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Paper Proposal: *Transforming Violence*  
Propose Title: TBD

In his book *The Joy of Being Wrong*, James Alison follows the Girardian theory of mimetic desire in arguing that the resurrection of Christ is the definitive event in the light of which the doctrine of Original Sin may be constructed. In the resurrection, we experience God as victim of humanity's acquisitive, rivalistic mimesis come back to us as forgiveness. The false peace that follows the victimage mechanism that is always and everywhere present in human history is subverted in the peace of the one whose original plan for human beings was and is distorted through the appropriation of identities that should be received gratuitously. The resurrection also discloses the illusion of the persecutors that present the victimage mechanism as that which is necessary for the production and maintenance of peace. The resurrection reveals that God is not involved in the violence and that the splendor of the original plan for humanity is held within God's creative beneficent mimesis that was (and still is) meant to bring human being along into the full possession of divine life.

Alison's theology of creation, developed in light of the resurrection event, appears at odds, at least initially, with the evolutionary process of hominization that he outlines in heavily borrowed form from Girard. Here, in Alison's work, we are presented with the difficult and timely paradox of evolution that passes through violence to produce human being and a Christian theology of creation that is a thoroughgoing expression of the personal, immediate, and pacific relationship of God in bringing into being each human person.

The paper I propose will attempt to wrestle with this paradox with the hope of highlighting a subtle but critical problematic for Christian theologians after Darwin. Ultimately, the question this paper will explore is 'What makes us human?' In the evolutionary view of mimetic desire that Alison first presents, it appears that the rupture between proto-human and human is defined by victimization, while culture develops around the cadaver. In his theology of creation, what is essential to human beings is God's calling us into being through the order of mimetic desire for the sake of participation in divine life.