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The Agony of Truth: Martyrdom, Violence, and Christian Ways of Knowing

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Beyond Standard Epistemology

It is hard to resist the temptation to see truth as a kind of settlement, as an agreement of some sort. We like to see truth as something arrived at – the terminus of a journey or the endpoint of a conversation. As David Hart puts it, “what is called truth is usually a consensus wrested from diversity amid a war of persuasions.”¹ By this, I take it that Hart means to highlight the common assumption that truth names a point at which things finally come together – a kind of last word, where we reach a state of comforting, harmonious unity, a sense of closure in which differences have been overcome once and for all. In doing so, we assume that truth names what Rowan Williams has called a “total perspective.”² In a similar vein, we like to speak of truth as a possession, as something grasped, and, when grasped, something over which we have a certain mastery. We speak as if truth is something we can handle, or perhaps as something others are unable to handle. In doing so, we imply that truth belongs to an economy of ownership and production, sometimes even of credit and debt.

Let us group this collection of impulses together under the heading of “standard epistemology.” Theologically speaking, it might be said that these descriptions go some way towards spelling out what is meant in the Christian tradition by the notoriously difficult term “world.” What follows, then, is a series of gestures towards a counter-epistemology that arises from the church’s confession that Christ is the truth. Here truth will appear to be unsettled rather than settled. It will bear traces of what, following Stanley Cavell, we might call a “rationality of disagreement.”³ It arises from an excessive economy of gift, and thus exists as a seemingly unnecessary and unwarranted

donation. As such, the truth of Christ involves a kind of ongoing contestation and thus cannot but appear to be inherently conflictual when set beside the world's desire for harmonies of closure. In short, I shall suggest that if truth is understood by way of an analogy to the truth of Christ, then it should be understood to name an essentially agonizing and agonistic reality.

To put all this somewhat differently, this essay sets out to critique and imagine an alternative to conceptions of knowledge that arise from the assumption that faith and freedom are to be pitted against one another as a kind of basic antinomy.⁴ From the perspective I will be elaborating, the main weakness of any such approach is that it seeks violently to guarantee or secure knowledge in some fixed source or ground, whether such a ground is conceived in terms of knowing subjects or objects known. Among other things, this is to approach questions of knowledge and the university as if they are intimately bound up with substantive ethical and political matters and not to speak of knowledge in the procedural terms that characterizes standard epistemology. In particular, I am interested in exploring how Christian conceptions of knowledge are entwined with questions of peace and violence. The guiding question that animates this discussion, then, is "What sorts of knowledge are appropriate to the Christian confession of the peace of Christ?" What follows is an attempt to provide a few gestures towards a more peaceable – which is to say more Christian – conception of knowledge. It is an exercise in reading Christianity as a counter-epistemology against the background of an assumption that Christianity names an epistemology of peace. Among other things, such a view features no basic opposition of faith and freedom, but rather a radical transformation of the standard notions faith and freedom, not to mention the idea of the university, as they are taken up into and thus redefined by the body of Christ.

But I am not so much interested in the concepts of faith and freedom as such, let alone with a conception of knowledge in general or the idea of the university. Rather, I seek to draw attention to the epistemological significance of martyrdom. More specifically, I am interested in exploring how the practice of Christian martyrdom is significant for a Christian conception knowledge and truth. Following Hart, I assume that "theology must, because of what its particular story is, have the form of martyrdom, witness, a peaceful offer that has

already suffered rejection and must be prepared to suffer rejection as a consequence.”⁵ One of the defining characteristics of the Christian tradition is the assumption that it is the martyr who most meaningfully has a claim to know the truth of Christ. And yet contemporary Christian debates concerning the idea of the university and the kinds of knowledge it enacts seem to take place in the absence of any meaningful appreciation of the epistemological significance of Christian martyrdom. So what might knowledge look like amongst a people for whom martyrdom is a meaningful reality? What if truth is spoken from the mouths of those, like Saint Apollonia, whose teeth were knocked out and jaws cut in an attempt to silence her voice in favour of those who would worship other gods?⁶ What if truth is illuminated by the flames that consume those who sing out songs of praise and thanksgiving while they are being burned at the stake?⁷ What if truth best captured by those whose desire for friendship with God leads them to pray “O, how happy I would be were the Lord to call me as a witness to his truth – what greater honor could come my way from God?”⁸ What if truth is written onto the tortured bodies of those who have disappeared “as part of the imaginative drama of a certain state project?”⁹ In short, what if “the word of God will be sealed with blood and defended with the cross?”¹⁰

Martyrdom and Instrumentality

Before turning to sketch out a vision of knowledge that seeks to answer these questions, it will be instructive to examine more closely how we typically speak of martyrdom, and in particular how we tend to link martyrdom with the question of truth. In particular, I want to identify three closely related claims that collectively define what we might call the standard conception of martyrdom. Perhaps the most common approach to martyrdom is to describe the martyr as one who died *for* or *because of* her or his beliefs. The martyr is then defined as one whose death is a consequence of a particular belief or set of beliefs she or he happens to hold. Or rather, the martyr dies because of an unwillingness to renounce certain beliefs even under threat of death. Martyrdom is thus understood to be a possibility that might arise when one is committed to the truth of a belief whose value is taken to override the value of one’s life itself. As Brad Gregory puts it, in what is otherwise one of the most interesting and illuminating accounts of the phenomenon of martyrdom in the sixteenth century,

“contested teachings such as papal authority, believers’ baptism, and justification by faith alone already separated Christians from one another. Martyrs demonstrated their willingness to die *for* these beliefs, proclaiming that commitment to the truth outweighed the prolongation of their lives.”¹¹

Second, and building on the theme of unwillingness to flinch in the face of death, martyrdom is often understood as a way of conquering or controlling the threat of death. The martyr is thus understood as one who defeats death by refusing to let death have the last word. In other words, the value of martyrdom is that it demonstrates that death no longer has power over us. Reflecting such a position, Carole Straw has suggested that Christian martyrdom is based on a “feeling of control over death and torture.”¹²

Third, and returning to the question of truth, martyrdom is often spoken of as evidence or confirmation of the truth of a particular belief. The stories of martyrs are often invoked in the service of a larger apologetic project, which points to the willingness of people to die for their beliefs as constituting at least a partial justification for the truth of those beliefs. At their worst, it seems that this is how the story of martyrs often function. Indeed, it might be argued that the very idea of the martyrology was created for this sort of apologetic purpose of securing the truth of the Christian faith.

What is instructive to note is that each of these three common approaches reads martyrdom in a strikingly instrumentalist fashion. They paint a picture of martyrdom as a more or less technological concept. They imply, in other words, that martyrdom names a kind of mechanistic process, whereby the martyr is understood and justified by some end result that he brings into being, some change that she effects. With respect to questions of knowledge, these descriptions of martyrdom suggest a kind of two-stage process: first we come to hold a particular belief that then leads us to act in various ways. In such cases, the belief held is somehow taken to be meaningful or true in and of itself, and martyrdom is understood to be a merely contingent outcome that might follow from holding that belief depending on what circumstances and political contexts one happens to find oneself in.

Martyrdom and Truth

Against such approaches, I want to paint a manifestly non-instrumental picture of martyrdom. More specifically, I want to

suggest that such instrumental conceptions of martyrdom radically distort the very meaning of martyrdom itself. In short, I will argue that martyrdom names an approach to knowledge and a way of life more generally which assumes that the truth of Christ cannot somehow be secured, but is rather a gift received and lived out in vulnerable yet hopeful giving in return. On such a reading, the martyr is not one who dies *for* or *because of* her beliefs. Rather, the death of the martyr is in some meaningful way the very expression of belief itself. Martyrdom does not arise out of a feeling of control over death. Rather, it is but an expression of a way of life that gives up the assumption of being in control. Martyrdom is not a phenomenon that can be understood by appealing to instrumental notions of cause and effect. Rather, it is a practice that involves the renunciation of an overriding preoccupation with effectiveness. Accordingly, the martyr is not to be invoked as evidence of the truth of a particular belief. Rather, martyrdom is a practice that constitutes and makes intelligible a certain kind of knowledge. Following Michel Foucault, I seek to explore how martyrdom “engender[s] new domains of knowledge that not only bring new objects, new concepts, and new techniques to light, but also gives rise to totally new forms of subjects and subjects of knowledge.”¹³ In short, I shall suggest that martyrdom is a practice that contributes to the constitution of a people whose lives and deaths require us to think of truth in some strikingly different ways.

It is worth emphasizing at this point that such an epistemological reading of martyrdom does away with much of the apparatus of contemporary epistemology – propositional truth-claims, justificatory structures, and the like. It is less concerned with what subjects might know or what objects might be known, and more with matters of style or performance – a certain way of knowing. It is not invested in the enterprise of identifying key beliefs and the actions they might imply, but assumes that to know is to engage in the work of the body. Accordingly, it sees knowledge neither as a purely theoretical event that admits of practical application, nor as an exercise of the mind that has certain implications for the body. Rather, it approaches knowledge as an embodied social performance or practice. It thus reads epistemology as a profoundly moral and political enterprise. In general, I am suggesting that martyrdom is not a product or result of what Christians claim to know. Rather martyrdom names a distinctly Christian way of knowing, a way of

knowing that is characteristic of the body of Christ, and in particular a way of knowing nonviolently, a nonviolent body of knowledge. Drawing on Hart once again, we might speak of the “style of the martyr’s expenditure, which is made in the hope of a return that it is powerless of itself to effect, but which is also made by a soul committed to the grace of an infinite God who can always give souls to one another in the dimension of peace, in the shared scope of his infinite beauty. That such a gift can truly be given can be demonstrated only by ceaseless giving.”¹⁴

Let me offer just a few brief observations in support of these claims. First, it is important to notice that the witness of the martyr does not turn on the ability to make truth fully present in a way that suggests truth is something we have some sort of direct access to or control over. For example, the martyrdom of Saint Apollonia turns crucially on the sense in which her voice has been silenced. Indeed, it might be suggested that the significance of Apollonia’s martyrdom is that it displays a witness to truth that somehow happens precisely because of the silence of her voice and not in spite of it. The witness of Apollonia, who has been violently robbed of the power to speak, is that of a speechless voice. The truth she embodies is reflected as much, if not more, in those moments after she has been silenced than in the threatening words her captors sought to erase. Her story is a story in which silence is not given the last word. Hers is a voice that cannot be silenced even as it is prevented from speaking, but that of a witness that cannot be reduced to or captured by those possessions known as words. This suggests that the truth of Christ is not merely a belief uttered or expressed or otherwise made present by us. Rather, it is a performance enacted in and through which truth is given as an offering or gratuitous gesture. This has everything to do with the question of agency. To identify truth with the voice of silence implies that it is not something we are fully able to possess. This contrasts starkly with the usual ways in which we think of ourselves as epistemic agents whose knowledge turns on a voice that articulates beliefs and thereby makes them present and thus grounds them in some sort of settlement.

In a related sense, it is important to appreciate the sense in which the martyr only exists as martyr in a way that is vulnerably dependent on the being of others. In other words, martyrdom is not something that we can bring about. Despite the temptation to invoke

voluntaristic notions of willingness and unwillingness in the contemporary portrayals of martyrdom noted above, it is crucial to recognize that one cannot choose to become a martyr. Rather, the notion of self-directed choice is the very antithesis of the logic of martyrdom. As Gregory puts it, “the martyrs’ agency depended upon relinquishing control, their strength upon a naked admission of their utter impotence and total dependence on God.”¹⁵ This is partly reflected in the fact that “martyr” is a title given by others to honour those whose lives and deaths are said to witness the truth of Christ.

Martyrdom, in other words, is a work of memory. And yet it is significant that the very practice of naming martyrs is a contested one. The naming of martyrs is the work of the church, and this is by no means an easy and straightforward task. It is an ongoing hermeneutical exercise that requires a constant need for examination and interpretation. Martyrdom is a meaningful description only in so far as it is subject to ongoing interpretation and negotiation. The figure of the martyr is under constant interrogation, not only by those who bring about their deaths, but also by those who would honour them. The very designation of martyrdom is a fragile and tenuous one, existing as it does in a kind of suspension between the twin extremes of suicide and victimhood. But the point I am making here is that it is out of this very suspense that we can see the interruption of the violent world of mastery, possession, and control by a non-violent offering of a radically different way of being and knowing called peace. There is a sense of otherness that characterizes Christian ways of knowing. The “otherness of the church” in this respect has everything to do with its attitude towards the other, its vulnerability to the stranger and even the enemy.¹⁶ And it is this stance of vulnerability, this refusal to seize control of one’s life, that is best captured in the Christian practice of martyrdom.

The Agony of Truth

In an attempt to sharpen some of these all-too-vague gestures and to lay bare the conversation partners lying behind the above reading of martyrdom and epistemology, it will be instructive to draw attention to some key moments in the work of Michel Foucault, Gillian Rose, and John Howard Yoder. My suggestion that martyrdom constitutes a counter-epistemology in which truth is seen as an agonistic reality owes much to Foucault’s attempt to move from a conception of the

subject as foundation to an appreciation of the notion of self-as-sacrifice. In his essay “Truth and Juridical Forms,” Foucault opens with the recognition that “[t]wo or three centuries ago Western philosophy postulated, explicitly or implicitly, the subject as foundation, as the central core of all knowledge, as that in which and on the basis of which freedom revealed itself and truth could blossom.”¹⁷ Against the background of such a claim, Foucault sets out to construct a critical “genealogy of the modern subject” that identifies and unsettles the particular forms of violence reflected in this conception of the subject as foundation.¹⁸ Closely related to this is Foucault’s critique of the notion that truth is grounded in origins, that it is rooted in originary “seeds of knowledge.”¹⁹ In short, Foucault claims that the modern idea of the subject as foundation is but one more attempt to ground truth in a kind of originary source and thus to secure or seize truth by means of a violent will to power. Furthermore, Foucault maintains that this sort of violence is particularly powerful because it is masked by the appearance of the freedom of the subject. In an attempt to provide an alternative to this temptation to the power of settlement, Foucault develops a reading in which both truth and the self are redefined as agonistic notions, as involving a sense of struggle, or a kind of ongoing contestation.

One of the main elements in this sense of agonistic dispossession of both self and truth is Foucault’s reading of Christian practices of martyrdom. It is worth quoting Foucault at length on this:

The revelation of the truth about oneself ... cannot be dissociated from the obligation to renounce oneself. We have to sacrifice the self in order to discover the truth about ourselves, and we have to discover the truth about ourselves in order to sacrifice ourselves. Truth and sacrifice, the truth about ourselves and the sacrifice of ourselves, are deeply and closely connected. And we have to understand this sacrifice not only as a radical change in the way of life but as a consequence of a formula like this: you will become the subject of the manifestation of truth when and only when you disappear or you destroy yourself as a real body or a real existence.²⁰

Elsewhere, Foucault suggests that truthful speech (*parrhesia*) involves a sense of risk, in which the self is put into a situation of significant vulnerability. As Foucault himself puts it, “Someone is said to use *parrhesia* and merits consideration as a *parrhesiastes* only if there is a risk or danger for him in telling the truth.”²¹ In short,

Foucault helps us see that a world in which martyrdom is a meaningful reality sees truth not as a stable possession that we might be able to capture fully, but as an agonistic sense of struggle in which the notion of the self as an agent of truth is put in question. Conversely, he suggests that where truth is understood agonistically, we should expect that martyrdom will occur at least in part because the self is not understood as a self-enclosed entity that is to be preserved at all costs.

As instructive as I find Foucault's reading of the self-as-sacrifice, it is also necessary to emphasize that this does not entail the complete erasure of the self. The notion of sacrifice implied in my reading of martyrdom is not that of a "purified" or "one-way sacrifice."²² It does not call for a kind of total surrender to the other. It is at this point that the work of Gillian Rose is helpful. One of the main features of Rose's work is her critique of the position she refers to as the "new ethics," and which she takes to be represented most straightforwardly by the work of Levinas and Derrida. In particular, Rose is concerned with the attempt to define "the ethical" in terms of a conception of the purified otherness of the Other and the kind of one-way sacrificial orientation it elicits. In short, Rose suggests that such a view covertly participates in exactly the kind of violence it seeks to avoid. As Rose herself puts it,

New ethics would transcend the autonomy of the subject by commanding that I substitute myself for 'the Other' (heteronomy) or by commending attention to 'the Other'. Yet it is the inveterate but occluded immanence of one subject to itself and to other subjects that needs further elaboration. Simply to command me to sacrifice myself, or to commend that I pay attention to others makes me intolerant, naïve and miserable.... [T]he immanence of the self-relation of 'the Other' to my own self-relation will always be disowned.²³

Put differently, Rose worries that new ethics equally participates in a violent vision of truth as ownership. It retains an underlying stance of mastery, of being in control, in the sense that the logic of self-sacrifice continues to presume the power of the self to give itself up. By contrast, she argues that a genuinely non-violent account of truth as dispossession or gift requires not a total giving of the self to the Other, but an ongoing agonistic exchange of giving and receiving – of generous receptivity or receptive generosity – that exists only when we

refuse to settle the difference between self and other.²⁴ Here Rose suggests that truth is to be understood precisely in terms of the categories of ambiguity, ambivalence, and anxiety of the self, and not in terms of a dualism which forces us to choose between complete self-presence or the total obliteration of the self. Genuine knowledge is that which involves an appreciation of its own fragility and the necessary risk of its endeavours. Here, truth is agonizingly difficult. It is an agonistic work of engagement. Or as Rose herself puts it, “Certainty does not empower, it subjugates – for only thinking which has the ability to tolerate uncertainty is powerful, that is, non-violent.”²⁵

Equally important to Rose’s critique of the new ethics is its tendency to essentialize or hypostasize violence. The non-violent thinking referred to in the above quote from Rose is to be differentiated from what she refers to as a “peace beyond time.”²⁶ In other words, Rose’s appeal to peace is not an attempt to invoke a reality that is somehow purified of violence. This is the sort of approach she takes to be characteristic of the new ethicist. Peace for Rose is neither a possession we can wield nor a wholly emptied dispossession or pure sacrifice. Rather, peace names a sense of struggle that exists against the background of a recognition that we are always already implicated in some form of violence. To quote from Rose yet again:

Instead of the monolithic, violent ‘coherence’ of ‘logic’ and ‘politics’, contrasted with the articulated peaceable ‘coherence’ of Talmudic casuistry, with its perfect jurisprudence of general and particular, this evident inversion [of peace] would be opened to an exposition that can acknowledge that it *does not know in advance* whether such institutions are violent or peaceful, for it is able to find out – by reconstructing the changing relation between universal, particular, and singular. This is experience – the struggle to recognize: to know, and still to misknow, and yet to grow.²⁷

In other words, peace is itself an agonistic reality. It does not name a settled territory we can fully embody or own. It is not something we own as a first instance called knowledge, which then informs our actions. Rather, it is a gift that might be given through us only when we no longer seek violently to control it. In the language of this essay, it is the work of the martyr.

All that I find helpful in Foucault and Rose about these matters of truth and agonism, of self and dispossession, of peace and violence

I find reflected in the work of John Howard Yoder. And so I close with a few references to the significance of Yoder's work as an attempt to spell out this vision of a non-violent body of knowledge that is constituted and made intelligible by practices of martyrdom. In particular, I seek to draw attention to Yoder's emphasis on truth and peace as witness, which is of course just another name for the martyr. Much of this is captured in Yoder's understanding of the set of temptations he grouped together under the label of constantinianism. But here it is crucial to appreciate that the question of constantinianism and non-constantinianism names a form of epistemological inquiry, and is not merely a question of "the political." In short, Yoder's account of the constantinianization of the church names a sense in which the church seeks to assume a stance of control or self-legitimation. Instead of embodied discipleship in practices of giving and receiving God's gift of peace in Jesus Christ, Yoder helps us see a church that has increasingly turned to a series of self-legitimizing strategies designed to ensure its ongoing survival. Theology thus becomes preoccupied with the organization and policing of time, with settlement and order, or what Yoder calls the attempt to move history in the right direction. Such an approach involves a denial of God, or at least signals an unwillingness to receive God's unpredictable future gifts.

Yoder's narration of the non-constantinian church, by contrast, involves an attempt to articulate a non-violent counter-epistemology. It names the kind of knowledge that is made possible because of the lives and deaths of the martyrs. In particular, the knowledge of martyrs it is not one that is preoccupied with epistemic justification, but is shaped by the epistemological virtues of patience and hope. It is an agonistic mode of knowledge that proceeds in fragments and ad hoc alliances, not in terms of the development of large-scale totalities. It is an epistemology that resists closure, refusing the lie of the total perspective and the search for a purified idiom of speech, recognizing that language about God is not finally limited to our current vocabularies. And finally, it is a counter-epistemology because it recognizes that theological knowledge is not a matter of disembodied beliefs, the truth of which needs to be secured through abstract rational analysis. Rather, the church resists the assimilation of knowledge and violence because it recognizes that Christian convictions are not possessions. In doing so, it operates as an

embodied way of knowing rooted in charitable practices of giving and receiving and especially in ongoing receptivity to life as a gift from God. It recognizes that the faith of the church becomes unintelligible when it is expressed in abstraction from a life of disciplined imitation of Christ. The church does not develop and seek to sustain a stable, settled body of knowledge, but engages in an agonizing and ongoing conversational exchange of difference which is truthful only when it proceeds in the absence of external guarantees. It cultivates a readiness for radical reformation and an appreciation of the sense in which it is always already involved in some form of failure.

Conclusion: An Unsettled Truth

In conclusion, let me return to the question of faith, freedom, and the idea of the university. Among other things, I suggested at the outset that the conception of agonistic, non-violent enquiry I speak of makes it possible to move beyond the standard impasse of faith and freedom. It sees faith neither as a rival source of knowledge by which to secure the necessity of truth, nor a threat to reason, but rather as a contingent and thus inherently vulnerable gift which makes possible a new way of understanding knowledge. Similarly it understands freedom neither as a procedural hedge that guarantees us protection against the “unfreedoms” imposed in the name of truth, nor as a threat to truth, but rather as the expression of the fragility and vulnerability of human reason. From the perspective of the contemporary university, with its preoccupation with technical efficiency and explanatory power or, failing that, its concern for the edification of the subject, I recognize that this cannot but seem odd and almost entirely out of place. But that is to say that the truth of Christ will be different and look different than other ways of knowing. There is an otherness to Christian ways of knowing that has everything to do with its orientation towards the other. What then of the university and other institutions that claim to be dedicated to the pursuit of truth? I confess that I am tempted to say that it should be a place where we are free to receive the gift of martyrs and, in so being, a place that is faithful to the truthful witness that they embody. And I am fortunate that Canadian Mennonite University, my academic home, strives to be just such a university. But at the same time, Christians are a diasporic people who know that they can be at home anywhere. So perhaps

what is most important is that Christians embody faithful practices of knowledge – to see the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity as epistemological virtues – so that they can operate anywhere precisely because they do not feel the need to control knowledge by fixing it in some settled somewhere called the university.

Notes

- 1 David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), p. 331.
- 2 Rowan Williams, *On Christian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 5.
- 3 Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 254. I owe this reference to Peter Dula.
- 4 A note on the themes of faith, freedom, and the university is on order at this point. This essay was originally presented at a conference entitled, “Faith, Freedom, and the Academy,” held at the University of Prince Edward Island, October 1-3, 2004. The overall theme of the conference was framed by the question of whether the university should be a place of “freedom *for* faith” or “freedom *from* faith.” Put in those terms, this essay is an attempt to say “both” and “neither” at the same time, and in so doing to rethink the university by way of an examination of the question of the truth to which it takes itself to be dedicated.
- 5 Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite*, p. 441.
- 6 Dionysius of Alexandria, “Extant Fragments,” trans. S. D. F. Salmond in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 6, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Dionysius the Great, Julius Africanus, Anatolius and Minor Writers, Methodius, Arnobius* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Press, 1995), p. 98.
- 7 See Thieleman J. van Braght, *The Bloody Theatre, or Martyr’s Mirror of the Defenseless Christians*, trans. Joseph F. Sohm (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1950), pp. 737-738.
- 8 Boutzon le Heu, as quoted in Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 104.
- 9 William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics, and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 58.
- 10 Menno Simons, as quoted by Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 220.
- 11 Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 7 (emphasis added).

- 12 Carole Straw, "Martyrdom in its Classical Context," in Margaret Cormack (ed.), *Sacrificing the Self: Perspectives on Martyrdom and Religion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 40.
- 13 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," in James F. Faubion (ed.), *Power, Essential Works of Foucault 1954 – 1984, Volume 3* (New York: The New Press, 1997), p. 2.
- 14 Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite*, p. 443.
- 15 Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, p. 132.
- 16 The reference is to John Howard Yoder, "The Otherness of the Church," in Michael G. Cartwright (ed.), *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecclesiological and Ecumenical* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 54-64.
- 17 Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," p. 3.
- 18 Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self," in Jeremy Carrette (ed.), *Religion and Culture*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 159.
- 19 Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," p. 8.
- 20 Michel Foucault, "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self," in Jeremy Carrette (ed.), *Religion and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 179. James Bernauer summarizes Foucault's transition from subject as foundation to self as sacrifice as follows: "the aim of modern knowledges and practices is to foster the emergence of a positive self in which one recognizes and is bound to the self-knowledge defined through the categories of the anthropological sciences. Modern self-appropriation is the discovery of and attachment to that truth, as the firm basis for encounter with the world. Foucault contrasted the modern vision with those Christian practices which invited a renunciation of the self who was articulated as true. In his view, the key to the Christian's experience of self-discovery and subjectivity was located in the model of *martyrdom*." James Bernauer, "Michel Foucault's Philosophy of Religion: an Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life," in James Bernauer and Jeremy Carrette (eds.), *Michel Foucault and Theology* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 90.
- 21 Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), pp. 15-16.
- 22 This way of putting it is that of John Milbank, whose work itself relies heavily on that of Rose. See esp. Milbank, "The Midwinter Sacrifice: A Sequel to 'Can Morality Be Christian?'," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 10:2 (1997): 13-38; and Milbank, "The Ethics of Self-Sacrifice," *First Things* 91 (March, 1999): 33-38.

- ²³ Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity*, as quoted in Rowan Williams, "Between Politics and Metaphysics: Reflections in the Wake of Gillian Rose," *Modern Theology* 11:1 (1995): 8-9.
- ²⁴ I owe the terminology of receptive generosity to Romand Coles. See Romand Coles, *Rethinking Generosity: Critical Theory and the Politics of Caritas* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); and *Beyond Gated Politics: Reflections for the Possibility of Democracy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).
- ²⁵ Gillian Rose, *Judaism and Modernity: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 4. It is important to recognize that the reference to "certainty" here is not to the familiar figure of Descartes, but the new ethics of Levinas and Derrida.
- ²⁶ Williams, "Between Politics and Metaphysics," p. 13.
- ²⁷ Gillian Rose, *The Broken Middle: Out of Our Ancient Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 263-264.