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Bind Us Together: Repentance, Ugandan Martyrs, and Christian Unity

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Abstract

Bind Us Together argues that in naming both the Anglican and Catholic Ugandans killed in the mid 1880s as "martyrs" a visible unity is implied that is useful in contemporary ecumenical theology. By recounting the story of the Ugandan martyrs told through both Catholic and Protestant sources, I am able to perform the Christian unity that I am arguing for. I also engage historical and theological obstacles to my argument. The historical obstacle is brought about by the mutual condemnation of both Catholic and Protestant martytrs by each side during the 16th century. The theological obstacle is the work of Ephraim Radner. Being indebted to Radner's understanding of repentance, I use John Paul II to overcome both of these obstacles. I conclude by discussing more explicitly the connections between the Ugandan martyrs and church unity showing that these martyrs provide Christians with language to speak intelligibly about Christian unity today.

Keywords

Ecumenism, Martyrdom, Ecclesiology, Ephraim Radner.

> Christ calls all his disciples to unity . . . believers in Christ, united in following in the footsteps of the martyrs, cannot remain divided. If they wish truly and effectively to oppose the world's tendency to reduce to powerlessness the Mystery of Redemption, they must profess together the same truth about the Cross. The Cross!
>
> *–John Paul II*
> *Ut Unum Sint,* § *1*

Briefly stated, this essay is an attempt to make it difficult for Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, to deny that the lives of the Ugandans killed in the mid 1880s are unequivocally worthy of the title "martyr" and that this implies a form of visible unity. Furthermore,

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this essay is an attempt to show, through the Ugandan martyrs of 1886, that truthful Christian speech about Church unity is possible, and the language they offer us is helpful for current ecumenism.

I begin with a narration of the life and death of these Ugandans that provides the language and grammar by which the rest of the essay is conducted. In my "showing," I do not stipulate "criteria" for visible unity as this runs the risk of turning prudential (cultural-linguistic) judgments into mere *techne* and succumbs to the temptation to use abstract categories such as "love" and "justice" instead of attending to particular lives.[1] To pose my thesis as a question, "How can Christians on both sides of the ecclesial divide, I as a Lutheran and the late John Paul II, agree to grant that the deaths of some Christians, particularly the Ugandan martyrs—both Protestants and Catholics—are worthy of the name 'martyr' despite the fact that Christians inhabit a divided Church in which believers on both sides have historically refused the title 'martyr' to each other?" I am not claiming that martyrdom *qua* martyrdom is a legitimate theological "category" for ecumenism; rather I am only arguing that the Catholic and Protestant Ugandan lives I remember below ought be called "martyrs" and, therefore, they offer a visible form of unity in a divided Church.

My argument has three parts. The first part is my narration of the Ugandans' martyrdom. Admittedly, there are necessarily two strands of my argument taking place in this first part, and both are required for my account to "work." The first strand is that the martyrs offer us language today to speak of Christian unity. I do not explicitly speak "about" language for this can easily presume a kind of "meta-linguistic" perspective I find problematic. Rather, this first part (and the first strand) is performative: my performance or narration of the Ugandan martyrs is my argument. The second and more subtle strand can be followed with attention to my prose in dialogue with my footnotes, but I do offer some further analysis in the final section.

The second part of my argument attends to two impasses that threaten to render my account of naming the Ugandans "martyrs" impossible. The first impasse is historical and brought about by the Reformation and sixteenth century historical figures' inability to name as "martyrs" religious deaths on the other side of the divided Church. The second impasse is theological and brought forth from the work Ephraim Radner. As will become obvious, I am deeply indebted to Radner's treatment of the divided Church and his call for repentance. However, I attempt to show that he leaves room for martyrdom to do ecumenical work, while I also try to open more space within his argument. In the end, I use John Paul II's work as the main impetus that can move the Church beyond these impasses, at least so I argue.

[1] See William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 58–70.

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Finally, I more explicitly address how the lives of the Ugandan martyrs help Christians speak about ecclesial unity through repentance, prayer, and the simple presence of their story.

Performing Unity: The Anglican and Catholic Ugandan "Martyrs"

My account of the Ugandan martyrs must begin with some preliminary remarks and a brief historical introduction. First, my narration will focus on how the Protestant and Catholic Christians challenged the power structures of the Bugandan culture because of their faith.[2] In other words, I will draw attention to the "politics" of their faith and how it was perceived by those in the political power structures of the Bugandan kingdom, especially the kabaka (king of the Buganda). I intend that my narration will echo the *political* deaths of Jesus and early martyrs. Also, since much of the literature on all of the Ugandan martyrs lacks this explicit political attention, I hope my analysis will contribute to filling this gap. Second, it is important at the outset to realize that the persecution of Christians in Uganda was not the norm.[3] There were relatively few Christians actually killed for religious reasons compared to the large number of Christian Baganda. John Faupel estimates that a total of approximately one hundred were killed in the violence of the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Of these, only forty-six can be confirmed to have been Christians.[4] Third, all of the martyrs were Bugandan natives converted through the missionary efforts of British Anglicans and French Catholics. Thus, their lives and deaths were embedded from start to finish in a culture they were familiar with and understood; they were not killed due to a lack of cultural knowledge or a "foreigner's mistake." Fourth, my attention will focus on those martyred on June 3, 1886 at Namugongo where both Protestants and Catholics were burned to death over the same pyre. I also briefly recount Joseph Mukasa's death. He was an influential Catholic Christian in a position of power in Mwanga's court. My narration is guided by theological concerns while relying on historical events; I have tried to be accurate with my recounting of the historical facts in such a way that historians would be satisfied. However, my account is not a summary of all those killed for their

[2] "Buganda" is the historical name of the nation-state now known as "Uganda." Though it runs the risk of anachronism, I use these terms interchangeably.

[3] An account to balance the literature on the martyrs that implies that violence was widespread against all Christians is given by J. A. Rowe "The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court: A Reassessment of this Episode in Buganda History," *The Journal of African History* 5, no. 1 (1964): 55–72.

[4] John Faupel, *African Holocaust: The Story of the Uganda Martyrs* (New York: P. J. Kenedey & Sons, 1962), 217; J. A. Rowe, "The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court," 57–58 seems to find Faupel's estimate reasonable. Faupel's work is a revision of an earlier account of the martyrs correcting mistakes and adding clarification. The early account was J. P. Thoonen, *Black Martyrs* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1941).

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faith in Buganda, but a particular narration used to argue a particular theological point.

I will begin with some brief, but important, historical notes. The first missionaries arrived in the Kingdom of Buganda in 1877, but significant missions work began the following year.[5] The Anglicans with the Church Missionary Society (Alexander Mackay will receive the majority of my focus on Protestant ministry) were the first to arrive in Buganda, while the Catholic White Fathers (Father Pere Lourdel is the most prominent) from France arrived in February of 1879.[6] Faupel's account of the Anglican missionaries is mixed, often containing areas of dispute and distrust between the Catholic and Protestant missionaries. This is not surprising. After all, Faupel wrote his account before the completion of the Second Vatican Council. Faupel's account reliably portrays the tensions between the Anglicans and Catholics. Likewise, Anglican missionary Alexander Mackey recounts tensions with the Catholics in his journal entries.[7] Despite the impression that these tensions underscore the Protestant and Catholic divide, these tensions bolster my argument precisely because missionaries claim that the tensions were never learned by the Baganda.[8] This raises an interesting question: How could the natives who converted to Christianity end up dying on the same fire for the cause of Christ in the midst of the Christian factions of Buganda? Perhaps the martyrs' lives offer Christians hope as we live and suffer the effects of a divided Church; hope that even within a divided Church conversion and, therefore, unity is a possibility.

Training for Martyrdom

In her intriguing essay "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," Maureen Tilley shows how martyrs in the early church underwent ascetic training to prepare for martyrdom.[9] Future martyrs used fasting and bodily pain to reconfigure the meaning of "pain" in order to build perseverance in face of immanent persecution. Of course, prayer reinforced these other practices. Furthermore, their training actually taught them that the torture and punishment of

[5] Faupel, *African Holocaust,* 13.

[6] Faupel, *African Holocaust,* 13–14.

[7] A. M. Mackay, *A. M. Mackay: Pioneer Missionary in Uganda*, edited by His Sister, (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1970 [1890]); see also Glenn Kittler ed., *The White Fathers* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 146–51.

[8] Kittler, *White Fathers*, 153.

[9] Maureen Tilley, "The Ascetic Body and the (Un)Making of the World of the Martyr," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*; for a similar insightful study on martyrdom and torture in antiquity see Gillian Clark, "Bodies and Blood: Late Antique Debate on Martyrdom, Virginity, and Resurrection," in *Changing Bodies, Changing Meanings: Studies on the Human Body in Antiquity*, Dominic Montserrat ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), 99–115.

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their bodies was hastening their arrival into the *eschaton*. Thus, as persecution took place, "[t]he more the torturers inflicted pain, the more they provided their martyrs with the means to their goal of salvation."[10] Of course, history teaches us that many Christians did not persevere in the face of death but renounced their faith. Precisely because diligent training is necessary for one to persevere in the face of persecution (one cannot just "decide" to be a martyr one day), the Ugandan martyrs must have had training that prepared them to withstand persecution and fear of death.

The Anglican martyrs were heavily trained in Scripture and prayer. All of the services over which Mackay presided included Scripture readings, prayers, and the Nicene Creed, which he translated into the Bugandan native language, Luganda.[11] Converts undertook these and similar practices leading to the first Protestant baptisms in March 1882.[12] (Only some of the Protestant martyrs were baptized before they were burned at Namugongo).[13] Unfortunately, there is little further evidence available pertaining to how the Protestant Baganda were trained.[14] Hence, I presume that communal training in Scripture, prayer, and baptism (for some) were enough to sustain them through persecution and death. My recounting of their martyrdom below supports this presumption.

Catholic martyrs were also trained. They were trained as Catholic catechumens who received instruction in Scripture, Church history, and prayer. More specifically, they prayed the Rosary and read prayers from daily masses.[15] Also, nearly all of the Catholic martyrs burned at Namugongo were baptized, either by Father Lourdel well before June 3 or by layman Charles Lwanga in last days of persecution before their martyrdoms.[16] Once again, no specific accounts exist of exactly what was taught and prayed on every occasion, but it is reasonable to presume that the Catholics' catechumen training along with prayer sustained them through their deaths.

[10] Tilley, "The Ascetic Body," 473.

[11] See Mackay, *Pioneer Missionary*, 110, 129–33, 170–72, and 231 for a few examples.

[12] Mackay, *Pioneer Missionary*, 231.

[13] For a list of Protestant martyrs including their baptismal state see, Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 209. H. B. Thomas, "The Baganda Martyrs, 1885–1887 with Special Reference to the Protestant Victims," *The Uganda Journal* 15, no. 1 (1951): 84–91 includes a list of Protestant martyrs but his work did not have the benefit of James Miti's *Short History of Buganda* who was a Protestant page during the persecution. Faupel's account relies on Miti's history and for his list of martyrs. Hence, Faupel is the most accurate synthesis of sources available that I know.

[14] R. P. Ashe, *Chronicles of Uganda* (New York: A. D. F. Randolph, 1895), 70 briefly mentions a "printing press" and "teaching" but only in passing. Ashe was an Anglican missionary.

[15] Kittler, *White Fathers*, 164.

[16] For a list of Catholic martyrs including date and place of death along with baptismal dates see Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 218–222.

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A Political Faith

In Bugandan culture, which the kabaka (leader of Buganda) represents, the kabaka ruled with great authority, and to refuse anything he asked was not only to offend the kabaka but to dishonor the entire Bugandan kingdom.[17] About six months before the major outbreak of persecution, influential Catholic Joseph Mukasa, who was the kabaka's personal servant who oversaw all of the kabaka's pages, was killed subsequent to a confrontation with Mwanga over Mwanga's ordering of the murder of Anglican Bishop Hannington.[18] Mukasa told Mwanga "bluntly" that his ordering of the death of Hannington was wrong; this angered Mwanga, and Mwanga took Mukasa's admonition as a form of treason.[19]

Having disagreements with a kabaka was not uncommon, but Mukasa's assertive confronting of Mwanga was unique. Baganda often spoke about the kubaka as an absolute ruler, but passive forms of resistance were allowed and often effective.[20] During Mwanga's reign the role of kabaka and chiefship in Bugandan culture was disintegrating; negotiating with chiefs and keeping his kingdom in proper order was becoming more and more difficult.[21] Thus, any challenge to a kabaka's power could elicit a violent response; Mukasa received such a violent response. He was ordered to be burned to death, but he was so well loved by many, including the executioner, that the executioner voluntarily beheaded Joseph prior to his body being thrown onto a fire in order to spare him excessive pain.[22] Protestant James Miti, a page under Mukasa in the kabaka's palace, and Anglican missionary Mackay, who initially converted Mukasa, agree that Mukasa's death was worthy of the title "martyr" as his life displayed humility, and his commitment to Christ caused him to be killed for his Christian faith.[23]

A second example of political disobedience for the sake of Christ was the refusal of both Catholic and Protestant pages to acquiesce to Kabaka Mwanga's sexual advances. Most of the Christian literature

[17] Holly E. Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 61–87.

[18] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, pp. 97–98, 108–118. For a primary source account, of Hannington from the Anglicans see Ashe, *Chronicles of Uganda*, 70–78.

[19] Kittler, *White Fathers*, 174; Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 110–11.

[20] Hanson, *Landed Obligation,* 68.

[21] Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 59–112; see also Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1996), 230–241; Richard Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda: Economy, Society & Warfare in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002).

[22] See Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 108–118.

[23] See the quotations in Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 117–18. Miti is an important Protestant source for the history of these martyrs and late 19th century Ugandan history.

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on Mwanga's homosexual acts narrates the Christian pages' refusal as simple acts of sexual purity in obedience to Christ.[24] Though this narration is partially correct, I want to show that it does not take into account the deep political implications of their moral stand, especially in the eyes of Mwanga. As mentioned above, refusing to obey the kabaka was interpreted as a political act; it was challenging his representation of Buganda. Moreover, the kabaka's authority was undergirded by reciprocal gift obligations;[25] this is often how the "passive" resistance was deemed effective. Hanson puts it well,

> . . . everyone in Buganda proclaimed the absolute power of kabakas but people seemed to have valued the kabaka's power for its ability to limit competition amongst chiefs, and very many forces in Ganda society had the capacity to ensure kabakas filled that function adequately.[26]

Chiefs gave the kabaka gifts while the kabaka allowed them relative autonomy in ruling their particular part of Buganda. However, people were free to move around Buganda and live under another chief if they deemed their chief unjust or if he did not provide appropriate goods; they could even live under one chief geographically, yet follow and pay tribute to another.[27] Thus, reciprocal exchange not only characterized the relationship between the kabaka and his chiefs, but was held together by the entire Bugandan polity. For numerous reasons this structure of reciprocal obligation was being eroded in the late eighteenth century.[28] Mwanga was attempting to hold his eroding kingdom together, and any direct attempt at challenging the power of the kabaka from the position of page, a position given by the kabaka, could lead to violence justified as aiming at restoring the Bugandan kingdom.[29]

Thus, several of the Mwanga's pages infuriated him by refusing his sexual advances. Other Christian pages, higher ranking than those being sexually solicited, were encouraging the young pages to refuse Mwanga and succeeded only in provoking Mwanga's anger toward Christians in general.[30] Mwanga thus perceived that Christians were a challenge to his political power, since Christian pages were not honoring and were taught not to honor their obligation to obey him.[31]

[24] Mackay in *Pioneer Missionary*, Kittler in *The White Fathers*, Faupel in *African Holocaust* and Ashe in *Chronicles of Uganda* all put the matter in these terms.

[25] Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 25–53, esp. 42–53.

[26] Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 69.

[27] Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 61–71.

[28] For accounts of how this took place see Hanson, *Landed Obligation* and Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda*. These accounts differ, but both agree that traditional Bugandan society was being eroded.

[29] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 82, 138.

[30] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 83, 137–38; Kittler, *White Fathers*, 176.

[31] See Ashe, *Chronicles of Uganda*, 80–82.

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As will be seen later, the manner in which some Christians were killed shows the political nature of their execution.

The final episode that led to the death of Christians at Namugongo took place May 25, 1886.[32] Mwanga went hippopotamus hunting, and when he returned he was not given the culturally required formal greeting by attending pages; in fact, no pages were even present at the gate. Ironically, the pages were being instructed in the Christian faith while the kabaka was absent, despite Mwanga's recent order forbidding his pages to learn religion.[33] This sent Mwanga into a rage that ended in the sentencing of Christians to death, the sentence that sent Protestants and Catholics to the same fire.[34]

In summary, the Christians' visible commitment to the Kingship of Christ over and above the kabaka's authority led to Mwanga's distrust of them and to their eventual deaths. The martyrs' catechetical training in Scripture, prayer, and baptism formed persons who resisted the principalities and powers of the Baganda when it compromised their faith. To be explicit, it was the pages' resistance and confrontation with "the powers" that led to their deaths. In addition to the similarities between Protestant and Catholic pages who both were trained to resist political powers, the manner in which they were killed displays a form of visible unity.

Martyrdom

Faupel's account is the fullest available of what happened to the martyrs in their last days alive. Thus, I will rely heavily on his work. Of utmost importance for my argument, however, is that his work is dependent on *both* Protestant and Catholic primary sources and also accounts given by some of the non-Christian executioners. Faupel admits his work would be "incomplete" without mentioning the Protestant "victims."[35] A total of thirty-two Baganda (including Charles Lwanga who will be discussed shortly) were burned at Namugongo on June 3, 1886. Thirteen were Catholic, and nine were Protestant. The other ten were unbelievers and had been awaiting execution for non-religious crimes.[36]

Though tensions between Mwanga and Christians ran high enough for some Christians to be killed prior to May 1886, the rage that followed Mwanga's hunting trip set into motion the chain of events

[32] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 139.

[33] Kittler, *White Fathers*, 179–81.

[34] Kittler, *White Fathers*, 179–86; Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 139–56.

[35] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 207. What Faupel fails to notice is that his narration of Catholic martyrs depends on Protestant sources and how this may affect using the word "martyr." My narration and argument attempt to take this into account.

[36] See Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 198–99, and for lists of the martyrs 207–222.

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leading to Namugongo's fire.[37] That afternoon and evening Mwanga successfully worked himself into a rage and ordered that no pages be allowed to leave his palace that night; many of the Christian pages were, therefore, locked inside the palace gates. During the night both Protestant and Catholic pages encouraged each other and prayed readying themselves to die for their faith, if necessary. Catholic Charles Lwanga was the leader of the Catholic pages baptizing catechumen while a Protestant named Mukasa provided guidance and encouragement for Protestants in alliance with the Catholics.[38] Comforting a newly baptized Catholic, Lwanga is reported by a page to say, "When the decisive moment arrives, I shall take your hand like this. If we die for Jesus, we shall die together hand in hand."[39]

The following morning Mwanga received backing from enough chiefs to justify taking further measures against Christians.[40] While this meeting was taking place, non-Christian pages were urging the Christians to flee, but Christians refused saying that the only reason for their death is their faith. They thought that fleeing was a denial of Christ before humanity (Matt. 10:33). Mwanga then ordered that all the pages from the palace's inner court be brought before him. Lwanga led the way to the kabaka's courtyard. When they arrived Mwanga said that his dog behaved better than the pages, because the dog obeyed his commands.[41] Next, Mwanga ordered that Christians and non-Christians be separated. Christians, both Catholic and Protestants, stood together awaiting the kabaka's response.[42] After making sure no Christians were attempting to hide amongst the unbelievers, Mwanga tried to convince some of the Christians to renounce their faith, but none did. Eventually, he gave the entire group the chance to recant, but all remained steadfast.[43] The non-believers sat amazed that these young men were knowingly putting their lives at risk. After reprieving a few, which Faupel thinks was because they had at times acquiesced to Mwanga's solicitations,[44] Mwanga gave his sentence: "Tie up all the Christians!" and turning to the victims, "I am going to burn you all." Then, he ordered that they be taken to Namugongo and burned.[45]

There were a total of thirteen execution sites; each had particular significance along with particular methods of execution. The burning site of the martyrs, Namugongo, was used because most of the

[37] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 119–38.
[38] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 144–145.
[39] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 145.
[40] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 147–48
[41] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 149.
[42] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 150.
[43] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 150–51.
[44] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 152.
[45] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 152.

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victims were royal pages; this was reserved for people of political importance.[46] Clearly, to die at Namugongo made one an enemy of the Bugandan state. Faupel describes it as the Bugandan version of England's "Tower Hill."[47] Other Christians killed by Mwanga who were not burned at Namugongo were left mutilated along roads and paths leading into the capital city following the custom of not burying those who were victims of a kabaka's anger.[48] Corpses, or more properly parts of corpses, served as reminders to travelers and Baganda about where certain kinds of disobedience lead.

Culturally, the execution sites also had religious significance, even if the kabaka himself did not attach that significance to the executions.[49] Everyday Baganda, however, understood the religious significance of these executions. Manaku reports some saying, "These Christians no longer believe in the tribal gods. They will bring calamity on the country."[50] The executioners made similar comments, "We have not killed you . . . all the gods whom you have despised, they are the cause of your death."[51] Thus, within the Bugandan culture the execution of the Christian martyrs was both political and religious.

The martyrs were literally bound together in a group and led through the palace while the outer court pages were brought in to stand before the kabaka like the previous pages were. (A majority of these pages were Protestant, but some Catholics were present as well).[52] Most of these Christians were sentenced to death by fire at Namugongo and joined the already condemned Christians they had just passed coming in. The logic guiding Mwanga's decision on who in this group should die seems to have been the fact that to kill all of the Christians would decimate the ranks of his pages. Thus, some pages were "only" castrated and beaten.[53] Some of the Christian pages verbally welcomed the kabaka's sentence, and one said he was "off to paradise to intercede with God for you [Mwanga]."[54]

The martyrs marched single file eight miles to Namugongo bound together neck to neck. As they marched, they passed on words of encouragement, they prayed, and discussed Christian teachings they had learned sustaining them.[55] When they reached Namugongo, they sat in confinement for an entire week as preparations for the execution were made. Large amounts of fire wood were cut down and gathered,

[46] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 168.
[47] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 168.
[48] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 142.
[49] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 168–69.
[50] Quoted in Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 179.
[51] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 194.
[52] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 154.
[53] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 154–55.
[54] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 156.
[55] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 170–71.

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and elephant grass reeds were cut which were used to wrap the victims prior to their being placed on the fire.[56] Awaiting their deaths, the soon to be martyrs continued encouraging each other, praying, and singing.

On June 3, 1886, the preparations for execution were complete. The Christians were led out of their confines to large piles of wood with their hands tied behind their backs. Elephant grass reeds were wrapped around each of their bodies and they were placed on the stacks of wood; more wood was brought and laid on top of them. Only Charles Lwanga was singled out, because he was perceived to be the leader and was taken aside not far from the main fire site where he asked to build his own pyre. The executioners approved and Lwanga silently burned to death alone away from his Christian brothers.[57] Back at the main fire site, the executioners circled the large wood pile that surrounded the Christians on all sides; they lit the fire around noon that Thursday, the day of the Ascension. Eyewitnesses, including the executioners, said that they had never seen anything like that execution before.

> We have put many people to death, but never such as these. On other occasions the victims did nothing but moan and weep, but the Christians were wonderful. There was not a sigh, not even an angry word. All we heard was the soft murmur on their lips. They prayed until they died.[58]

Beyond Old and New Impasses through Repentance

A critical question must be raised at this point. Can these martyrs do the ecumenical work I want to assign to them? There have been two impasses that threaten to render my argument void. The first is historical and comes from the sixteenth century, and the second is theological coming from the work of a contemporary theologian.

Christianity has known its share of martyrs from its genesis. However, the Reformation produced a rift between Christians to the point where who counted as a martyr was constantly challenged on both sides. There are conflicting accounts of why the violence took place and who or what bears the most responsibility.[59] The differences

[56] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 172.

[57] Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 192–94.

[58] Quoted in Faupel, *African Holocaust*, 197. Here, one cannot but hear echoes of Radner on the death of the church, and John Paul II's discussion of the primacy of prayer in ecumenism in *Ut Unum Sint* § 21–27.

[59] The oft given name "Wars of Religion" provides one obvious interpretation, but recently William Cavanaugh has challenged this. See William T. Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House: The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State." *Modern Theology* 11, no. 4 (1995): 397–420; and "Killing for the Telephone Company: Why the Nation-State is Not the Keeper of the Common Good." *Modern Theology* 20, no. 2 (2004): 243–274. I will use Cavanaugh's re-narration below.

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in these accounts are important, and I will address the impact they have later. For now, the important issue at stake is that Catholics and Protestants did not recognize each other as "martyrs."

In the sixteenth century, both Protestants and Catholics followed Augustine and affirmed that it was "not the punishment, but the cause, that makes a martyr."[60] Could Protestants killed for faith be called "martyrs"? The Catholics answered, "No." Even the irenic Erasmus could not bring himself to affirm Lutherans as martyrs, nor could he condemn their deaths:

> I do not know whether I ought to deplore their deaths. It is clear that they died with the greatest and unheard-of steadfastness, not for the articles of Luther, but for his paradoxes—for which I would not want to die, because I do not understand them. I know that to die for Christ is a glorious thing. The devout have never lacked affliction, but the impious are also afflicted. He who repeatedly transforms himself into an angel of light is skilled in many crafts. And the discernment of spirits is a rare gift.[61]

On the other side, could Catholics killed for faith be called "martyrs"? The Protestants said, "No." Puritan minister Giles Wigginton told Catholic Margaret Clitherow, on trial for treason, that she was "foully deceived" if she thought that dying for her Catholic faith counted as martyrdom.[62] Even Protestants did not affirm other Protestants as martyrs. Luther thought the deaths of Zwingli's followers should not be compared to the "holy martyrs" and condemned them for making that comparison.[63] In the tumultuous sixteenth century martyrdom had rigid criteria, and these criteria were mutually exclusive of the other sides.[64]

Given this history how can I attempt to name the Anglican and Catholic victims both "martyrs"? This historical impasse threatens the coherence of assigning the title "martyrs" to the slain Ugandans I recount above. Pope John Paul II provides a way forward through this first impasse by re-naming Protestants as "martyrs".

In 2001 in the Ukraine, John Paul II gave an address to beatify twenty-seven Greek Catholic martyrs.

> Together with them [the Greek Catholic martyrs], *Christians of other confessions too* were persecuted and killed on account of Christ. Their joint martyrdom is a pressing call for reconciliation and unity. *This is*

[60] See Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 315–41.

[61] Quoted in Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 321.

[62] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 322.

[63] Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 325.

[64] For more on this see Gregory, *Salvation at Stake*, 329–339. As will become clear below I wish to complicate Gregory's (along with Radner's) reading of the 16th century with attention to socio-political structures at work.

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> *the ecumenism of the martyrs and witnesses to faith*, which indicates the path of unity to the Christians of the twenty-first century. May their sacrifice be a practical lesson of life for all. This is certainly not an easy task . . . The only way to clear the path is to forget the past, *ask forgiveness of one another and forgive one another* for the wounds inflicted and received, and unreservedly trust the renewing action of the Holy Spirit.[65]

An obvious difference immediately surfaces between John Paul II's statement and ones from the sixteenth century: now both sides are recognized as "joint" martyrs. Only the Catholic martyrs are beatified, but Protestants are recognized as having "faithful" instructive value worthy of imitation.[66] Compared to the previous sentiments and statements a dramatic reversal has occurred; Protestants are recognized as martyrs and lifted up as examples to follow. It would be fascinating to trace how this shift has come about, but that is beyond the scope of this essay. What matters for my purposes is that this reversal is present in the contemporary Church, and I want to show that both Catholics and Protestants ought to heed the late Pope's words and seize this opportunity to move toward a more faithful visible unity. This is a moving beyond the first impasse: the sixteenth century's mutual condemnations of each other's "martyrs".

But, is the moving beyond the first historical impasse enough? Is it now, suddenly, intelligible to speak of Catholic and Protestant "martyrs"? "Holiness" and even "martyrdom" as categories for use in pursuing unity have been dealt a significant theological blow by Ephraim Radner's *The End of the Church: A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West*; this is the "new" impasse.[67] Radner's argument is both historical and theological, but he uses history at the service of a theological argument. Radner's work is massive in scope, offering a paschal-christological figural reading of history, and the narrative he tells seeks to encompass all of Western Christianity. Radner's argument also possesses a rhetorical beauty as a whole. Radner thinks the Reformation was a bad idea making his fellow Protestants uncomfortable, whereas his heroes are the Jansenists who are not held in high esteem among Catholics; perhaps only an Anglican could craft such a wonderful argument.

Despite Radner's weighty admonition, however, I think it is unclear that Radner has succeeded in completely eliminating "martyrdom" as useful ecumenical language. Probably the best way to counter Radner

[65] John Paul II, "The Ecumenism of the Martyrs and Christian Witnesses Points Out the Path of Unity." *Osservatore Romano* 1700, no. 27 (July 4, 2001): 6; italics from original.

[66] John Paul II, "Ecumenism of the Martyrs," 6. I also think it obvious that many Protestants today would have little trouble using the language of "martyr" in reference to Catholics.

[67] Ephraim Radner, The End of the Church: *A Pneumatology of Christian Division in the West* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998).

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would be offer an alternative narrative. What I modestly offer instead, however, are brief arguments for amending his position. My goal in this section is to show where Radner leaves space for martyrdom to serve ecumenism and to complicate parts of Radner's own story. To the extent I succeed, more space is opened for the possibility of martyrdom to yield a form of visible unity in the Ugandan martyrs.

I will begin by summarizing the problems Radner sees with using holiness and martyrdom to establish a visible unity. The crux of Radner's argument against such uses of martyrdom and holiness lies in pneumatological adjudication. By this, Radner means to show that the divided state of the Church renders the appeal by one side of the Church to the Spirit's presence in "martyrdom" unintelligible to ears of the other side.[68] In other words, how can Protestants and Catholics point to the Spirit's presence in each other's lives when the criteria for the Spirit's presence differ for each tradition? How can the Anglican and Catholic Ugandans both be "martyrs" in the same sense given the differing criteria? And if the sense of "martyr" differs, there is no unity after all. For Protestants, pneumatological presence in martyrdom was discernable through correct doctrine gleaned from Scripture[69] and for Catholics it was shown by the victims explicit ties to the Catholic Church and its tradition and claims.[70] Of course, Protestants intentionally rejected *that* Church and its claims. Thus, any appeal to holiness remains within this internal division and its accompanying contradictions and mutual renunciations. Therefore, according to Radner, my argument that naming both the Anglicans and Catholics "martyrs" risks being incoherent.

Radner does, however, acknowledge that true martyrdoms may occur and that such people do embody authentic holiness.[71]

> . . . to *see* this purity, to *see* this holiness, as the Spirit's life unveiled and resplendent in its "power" and "authority" is no longer something any one of us could dare affirm before the eyes of the Church, let alone the world . . . John Paul II's appeal to the evidence of sanctity for the presence of the Spirit's unity makes sense only within the sphere of the actual operation of divine love for one another among separated Christians. [72]

Radner continues by saying that this small hope of visible unity in martyrdom, if I can call it that, can only function if it is "protected from the offenses against charity waged by the Church."[73] By this

[68] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 133.
[69] Radner, *The End of the Church,* 126–29.
[70] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 124–126.
[71] Radner, *The End of the Church,* 133.
[72] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 133. Radner's reference to John Paul II is to the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*.
[73] Radner, *The End of the Church,* 133.

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Radner seems to be referring to the slaying of Christians by other "Christians" that took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Radner proposes the way of repentance as the only option for displaying and discussing unity available to a dying and possibly dead Church.[74] Using the divided kingdom of Israel, Radner shows that divided Israel actually dies, and this is the fate Christians ought to expect of the contemporary Church. However, he qualifies this: "it is not the Church that must die, but we ourselves, in giving ourselves over to its fictive welfare."[75] In other words, the Church practices penance for its past offenses and this requires that contemporary Protestants and Catholics practice penance for the Church's violent and divided history. On the necessity of the Church doing penance, I cannot be in fuller agreement with Radner. Moreover, I think that the practices and language of penance offer different ways to speak Christianly about unity. In a way, I intend my own argument for Catholic and Protestant Ugandan martyrs to be an exercise of Protestant penance that begins to speak in this "different" language of repentance.

As mentioned above, Radner does leave some space open for martyrdom as a sign of visible unity, provided it is immune from the previous "offenses." I think John Paul II can be used in conjunction with Radner on this point, because John Paul II begins to assume a posture of penance that Radner requires. However, Radner takes issue with some of the late Pope's work on martyrdom and ecumenism, particularly *Ut Unum Sint*.[76] Radner's major concern is that sweeping pneumatological claims cannot be gleaned from specific historical examples.[77] In other words, neither side can claim to have the Spirit's presence by appealing to one example. Furthermore, Radner wonders at John Paul II's claim to an "invisible" unity.[78] What work can invisible unity do and what could it possibly mean in a divided Church? In Radner's chilling words,

> If the true Church, at unity with itself, is known by the gleam of its sanctity and the blood of its martyrs, each shouting for vindication at the Lamb's throne, one against another, is it any wonder that even a Pope would toy with "invisible" evidences? Or that, at least, the Spirit might seem to delight in disguisement?[79]

To clarify, Radner is not denying that martyrdoms happen, but that they are "drowned out" by the magnitude of the Church's division and sins.[80]

[74] Radner, *The End of the Church,* 335–354.
[75] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 354.
[76] The passages Radner explicitly discusses are *Ut Unum Sint*, § 83–85.
[77] Radner, *The End of the Church,* 59.
[78] *Ut Unum Sint*, § 84; Radner, *The End of the Church,* 61.
[79] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 61.
[80] Radner put the matter to me in this way in personal correspondence.

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I think John Paul II's work can be used legitimately when understood in the larger context of his writing, including works not taken into account by Radner's *The End of the Church*.[81] In John Paul II's quotation above he says Christians must "forget the past" and "ask for forgiveness of one another and forgive one another."[82] What John Paul II means by this is that we must purify our memories of the past, which includes acknowledging our own sins and then asking forgiveness of one another;[83] "Let us forgive and ask forgiveness!"[84] Furthermore, John Paul II asked forgiveness for a number of sins, *including the divided church*.[85] "Forgetting" the past is not a facile or liberal version of "Let's just all get along" according to the late Pope; it is a call to conversion, both personal and communal.[86] Of course, this way of proceeding is controversial, and John Paul II was cautioned and even encouraged not to ask for forgiveness by some of his advisors.[87] But, I think many Catholics and Protestants can agree that forgiveness ought to be sought for offenses committed by both sides over the past few centuries.

My two points of contention with Radner that follow, therefore, should not be read as a "way out" from the hard work of repentance that Radner rightly requires of us. In fact, repentance like John Paul II performs is what makes the mode of speaking I am arguing for possible. First, I contend that Radner lacks attention to political history in the 16th and 17th centuries. Second, by noting current "cultural-linguistic" trends in the Church today, I attempt to show that his narrative fails to capture the entire contemporary Western Church.

First, the history that Radner tells of the sixteenth century lacks attention to important political structures and movements.[88] Thus, Radner affirms that violence was done by "Christians" to other

[81] One of the obvious reasons that some of John Paul II's works are not addressed is that some of them were published after *The End of the Church*. However, Radner does not deal with *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* where JP II takes an explicit posture of repentance. I think Radner does not discuss this work for a couple reasons. The first is rhetorical; Radner leaves this out to make his case more compelling in calling for repentance. Second, John Paul II's words are not gaining wide adherence. Thus, the late Pope's work is being "drowned out" by ecclesial division.

[82] John Paul II, "The Ecumenism of the Martyrs," 6.

[83] See Luigi Accattoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness*, Jordan Aumann trans. (New York: Alba House, 1998), 95–103.

[84] John Paul II, homily given on the "Day of Pardon" 12 March 2000; cited in *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past*. Vatican trans. (Boston: Pauline Books, 2000), 83.

[85] John Paul II, *Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, 4 November 1994, §34; see also *Memory and Reconciliation*, 95–104.

[86] See John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, 1995, §15–17.

[87] Accattoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness*, 55–79.

[88] See, for example, Justo Gonzalez, *The Changing Shape of Church History* (St. Louis: Chalice, 2002) who discusses how a new wave of scholarship is beginning to pay more attention to Spanish and Portuguese colonialism in the 16th century, which could yield differing interpretations of the Reformation, see pp. 42–44.

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Christians on "Christian" grounds.[89] But, this is not "the simple reality" Radner claims it to be.[90] William Cavanaugh argues that these historical acts of violence "were not simply a matter of conflict between 'Protestantism' and 'Catholicism,' but were fought largely for the aggrandizement of the emerging State over the decaying remnants of the medieval ecclesial order."[91] Furthermore, "The net result of the conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was to invert the dominance of the ecclesiastical over the civil authorities through the creation of the modern State . . . . the origins of civil dominance over the Church predated the so-called 'Wars of Religion.'"[92] The origins of civil dominance go as far back as the fourteenth century controversy between the Papalists and Conciliarists.[93] By the time of Luther, the Reformation, and the subsequent acts of violence the perpetuators of violence were not solely concerned about "doctrine" as Radner and Gregory think; the primary concern was about gaining political power.[94] In fact, Cavanaugh notes that 1572—St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre—was the last date when Catholics and Protestants were easily distinguishable in the French civil wars because after this Catholics were opposed to Catholics (Catholic League v. *Politiques*; Hapsburg v. Bourbons) and Protestants and Catholics were allied together (*Politiques* and Protestants; King Henry III and Henry of Navarre).[95] Even Michel de Montaigne writing the sixteenth century was not convinced the violence being committed was simply done in the name of doctrine or religion (or even nationalism *pace* Cavanaugh):

> Let us confess the truth: if anyone should sift out the army, even the average loyalist army, those who march in it from the pure zeal of affection for religion, and also those who consider only the protection of the laws of their country or the service of their prince, he could not make up one complete company of men-at-arms [sic] out of them.[96]

[89] Radner, *End of the Church*, 122–23.

[90] Radner, *The End of the Church*, 122.

[91] Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 398.

[92] Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 398–99.

[93] Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 401.

[94] Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 401. I do not wish to diminish the need for acknowledging the horrendous evil done during these times. I also do not intend to deny that repentance needs to be practiced. I only wish to shed further light on the historical situation by showing a weakness in many Reformation accounts. Furthermore, to say that doctrinal concerns were not primary is not to deny that they were operative in some fashion. In other words, I do not regard Cavanaugh's work as being what "really" was going in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; I am simply drawing his work into the conversation to fill in what I perceive to be gaps in an already complicated history. I do not deny that some persons were killed (primarily) for religious reasons at the time of the Reformation.

[95] Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House," 401–03.

[96] Montaigne, "The Apology for Raymond Sebond," in *Michel de Montaigne: The Complete Works*, John Frame, trans. (New York: Knopf, 2003), 392.

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To be sure, Cavanaugh's narration is not the widely accepted version of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, it does provide a legitimate corrective or complication to the typical Protestant narrations of ecclesial corruption and to the Catholic narrations of ecclesial abandonment that often characterize discussions of the Reformation.[97]

Second, I am not convinced that Radner's argument captures as much of the contemporary ecclesial world as it seems. George Lindbeck, Radner's teacher, provides the necessary horizon against which Radner's work is done. Lindbeck provides Radner with the ability to use his figural interpretation through Lindbeck's "cultural-linguistic" and "intra-textual" understanding of religion, though Radner's work is more explicitly biblical in comparison to his teacher.[98] Characteristic of the cultural-linguistic approach is the importance of practices and language where practices constitute, in part, the "grammar" of language.[99] Historically, Radner's work is first rate, though not impervious, as I have just argued, and his construal of the significant historical differences between Protestants and Catholics is accurate and penetrating. I am not sure, however, how someone in my own "cultural-linguistic" situation (along with many others) is narrated into Radner's story.[100]

As a Lutheran, I attend a Catholic university, study theology under a Baptist as well as Catholic theologians, infrequently attend weekday Mass (without taking the Eucharist), attend Lutheran services on Sunday, and teach adult education classes at my Lutheran church. Furthermore, I find myself, more often than not, in agreement with Catholicism than with my Protestant heritage. I am learning to speak "Catholic" even while I continue to speak the "Protestant" that I have known since my earliest years.[101] As I seek to navigate this identity, I find that I am learning a different language that is neither merely Catholic nor just Protestant, though undoubtedly Christian in a thick

[97] I am indebted to William Portier for the putting the matter to me in this way. He has also said that what needs to happen in ecumenism is that Protestants and Catholics should study Reformation history locked together in the same room. Then, we could know more specifically what we need to repent for and ask forgiveness for. My hope and prayer is that this will happen.

[98] George Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1984).

[99] As I hope will become clear, I think of myself as working with this "method." Also, for a wonderful account of practices as "grammar" to which I am deeply indebted see Brad Kallenberg, *Ethics as Grammar: Changing the Postmodern Subject* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 2001).

[100] This is an appeal to "experience," but it is a "social experience." I am indebted to Terrence Tilley for the way I use "social experience;" see his *History, Theology, and Faith: Dissolving the Modern Problematic* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 151–52.

[101] I was not raised Lutheran; I was raised United Brethren in Christ.

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traditional and historical sense. Many "evangelical Catholics" are in a similar situation.[102]

At times, Radner seems to construe the polemical and bifurcated historical differences between Catholics and Protestants as easily fitting into our contemporary ecclesial lives. Radner may counter that my and the "evangelical Catholics'" ecclesial lives are quite confused, but such a claim relies on the historical grammar Radner himself operates within and argues for. Given his perspective, his account cannot but fail to find our lives coherent in any ecclesial sense, and any potential conversion that his narrative requires cannot be detected. In other words, it seems that Radner's account may be unable to recognize a converted person or community that the Pope attempts to be and calls for. I do not intend to claim definitively that God is now raising up a generation who heed the late Pope's words, but I do not think such a claim can be ruled out. I am not sure how Radner can leave space open for accommodating such a possibility. In my judgment, Radner needs to attend more to particular lives, complex practices, and self-understandings of Christians today who do not easily find a place within his narration.

In spite of these criticisms, however, Radner's proposal of repentance remains crucial. It would be simplistic merely to give credit to liberalism and pluralism for the "opportunity" to learn this "different" language, which he would rightly reject as a foreign intrusion into Christian conversation. Radner is right to insist that speaking this different language requires that Christians attend to repentance. Conversion includes learning to speak differently.

The Ugandan Martyrs and Speaking of Christian Unity

So, how do the Ugandan martyrs help us speak differently about Christian unity? Without exhausting all the ways these lives and their story can aid ecumenism, I will discuss three important implications of naming the Ugandans as "martyrs" for speaking about Christian unity.

First, the practice of repentance is a necessary part of the grammar for speaking of Christian unity. Without repentance, naming the Anglicans and Catholic Ugandans as "martyrs" is to speak incoherently. John Paul II is able to speak without confusion and contradiction about Protestant martyrs because of his practices of repentance,

[102] For an award winning account of this analogous Catholic "cultural" shift see William Portier, "Here Come the Evangelical Catholics," *Communio* 31 no. 1 (2004): 35–66. For an example of Protestants in this situation see Steven Harmon "'Catholic Baptists' and the New Horizon of Tradition in Baptist Theology," in *New Horizons in Theology*, College Theology Society Annual Volume 50, Terrence W. Tilley, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), 117–34.

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something the Church as a whole has arguably neglected. That the late Pope was discouraged from asking for forgiveness and assuming a posture of repentance by some advisors can be interpreted as displaying a latent Catholic tendency to forego the acceptance of responsibility for sins.[103] Of course, when a Pope makes such a revolutionary pronouncement, it must be grounded in accurate historical knowledge and nuance that require thorough inquiry and understanding. In other words, one ought to be confident that one's forbears were in fact wrong when asking for forgiveness. However, even if William Cavanaugh's narration (and other alternative narrations) of the "Wars of Religion" is correct and helpful, it does not explain or cure how easily the Church, along with its beliefs and practices, was co-opted by arising nation-states and used for the violent aggrandizement of nations.[104] Thus, the Church would still be required to do penance for allowing itself to be a violent instrument of an outside institution. The Ugandan martyrs, along with the ancient martyrs, offer us examples of faithfulness that do not allow the principalities and powers to usurp the power of the Cross in the life of the Church. For the naming of the Ugandan martyrs as "martyrs" to become intelligible Christian language for the Catholic Church, John Paul's example of repentance must be followed and practiced.[105]

A second practice constituting the grammar of truthful speech about Christian unity that the Ugandan martyrs offer the Church today is prayer. Prayer, obviously, is largely linguistic in nature. By praying together Protestants and Catholics learn to speak together, and speaking together is itself a visible form of unity. John Paul II's discussion of the primacy of prayer for ecumenism is especially helpful here.

> Even when prayer is not specifically offered for Christian unity, but for other intentions such as peace, it actually becomes an expression and confirmation of unity . . . If they [Catholics and separated brethren] meet more often and more regularly before Christ in prayer, they will be able to gain the courage to face all the painful reality of their divisions, and they will find themselves together once more in that community of the Church which Christ constantly builds up in the Holy Spirit, in spite of all weaknesses and human limitations . . . And yet, despite

[103] See Accottoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness*, 55–79. To be sure, the reasons some Cardinals opposed John Paul's pronouncements were not sweeping and against repentance per se. Their major concern was the Pope's ecclesiological focus in discussing the sins of the Church's sons and daughters. However, John Paul went ahead with his pronouncement despite some opposition from the Cardinals, who included, at the time, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

[104] I am indebted to Ephraim Radner for pointing this out to me in personal correspondence.

[105] Of course, I do not intend to exempt Protestants from following John Paul's example. Both Protestants and Catholics must repent in order for the Ugandan martyrs to be rightly called such.

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> our divisions, we are on the way towards full unity, that unity which marked the Apostolic Church at its birth and which we sincerely seek. Our common prayer, inspired by faith, is proof of this. In that prayer we gather together in the name of Christ who is One. He is our unity.[106]

Speaking together is more than using the same words; it requires lives that resemble each other or people who are formed into Christ's image. The Ugandan martyrs' practices of prayer formed them into faithful adherents to the Gospel in the face of persecution and death, much like Christ who "is our unity." Prayer was a common practice that formed them into similar types of Christians–Christians who became martyrs and prayed together as they perished. These Ugandan martyrs provide us with examples witnessing to the importance of prayer and unity. They practiced, though perhaps not fully understanding, the close relationship between unity and prayer in a divided Church that formed similar types of faithful Christians recognized by both Protestants and Catholics.

Third, the Ugandan martyrs' story can neither be labeled simply "Protestant" nor "Catholic." To make an argument that either Protestants or Catholics are unworthy of the title "martyr" would require quite a different story from the one told above; it would require a complete re-narration from "one side" of the story. However, the Ugandan's story is mediated through *both* Catholic and Protestant sources/language. Even the Catholic historian John Faupel relies significantly on Protestant sources. In fact, Protestant and Catholic sources and accounts of the Ugandan martyrs are parasitic on each other and require each other in order for the story to acquire its historical truthfulness and theological power. There is simply no "one side" of the story. The story of the martyrs comes to us today (roughly) as a single story told through unification of different Christian ways of speaking. Thus, the story of the Ugandan martyrs, quite literally, offers Christians a new way of speaking of martyrdom and unity to which Christians should carefully attend.[107]

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[106] John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint*, §21–23.

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