims, a God who is disclosed in the action of those who take the side of the victims.'¹⁶ The Passion Narratives reveal for Girard, the God of Jesus Christ to be the one who sides with all innocent victims.¹⁷ The crowd and religious leaders all participate in this reality during Jesus trial and execution. Peter's denial and the silence of the disciples indicate that even they could not resist the scapegoat mechanism.¹⁸ In revealing this mechanism, the Gospels condemn it. They show it up for what it is. Girard believes that through this revelation, human beings will be liberated.

Men will finally be liberated by means of this knowledge, which will help them to demystify the quasi-mythologies of our own history and then, before long, to demolish all the myths of our universe whose falsehoods we defend not because we believe in them but because they protect us from the biblical revelation that will spring from the ashes of mythology and with which it has long been confused.¹⁹

Jesus is then scapegoated by the religious and political institutions in order to quell the violence of the crowd.

The revelation, the disclosure, the unmasking of the mimetic world, occurs in the death on the cross, the sign whose signification and significance is that the prevalence of mimetic desire and rivalry, which are actuated and controlled through social structures of substitution or sacrifice, cannot tolerate the presence of the One who does not distinguish people and values according to all the structures that control and validate violence.²⁰

Those who follow Christ recognise the significance of this innocent victim. To resist scapegoating might be termed as the *good mimesis*. It is that ethic which resists the 'logic' of the crowd: it resists victimisation. A political interpretation of the Cross of Jesus Christ is a rejection of scapegoating, but also a rejection of substitutionary atonement.²¹ The Cross of Jesus Christ reveals the response of culture to the one who brought the message of God: it crucified him. This scapegoating, or victimisation mechanism, claims Girard, still exists at the heart of a culture of exchange and substitution. It exists because its origins lie in the fellowship of the lynch mob; in the human desire for a victim; in the human proclivity towards violence.

Substitutionary atonement is inconsistent with the Girardian hypothesis. God does not sacrifice the Son in order that His wrath might be quelled. Rather, God through the death of Jesus Christ reveals the violence which lies at the heart of all human culture. A violence which scapegoats and which exercises itself through victimisation.

God's revelation in the Cross works then by way of example, not by substitution. Revelation works through the victim. But this should not be understood in the sense that God creates victims in order for revelation to take place. God cries out with the victim because God as love reveals to us the nature of our culture and the violence it often promotes. The Cross inspires us to resist the structures which cause such violence. It does not appease God's wrath through a divine act of substitution. Although both these thinkers come from different backgrounds, there are many complementary aspects in their work which are significant for our consideration.

Sölle appropriates a new language of suffering which she feels needs to be embraced by all believers. As a language it involves accepting the role of struggle and pain in personal relationships as well as at a social structural level. It involves the recognition of how social factors promote injustices and how, often unwittingly, we collaborate in these factors. This kind of suffering refutes physical violence, but also the violence which happens in personal relationships between people. The Cross becomes the impetus towards discipleship, a daily way of life and not just weekly participation in the Sacrament or worship service. Theologically this identifies God's agency and human discipleship in some kind of dialectical relationship, rather than individuals involved in a timeless salvation mechanism.

Sölle does not construct an exhaustive image of God, but the implications of her analysis seem to imply that God is much different to the 'idol' she thinks is associated with privatised religion. Behind her analysis lies the insight that human beings have a propensity to 'think' of God as the justification of their own imperialisms and ideologies. This same propensity involves a deep seated self hatred of which theological sado-masochism is but one manifestation. The issue of her criticism of Moltmann is a difficult one. Moltmann is aware of this criticism and has responded to it.²² The key issue is regarding the separation of the work of the Father from the Son. Moltmann claims that this work is bound up in the divine co-suffering or 'Compassion' of God. Although he is sensitive to what Sölle says, he nevertheless disputes her claims. It would be necessary then for Sölle to offer an alternative vision of God. In light of the work done in the area of God language in recent years this would seem a worthwhile enterprise.

Sölle's work then is relevant to the issue of violence and religion. The rejection of the timeless salvation mechanism points to a rejection of victimisation here. God does not 'fatten...(people)...up like pigs for the slaughter'. Behind such a statement (as in Calvin above) is not only a deep seated self-hatred, but also a hatred of others, which is the

ground of religious self-righteousness and political apathy. Resistance to violence plays a profound and important part in Sölle's thinking here.

This is also true for Girard. The Cross is a radical refutation of the religious violence which Girard identifies at the origins of human culture. God does not want victims. It is human beings who produce victims. Jesus is seen here as the one who brings a message of God to us and human culture responds by scapegoating him. The political conflict between the religion and state of his time is resolved through the scapegoat mechanism. But the violence of sacrifice is not in God. God's revelation is of such a nature as to refute this violence. Jesus' death is not instituted by God. Girard understands sacrifice as the sacred sanctioning of violence. The 'logic' of substitution is a throw back to such thinking.

The implications of both these analyses are far reaching for contemporary religious experience. A reconsideration of themes of redemption, salvation and revelation are called for. It does not suffice for religious institutions to promote faith which seeks only the comfort of the Sacrament and the proclamation of the Word, however important these factors may be. There is need for an active resistance to the kind of violence which Sölle and Girard have reminded us of. 'There is nothing makes us feel so good as the idea that someone else is an evildoer.'²³ When religious concepts are called upon in the selfish quest to justify 'righteousness', then all the violence of the sacred will follow. Sölle's language of suffering is an alternative to such a scenario. Girard's work is only one example of more recent attempts to re-focus theology on sacrifice.²⁴ The distinguishing factor in this work is his understanding of revelation and indeed Scripture as a mode of that revelation. The Bible '*...is the privileged locus of a liberating 'revelation' of the origins of culture in religion.*'²⁵ For Girard, Scripture takes the side of the victim. Within the Old and New Testaments there exists a revelation of the victimisation mechanism, most clearly shown in the Cross of Jesus of Nazareth.²⁶ Such a revelation must reveal the subtle ways in which one involves oneself in scapegoating, leading to a desire and lifestyle which resists such activity. The practice of such a resistance is consistent with both Sölle and Girard. It would be an active rather than a passive resistance.

Appropriating resistance to scapegoating and Sölle's language of suffering would mean that we would not be able to judge or discriminate people because of their sexuality, race or political viewpoint. This is becoming a crucial aspect in relation to sexuality. There is a great deal of literature on this in the last few years and this is not the place to list it. But it seems that sexuality is one area in which

many have in the past felt victimised or scapegoated. A large part of this has been due to religious stigmatisation. The language of suffering implies that we must follow a lifestyle which accepts people as they are. Such a lifestyle goes with all people the extra mile and does not reject them because they are 'socially unacceptable'. A conception of God which seeks to justify such judgmental behaviour is rejected here. It involves the language of the sacred and not the language of suffering.

The Religion of Substitution

In this last section we shall examine what is meant by 'substitutionary religion' and its alternative in light of the above developments by the thinkers considered. Girard has basically turned the whole meaning of sacrificial language on its head. Traditionally sacrifice points to the benefits of what happens on the Cross of Christ. God does something here in the human being's stead. The Death of Christ is part of the divine plan. In both the Girardian perspective and, indeed, from Sölle's perspective, the Death of Christ is not part of a plan. Christ's Death is a consequence of the violence of culture. It is a sacrifice, but not because God wills it to be that way. It is a sacrifice because Jesus Christ goes to the Cross scapegoated by the powers of religion and state. These powers sacrifice Christ, rather than allow the energy of the crowd who demanded his death to become uncontrolled violence. It is then a cultural or human sacrifice, rather than a divine sacrifice. Nevertheless, God speaks through this sacrifice as God does through every victim of culture. The Cross of Christ becomes a revelation of every victim. This involves God's revelation 'in spite of' the violence of culture. It is not a revelation 'because of' God's purposes. Girard then offers us a rehabilitation of the language of sacrifice in terms which focus us on praxis.

With the help of Girard and Sölle we can develop the above to include a more extensive criticism of contemporary religion. The technical term for the scapegoat is the *pharmakos*. This is the one who is murdered, that the group might remain in peace. Culture for Girard is basically a 'supplement' or something added to nature. The origins of culture in this light lie with scapegoating. Culture, where it does not find a scapegoat, will find other substitutes.²⁷ To these substitutes is ascribed the word *pharmakon*.²⁸ In the context of the mimetic crisis within culture there is an attempt to cope with that crisis. The cultural predicament involves a continual process of substitutions in order to reach for some 'reality' or 'satisfaction' which is never acquired. J.G. Williams claims:

I have no doubt; however, as Derrida shows so strikingly, the very concept of medicine or remedy (*pharmakon*) is rooted in a primary notion of substitution for or supplementation of an original reality.²⁹

The *pharmakon* is a metaphor of culture and is a 'supplement' which is added to nature. Literally, it means 'remedy' or 'poison'. On the one hand it is a remedy for a given crisis, but on the other hand, it carries with it a poisonous nature, it damages as well as repairs. At the centre of the Girardian analysis is the innocent victim or *pharmakos*, substituted as a remedy for a given mimetic crisis. The turn to the *pharmakon* or substitute involves the same structure and *dynamic* as the scapegoating mechanism. Williams claims:

If culture is viewed from the standpoint of 'supplement' to nature...then the *pharmakon*,... may be taken as a metaphor of culture. As such, its function is structurally the same as the scapegoat: In greek, *pharmakos*.³⁰

Culture then is a 'pharmacy', a dispenser of the *pharmakon*. In the endless process of substitutions to which human beings can become addicted, the *pharmakon* finds manifestations in drugs, ideology, religion and many others. These are 'substitutions' played out in the context of culture. Drugs might offer relief from any given situation, but they are also poison and can be killers. Drinking can also function in this way. It can help individuals escape from or participate in 'reality'. The reality, as often as not, is socialisation. The group process here reinforces what is done. It makes refraining difficult. The substitution of a substance for the group in conflict is an outcome of the mimetic process. These substances would not become a part of the pharmacy without authoritative models which people mimetically adhere to in the mimetic process itself and the reality of mimetic tendencies which lead to scapegoating and violence.

Modern culture finds replacement for primitive sacrificial religion in the substitutionary activity of the *pharmakon*. The ancient forms of sacrifice are no longer effective for most, although the reality of scapegoating still exists. But the energy expended in scapegoating now finds release in the *pharmakon*. Addiction might be viewed in this way, but so also can fire arms and gambling. These are all ways of dealing with mimetic conflicts within the community. They are ways in which the cultural pharmacy dispenses its substitutions. However, remedies which bring relief from the chaos of mimetic conflict are also poisons, often more poisonous than remedial. They can pull human beings more deeply into the vortex of violence.

It is also true that religion can function as a *pharmakon*. Religion is a substitute for some kind of reality. It is the thesis of this study that

contemporary culture finds a replacement for primitive sacrificial religion in the *pharmakon*. Religion can also be one example of the *pharmakon* in action. So also can ideology and dogma. These three bring relief from the chaos of mimetic conflict in the way the scapegoat did, but they also bring harm (idolatry).

Substitutionary religion functions as a *pharmakon*. This is also where Sölle's criticism becomes so relevant for this study. It brings relief from mimetic conflict by offering a system of doctrinal and social differences which are acceptable to believers and which alleviate their insecurities and the potential for conflict. Doctrine or Dogma presents a community with a system of 'truth' which has the potential to operate idolatrously because it can function as a substitute for God. Adherence to the 'truth' of the religious community is the prime directive here. Those who contravene religious dogma are scapegoated and anathematised. The social system which surrounds such a directive might be enhanced by a strong devotional code which promotes standards of 'piety' and creates strong social, ethnic, and sexual differences. This system must not be violated or scapegoating might result. The fear of separation from the crowd offers the group a strong religious cohesion. The sense of identity one might gain offers the new convert an alternative to the loneliness of life outside the community.

At the centre of such a community is the substituted Christ, the *pharmakos*, who is the bringer of the *pharmakon*, the religion of substitution. God has 'purchased' our salvation. Christ has 'done it all' here. The believer 'feels' the relief of being saved from the 'eternal fires'. Continuing salvation is dependent on the believer's devotion to the *pharmakon* of correct substitutionary doctrine. This is the religion of substitution. It offers comfort and relief from social and religious insecurity, but the need to transform our world through confrontation with the victim is, at most, of secondary importance.

Both Sölle and Girard in their separate ways refute such a religion. It is a product of scapegoating and is fundamentally a denial of personal responsibility for the world. Sin and forgiveness are privatised here and Sölle criticises such notions. Sin privatistically interpreted means that the individual only need seek cultic participation in the act of repentance or as 'personal' forgiveness from the 'Lord'. However, the effects of sin are more far reaching than this and should not be underestimated. Sölle wants us to understand sin as **collaboration**.³¹ It involves the participation of individuals in the structures which promote injustice and poverty. Repentance in this scenario involves not only an act of confession, but also reparation in the form of social action to restore a just order. One might add to this also the healing of

personal relationships.

Forgiveness is then not bestowed from 'on high'. It is experienced in the course of the struggle for justice and for a better world. There is an ongoing dialectic between Christ as Representative and human agents who work out their own salvation here. Christ's work remains provisional. God is in a sense, dependent upon our response in the process of carrying out justice. Sin and forgiveness in this way are politically interpreted.

Substitutionary religion as described is basically nonpolitical and relies on a strongly 'supernaturalist' view of the atonement. It functions as a *pharmakon*, a substitute, which helps individuals escape from the realities of the world and from personal participation in changing those realities. It functions idolatrously because it seeks to replace the transcendent God with a system of fixed dogma which believers must adhere to. Such a religion is based on scapegoating and is therefore a product of religious violence. Even if no physical violence is carried out, such religion tends to encourage psychological violence because the individual is fixed to a stringent unchanging code of beliefs. This has its worse scenario in fundamentalist groups and much of the literalistic apocalyptic images which accompany these theologies.³² Faith is focused on the written word and not on the God who transcends this word. Leadership is often very authoritarian and individual freedoms, often those of women, are denied by way of securing such leadership.

The alternative vision offers us a way of faith characterised by relative insecurity. Rejecting the religion of substitution involves taking up the Cross as the impetus to discipleship and social change. It acknowledges the condition of our world and the radical victimisation that culture often engenders. Economic structures are not as such 'God-given' or 'Christian' in principle. They are often radically violent phenomena and can ruin lives as well as make them rich. The extent of sexual violence is often unrecognised and this has been especially true behind closed doors in many homes as well as on the streets. The continuing ethnic and religious crises we see in our world are indicative that scapegoating is still rife, even if not in its primitive religious form.

Both the work of Sölle and Girard is highly significant for contemporary faith. There is much scope for the rehabilitation of sacrificial language and they have, in their separate ways, contributed to this. Such thinking, along with many of the perspectives of the theologies of feminism and liberation, serve to show that the extent of the global crisis and the continuing struggle of marginalised groups have continuing relevance for theology and praxis. Theology must

continue this struggle and actively refute the religion of substitution. We must continue also to restructure preaching, worship and liturgy in such a way that they promote lifestyles of discipleship, so that believers might be active agents of social change and not collaborators in structures of religious and political injustice. This is done through resistance to scapegoating.

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- 1 D. Sölle, *The Window of Vulnerability: A Political Spirituality* (1990) 122-132.
 - 2 Girard's work makes use of Durkheim's fundamental cultural distinction of the sacred and profane. See for example E. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1982) 37. Girard discusses this in, R. Girard, *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1987) 82.
 - 3 By 'privatised' I am referring to those religious communities which encourage participation solely in religious ritual in distinction to a strong liberative/social praxis.
 - 4 D. Sölle, *Suffering* (1975) 22-23 (= *Suffering*).

- 5 *Suffering*, 26–27. Sölle's reaction to Moltmann's theology is in response to the contrast she sees in Moltmann's understanding of the work of the Father with that of the Son. The saving significance of the Cross lies, for Moltmann, in the fact that the Father has 'given over' the Son to be crucified. She understands Moltmann's theology to make the Father the source of the Son's death and therefore violence. This is unacceptable for her. *Suffering*, 22–23. Moltmann is aware of her criticisms, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions* (1990) 175–178.
- 6 *Suffering*, 28. For Sölle the position of the individual with regards suffering is quite clear: 'In the face of the sufferer you are either with the victim or the executioner - there is no option.' *Suffering*, 32.
- 7 D.Sölle, *Christ the Representative: An Essay in Theology After the 'Death of God'* (1967) 88-89 (=Representative).
- 8 *Representative*, 103.
- 9 *Representative*, 106.
- 10 *Representative*, 119–120.
- 11 S.McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age* (1987) 63ff.
- 12 E.Bethge (ed.) D.Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1967) 360ff.
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- 19 *The Scapegoat*, 108.
- 20 *Williams*, 213-214.
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- 30 *Williams*, 248. The italics are the author's.
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