

Towards Reconciliation

Understanding Violence and the Sacred After René Girard

by Paul Gifford

“Paul Gifford’s book offers clarity and hope... A wonderfully lucid exploration of the dark side of human civilisation, this is also a challenge to confront the lure of sacred violence while we have time.”

- Angela Tilby, Canon Emeritus of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford and Canon of Honour of Portsmouth Cathedral

About the Book

Why do humans sacralise the causes for which they fight? Who will decipher for us the enigma of ‘sacred violence’? Paul Gifford shows that the culture theorist and fundamental anthropologist René Girard has in fact decoded the obscurely ‘foundational’ complicity between violence and the sacred, showing why it is everybody’s problem and the Problem of Everybody.

Girard’s mimetic theory, especially his neglected writings on biblical texts, can be read as an anthropological argument continuous with Darwin, shedding formidable new light to a vast array of dark and knotted things: from the functioning of the world’s oldest temple to today’s terrorist violence, from the Cross of Christ to the Good Friday Agreement. . . Such insights illuminate superbly (‘from below’) the ways of creation, revelation, redemption – which is to say, ultimately, the Christian enterprise and vocation of Reconciliation.

Here is a novel and exciting resource for scanning the hidden ‘sacrificial’ logic that still secretly shapes cultural, social, and political life today. Girard puts us ahead of the game in the key dialogues required if we are to avoid auto-generated apocalypses of human violence in the world of tomorrow.

Key Sales Points

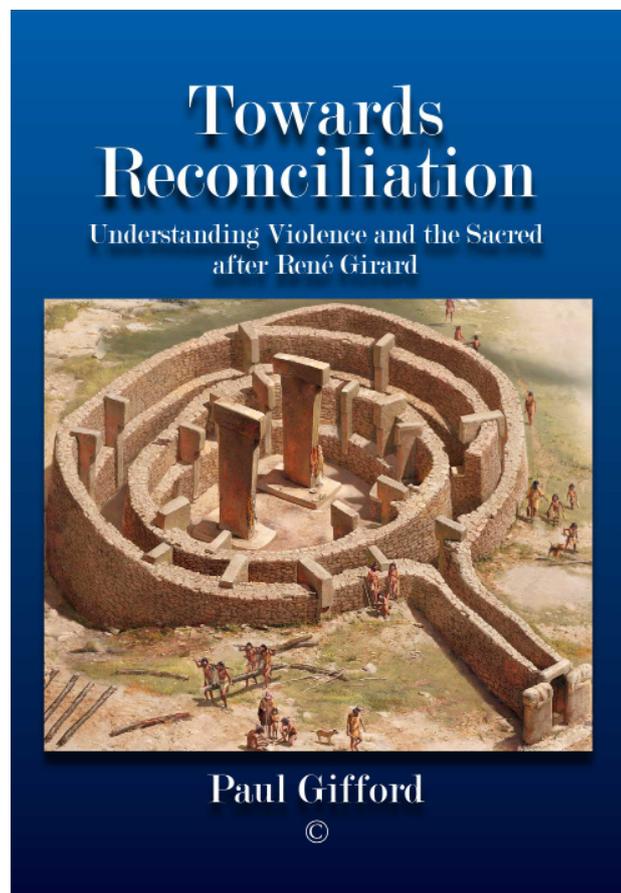
- One of the first interrogations of the legacy of one of the foremost cultural theorists of the last century.
- A timely exploration of violence and the sacred in the context of a rising tide of religious fundamentalism.
- Clear, digestible and comprehensive overview of René Girard’s thought, and how to apply his insights.

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About the Author

Paul Gifford is Buchanan Professor of French (emeritus) and Director of the Institute of Cultural Identity Studies, at the University of St Andrews. He has also taught at the Universities of Toulouse, Ulster, Western Ontario and Stanford Ca. He knew and worked with René Girard: as Invited Scholar at Stanford University (2007), and as elected Visiting Research Fellow of the Girardian Foundation Imitatio (2009-12).

Audience: Research & Scholarly
BIC Category: HPQ
BISAC Category: PHI019000
Publication date: 26/03/2020 (HB) 24/09/2020 (PB)
156x234 mm, 256pp

HB 9780227177082 £65.00/ \$98.00 / €97.50
PB 9780227177075 £20.00/\$30.00/€30.00
PDF 9780227907092 £61.50/\$123.00/€92.25*
ePub 9780227907108 £46.15/\$92.30/€69.25*
Kindle 9780227907115 £46.15/\$92.30/€69.25*

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