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(169) SACRIFICE IN RELIETION, SACRIFICE IN FAITH.

THE PARACLETE

For Andrew

Introductory remark

In the paper very complicated realities are only schematically indicated. If it looks worthwhile it might be necessary to elaborate it much further. Before I do, however, I would like to have reactions which eventually make it clear that it is useful to write another paper.

1. SACRIFICE IN RELIGION

1.1 A sacrifice in religion always is a victim of others, who or which, in whose/its very victimising, gives peace to these others, the victimizers.

1.2 A sacrifice is a sacrifice when:

1.2.1 There is a cultural situation, a macro or a micro, in which there are difficulties, a danger to the life of the group involved, which only can be solved by the old, common cultural means, a sacrifice. There is an agreement that the sacrifice is the cause of the difficulties and by driving him/her/it our together peace is restored.

1.2.2 This sacrifice is finally randomly chosen, even if rituals try to hide that fact. The fact that it is a random sacrifice is hidden both for the sacrificers and for the sacrifice her/him/itself. The sacrifice, if it is a human being, (finally) agrees to be sacrificed, accepts "the guilt", the responsibility for the difficulties, and agrees to be the victim, to be sacrificed.

1.3 Of course there is an endless long development, from the beginning of culture until today, with as a result that the own character of the sacrifice is more and more hidden. Finally however there is a straight line from the origins of sacrifice to every sacrifice of nowadays life. Important changes are:

1.3.1 There is not one sacrifice, for the time being, for a whole group of tribe, living its own life amidst of the world. There are endless many, all over the world, peoples, groups, individual persons. In the same time every group and even every person has endless many scapegoats.

1.3.2 There is not any longer a clear distinction between sacrificers and sacrificed generally. Every sacrificer can become, can be or is a sacrifice in other situations and the other way round.

1.3.3 Although still vast quantities of scapegoats still are killed (in famines, in wars, on the roads, in hospitals, in criminal activities, as punishment etc), many of them remain alive amidst of the scapegoaters, making in different manners life for them very difficult and neurotic.

1.3.4 Although we perceive more and more clear what sacrifices, what scapegoats are, see and condemn the scapegoating of others, we very often still are not conscious of our own scapegoating, of our sacrificing, with as a result that we are not aware of them as scapegoats and only in many manners try to “care” for them as far as they stay alive.

1.3.5 Thus our scapegoats, the sacrifices of modern culture, being in the mimesis with us, still accept their guild. They still accept their responsibility for the chaos in the life of those who scapegoat them and their task to restore order by being scapegoated.

1.3.6 In this scapegoat mechanism we use all the old and new devices in order to scapegoat, to prevent that we will be scapegoated ourselves and to accept being the scapegoat. We try to understand our opponent, her/his weaknesses and strengths, we are mind-reading, we seek allies, we are cruel, sadistic. We are, as scapegoats, filled with guilt feelings (which, of course, is not the same as guilt), we are depressed, masochistic, we accuse ourselves of the crimes and faults our scapegoaters are accusing us of.

1.4 Gifts had and have the same character as sacrifices. They are finally, be it eventually ritually, finally randomly chosen. They are used in order to secure peace between the giver and the receiver, They take, humans and non-humans, their role upon them, The only difference is that these sacrifices, generally, are not killed or destroyed, although this too happens till this very day. They are given away to others, in order that these others have them, use them in their manner. These others represent (possible) violence, and thus the sacred. This is exactly the reason that these gifts are made. Thus these others finally represent the gods, embodiments of the sacred, to whom all sacrifices finally are directed, as repetitions of the original happening in which violence was overcome and culture was founded.

2. SACRIFICE IN FAITH

In the faith the character of the sacrificial victim, the being of this victim, is turned upside down, as generally is the case with every reality which is touched by the Gospel. The “mob”, in all its very different forms, remains the same. They still seek to restore order at the cost of the sacrifice. The sacrifice however becomes another person.

2.1 Being in the faith, the sacrifice does not take upon her/himself the guilt for the upheaval, which provokes her/his victimising. She/he stays free of it. In this freedom the sacrifice knows, that the persecution of the crowd is a cultural necessity, that this crowd does not know what it is doing (cf. Luke 23, 34). He/she understands the motives of the “crowd”, accepts that they are in objective hypocrisy and thus “in good faith”. She/he knows them, because they know and understand their own heart. In this freedom he/she knows as well that remaining in this freedom, in the same time accepting the persecution as a ritual expression of a culture in difficulties, he/she might be called to follow Christ until the very end, by being tortured, physically and physically, by being murdered. If so, then the sacrifice suffers and dies in freedom in the fellowship of Christ. This fellowship means to suffer the same fate as he did. For the mob he too was a designated victim, with all the signs of being a very suited sacrifice. In fact however he was, for culture, a negative sacrifice, not restoring culture, but showing, finally, its impossibility. Being the negative sacrifice for culture, not suited for its job but quite the reverse, he became the real sacrifice for the Kingdom.

2.2 By remaining free the sacrifice breaks the mechanisms of culture, because for them, in order that they achieve their goals, it is necessary that the victim agrees with her/his victimising. The whole mechanism only works when all, the victim included, agree that the latter is guilty. By remaining free, free of the mimesis of desire of the persecuting crowd, the mechanism which keeps culture going is broken, because the unanimity is broken. The mechanism does not any long function. The persecutors are frustrated. What they do is idle, illusive. They cannot reach their goal.

2.3 In this manner the sacrifice becomes an existential challenge for the persecutors. A choice becomes unavoidable for them. They can accept that the sacrifice is not guilty, and that, consequently, it was simply wrong what they were doing. They can perceive that the mechanisms of culture do not work any longer, that they fail. In both cases they have to seek other ways. Or they push aside the dawning insight. They persecute with more intensity than ever, in order to keep culture going on in the old manner,

2.4 Jesus is the central <insert Greek chars here> for culture. He is the reality who time and again compels to chose: Either to leave the mechanisms of culture, finally the mimesis of desire behind us, to follow this man who gives the other possibility to live; or to stay in the old ways, more and more sacrificing, as one the Aztekes did. Everybody who follows Christ and remains free in persecution, challenges the cultural reality as Christ did and is, as he was and is, a <some text>, the possibility to make the final choice, for this world.

2.5 Following Christ means to be this sacrifice. A sacrifice who no longer agrees with the persecutors, that she/he is specifically guilty of the chaos in the community but who, instead of, belies the cultural presuppositions of sacrificing, who shows, in her/his freedom, the lie of culture, the impossibility to go on in the same manner and the way to another reality.

2.6 Consequently in the faith the character of the gift changes as wholly as the character of sacrifice does. Gifts are not any longer necessarily given, "sacrifices" for the gods to put them at peace, in order to keep or restore peace in culture. Gifts are given, out of the own abundance of peace, of freedom, thus spreading peace over the world, the peace which is already given in the reality of the sacrifice of Christ. Cf. Matth. 5, 38 – 42.

3. THE PARACLETE

3.1 The Paraclete, <some text> (cf John 14 – 16), is the person who is called in order to help, to assist. It is the person who pleads to God for the followers of Christ not to leave them alone. In most translations "the paraclete" is translated with: The comforter. It is the person who acts in favour of another, of the persecuted.

3.2 When is it necessary that he does so? It is exactly in the situation in which a person is scapegoated, in which we run the risk to be scapegoated or in fact already are. In that situation, if we were left alone, we would necessarily be sacrifices in the old, cultural sense. Left alone we would finally agree with our persecutors, we would accept the responsibility, the guilt for the difficulties in culture. We would make it possible that for a time culture goes on again in its old manner. Finally we would senselessly suffer and perish, as all the sacrifices did before us.

3.3 Being scapegoated always means to be alone. In the scapegoating-situation always and again are the many against the one or an overwhelming big crowd against a small group. In that situation the paraclete is promised if we ask for his coming. The paraclete delivers us from this being along. He brings us in the communion with the risen Christ, with God. He brings us into the mimesis with Christ who withstood, being in the relationship with

his Father, the power of the mimesis of desire in his relationship with the crowd. The first relationship did away with the second one. Being in the mimesis with him, we too can stay free of the accusations. We do not fight against them, rivalling and consequently losing. We know that our persecutors don't know what they are doing. We suffer and, eventually, die as free persons, thus overcoming the world, i.e. culture. The paraclete is the Spirit, who brings us together with Christ. When he is with us, we are not any longer scapegoats in the old meaning. We become sacrifices in the new sense, as Jesus was one. We become ourselves <some text>, scandals, realities outside of culture, because of which culture has to chose, either for life or for the mimesis of desire and thus death.

3.4 Just because all this is true, the truth, the paraclete in fact brings us into the reality of mimesis outside of desire. Following Christ in his suffering is the other side of living with him his life. We are, delivered from the mimesis of desire, free to go our way, through this world to the Kingdom. We have the eyes we need in order to be able to see where Christ goes and what he wishes from us. We can go carefree, in abundance, as he promises us, but with persecutions (Marc 10, 30 parr.) They necessarily belong together. Partaking in Jesus' freedom, in his abundance, we because of that very reality are <some text>, scandals, who eventually will be persecuted.

Hengelo, 20.06.94

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