

“Is the Apocalypse Inevitable?: Native American Prophecy and the Mimetic Theory

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The theme of our Conference this year is Convergence or Catastrophe. It raises in spectral fashion the ominous situation in which we find ourselves as we open the 21st century since the advent of Christianity. It is not difficult to multiply examples of the dire straits in which we humans find ourselves, from proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, population estimates, resource shortages to global warming and environmental degradation, genocides and wars, more wars and rumors of wars.

This essay asks the question, ‘Is mimetic theory inherently pessimistic?’ by juxtaposing the apocalyptic element in mimetic theory and Native American prophetic traditions.¹ In other words, is the apocalypse inevitable? Such a stance could seem utterly pessimistic and without hope. Rene Girard has been accused of such pessimism. But is it pessimism to suggest that there is a convergence of negative and detrimental existential *realia* that require us as a species to either change or face the consequences of our behavior?

Robert Doran in a series of enlightening interviews with Rene in 2007 asked about the importance of turning points in human history, in particular, how Rene understood the events of September 11th 2001.

“**RD:** You yourself see 9/11 as a kind of rupture, a seminal event?”

RG: Yes, I see it as a seminal event, and it is fundamentally wrong to

¹ I am cognizant of and in harmony with George E. Tinker’s concern that Euro-Americans use Native traditions and philosophy without understanding the context in which they arise. [Spirit and Resistance](#) (Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 2004) .is an important warning about the grave possibility of misunderstanding, misappropriating and misrepresenting Native cultures. I will do my best to heed that warning.

minimize it today. The normal desire to be optimistic, to not see the uniqueness of our time from the point of view of violence, is the desire to grab any straw to make our time appear as the mere continuation of the violence of the twentieth century. I personally think that it represents a new dimension, a new world dimension. What communism was trying to do, to have a truly global war, has happened, and it is real now. To minimize 9/11 is to try to avoid thinking the way I do about the importance of this new dimension.”

What makes 9/11 such a profound event is that it is a religious event. According to Rene:

“9/11 is the beginning of this [new dimension], for in this attack technology was used not for humanistic ends but for radical, metaphysico-religious ends, which are not Christian. That is why it is such an amazing thing for me, because I’m used to considering religious forces and humanistic forces together, not as if one were true and the other false; and then suddenly archaic religion is coming back in an incredibly forceful way with Islam. Islam has many aspects of the Biblical religions minus the revelation of violence as bad, as not divine but human; it makes violence totally divine. This is why the opposition is more significant than with communism, which is a humanism. It is a bogus humanism, the last and most incredibly foolish form, which results in terror. But it is still humanism. And suddenly we’re back in religion, in archaic religion—but with modern weapons. What the world is waiting for is the moment when the Muslim radicals will somehow be able to use nuclear weapons.”²

It is this turn back to archaic religious responses that Rene sees as foreshadowing apocalypse.

RD: Then could one say that you are pessimistic in an a priori sense?

RG: I am pessimistic in the sense that everybody understands the word pessimism. But I’m optimistic in the sense that if one looks at the present world, it already verifies all the predictions. You can see the shape of the apocalypse increasing every day: the power capable of destroying the world, ever more lethal weapons, and the other threats that are multiplying under our eyes. We still believe that all of these problems are manageable by man, but if you take them all together you can see that this is not the case. They acquire a kind of supernatural value. Like the fundamentalists, many readers of the Gospels are reminded of the world situation when they read these apocalyptic chapters³.

² Robert Doran “Apocalyptic Thinking after 9/11: An Interview with Rene Girard” © Board of Regents, University of Wisconsin System, 2008 SubStance #115, Vol. 37, no. 1, 2007 Page 21

³ Ibid, 27.

Now I for one am not a Christian fundamentalist. I do not believe in the triumphalist stance of so-called Christian America, nor do I think there is some fire escape rapture scenario awaiting all true believers. But rejecting the apocalyptic projections of certain forms of the Christian tradition does not mean turning a blind eye to the realities that we face today, hoping in some old fashioned liberal naivete, that things will get better in the by and by.

Already in his 1978 Things Hidden, Rene saw the importance of apocalyptic as a tradition of warning to humans bent on violence and destruction. At a time when biblical scholars were questioning whether or not Jesus was an apocalypticist, Rene bluntly observed that

“We now have in our hands all the threads of the logic that transforms the announcement of the Kingdom into an announcement of the Apocalypse. If humans turn down the peace Jesus offers them – a peace not derived from violence, which by virtue of this fact, *passes understanding* - the effect of the gospel revelation will be made manifest through violence, through a sacrificial and cultural crisis whose radical effect must be unprecedented since there is no longer any sacralized victim to stand in the way of its consequences.”⁴

In 1982, Rene put it a bit more pointedly concluding his book on The Scapegoat by saying that “the time has come for us to forgive one another. If we wait any longer there will not be time enough.”⁵

What is troublesome for some is that it is precisely the proclamation of the demise of the ‘Generative Mimetic Scapegoating Mechanism’ (to use Robert Hamerton-Kelly’s designation) that is facilitating the breakthrough of this apocalypse. Things Hidden points in this direction, the chapter on the Paraclete in The Scapegoat confirms it, and in 1999, I See Satan Fall as Lightning cements this kerygmatic influence to our current crisis:

“The knowledge we have acquired about our violence, thanks to our religious tradition, does not put an end to scapegoating but weakens it enough to reduce

⁴ Things Hidden from the Foundation of the World (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 203.

⁵ The Scapegoat (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1986), 212. On the ‘kairos’ moment we are in and the need to forgive rather than retaliate see also Evolution and Conversion Rene Girard with Pierpaolo Antonello and Joao Cezar de Castro Roacha (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 225, 262.

its effectiveness more and more. This is the true reason why apocalyptic destruction threatens us, and this threat is not irrational at all.”⁶

Contradicting all forms of liberal theology and indeed even liberation theology, Rene in 2006 interviews with Pierpaolo Antonello and Joao Cezar de Castro Roacha will say that “the gospel does not provide a happy ending to our history.”⁷ Coupled with the Doran interview cited at the beginning of this essay it would appear that *the mimetic theory itself facilitates our current apocalyptic crisis in that it incorporates the unmasking of the victimage mechanism in the preaching of the passion of Jesus Christ.*

The most significant advance that mimetic theory makes to our definition of apocalypse, however, is that the consequences we face are not divine or transcendent in character but are absolutely anthropological. This is why Rene understands our current crisis as religious but not ‘theological’ in character, that is, the crisis we face is created by human/religious constructs not by the character or will of God. This insight vitiates all of the speculations that Christian apocalyptists proclaim grounded in their triumphalist Constantinian world-views.

There is an intellectual imperative regarding this perspective. As Rene notes,

“This is the reason why one has to see this process from the mimetic perspective and in Christian apocalyptic terms, in the sense that the more there is an opening in the world where ritual is dead, the more dangerous this world becomes. It has both positive aspects, in the sense there is less sacrifice, and negative aspects, in that there is an unleashing of mimetic rivalry.”⁸

It is in the anthropological rendering of apocalypse that we can find certain similarities with Native American prophetic traditions. In these apocalyptic prophecies the consequences that humanity faces are not to be seen as coordinated with an eschatological deity of wrath, but rather are recognized as the inevitable results of human self-destructive tendencies.

⁶ I See *Satan Fall as Lightning* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2001), 184.

⁷ *Evolution and Conversion*, 237.

⁸ *Evolution and Conversion*, 254.

Before citing a few examples from the American Southwest, it should be pointed out that Native prophecies are divided in two categories, those permitted to be revealed to the non-Native and those that are kept within the various tribes themselves, as they pertain only to the survival of the tribe. More so, Native prophecies are oral in character, not written down and so unlike Jewish or Christian prophetic traditions, one has to rely on testimony from an elder. Also unlike Jewish-Christian prophecy replete with successions of events and timelines, Native “prophecy reasserts the powers of Indian mythology and cosmology over mere chronology.”⁹

Willard Johnson observes that there are discernable periods to Native prophecy. Prior to the coming of white Europeans to American shores, there is no evidence of Native prophetic traditions. It is only after the encounter with Euro-American people that Native Prophecy, as we know it, emerges.¹⁰

The significant historical markers for Native prophecy are 1745-1890 when Natives were involved in a ‘religiously charged struggle for unity’ and prophets ‘led nativistic resistance movements that drew upon indigenous religious traditions and ritual forms to create intertribal movement...[opposing] parties who wished to accommodate the invaders.’¹¹ After the suppression of Native traditions, the demolition of tribal structures and affiliations at the end of the 19th century, Native prophecy went underground and did not emerge until the 1970’s during the dawning of the New Age movement. Johnson cites a Juaneno prophet, Ka’chi, who avers that “when a prophecy’s time comes and if its message refers to all humanity, it can be made public.” This is because “some will heed and believe” and “some from every race and nation will begin to retrace their footsteps and find the sacred path again.”¹²

A problem arises in that most of the post 1970’s native prophecies have been influenced (not always beneficially) by New Age speculations. So, there are very few prophecies that are authentically

⁹ Peter Nabakov, *Native American Testimony* rev. ed. (New York: Penguin, 1999), 469.

¹⁰ William Johnson, “Contemporary Native American Prophecy in Historical Perspective”, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 64/3, 575-611.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 577.

¹² *Ibid.* 579.

(uncorrupted) Native that have gone outside Native circles.¹³ I will use three examples from the American Southwest, Hopi, Zuni and Apache.

These Native prophecies stress four elements:

- 1) Ecological degradation and consequences
- 2) The problem of human violence
- 3) A time of turning
- 4) Hope for the coming age.

One of the best known prophecies is that of Hopi Thomas Banyacya, one of the few Hopis allowed to translate Native prophecies into English, who in 1976 addressed the U.N.-sponsored Habitat Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia. He offers this interpretation of Hopi prophecy:

“What have you, as individuals, as nations and as the world body been doing to take care of this Earth? In the Earth today, humans poison their own food, water and air with pollution. Many of us, including children, are left to starve. Many wars are still being fought. Greed and concern for material things is a common disease. In this western hemisphere, our homeland, many original native people are landless, homeless, starving and have no medical help.

The Hopi knew humans would develop many powerful technologies that would be abused. In this century, we have seen the First World War and the Second World War in which the predicted gourd of ashes, which you call the atomic bomb, fell from the sky with great destruction. Many thousands of people were destroyed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

For many years there has been great fear and danger of World War Three. The Hopi believe the Persian Gulf War was the beginning of World War Three but it was stopped and the worst weapons of destruction were not used. This is now a time to weigh the choices for our future. We do have a choice. If you, the nations of this Earth, create another great war, the Hopi believe we humans will burn ourselves to death with ashes. That's why the spiritual Elders stress strongly that the United Nations fully open the door for native spiritual leaders as soon as possible.”¹⁴

Frank Waters recorded the Hopi prophecy,

¹³ In addition to Johnson see also Jake Page [In the Hands of the Great Spirit: The 20,000 Year History of American Indians](#) (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 404ff.

¹⁴ This text can be found in many places and is easily referenced by a Google search.

“World War III will be started by those peoples who received the light [the divine wisdom or intelligence] in the other old countries [India, China, Egypt, Palestine, Africa]. The United States will be destroyed, land and people by atomic bombs and radioactivity. Those who take no part in the making of world division by ideology are ready to resume life in another world...the War will be a spiritual conflict with material matters. The emergence of the Fifth world has begun. It is being made by the humble people of little nations, tribes and racial minorities”¹⁵

A tradition from the Zuni tribe of New Mexico describes the mimetic character of the future crisis:

“Cities will progress and then decay to the ways of the lowest beings. Drinkers of dark liquids will come upon the land, speaking nonsense and filth. Then the end shall be nearer. Population will increase until the land can hold no more. The tribes of men will mix. The dark liquids they drink will cause the people to fight amongst themselves. Families will break up: father against children and the children against one another...our possessions will turn into beasts and devour us whole. If not, there will be an odor from gases, which will fill the air we breathe and the end for us shall come. But the people themselves will bring upon themselves what they receive. From what has resulted, time alone will tell us what the future holds for us.”¹⁶

My third example comes from a most unusual source, an Apache scout/shaman who lived from about 1880-1970. Stalking Wolf was trained in an elite medicine society and had virtually no contact with the ‘Wasichus’ (white Euro-Americans, the term is Sioux) until after 1930. His apocalyptic vision stems from before this time, most likely between 1925-1930. Tom Brown Jr. recorded it in 1962.¹⁷

In this vision Stalking Wolf saw a series of signs that would precede the changing of the ages. The first sign is that of famine.

“The world will one day look upon all of this with horror and will blame the famine on the weather and the Earth. This will be the first warning to the world that man

¹⁵ Frank Waters, *Book of the Hopi* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 334.

¹⁶ Nabakov, 470, citing from *The Zunis: Self Portrayals* by the Zuni People (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972)

¹⁷ All citations of Stalking Wolf’s prophecies are taken from Tom Brown Jr., *The Quest* (Berkeley Trade, 2000). For more information on Stalking Wolf and my relation to his tradition I refer the reader to my essay “Ecospirituality” presented at COV&R 2004. It can be accessed at www.preachingpeace.org. I note in that essay that there are currently no Euro-American Christian theologians seeking to integrate the Native and Christian traditions. Dr. Terry LeBlanc (Micmaq) in a June 11th 2008 conversation at Princeton University confirmed this suspicion.

cannot live beyond the laws of Creation, nor can he fight Nature. If the world sees that it is to blame for this famine, this senseless starvation, then a great lesson will be learned. But I am afraid that the world will not blame itself but that the blame will be placed on Nature. There will come starvation before and after this starvation, but none will capture the attention of the world with such impact as does this one.”

According to his interpreter, Tom Brown Jr., the first sign was ‘fulfilled’ by the great famine in Africa in the 1970’s. A second sign occurs

“during the years of the famine, the first sign, that man will be plagued by a disease, a disease that will sweep the land and terrorize the masses. The doctors (white coats) will have no answers for the people and a great cry will arise across the land. The disease will be born of monkeys, drugs, and sex. It will destroy man from inside, making common sickness a killing disease.”

It is not difficult to see a possible reference to HIV/AIDS here. A third sign:

Looking skyward, the sun seemed to be larger and more intense; no birds or clouds could be seen; and the air seemed thicker still. It was then that the sky seemed to surge and huge holes began to appear. The holes tore with a resounding, thunderous sound, and the very Earth, rocks, and soil shook.

The skin of the sky seemed to be torn open like a series of gaping wounds, and through these wounds seeped a liquid that seemed like the oozing of an infection, a great sea of floating garbage, oil, and dead fish. It was through one of these wounds that Grandfather saw the floating bodies of dolphins, accompanied by tremendous upheavals of the Earth and of violent storms.”

This seems to be a reference to the destruction of Earth’s atmosphere and the ozone layer accompanied by the destruction of the earth’s seas. The fourth sign of the impending apocalypse is cosmological in character. Possible interpretations might include extraordinary volcanic eruption or fallout from a nuclear war.

“The night of the bleeding stars... will become known throughout the world, for the sky in all lands will be red with the blood of the sky, day and night. It is then, with this sign of the third probable future, that there is no longer hope. Life on the Earth as humans have lived it will come to an end, and there can be no turning back, physically or spiritually. It is then, if things are not changed, that humanity will surely know the destruction of the Earth is at hand.”

What is most intriguing about these Native prophecies is that in spite of the Christian influence on Native prophetic traditions since 1745, there is no trace of a violent god such as one sees in contemporary Christian fundamentalist interpretation of biblical prophecy. In every case that I have investigated, apocalyptic consequences are strictly anthropological. This, I think is of signal importance. It suggests that the Girardian reading of Christian apocalypse as an anthropological datum or religious phenomenon is not isolated.

Biblical and theological studies also reflect this shift in the numerous books on 'empire' that have come out in recent years.¹⁸ These studies read the New Testament, particularly apocalyptic as standing against the phenomenon of Empire, that is, the social-religious world structured on violence, dominion and oppression. Empire has both physical (social) and a spiritual (religious) dimensions. New Testament writers, primarily Paul, use language that reflects both sides of this phenomenon.

What Scripture calls 'the principalities and powers' comes under the rubrics 'greed, jealousy, or evil inclinations/spirits' in Native prophecy. In either case, both traditions refer to the 'bent' ways we humans structure our relationships, to the Creator, the creation and one another. Far from creating a colonial Christian culture (as Christian missionaries to the American Indians sought to do by 'killing the Indian in the child'), the gospel of peace deconstructs the 'bent' ways of all culture, including the civil religion of the United States, so-called 'American Christianity.' In the Doran interview Girard says,

Those who say that Christianity is anarchistic are somewhat right. The Christians are destroying the powers of this world, in the sense that they are destroying the legitimacy of all violence. From the point of view of the State, Christianity is a

¹⁸ A seminal prescient work is a commentary on the Apocalypse of John by William Stringfellow, An Ethic for Christians and other Aliens in a Strange Land (Waco: Word, 1973). Three contemporary examples of exegesis would include Pablo Richard, Apocalypse (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2005), Ted Grimsrud, Triumph of the Lamb (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1987) and Richard Horsley, Paul and Empire (Harrisburg: Trinity, 1997). Theological titles would include Joerg Rieger, Christ and Empire: From Paul to Postcolonial Times (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, The Power of the Word Scripture and the Rhetoric of Empire (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007); Robert Jewett, Mission and Menace: Four centuries of American Religious Zeal (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008).

force of anarchy. Anytime it recaptures its old spiritual strength, this reappears in a way¹⁹.

Interestingly, post-1970 Native prophecies contain the same list of problems identified by Girard in the Doran interview and Evolution and Conversion. Many of these are reflected in (or from?) the gospel apocalypses (Mark 13, Luke 21, Matthew 24-25). Common apocalyptic features include:

- ❑ Ecological degradation and it's potential effects
- ❑ Conflict/war around the world
- ❑ Destructive weapon technologies
- ❑ Overpopulation
- ❑ Diminishing resources (gas, water, air)
- ❑ Unstable economies
- ❑ Religious conflicts (internal and external)

So we might, with Rene, ask the question, are we to understand the Jewish- Christian apocalyptic tradition as depicting a linear, chronological sequence of events or a conflict within religious/spiritual traditions?²⁰ In this, both Rene Girard and Native prophetic traditions argue for the latter. This suggests that a reading of apocalypse as a transcendent otherworldly reality is not the best or most sufficient reading. It is our collective response to these crises that will determine just how close we get to apocalypse *by the way we read apocalypse*. Girard observes, "Not too long ago people would have had a Christian reaction to 9/11. Now they have an archaic reaction, which does not bode well for the future."²¹

It may well be that Native prophetic traditions from 1745 to the present reflect the influence of the Biblical prophetic tradition. If so, it shows that the reading of (at least) New Testament apocalyptic as anthropological in perspective is a viable alternative to transcendental violent readings. I would suggest that both Girard (culturally) and

¹⁹ Doran Interview, 25.

²⁰ My friend Jonathan Sauder asks, "Can we say that the crisis is between divergent hermeneutics *within* each religious tradition?" I think this is more to the point. Our current crisis then is not between Islam and Christianity as much as it is between 'the violent deities' of jihadist Islam and Christendom (as a social-ecclesial matrix).

²¹ Doran Interview, 25.

Native American prophetic traditions (orally, through evangelism) conceive their 'apocalyptic' scenarios under Biblical influence.

Osage Native Robert Allen Warrior, contrasts the neo-colonial perspective of reading the Bible from a position of power with a Native reading 'from below.' He argues that, "as long as people believe in the Yahweh of deliverance, the world will not be safe from Yahweh the conqueror."²² The importance of this cannot be gainsaid. We can apply the rejection of a triumphalist rendering of the Exodus by R.A. Warrior to the modern dispensationalist transcendent violent rendering of apocalyptic texts. Any reading of a text from a position of power is *ipso facto* colonialist (or, if Christian, Constantinian). In other words, to read apocalyptic texts as transcendent is to read them from the perspective of archaic religion.

The Native Americans were employing a 'reading from below' from the perspective of the persecuted and scapegoated long before it was fashionable to do so. The difference is that Native cosmology sees the relation of history to apocalypse within the framework of a spiraling-forward cycle, thus according to some traditions we are at the end of one age (the Fourth) and the dawning of the next age (the Fifth) of humanity. For Girard, as a Roman Catholic Christian, mimetic crises also come and go (are transitioned through), but there remains the possibility of an extinction of humanity because of our technological ability to destroy the world. But Rene is not without hope, hope that we can recognize our enchantment by violence and reject its spell in favor of a new orientation of non-retribution grounded in the coming Kingdom of God, even as Jesus did.

Both Native prophetic traditions and the 'eschatology' of the mimetic theory as deployed by Rene thus are oriented in the final analysis to hope. It is the hope that the Creator will make all things new and in

²² Robert Allen Warrior, "A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys and Indians," in *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R. S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1991, 1995), 284. I am indebted to Ray Gingerich "Was Yoder's God a Warrior God" *Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July 2003 for bringing this book to my attention. From a Christian perspective Gingerich goes on to add, "unless Yahweh is perceived and worshipped as the nonviolent deliverer, even as is Jesus." Warrior, following narrative hermeneutics (Childs, Lindbeck, Hauerwas) notes that while the history behind the text may be different than the biblical narrative, popular reading of the Bible only knows the narrative. From the perspective of mimetic theory, this is a 'mythic' reading of the text.

right relationship, all creation including the human species. For the Native this call to conversion has two aspects, a deep commitment to be a good steward of Earth and the desire to relate to a loving Creator. Rene would also affirm these two desires but adds a third, the renunciation of violence.

The renunciation of violence is grounded not simply in Jesus (or some generalized form of his ethic), but also in the anti-sacrificial project of Jesus' Scriptures. Like the Hopi, Girardian eschatology is not pie in the sky by and by but is grounded in real history, actual human interactions, the entire earthly warp and woof of life.

Now if mimetic theory only asserts that mimesis and violence lead to apocalypse when unchecked and that the preaching of the gospel (ο κατεχον) leads to the breakdown of the mechanism, one could assert that it is inherently pessimistic. Thankfully there is a But. That 'but' is the call to conversion or repentance.

The call to conversion is not directed by 'true believers' to non-believers in either Native or Girardian apocalyptic scenarios, the call to conversion is for every religious tradition to find within itself the constructive tools to deconstruct itself in the light of the possibility that God, the Great Mystery, the Creator of all things, is loving and forgiving, reconciling and peacemaking, giver of Life; rather than bringer of both Life and death, existing in a perpetual Janus faced state. The warning part of the tradition is frightening but the belief in the continuation of life grounded in a God of Life gives courage and elicits gratitude. I think, ultimately, both Rene Girard and most aboriginals could affirm this.

Thus, there is a possible similarity by which both Native and Christian theological traditions have been deconstructed by the gospel. For me, this similarity, this double testimony, of the anthropologizing of the apocalyptic scenario, bears witness to what my wife Lorri calls 'compassionate eschatology.' It understands the Creator to be ever drawing us toward life-giving behaviors.

"American Indian spirituality sees as its fundamental goal the achievement of harmony and balance in all of creation. We also see the hegemony of the

Mystery (God?) in the whole of existence, but we see ourselves as *participants* in that whole, doing our best to help maintain harmony and balance.

While acknowledging that our spirituality is enormously complex in this regard, it must suffice in this context to say that we are pressed by our spirituality to understand the *basileia* as the place that encompasses the entirety of the real world, hence, creation. Thus, no one and nothing can be left out of the *basileia*. In the spirit of the prayer '*mitakune ouyasin,*' we all belong."²³

Neither Natives nor Girard are without hope. How then might we understand our current crisis? It is time for us to be realistic about what we are seeing. In the current popular Christian interpretation of our situation what we see is a modern turn back to the past, in fact, way back to the dim mists of our prehistory. The sacrificial response and the call to arms by many persons of many faiths in the United States after 9/11 is a cultural devolution. We have regressed as a species, at the very least, in our hermeneutics.

What ultimately happens depends on how we respond. The call to conversion is not from one religion to another, for religion is the problem not the solution. Like Saul on the road to Damascus²⁴, all of us, particularly those of us whose background is in one of the major monotheistic religions, must answer the question "Why are you persecuting me?" We are called to convert from violence to peacemaking and forgiveness. To be realistic about our current predicament ought to be motivation for those of us who use the mimetic theory to preach and teach with even more vigor and passion.

May it be given to us to hear the life-giving hope of the Way of Peace and so be children of the earth, children of the Creator.

²³ Tinker, op. cit. 112. "Tink" is a member of the Osage Nation and teaches at Iliff School of Theology.

²⁴ Acts 9:1-19. Thanks to Jonathan Sauder, Lorri Hardin, Ted Grimsrud, Tony Bartlett, Ron Vogt and John Stoner who made valuable suggestions to drafts of this essay.