



NORWEGIAN
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Religion and Reconciliation in Rwanda

Is religion an obstacle or a resource in reconciliation?

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Table of content

- 1.0 Introduction..... p. 1**
 - 1.1 Motivation..... p. 1
 - 1.2 Presentation of topic..... p. 1
 - 1.3 Research questions..... p. 2
 - 1.4 Method and material..... p. 3
 - 1.5 Outline of thesis..... p. 4
- 2.0 The history of Rwanda..... p. 5**
 - 2.1 Pre-colonial history..... p. 5
 - 2.2 Colonial history..... p. 7
 - 2.3 Postcolonial..... p. 10
- 3.0 The Genocide..... p. 13**
 - 3.1 100 days in Rwanda..... p. 14
 - 3.2 Religious leaders and the church..... p. 17
 - 3.3 UN and the international society’s reactions..... p. 17
 - 3.4 Eyewitnesses..... p. 20
 - 3.5 The genocide ends..... p. 21
- 4.0 Rwanda’s way to recover..... p. 23**
 - 4.1 The years after the genocide..... p. 23
 - 4.2 Refugees and the refugee camps..... p. 26
 - 4.3 Gacaca courts..... p. 27
 - 4.3 International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda – ICTR..... p. 30
 - 4.5 The role of religion in reconciliation and society..... p. 30
- 5.0 Method and empirical findings..... p. 33**
 - 5.1 Method..... p. 33
 - 5.2 Presentation of organizations..... p. 38
 - 5.3 Thematic presentation of findings..... p. 40
 - 5.3.1 Christian values and teachings used in reconciliation in Rwanda..... p. 41
 - 5.3.2 Punishment in reconciliation..... p. 43
 - 5.3.3 Forgiveness in reconciliation..... p. 44
- 6.0 Theory p. 47**

| | |
|--|--------------|
| 6.1 Four dimensions on reconciliation..... | p. 47 |
| 6.2 Reconciliation and justice | p. 49 |
| 6.3 Reconciliation practices..... | p. 50 |
| 6.3 How to achieve Reconciliation..... | p.56 |
| 6.4 Restorative Justice..... | p. 57 |
| 6.5 Religion and reconciliation..... | p. 59 |
| 7.0 Discussion..... | p. 61 |
| 7.1 Reconciliation and Christianity..... | p. 61 |
| 7.2 Reconciliation and punishment..... | p. 65 |
| 7.3 Reconciliation and forgiveness..... | p. 69 |
| 8.0 Concluding remarks..... | p. 75 |
| | |
| Literature..... | p. 78 |
| Apendix..... | p. 80 |

Chapter 1

Introductions

1.1 Motivation

Not long after I started my Master's degree I found that the subjects that interested me the most, was subjects on religion, conflict, peace building and reconciliation. After reading more about reconciliation I understood that this was an area I wanted to learn more about and I was intrigued by what role religion can play in reconciliation. After some more research, I chose to look at Rwanda's reconciliation process after the genocide in 1994. This gave me an opportunity to research a process that had been going on for a while, and thereby I would be able to get information that can indicate if the reconciliation process has been successful or unfavourable for the people in Rwanda. Since Rwanda is a country where the vast majority confesses to a Christian belief I saw the chance to do a research that couple reconciliation and religion. Especially since I early on discovered that churches had been one of the most significant killing grounds during the genocide. Moreover, I discovered that Christian organisations facilitate the majority of the reconciliation work, and this duality intrigued me. I had several different approaches that I considered and had to do some adjustments to my approach during my research in Rwanda. In the end I ended up with a approach that reflected both my initial plans and that was formed by discoveries and lessons learned during this process.

1.2 Presentation of topic

Rwanda has since they were colonized by the Germans and later the Belgians had a tension between the two largest ethnic groups in the country, Hutus and Tutsis. Tutsis were favoured by the colonial powers until they became independent in 1962. With the independence the Hutu majority were given most of the power, and the tensions from being oppressed for years, resulted in Hutus now oppressing Tutsis. This conflict defined Rwanda the following 40 years, and in the late 1980's the conflict escalated. In 1994 Rwanda experienced a genocide unparalleled to anything this world has seen. The leading Hutu regime facilitated the genocide

targeting the Tutsi population. In 100 days close to a million people were killed, most of them hacked to death by machetes. The genocide was overlooked by the rest of the world and in July 1994 the country was covered in decaying bodies with no government, no infrastructure and no money. In the aftermath Rwanda chose a road towards reconciliation. They have slowly rebuild the nation, with an emphasis on reconciliation for its people. The reconciliation process that has been, and still is ongoing, in Rwanda is the foundation I frame my thesis in. In the years after the genocide many Tutsis who had been living as refugees in neighbouring countries returned to Rwanda. Organisations started working with reconciliation, in addition to try to overcome the extensive amount of people accused for crimes during the genocide, Rwanda created the Gacaca courts. Gacaca is a hybrid; a court, build on traditional courts in Rwanda who traditionally used to judge in questions about land and cattle, and truth commissions. In addition to the Gacaca courts many organisations work on different approaches to facilitate reconciliation for the Rwandans. Close to all of these organisations are Christian, and the language used to promote reconciliation is permeated with a religious tone. Christian teaching are used to encourage reconciliation, and many find both motivation and strength to try to reconcile because of their personal faith.

1.3 Research questions

Main research question:

Is religion an obstacle or a resource in Reconciliation?

Sub research questions:

How can reconciliation be achieved after a genocide?

Which theories can support religion as a resource in reconciliation?

How can the empirical findings endorse reconciliation after genocide?

My focus in this thesis is if religion is an obstacle or a resource in Reconciliation. To answer this question I will have to look at how, and if, reconciliation can be achieved after the genocide. In Rwanda, the majority confesses themselves to a Christian belief, and close to all organisations that work with reconciliation in the country are Christian organizations. Therefore, I want to focus on this dimension of reconciliation especially. Often in discourse, religion is perceived as a personal matter, which to a large degree should be kept out of public discourse. I am intrigued to see if this is always the case, and therefor the case of Rwanda's genocide will be an interesting case to employ in my research. I will explore how

reconciliation can be achieved, by looking at empirical data collected from my research and see if the data support this. In order to find answers to my question on religions role in reconciliation, I need to examine reconciliation and specifically the reconciliation process in Rwanda. Some portray it as a success story in reconciliation, so I will need to research if assertion has validity. Further, I will see if there are theories that support religion as a resource in reconciliation and if they correlates with the empirical findings. Comparing my findings on religion and reconciliation, both in literature and from data will form the basis in this thesis.

1.4 Method and material

To find valid material to answer my research question I will include both theories on the subject and conduct an empirical research in Rwanda. This will give me insight from different sources and provide material to best endorse my thesis. I started by researching the history of Rwanda before the genocide, to learn as much as I could about the genocide and familiarise myself with the current situation in Rwanda. Two scholars are well known for their expertise on Rwanda. Dr. Gérard Prunier is French scholar, with extensive knowledge on East Africa. He has written *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, which is a well-known and highly regarded work on the Rwandan genocide. Linda Melvern is a British investigative journalist, and is probably the foremost expert on the Rwandan genocide. She was the second vice-President of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and she was a consultant to the Military One prosecution team at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda -ICTR. Her books on Rwanda is part of the curriculum in universities worldwide. I searched for scholars and literature to complement my approach, on issues that related to reconciliation in Rwanda and on religions role in reconciliation I found it challenging to find much valid information. There is a vast difference in available literature on pre-genocide history, the actual genocide, and the post-genocide period in Rwanda. The research and literature on the genocide is substantial and growing, but on the pre-genocide and post-genocide periods, the situation is quite different, and this seems to be a neglected area by authors and researchers.¹ I was fortunate and ended up finding scholars that presents theories on reconciliation and on religions role in reconciliation, I in my thesis I will look at these theories to see if they

¹ Zorbas (2004) p. 47

correlate with my other findings. Dr. Cecelia Clegg is a well-known Scottish practical theologian who has the field of reconciliation as a special interest with the conflict in Northern Ireland as her field of expertise. Dr. Daniel Philpott is an American professor in international relations and political theory, his field of interest is religion and global politics; transitional justice, reconciliation, ethics and international relations. In Rwanda I met with organizations and people who all work with reconciliation on different levels and with different approaches. I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews, with a variety of respondents. Observations made during my research proved valuable to my thesis.

1.5 Outline of thesis

In chapter 1 I present the history of Rwanda, I have divided it into 3 periods, pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial. This will provide background information to better understand the genocide and the reconciliation process that followed. In chapter 2 I present what happened during the genocide in 1994. The chapter is divided into 5 parts, in the first part I describe what actually happened during the genocide. Then I look at the role of the church and religious leaders in the genocide before I move on to the role of the UN and the international society. I have chosen to present some stories that describe some of the horrific things that happened to people, I do this because I believe that it is important to hear some of these stories to grasp the enormity of what happened during the genocide. I finish the chapter by describing the surroundings around the end of the genocide. Further, in chapter 4 the focus is on the aftermath for Rwanda post genocide. How life in Rwanda was during their efforts to rebuild their country and then I move on to the pursuit of justice and how to hold perpetrators accountable for the genocide. These chapters make up the background chapters of my thesis. Next comes the chapter where I present the methods used in my research and the empirical findings, before I move on to the chapter where I present literature and theories on reconciliation and religions role in reconciliation. This leads to the chapter where I combine all the information I gathered, analyse the material and see how they aid me in answering my research questions. In the final chapter, I give my concluding remarks.

Chapter 2

The history of Rwanda

Knowing Rwanda's history is essential in understanding the situation in Rwanda today. History has been used by both sides in the conflict to legitimate the conflict and to explain why the conflict became so extreme. It has also been used in the reconciliation process to emphasize similarities and common ground among Rwandans. I will take a brief look at early history but my focus will be on pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods.

There is little existing literature on Rwanda's history before the genocide, especially before the 1950's. The existing literature is incohesive and at times of little scientific value. This is especially prevalent up until the 1950's but even up to the 1990's it is an issue. Finding material that is valid and trustworthy is challenging. Most of the information available is short and lacking in detail. Establishing the correct dates and years for when different historical events took place often have a wiggle room of between 5 and 10 years depending on the different literature. The literature I have used are for the most parts recognized academic material. When I refer to literature that does not meet my requirements, it is because I found the topic/text/quote, which I refer to several places, and therefore have to assume it has legitimacy

2.1 Pre-colonial history

The African continent holds the earliest traceable human history. Traces of early fishing and agricultural societies in African excavation sites are considered the oldest findings of human and societal development.² Scientist agrees that "the first human beings of the modern species (the modern man) developed in Africa".³ The climate that created the Sahara desert is in large parts responsible for creating Sub-Saharan Africa, which created a region in partial isolation. This separated Africa south of the Sahara from the developments in the Middle East and Mediterranean area.⁴ The first agricultural societies were most likely situated in the northern parts of the continent, around Egypt, but it is usually believed, though debated, that

² Simensen (2009) p.19

³ Simensen (2009) p.20

⁴ Simensen (2009) p.26

there was some sort of diffusion between the areas north and south of the Sahara.⁵ The Sub Saharan areas were dominated by hunting and gathering societies for a longer time period. Another issue arose when livestock became a part of the agriculture, in western and central parts of Africa the tsetse fly spread disease among the cattle. This setback can be one of the explanations to why parts of Africa Sub Sahara were left behind in the agricultural revolution. When crops from Southeast Asia were introduced, in the first centuries AD, central parts of Africa and their agricultural situation had a renewal. Around the Great Lakes the Asian bananas had a great success and became important to the rise in population in this area.⁶

Rwanda was populated by Twa (batwa), a pygmy tribe who made their living by gathering and hunting. Later an ethnic group, Hutu, who made their living by agriculture mostly on the ridges, arrived. The ethnic group Tutsi came after this, making their living by cattle farming centred in the valleys. They lived side by side, depended on each other financially, and had cultural homogeneity and all spoke the Bantu language.⁷

Rwanda had kingdoms, and many chiefdoms by both Hutus and Tutsis. In the kingdoms, Tutsis were given a military role, because the hierarchy and mobility of the cattle farming, Tutsis traditional way of life was very compatible with the ways of the military. Eventually there was one big kingdom that covered most of Rwanda; it was ruled by a Tutsi king- Mwami. Only the North Western part of Rwanda was dominated by Hutus who refused to surrender to the Mwami. Rwanda was then ruled by a feudal system called *Ubughake*. "At first, the agreement meant that Hutu could use Tutsi cattle in exchange for personal and military service. Over time, ubuhake became a feudal-type class system through which land and cattle, and therefore power, were in the hands of the Tutsi minority. The Hutu indentured themselves to a Tutsi lord giving him agricultural products and personal service in exchange for the use of land and cattle."⁸

When caravans made mobility easier, many African countries opened their borders and became engaged in trade. Rwanda chose to close their borders to trade. Their development

⁵ Simensen (2009) p.29

⁶ Simensen (2009) ch.1

⁷ Prunier (1997) p.5

⁸ <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/rwhistory.htm>

happened from within. One result of this was that Rwanda was never occupied by foreigners until the White Man came.⁹

History does not point to one particular war or conflict that would result in the bloody conflict to come.¹⁰ “Although Rwanda was definitely not a land of peace and bucolic harmony before the arrival of the Europeans, there is no trace in its pre-colonial history of systematic violence between Tutsi and Hutu as such.”¹¹ As a matter of fact, Chrétien claims that “On the various canvases of so-called traditional African civilizations, the Great Lakes region seems to stand out for its high degree of cohesion. The region has centralized polities, common religious references, intense human density, and similar languages, all of which underline a contrast with neighbouring areas.”¹²

2.2 Colonial history

Rwanda was first under German rule, divided and given to Germany during the Brussel conference, but it took several years from the Germans seized Rwanda, until someone actually went there. Gustav Adolf von Götzen was one of the first European to set foot in Rwanda; he later became the governor of German East Africa. What he saw was a country build on kingships, he met the Mwami (the king), who had a divine role in his kingdom, and made an agreement with him so that Germany, who did not pay very much attention to Rwanda, in large parts ruled through the Mwami.

The first Europeans wrote and described what they found and saw during their journeys. The people of Rwanda, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, was described by appearance, occupation and how they organised their societies. The common perception the White Man had of the African people they met, was that they were inferior to them. The African people were seen as savages that needed the guidance of the civilised White Man. The first Europeans in Rwanda had different descriptions of Hutu, Tutsi and Taw, I will present some of them:

“Members of a worn out and quirky disappearing race... the Mutwa presents a number of well-defined somatic characteristics: he is small, chunky, muscular, and very hairy;

⁹ Prunier (1997) p.2

¹⁰ Simensen (2009) p.117-120

¹¹ Prunier (1997) p.39

¹² Chrétien (2003) p.41-42

particularly on the chest. With a monkey-like flat face and a huge nose, he is quite similar to the apes whom he chases in the forest” 13

“The Bahutu display very typical Bantu features. (...) They are generally short and thick-set with a big head, a jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips. They are extroverts who like to laugh and lead a simple life.” 14

“The Mututsi of good race has nothing of the negro, apart from his colour. He is usually very tall, 1.80m. at the least, often 1.90m. or more. He is very thin, a characteristic which tends to be even more noticeable as he gets older. His features are very fine: a high brow, thin nose and fine lips framing beautiful shining teeth. Batutsi women are usually lighter-skinned than their husbands, very slender and pretty in their youth, although they tend to thicken with age. (...) Gifted with a vivacious intelligence, the Tutsi displays a refinement of feelings, which is rare among primitive people. He is a natural-born leader, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated goodwill.” 15

Here we start seeing how the colonialists discriminate, between the different groups of people living in Rwanda, from the start of the colonial period. These descriptions became a crucial part of nurturing ethnic conflicts.

During the World War I Belgium gained control over Rwanda. And after the first world war they were given the mandate to rule Rwanda by The League of Nations, they were to play a much more active control over Rwanda than Germany did. The Belgians had plans for Rwanda and wanted to make money out of the resources available. They made coffee through forced labour. Under their rule, Tutsis were favoured in a large scale. They gave Tutsis positions in leading roles and suppressed the Hutus and Twas. They also introduced identity card that stated which ethnic group you belonged. The regime was openly racist and assigned positions by race. They measured the size of people’s heads, noses and lips and used skin-color to estimate intelligence. So they accelerated the ethnic divide between the three ethnic groups in such a large scale that they are, after my opinion, definitely in part to blame for the ethnic conflicts that dominated Rwanda in the 20th century and ended in the genocide in 1994.

¹³ Prunier (1997) p.6

¹⁴ Prunier (1997) p.6

¹⁵ Prunier (1997) p.6

By the 1940's thousands of Hutus had fled the country. In 1946 Rwanda became a UN trusted territory, but still under Belgian administration. Now there was a UN demand, which stated that Rwanda was to be prepared for independence. This meant including Rwandans in the political life. The Belgians was reluctant, but in 1952 they implemented a 10-year development plan, and as a part of it Rwandans was given some political and economic power. This power was granted the Tutsis, and led to a social domination over the Hutus.¹⁶ However, at the same time there began a shift in this discrimination of Hutus. This shift probably has its roots in the church and slowly the Belgians started to give some recognition to the Hutus. "Although they did not decide in the Hutu's favour, church representatives had been alone in expressing, quite early on, some doubts about the place assigned to the Hutu in Belgian colonial society"¹⁷ By the end of WW1 the church in Rwanda had changed. Now approximately 50% of the priests were white and 50% were local, and most of the native priests were Tutsi. The Tutsi priests was some of the first to raise the notion of racial equality, they also saw a future without colonial rule.¹⁸ This became the start of the church, eventually the Belgians, advocating for recognition of Hutus as "equals". Nevertheless, it was too little too late, in 1957 the Bahutu Manifesto came out; notes on the social aspect of racial native in Rwanda. This text was written by nine Hutu intellectuals and was a text meant for the UN trusteeship mission.¹⁹ One of the leaders in PARMEHUTU, Gregoire Kayibana, was the former editor of a Catholic paper. He contributed a great deal in creating the manifest; also, the manifest was reviewed by clerics from the Catholic Church before it was published.²⁰ Another contributing factor was that by the end of the 1950's both Hutu and Tutsi had begun establishing political parties. One of the larger Tutsi parties, UNAR, was very much against the Belgians presence in Rwanda and they wanted independence immediately. In 1959 the Hutu revolution came, they attacked Tutsis and burned sown their houses. The Tutsi retaliated, but the Belgians favoured the Hutu. The worst was over in 1960, but over the next 4 years 130.000 Tutsi fled to neighbouring countries. In 1960 the first elections was held, and PARMEHUTU won by overwhelming majority. This was the beginning of independence and autonomy.

¹⁶ <http://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/rwhistory.htm>

¹⁷ Prunier (1997) p.41

¹⁸ Prunier (1997) p.43

¹⁹ Prunier (1997) p.45

²⁰ Rittner, Roth and Whitworth (2004) p. 152

2.3 Postcolonial history

Rwanda received its independence in 1962 and after the first election Gregoire Kayibanda, PARMEHUTU, became Rwanda's president. A new constitution was ratified, and Rwanda's economic ties with Burundi ceased. In 1963, Tutsis who had fled the country tried to invade Rwanda from Burundi. The lack of good planning and inefficient weapons made them unsuccessful. This led to a massacre and over 10.000 Tutsis was killed²¹. The new government led a very pronounced anti Tutsi policy, and dehumanising words like "cockroaches", used to describe the Hutu, started to get footing. Tutsi continued to flee to neighbouring countries. To say that The Tutsi was inferior in Rwanda during these years is an understatement. They were outright suppressed and marginalised by the government. Though there had been many problems, Kayibanda was re-elected in 1969 for a new four-year period.

In 1973 Mgr. Juvenal Habyarimana led a coup to overthrow the government, and succeeded. He led a military regime controlled by Hutu. He even made Rwanda a one party state, where his party Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement –MRDN, was the only political party allowed, with only one ruler- himself. In reality, Habyarimana led a dictatorship, with support from several western countries. Habyarimana was re-elected in both 1983 and 1988.²²

The anti-Tutsi attitude continued on under Habyarimana, he even made a policy that made it illegal for refugees to return to Rwanda. This led to fury among the Tutsis both in Rwanda and in diaspora. Although Tutsis was still marginalised and inferior, it was not as rigorous as it was during Kayibanda. This does not mean that they were not the subjects to racism, discrimination and great injustices. The only place that did seem to see the Tutsi as somewhat equals was the church. "The church in spite of being Hutu-dominated, remained more open, and a measure of institutional equality existed among the clergy; in the 1980's three of eight Rwanda bishops were Tutsi."²³ However, Hutu was seen as the real Rwandans, Tutsi was just foreigners. Just like the Belgians had their predilection for the Tutsi and exalted them rather than the Hutu, the government now did the same thing only the beneficiaries this time around was the Hutu.²⁴ Prunier says "the Habyarimana regime up till (circa) 1988 was in general on

²¹ Prunier (1997) p.56

²² Prunier (1997) p.77-78

²³ Prunier (1997) p.75

²⁴ Prunier (1997) p.80

of the least bad in Africa if one considers only its actions and not its intellectual underpinnings”.²⁵ Is it possible to overlook the ideology behind? Especially when we know what was to come?

In 1990 Habyarimana announced that he favoured a multi-political state, and that people were now allowed to form political parties and a political movement began. At the same time the Rwandan Patriotic Front- RPF started to plan an attack on the government to take back their country. Tutsis formed RPF in exile, most of them living in Uganda, and many of them had been a part of the Ugandan army. RPF was created to take back their land and their homes. To fight against the repression of their people in Rwanda. 1. October 1990 they invaded Rwanda from Uganda. They were met by the Forces Armées Rwandaises -FAR, and though they had the element of surprise on their side, FAR was a much better equipped army. They also received help from the French rather quickly. The war lasted for a month, and the RPF army lost many of its leaders. RPF withdrew to Uganda where they laid low and recuperated. Slowly they rebuild their army under the leadership of Paul Kagame. Most of the army consisted of exile Tutsis in Uganda, though exile Tutsis from other countries came as well. Many of them had been part of the NRA (National Resistance Army) in Uganda, and they used their contacts there to acquire weapons. Economically they depended on funds from exile Tutsis, many of them living in western countries. During the next years the civil war proceeded.

Habyarimanas original plan was probably to announce a multi political state in order to please the French²⁶, but as violence and demonstrations grew, he realised that this had to be enforced. In addition, somewhat reluctantly, he started a road towards democracy.

Habyarimana had to share political power and a new multiparty cabinet was sworn in. They also decided to initiate negotiations with the RPF. There were many peace agreements signed between the government and RPF and repeatedly they were broken

Then in the summer of 1992 the peace talks of Arusha was commenced. They lasted for 1 year and resulted in the Arusha Peace Agreement, which was signed in 1993. The agreement

²⁵ Prunier (1997) p.83

²⁶ Prunier (1997) p.127

among other contained a cease-fire, a broad based transitional government -BBTG and repatriation of refugees.²⁷

Hutu extremist was against the peace talks in Arusha. They felt that the president and “the world” would give away much of the power to the Tutsis. They felt that they had no mandate and therefore no control over what was happening in Arusha. Their impression was that Habyarimana was giving away too much power to the RPF. The fact that there even was an attempt at cooperation with the RPF was seen as outrageous and even treason. Much of this Hutu extremism grew from within the Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique –CDR. CDR was one of the new parties that appeared on the political canvas when Habyarimana opened up for a multi-party state. The CDR was a radical and racist Hutu party, and it was out of their political circle that the Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines -RTLMC arose. RTLMC is known for its racial broadcasting, which encouraged people to slaughter Tutsis.²⁸ The broadcasting started in July 1993. The Arusha Peace Agreements was never implemented and in November 1993 the first soldiers in the UNAMIR peace keeping force arrived.

²⁷ Prunier (1997) p.192

²⁸ Prunier (1997) p.128-129

Chapter 3

The genocide

In April 1994 genocide erupted in Rwanda. The tensions had been running high for some time, and when President Habyarimanas plane was shot down on its way home from Tanzania, it resulted in an eruption of violence. In the next 100 days close to 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were slaughtered and killed by Hutu extremist. It took about two days from the genocide erupted until RPF started fighting back. The killings were well organised, and massive in scale. People were literally slaughtered, by simple everyday tools like machetes, clubs and hoes. The prime minister and other ministers were some of the first ones killed, and an interim government was soon in place. This government were loyal to the Hutu extremist ideology, and became one of the largest facilitators of the genocide. One by one, political leaders around the country who did not agree with this ideology were killed, and replaced with people chosen there by the interim government. Churches ended up as killing fields, and most religious leaders did not speak out against what was happening. A well-organised and carefully planned genocide ravaged Rwanda. By the end of April most of the UNAMIR force had been withdrawn, leaving under five hundred peacekeepers with no resources and no personnel to help the Rwandans from the massacre. The international community did not do anything, with significance, to help the people in Rwanda. Many people fled to churches, only to end up being slaughtered by the thousands. Mothers were forced to dig graves in which their children were buried alive after. People were mutilated and tortured. The rivers clogged with bodies. Dogs were eating the remains of bodies decaying in the sun. RPF fought their way through Rwanda. Finally, after over three months, they controlled over half the country, ceased Kigali and won. Rwanda was now a country covered in rotten corpses, with no money, no academics, no legal system, no trust and almost no hope.

3.1 100 days in Rwanda

Habyarimana's plane was shot down in the morning 6. April, the Presidential Guard immediately took control over the airport. Less than an hour later roadblocks had pop up all over the capital and shooting could be heard all over Kigali as house searches were carried out. Some of the first victims of the genocide had been carefully planned; liberal politicians, religious leaders and other high standing businessmen and women, who supported the Arusha peace agreement or otherwise had shown that they supported the change that was about to start in Rwanda. One of these was the Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana. She was killed in her own home, at the time she was under the protection of 15 UNAMIR soldiers. These soldiers were a part of a peacekeeping mission, and when they were asked to lay down their weapons, they did- thinking that it was the right thing to do with the mandate they had been given. Ten of the peacekeepers in this group were from Belgium; they were taken away and killed. When the UN eventually found their bodies they had been badly mutilated and mangled, this news shook the west, and off course Belgium in particular.

People ran. They sought refuge in places they considered safe. Churches, hospitals and schools were overcrowded by people seeking refuge. Wherever there was a blue UN flag, people gathered in huge crowds believing the UN would protect them. All across town roadblocks, manned by the Interahamwe militia, demanded people to show their identity cards. If the identity card said Tutsi, they would be killed on the spot. Neighbour turned on neighbour and the massacres grew bigger by the minute. Two days into the killings, on April 8th the massacres had become evident²⁹ and RPF decided to fight back. Death lists circulated, and Interahamwe went door to door to kill everyone on these lists. Interahamve was created as a militia that agreed with the government, especially the cells within the government that did not want the peace agreement and that was a part of planning the genocide, Interahamve organised the killings. They also had a radio channel, Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines- RTLM, which broadcasted before and during the genocide, they repeatedly urged all Hutus to join in the killings. They used whatever weapons they had available; therefor the Rwandan genocide is known for the slaughtering and dismembering of their victims, by machetes, clubs and hoes.

²⁹ Prunier (1997) p.221

The people in Interahamwe was not politically active but mostly frustrated and angry young men who was easily convinced that this would be the right way to get a better life. They were recruited mostly among the poor, and when the violence erupted, they recruited even more among the poorest. These people saw a chance to revenge the injustice they felt as inferior in every way. They saw a chance at living as outlaws knowing that the chances of legal prosecution were small.³⁰ The militia was supplied with large amounts of alcohol and drugs, which only added to the anger and the violence.

While expatriates were being flown out of Rwanda, the genocide continued to spread. It spread throughout the whole country like a fire. “At roadblocks in Kigali the militia asked for identification cards at first, killing all those with the designation Tutsi, but this took too much time and became an irritation, so the militia singled out those who were tall, with straight noses and long fingers. And then they killed those who looked educated and richer than others”³¹

This was a well-planned and organised genocide. A secret cell called Zero Network was close to President Habyarimana, this cell believed in the extreme Hutu power ideology, and with its powerful members, they had a huge impact. President Habyarimana’s personal secretary- who was also married to his sister, Mme Habyarimana, three of her brothers, her son-in-law and Colonel Thèoneste Bagosora were all a part of Zero Network. The interim government was also big contributors to the implementation of the genocide, especially the Prime Minister Jean Kambanda and the Defense Minister Major General Augustin Bizimana. The hate radio RTLM brought the extreme ideology to the people, and encouraged them to pick up whatever available weapons and join their cause; kill all Tutsis, and Hutus who disagree with the ideology. “So we can see the actual organisers of the genocide were a small, tight group, belonging to the regime’s political, military and economic elite who had decided through a mixture of ideological and material motivation radically to resist political change which they perceived as threatening.... and (they) shared a common ideology of racial Hutu domination over Rwanda”³²

³⁰ Prunier (1997) p.230

³¹ Melvern (2009) p. 152

³² Prunier (1997) p.241-242

3.2 Religious leaders and the church

In 1991 90% of Rwanda's population belonged to Catholic, Protestant or Seventh - day Adventist churches.³³ Both the churches and religious leaders in Rwanda participated in the genocide, they had people sympathising to both sides. Churches were the most common places for people to seek refuge; it was also one of the places where most people were killed. African Rights claims "more Rwandese citizen died in churches and parishes than anywhere else" during the genocide.³⁴ Prunier claims the churches were bystanders to the genocide in general³⁵, and that some turned out as perpetrators, and others fought against the genocide. For the most part, it was people with a Christian belief who made out the helpers, not the church. Nevertheless, as perpetrators the church played a role. In the Catholic Church, only two out of nine Bishops spoke out against the genocide.³⁶ Churches like Ntarama, Nyamata, Narabuye and many more, ended up as slaughterhouses instead of sanctuaries. The stories told by genocide survivors are often a grim tale. "People came to mass each day to pray, and then they went out to kill."³⁷ A Seventh - day Adventist pastor, Elizaphan Ntakirutimana, encouraged Tutsis to gather at his church, and then lead a militia mob straight to the church. Eight thousand people were killed. There are also stories of church leaders who protected their congregation. "Tutsi refugees reported that in several locations Hutu priests had barred the doors of their churches to death squads; claiming that they could not kill in a church and, at least in one case, paying the mob to leave."³⁸ Many Christian individuals and church officials showed heroic acts and stayed true to their belief with Jesus Christ as their idol, but the churches, as institutions, on the other hand had a role that in many cases is highly dubious at best.

³³ Longman (2010) p.4

³⁴ Longman (2010) p.4

³⁵ Prunier (2009) p.250

³⁶ Prunier (2009) p.250

³⁷ Longman (2010) p.7

³⁸ Longman (2010) p.16

Muslims in Rwanda, a minority, did not participate in the genocide. Testimonies show that in large part Muslims protected each other³⁹. They did not see themselves as Hutu and Tutsi, but as brothers and sisters in faith. Something the Christian community failed to do.

3.3 UN and the international society's reactions

Romeo Dallaire led the peacekeeping force UNAMIR and tried desperately to get the UN and the rest of the world to react to what was happening, to help, to reinforce UNAMIR, and to give them a new mandate, that would give them permission to intervene. However, the failure in Somalia in 1993 and the loss of the Belgian soldiers was still fresh in mind. USA did not support any reinforcement of UNAMIR; they were reluctant at any form of peacekeeping, especially since USA did not have any special interests in Rwanda to protect. France could have been an influential country in fighting for an UN intervention but “there was fear in Paris that, given France’s past records in Rwanda, any form of ‘humanitarian’ intervention, even under a UN mandate, might be mistaken for an attempt at supporting the provisional government and lead to military clashes with the RPF.”⁴⁰ In one of the cables that Dallaire sent UN headquarter he said “Does UNAMIR risk an armed confrontation, for which we are not equipped, protected or mandated, at considerable risk to the safety of our own troops, to attempt to save these people, or do we leave them for possible extermination?”⁴¹

In the days that followed six. April, soldiers from France and Belgium arrived by planes to Rwanda, not to enforce the UNAMIR but to evacuate Europeans and Rwandan VIPs from Rwanda. The orders were to evacuate only expatriates and France evacuated some Rwandan VIP’s, among these were the president’s widow and some of their children. “In a matter of four days, almost all expatriates had left. A total of 3900 people of over twenty-two nationalities were safely out of the country.”⁴² “For the peacekeepers of UNAMIR, the final departure of the troops that came to rescue the expatriates was an affront to their mission. It was unbelievable that they could leave, knowing the dangers. *Dallaire said that it was inexcusable, by any human criteria ‘[That we] were left to fend for ourselves,’ he said, ‘with neither mandate nor supplies- defensive stores, ammunition, medical supplies or water- with*

³⁹ Prunier (2009) p.253

⁴⁰ Prunier (1997) p.235

⁴¹ Melvern (2009) p.187

⁴² Melvern (2009) p.163

only survival rations that were rotten and inedible- is a description of inexcusable apathy by the sovereign states that made up the UN, that is completely beyond comprehension and moral acceptability."⁴³ In the end only an estimate of less than thirty white foreigners had decided to stay, this made the genocide easier to carry out, "without the prying eyes of the west".⁴⁴

At the same time as the genocide spread in Rwanda, the discussion on whether or not to withdraw UNAMIR was running high in UN. First, the Belgians were called back. After what had happened to ten of their men, Belgium did not want to continue to put their soldiers in danger. They left 19. April, some of them made it clear that they left under protest. 21. April UN decided to withdraw most of the peacekeeping force leaving only a small troop of 270 in Rwanda. When the genocide erupted, there were 2519 UNAMIR troops in Rwanda.⁴⁵ Romeo Dallaire gave all the peacekeepers the choice to stay. In the end there were under 500 peacekeepers left in the country.

In the western press words like tribal anarchy, ethnic violence, tribal or civil war etc. was used to describe what was happening in Rwanda; almost no one used the word genocide. Using the word and acknowledging what was happening would also mean that the world had the obligation to act. Not until late April, the word started appearing in the press, but still these were the exceptions. The same goes for the UN and the use of the word genocide. On 29. April there was a statement draft that included the paragraph "The horrors of Rwanda's killing fields have few precedents in the recent history of the world. The Security Council reaffirms that the systematic killing of any ethnic group, with intent to destroy it in whole or in part constitutes an act of genocide as defined by relevant provisions of international law... the council further points out that an important body of international law exists that deals with perpetrators of genocide."⁴⁶ The British ambassador, David Hannay protested this paragraph saying that to define it, as a genocide, and then not react on it, would be ridiculous. The representatives from USA, China, Rwanda and France did not want this paragraph either. Therefore, the statement that was issued did not include this paragraph, but a watered-down version of it, that did not include the word genocide⁴⁷

⁴³ Melvern (2009) p.170

⁴⁴ Prunier (1997) p.236

⁴⁵ Prunier (1997) p.234

⁴⁶ Melvern (2009) p.203

⁴⁷ Melvern (2009) p.203

The UN now decided to send new troops to Rwanda, UNAMIR II, which was to consist of 5500 people. However, the decision did not result in anything. The only countries that said they would contribute with personnel, was African countries. In addition, they could not provide materials. No western country volunteered anything. The decision did not help the UNAMIR in Rwanda or the people being slaughtered. In mid-June, France announced that they would intervene and create safe zones in Rwanda. A couple of days after the announcement the UN discussed the French initiative. They were the only western country that had offered anything, and it would not cost UN anything. The French were given a UN mandate, they were not to wear blue berets, but would be coordinated by the secretary-general.⁴⁸ Operation Turquoise was now a reality. Nevertheless, there were mixed feelings about this mission. Dallaire was very much against it, and raised the question why France could not contribute these troops to UNAMIR II. Kagame was outraged and stated “you have armed the Presidential Guards; you have accepted that the Presidential Guard armed and trained, in front of you, the Hutu extremists.”⁴⁹ When the news of a French intervention reached Rwanda, the Interahamwe hung the tricolour on their roadblocks, and rejoiced in the certainty that the French came to help them. When the French soldiers arrived, their leaders refused to acknowledge that genocide was occurring. The French soldiers were shocked, “one of the French officers, Sergeant Major Thierry Prunghaud, said: ‘This is not what we were led to believe. We were told that the Tutsi were killing Hutu.’ Another soldier said: ‘we have not a single wounded Hutu here, just massacred Tutsi.’”⁵⁰ RPF were to be excluded by the safe zones created by the French, keep away by force if needed. The safe zone ended up being safe zones for the perpetrators of the genocide in the beginning. Moreover, the French defended this by saying that they did not have a mandate to arrest anyone within the zone.⁵¹ The killings also continued within the safe havens operation Turquoise created. The Operation Turquoise was to last for 60 days, and the UN saw it as a good option until UNAMIR II came to Rwanda.

⁴⁸ Melvern (2009) p. 233

⁴⁹ Melvern (2009) p. 2351

⁵⁰ Melvern (2009) p.238

⁵¹ Melvern (2009) p. 240

3.4 Eyewitnesses

René Caravielhe, a logistician with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) France, describes what he saw in Rwanda during the genocide.

“Jean de Dieu, eleven was curled up, a ball of flesh and blood, the look in his eyes was a glance from nowhere... without vision; Marie-Ange, aged nine, was propped up against a tree trunk... her legs apart, and she was covered in excrement, sperm and blood... in her mouth was a penis, cut with a machete, that of her father... [nearby]... in a ditch with stinking water were four bodies, cut up, piled up, their parents and older brothers... another word will have to be coined more terrible than the word horror, in order to describe this sort of thing... this sort of thing was a daily experience for volunteers still in Rwanda.”⁵²

In a church in Narabuye, people sought refuge, but the militia came and slaughtered them. Thirty-five thousand people died at Narabuye; they assumed they would be safe within a church. The massacre in Narabuye took place from 7.-19. April. Placide survived by a thread many times. He was just a kid.

He was carried in a backpack away from the slaughter and then cast aside, and left to die. The shrapnel from a grenade tore up both his legs and forced him to crawl away from the Interahamwe militia. He saw unborn children being cut out of their living mothers, just to kill them both afterwards. He saw his family being killed. Placide, with legs that could not hold him, hid by a nearby house. The Interahamwe found him here, but left him knowing he would die in a day and wanting it to be slow. His sister⁵³ Valentina was badly wounded by machetes, and her fingers on one hand were cut off. With badly infected wounds, she hid under the bodies, and lived in a pile of rotting corpses until they were saved by RPF. It took 43 days from the massacre in Narabuye until they were saved.⁵⁴

In a church in Ntarama, another massacre took place. The militia showed no mercy, and killed as many as they could. In the room where they used to have Sunday school for the children, a small house next to the church, the killers used one of the walls as their weapon. Small children, under the age of two, were smashed against the wall, over and over again until they

⁵² Melvern (2009) p.207

⁵³ Valentina and Placide are not biological siblings, but they themselves see each other as brother and sister.

⁵⁴ Placide Uwiragiye

were dead. Then they were thrown in a pile, before the killers picked up the next child to be killed.

This is three of many stories describing the unimaginable horror that took place in Rwanda during the genocide.

3.5 The genocide ends

Since 8. April RFP had been fighting back. They were advancing, and by 22. May they had taken control over the airport in Kigali. They had given up all hope of receiving help from UN or the rest of the world. The only way to stop this was for them to win. They had been fighting for over a month and controlled nearly half the country. The closer RPF came to cease Kigali, the bigger grew the flood of people fleeing the country. By the end of June, roads were clogged with Hutus and genocide perpetrators now escaping. The exodus to DRC (Democratic Republic of Congo) in the beginning of July 1994 is the largest exodus, of its kind, in history. In two days, over one million crossed over the borders to DRC. Creating huge refugee camps, where famine and diseases ruled. In these camps, the extreme Hutu Power ideology lived on, and parts of the genocide continued there. The safe zone, created by Operation Turquoise, inside Rwanda also ended up being a safe haven for perpetrators.⁵⁵ 4. July RPF took Kigali. 17. July 20.000 soldiers from the Rwandan Army fled to DRC, bringing with them money and weapons. Finally, RPF declared a ceasefire 20. July and the day after a new government was sworn in. 12 of the 19 Ministers were Hutu.

One million people had been killed. Rwanda's hills were covered in bodies. Rwanda was no longer a battlefield; it was now a country with nothing. No security, no health care, no academics, no money, a people in fear and almost no hope.

“What we have been living here is a disgrace. The international community and the UN member states have on the one hand been appalled at what has happened in Rwanda while, on the other hand, these same authorities, apart from a few exceptions, have done nothing substantive to help the situation... the force has been prevented from having a modicum of self-respect and effectiveness on the ground... FC [force commander] acknowledges that this

⁵⁵ Melvern (2009) p.240

mission is a logistical nightmare for your HQ, but that is nothing compared to the living hell that has surrounded us, coupled with the obligation of standing in front of both parties and being the bearer of so little help and credibility... UNHQ, and sovereign countries, with few exceptions, have solidly failed in providing any reasonable/tangible/timely support to the expanded UNAMIR so far. The APC's⁵⁶ are still in Entebbe, we don't have water... although Rwanda and UNAMIR have been at the centre of a terrible human tragedy, not to say Holocaust, and although many fine words have been pronounced by all, including members of the security council, the tangible effort on the ground to meet the minimum viable operational needs... has been totally, completely ineffective”
(R. Dallaire in one of his last cables to UNHQ)⁵⁷

⁵⁶ an armoured fighting vehicle that had been promised to the UNAMIR

⁵⁷ Melvern (2009) p.242

Chapter 4

Rwanda's way to recovery

In a country that was literally covered in dead bodies, with no infrastructure left and without a government Rwanda had to try to find a way forward. They had to try to find ways to rebuild the country almost from scratch, and they had to choose if the future would continue harboring the ideologies and the conflicts from the past or if they should try another approach and try to create a peaceful nation.

4.1 The years after the genocide

When the new government was sworn in, July 1994, the country was in utter chaos and despair. They would have to build the country again, from scratch. The new government were to implement the Arusha agreements, but all the minister posts that, according to the agreement from 1993, should have gone to MRDN was now given to members from RPF, and in addition there was created a new post of vice-president that was given to Paul Kagame. Most of the new ministers had no previous experience from government or the professional political life. They called the new government 'the Government for National Unity'.

France was very much against the new government, and tried to persuade others to support their opinion. They even tried to halt the aid to Rwanda from the European Union (EU).⁵⁸ France's role in Rwanda was at best ambiguous; a report that came out in 2007 confirmed that France saw the war in Rwanda as a war between Anglophone and Francophone Africa, thereby supporting the Francophone government in Rwanda, and fighting RPF which was seen as the Anglophone threat seeing that they'd been in exile in Uganda. France ended up giving «unconditional public support» to the Habyarimana regime.⁵⁹

The international society was now very much interested in Rwanda, and NGO's from all over the world came to help. The devastation was overwhelming. Millions of people were in refugee camps in neighboring countries, and in Rwanda, people were scattered all over the

⁵⁸Melvern (2009) p.250

⁵⁹Melvern (2009) p.265-268

country.

The first years after the genocide, talking about amnesty for perpetrators was too sensitive and painful for both the people in Rwanda and the government. At an international conference held by the government in Rwanda on how to deal with accountability, in the fall of 1995, the question of amnesty as a part of reconciliation was portrayed by the representatives from South Africa as “the African way”, but it was too early to resonate with the Rwandans.⁶⁰ The focus became security and reducing poverty. In 1997 over 100 leaders from all over Rwanda, both at civil and private sectors, started gathering at the President’s office weekly, to discuss Rwanda’s biggest challenges and what needed to be dealt with first, they created a vision for how they wanted to rebuild Rwanda. Out of these meeting emerged five major problems that needed to be addressed first “ensuring security, establishing unity, developing programs for justice and reconciliation, establishing good governance and democracy and finally rebuilding the economy.”⁶¹ A result from these meetings was the drafting of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, PRSP, which was sent to the IMF and World Bank and other donors as a plan on how to move forward. The evaluation from the World Bank after supporting this Poverty Reduction Strategy was very positive, and Rwanda was given credit for their efforts to bring the country and its people back on their feet.⁶²

Many steps were taken to try to get control over the new situation in Rwanda, and to try to rebuild. One of the more prominent problems was the lack of a legal system. Academics had been on the target lists in the genocide, which resulted in a mere 10 lawyers left in Rwanda in 1994.⁶³ At the same time, tens of thousands were arrested for playing a role during the genocide. The prisons soon became overcrowded, according to Amnesty International Rwanda had prisons with the capacity to hold 18.000 prisoners before 1994, during the first 18 months after the genocide 90.000 people were arrested. New prisons were build, but they became overcrowded immediately. The number of imprisoned people reached its top in 1997 and 1998 with 124.000, the prisons had a capacity to hold 49.400.⁶⁴ It was estimated that it would take more than a century to judge all the prisoners with the capacity of the Rwandan

⁶⁰ Clark and Kaufman (2008) p.213

⁶¹ Ensign and Bertrand (2010) p. 56

⁶² Ensign and Bertrand (2010) p. 56-57

⁶³ Zorbas (2004) p.34

⁶⁴ Amnesty International; A question of Justice (2002)

legal system.⁶⁵

To find a way to manage the huge amount of cases, and slowly starting on a road towards reconciliation several steps were made, within the judicial and legal sphere. The International Criminal Tribunal of Rwanda (ICTR) was created by the UN to deal with the most severe cases of acts of genocide and crimes against humanity, on a national level Rwandans drew on an old tradition, the Gacaca, which is a traditional legal system usually used in disputes over issues like land, cattle or neighborly disagreements. This traditional system was revived and given a new mandate where they had the opportunity to sentence people to prison sentences if they were found guilty, also, and maybe even more crucial, it was meant to be a tool for reconciliation. The judicial processes in Rwanda and the resource problem it faced, has received much criticism. It should also be acknowledged that during the first decade following the genocide, Rwanda had prosecuted more suspects than Germany, Austria and Italy together accomplished the first decade after World War I.⁶⁶

A commission called National Unity and Reconciliation Commission- NURC was established in 1999 to address issues concerning unity and reconciliation and to promote and facilitate reconciliation. The commissioners were, and still is, largely religious leaders. NURC holds meetings, workshops and conferences on the subject. They have contact with organizations, mosques and churches working with reconciliation and serves as a resource and facilitator for them. Their work aims at reaching the whole spectrum in the population, working in rural areas and the big cities, both with victims, perpetrators, refugees and returned refugees. With a special emphasis on education and training both for the public and for the perpetrator and returning refugees. The criticism that NURC has received points out that it is a too vertical approach, not a bottom-up approach that the critics claim is needed, also there has been concerns about Rwandans' view on NURC as a governmental voice.⁶⁷

In 2003 the first election since the genocide were held. Political freedom in Rwanda at the time was restricted. The sitting RPF government banned the largest Hutu party, MDR, on grounds that they spread genocidal ideologies. This also meant that RPF's largest competition disappeared, and in reality, they almost had a monopoly on the political scene. The Rwandan government has been widely criticized for the lack of freedom of speech and political

⁶⁵ Zorbas (2004) p.36

⁶⁶ Clark and Kaufman (2008) p.218

⁶⁷ Zorbas (2004) p.39

freedom. Most of this critique comes from the international society, and particularly the West.

RPF and Paul Kagame won the 2010 elections by over 90% of the votes. However, with very few opponents, because most of the other presidential candidates that wanted to run for office, did not get their paperwork approved and some, like Victoire Ingabire Umuhiza, were banned from the elections on grounds of promoting genocidal ideologies and genocide denial.

Carina Tertsakian claims that Rwandans do not have the opportunity to raise their voices against the government, because there is then a real possibility that they will be accused of genocide denial or having a genocide ideology. This results in a situation where outsiders from the international society have the obligation of speaking up on their behalf.⁶⁸The Rwandan governments answer to this is among others; “Kagame feels that if you have a western-type full freedom of expression, that will allow revisionism, genocide denial, and that can lead to genocide itself. It is still too soon since 1994”⁶⁹

There is a lot of ambivalence around RPF. On one hand, RPF fought and won the war to stop the genocide, when no others took up the fight. This gives them respect and trust in the community. But the problems that arises concerns their solitary on the political scene, and their opposition to have RFP soldiers trialed for war crimes committed during the genocide, and the months after. A report from UNHCR concluded that in the months after the genocide that RPF were responsible for killing “thousands of civilians”⁷⁰ It is important to remember that not only had people lost loved ones in the genocide; many had also lost all their property and belongings. Women had been raped, unwanted pregnancy and HIV became part of the legacy they were given. What happened in Rwanda was one of the accelerators that lead to recognition of rape and sexual violence as a weapon of war.

4.2 Refugees and the refugee camps

The refugee camps in DRC, Tanzania and Burundi, the biggest ones in DRC, were over flooded with refugees. There was no clean water and little food, corpses was rotting around them; the conditions were horrible. The UN and NGO’s had no political control in the camps.

⁶⁸ Pflanz, Mike (2010)

⁶⁹ Pflanz, Mike (2010)

⁷⁰ Des Forges (1999) p.728

The peculiar thing is that many of the refugees arrived according to where they came from, neatly divided into prefectures and communes, with their former bourgmestres and leaders still in charge.⁷¹ The Hutu Power ideology lived on, and MRDN and the militia soon established a new regime inside the camps. Huge amount of weapons had been brought from Rwanda into the camps, and the killings continued. People who did not agree with them, or wanted to return to Rwanda were threatened, abused and even killed- they established control by fear. The militia created a system where they took the food distributed, and sold it, thereby generating income to continue their fight for Hutu Power.

The ethical dilemmas for the people and organizations aiding the refugee camps were tremendous, the need for aid was huge, but the camps were filled with genocide perpetrators who were continuing their mission within the camps. Several organizations made a plea to the UN, asking for security forces to be deployed to deal with the militias terrorizing the camps, but no such forces were deployed.⁷²

4.3 Gacaca courts

In 2001 the government introduced the Gacaca courts, based on traditional Rwanda justice systems. The Gacaca courts purpose was to ease the huge amounts of cases of the national courts. The aspect that makes the reconciliation process in Rwanda different from others, like for example the reconciliation process in South Africa, is that it combines reconciliation and punishment. They have combined the two, with a system that divides perpetrators into four groups, each group is judged, and if found guilty- punished by different courts. This means that many of the perpetrators may not get as harsh punishment as the victims might have wanted, but they do not automatically escape punishment by confessing their crimes.

1st category: Planners, organizers, instigators, supervisors of the genocide and other persons with authority within the military, local or national political leaders, people who performed especially heinous murders and those who raped.

⁷¹ Prunier (2009) p.313-314

⁷²Melvern (2009) p.249-250

2nd category: Murderers who don't belong in the first category, people whose actions, besides actual killing, resulted in the death of others and those who performed acts with the intent to kill, seriously harmed others, but the attack(s) didn't result in causing death.

3rd category: Persons who caused serious harm to other people.

4th category: People who committed crimes against property⁷³

For the most part the gacaca courts were to judge in cases with perpetrators from the third and fourth category, they have also judged in some cases from the second category. Although it builds on a traditional judicial system, it is a new and different institution. Traditional Gacaca courts did not have legal power to sentence people to imprisonment, they were largely a mediation forum that were used to settle disputers over land, cattle e.g. The new version of Gacaca created after the genocide has the opportunity to convict people to prisons sentences, the rule is that if the perpetrators confess to their crime in the Gacaca courts and tell the truth, they will automatically get their sentences greatly reduced. Gacaca trials was implemented in 2005.

The profound aim of Gacaca is to find peace, truth, forgiveness, healing, justice and reconciliation.⁷⁴ Truth entails finding what happened in the past. Peace is the absence of conflict, to achieve peace, a culture of violence has to be replaced, the culture of impunity has to be banned and the people responsible has to be punished, in this way we can create a culture of peace to replace the culture of violence. Forgiveness is when people leave vengeance to be, and instead chooses to move towards the future without binding themselves to a circle of pain, violence and conflict. To make the choice, not to forget, but to create something new and more positive. It does not mean that people can't be punished for their crimes, or that victims should turn the other cheek, but to move away from a stand where everyone on a personal basis harbors hate and thoughts of vengeance toward the perpetrators, and moving on to a place where the perpetrator no longer holds this power over you. To heal a person or a nation it requires a holistic approach. The trauma that has been inflicted needs psychological, emotional and material healing combined with several other factors (often on a more individual base), to make it possible for individuals, and in extension nations, to rebuild identity and heal. The discussion when it comes to transitional justice after conflict is always what role traditional justice should play. Should people be punished in addition to truth

⁷³ Clark and Kaufman (2008) p.214

⁷⁴ Clark (2010) p.31

telling? In South Africa the Truth and Reconciliation Commission –TRC gave *people freedom from punishment* in exchange for their testimonies. In Rwanda, they have chosen a combination that gives huge reductions in sentencing in exchange for testimonies. This is part of restorative justice, which sees it as insufficient to just hand out punishments, in order to restore a society and rebuild relationships between people; there is a need for perpetrators and victims to find a way out. This is where the other aims contribute, so that it is not just a process where punishment is being handed out, but also a process that acknowledges that a society needs more than to punish perpetrators in order to move on.⁷⁵ “Reconciliation involves the rebuilding of fractured individual and communal relationships after conflict, with a view towards encouraging meaningful interaction and cooperation between former antagonists.”⁷⁶ Reconciliation entails looking both to the past and the future, and for individuals and communities to work in cooperation to create the present and the future they want. Not ignoring or forgetting what has happened, but to make a new vision together.

Gacaca courts play a role both in judging, and in reconciliation after the genocide, the aim is restorative justice. It is made up by Rwandans for Rwandans, and is not a governmental institution, but a local one, where judging and sentencing of perpetrators is being done in cooperation with dialogue and truth telling. This makes the Gacaca a national tool both for justice and for reconciliation.

The Gacaca have received a lot of criticism, mostly by foreigners and non-Rwandan NGO's. Both Amnesty International- AI and Human Rights Watch- HRW have condemned Gacaca for being unjust. “Amnesty International believes... that gacaca trials need to conform to international standards of fairness so that the government's efforts to end impunity, and the trials themselves, are effective.”⁷⁷ They also believe that through the Gacaca the perpetrators of genocide may escape punishment, they claim that Gacaca do not respect human rights.⁷⁸ “Neither justice nor reconciliation can be achieved without strict adherence to international human rights standards in the arrest, detention and trial of suspected genocidaires.”

⁷⁵ Clark (2010) p.33-44

⁷⁶ Clark (2010) p.44

⁷⁷ Amnesty International; A question of Justice (2002)

⁷⁸ Amnesty International; A question of Justice (2002)

4.4 International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda – ICTR

On 8. November 1994 the Security Council created the International Criminal Tribunal, resolution 955, for Rwanda (ICTR). The ICTR was created to deal with the most severe charges against perpetrators in the genocide, those responsible for the genocide, placed in category 1. They would try people for crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide. The court was set outside the country, in Arusha, Tanzania. It was a slow start for the ICTR, it took over a year to set up headquarter, and the first trial did not start until 1997. The ICTR has received much criticism, both for the time delays and for the huge amount of money, time and effort that has been used on the trials, which has resulted in 69 completed cases in 14 years⁷⁹, too few claims the critics. Rigby claims that part of the decision to create ICTR was a political one to deflect the errors made by the UN during the genocide.⁸⁰ Some of the most prominent politicians and leaders in Rwanda at the time of the genocide, have been convicted by the ICTR. The ICTR is a court that follows the international legal system, unlike the Gacaca. Lambourne found in her research that many Rwandans came forward and said that the ICTR did not promote reconciliation because it is not a social institution and they do not offer compensation. According to her interviewees, they need both justice and compensation to be able to find reconciliation, because, as one of her interviewees said “it is hard to forget when living in such [poor] conditions”⁸¹ Her findings conclude that retributive and restitutive justice are the most prioritized in the process after the genocide.⁸²

4.5 The role of religion in reconciliation and society

Both before, during and after the genocide Rwanda was, and remains, fairly homogenic when it comes to religious affiliation. Christianity is by far the largest religion in the country with over 90% of the population belonging to Christian churches of different denominations. The largest one being the Roman Catholic Church, close to half the population are members in the Roman Catholic church. The churches has been largely criticized for their role in the genocide, both for actively participating and for being silent and passive. And though the

⁷⁹ ICTR 2011, <http://unictr.org/Cases/tabid/204/Default.aspx>

⁸⁰ Rigby (2001) p.176

⁸¹ Lambourne (2004) p.15

⁸² Lambourne (2004) p.17-18

church can't be seen as the largest contributor to the message of hate that led to the genocide, it can't be excused either for their actions and non-actions.

Using the term "the church" I refer to the body of organized Christian churches in Rwanda, not any particular denomination. Many will mistake the use of this term to mean the Roman Catholic Church, this is not the case here, in this context the Roman Catholic Church will represent close to 50% of "the church" due to the fact that it is the largest Christian community in Rwanda. When criticizing the churches and their role in the genocide it is important to notice that it was not just one denomination of Christianity that participated.

Father Thomas J. O'Hara told Carol Rittner in an interview that he knew that after the genocide some priests gathered to try to start a healing process inside the Church.⁸³

In Rwanda the relationship between religion and state power has been intertwined for a long time. This drives from the first missionaries who from the start wanted to maintain a good relationship with the government and local officials. After the colonial period, this bond between church and authority continued, though the churches in Rwanda have probably been the most autonomous institutions in the country. One can off course discuss the problems that occur when the bonds between religion and state are so close that they at times are difficult to separate, but this is not something I will elaborate on in this thesis because it will lead to a bigger discussion that takes my thesis of topic. It is important to know that this was the case, and that such a relationship have created problems and implications both for the churches and the state in Rwanda. This bond between politics, government and religion has characterized state building in most of the African colonies, and thereby left the countries with this legacy.

The role between Christianity and state in Rom 13.17, the bible verses in Romans 13. 1-7 can be looked at as a contributor to the way Christians in Rwanda saw their role under the state according to David P. Gushee.⁸⁴ Romans 13.1-7 states that all authority is established by God, and all humans are obliged to subject themselves to the government, to rebel against the government is to rebel against God. Gushee claims that this is a misreading of the bible verse, without elaborating on why.⁸⁵ But it is common among Christians to set God and his commands before other authorities when they are conflicting, this is grounded in what is stated in Acts 5.29; we must obey God rather than human beings.

⁸³ Rittner, Roth and Whitworth (2004) p.138

⁸⁴ Rittner, Roth and Whitworth (2004) p.263

⁸⁵ Rittner, Roth and Whitworth (2004) p. 263

Christianity in Africa is said to be “a mile wide but only an inch deep”, and Agatha Radoli claims that “If Rwanda, a country where 70%⁸⁶ of the people claim to be Christians, exhibited such an unchristian attitude in the time of crisis the Christ’s message of love and fellowship has fallen on deaf ears completely. In spite of a century of evangelization, Christianity has not taken root in Rwanda and many other parts of Africa.”⁸⁷ And if this is true then Christianity can’t be held responsible for anything that happened during the genocide, because large parts of Africa, and in this case- Rwanda in particular, is not a true Christian nation.⁸⁸

Longman believes that the genocide could have been stopped much earlier than it did, if people in Rwanda or the international society had reacted, and he believes that the churches could have played an important role in this. He is probably right, that if more people had reacted, much of the killings and violence could have been avoided.

Longman states “Perhaps religious belief and practice are predisposed towards exclusiveness and the type of communal violence and genocide... this assumption is refuted by cases in which religious groups have opposed authoritarian governments, ethnic violence and genocide.”⁸⁹

The unity and fellowship provided by churches and congregations can be exploited by their leaders, history have many stories to confirm this, and at times gruesome stories.

Communities that have members who have strong, almost unquestionable, faith in their leader, will always be prone to exploitation from their leaders, History have also shown that communities where the members share a personal faith or ideology are more prone to this than, say for instance, a sports club or a women’s group that doesn’t gather their community or group by a common belief in a deity or an ideology. But is it religion, belief or conviction that makes people more prone to this, or is it the organization, the leaders or the followers exalting of their powers to the extent that people no longer distinguishes between their belief in an ideology or deity and their belief in their leaders. There is a minority of Muslims in Rwanda, but the Muslims did not participate in the genocide. For the most part the genocide in Rwanda was Christians killing Christians.

⁸⁶ This percentage of Christians in Rwanda is much lower than any other sources I have come across in my research. I have never come across numbers under 90%. Therefore I can not find this source valid when it comes to the percentage of Christians in Rwanda, and I will not use this anywhere else in this thesis.

⁸⁷ Longman (2010) p.9

⁸⁸ Longman (2010) p.9

⁸⁹ Longman (2010) p.15

Chapter 5

Method and Empirical findings

5.1 Method

In my thesis, I have done a qualitative research by interviewing people in Rwanda who in one way or another are involved in reconciliation on local or national level in their society. My goal was to find out what role religion can play or plays in reconciliation after a violent conflict, in Rwanda's case after the genocide in 1994. Is religion, and in Rwanda's case this is largely Christianity, a help or a hinder in a reconciliation process, or is it irrelevant?

Not long into the master study I understood that the field that interested me the most was within conflict and religion and from there my interest in religions role in reconciliation. I choose to look at a field that there is very little research on, so largely I had little literature or research to compare with my findings. There is a vast amount of information on the genocide and quite a lot on reconciliation after conflict, views on reconciliation in South Africa and to some extent on parts of the reconciliation process in Rwanda. The lacking was on the area on religions role after conflict, and especially in a reconciliation process. In 2012 Daniel Philpott came out with a book that addresses this field more relevantly to my research than any other I found, this helped me a lot in my further work with the thesis. This mean that the research I did in Rwanda is largely colored by my own questions to the topic.

I wanted to interview people who in different ways are part of a reconciliation initiative, and it was important to me to interview people in both rural and urban parts of Rwanda. It was also important to interview both people with higher education and people who do not have any form of college or university education. To get the views of people from different backgrounds is important, and it is very important that the respondents represent a variety of the Rwandan people. This will give my research more validity.

There are ethical principles taken into account before I did my interviews, this is to protect the respondents. To ensure the principle of informed consent, all respondents received an information sheet where they were informed about what the aim of the interview is, and that

their participation will be anonymous in the finished product. They all could redraw their participation within 6 months after the interview had been conducted, just by sending me an email. It is important that there is not any deception, invasion of privacy, lack of informed consent and that there is no harm to the respondents.⁹⁰ The research have been approved by NSD Personvernombud⁹¹ for privacy protection of the respondents.

My research is a qualitative research, where I am using the collected data to portray the picture painted by the respondents on the role of religion in the reconciliation process that has been going on in Rwanda since the genocide in 1994. This is a small group of respondents, but since they are from different organizations, different geographical areas, have a vast variety of educational level and work within different focus groups I believe that the findings have consensus and validity to show a reality that will not be perceived as untrue or extreme by most Rwandans. In itself, the research has validity in bringing light to the work being done on reconciliation in Rwanda, because its focus is on a subject that most of the Rwandan organizations working on reconciliation in Rwanda emphasizes. Qualitative research is often more concerned with words and personal experiences than with numbers.⁹² The findings in a research that links up interviews to theory will provide valid information and can result in new theory.⁹³ The focus on descriptive detail is to emphasize the importance of finding the contextual understanding of the social society and the dynamics in the local community.⁹⁴

During my stay in Rwanda, I found it very easy to get in contact with people. My experience of the Rwandan people is that they are very open and hospitable. Since I had some contacts in Rwanda before I arrived, my first few interviews happened the first week, but then it became more difficult to find relevant respondents, and I used a couple of weeks on finding organizations and respondents that would benefit my research. After working on making new contacts and familiarizing myself with the many organizations working on reconciliation, I finally found several good respondents, and my last two weeks I conducted most of my interviews. I also spent time getting to know the culture, talking to people visiting memorials and information centers.

⁹⁰ Bryman (2012) p.135

⁹¹ The Data Protection Officer (projectnumber 27158)

⁹² Bryman (2012) p.380

⁹³ Bryman (2012) p.384

⁹⁴ Bryman (2012) p.401

When searching for respondents working with reconciliation in Rwanda it soon became clear that most of the work being done on this subject is in some way attached to one or more churches. The denominations of the churches differ, but, in my restricted timeframe of six weeks, I could not find a single organization working on the issue of reconciliation that did not have a religious affiliation in some way. Most of them were interfaith organizations, working with different denominations within Christianity, and a couple of them were ecumenical. In Rwanda, the Roman Catholic Church is the biggest denomination within the Christian community, close to half the population belong to this church.

I conducted semi-structured interviews, having an interview guide to give some cohesion to the interviews, this allows the respondents to tell their own story in their own account, and the conversation creates room for gathering more information and more nuances than with a structured interview.⁹⁵ “Keeping structure to a minimum is supposed to enhance the opportunity of genuinely revealing the perspective of the people you are studying”.⁹⁶ Having the interview guide allowed me to have some questions to steer the conversation in a way that would create more consensus between the interviews, and to help the respondents to what kind of information I needed. To allow the respondents freedom in their way of giving information resulted in new angles that I had not seen in my preparations before conducting the research. I could revisit the interview guide and fill in or remove questions that seemed to enhance or steer away from the theme. This is why I believe this method, under these circumstances and with what information I was seeking, gives more information and more depth than the other methods. I audio recorded my interviews, this gave me the opportunity to be more attentive during the interview, instead of focusing on taking good notes, I could focus on the respondent and our conversation. I often wrote notes after the interviews with observations, feelings, thoughts and questions that I had about the interview. I transcribed all the interviews, this was very time consuming but it gave me the opportunity to look at them again and revise them together with my notes. In my transcriptions, I anonymized everything, so that I could keep them after deleting the audio recording according to the guidelines of NSD.

After arriving in Rwanda, talking to organizations working on reconciliation and conducting my first interviews I changed some of my focus areas. I found that some I wanted to see things from a different angle than what I planned before conducting my research. I chose to

⁹⁵ Bryman (2012) p.12

⁹⁶ Bryman (2012) p. 403

focus more on a general approach to the work being done on reconciliation, and less focus on perpetrators and reconciliation workers work conditions.

Part of my research is observation, not observation of particular situations or planned observation of something specific, but observation of culture, religious practice, collaboration, language, communities and more. Observations as part of interaction with respondents, visiting organizations or memorial sites or observations of daily life in a new culture. All of this contributes to the understanding of the society and the people of Rwanda, and thus also to the thesis and the issues of my research. It is an overt observation in the way that whenever I talked to people I was always open about why I was there, and what the focus of my thesis is. Since my stay in Rwanda was only six weeks, my observations is what Bryman calls a “micro-ethnography” which entails a shorter stay but with a particular aspect of a topic.⁹⁷ Observation was the aspect of my research that made me better when it came to look at and analyze the information I found through the interviews. Observation is what took some of my own presumptions and my own worldviews, and put them more in the background. My understanding of the issues that Rwandans face in this reconciliation process increased by what I learned from my observations.

Presentation of respondents

In the sample of respondents there are 12 people consisting of both men and women, 25% of them are women. On the subject of education, my informants consisted of both lay people and people with higher education; two thirds of the respondents have higher education. They all have affiliation to Christian congregations, and all have a Christian faith.

I have chosen not to reveal any identifying information about most of my respondents, mostly because I find it irrelevant to the findings to do so. Another reason is that this is an sensitive issue, and relates to painful personal memories for many of the respondent and if they want to share their story in detail to others it should be in their own words, not told by a third party.

⁹⁷ Bryman (2012) p. 433

I will present a couple of the organizations that some of the respondents belong to or are affiliated with, mostly these organizations helped me in navigating the field and assisted me in finding respondents or other organizations that I could talk to.

I conducted my interviews in May and June 2011, transcribed and revised them in the fall 2011 and winter 2012, and that is four years ago, still I have kept up with the work being done in the organizations I worked with, and it has not changed to any degree that would make the information collected outdated. I believe that having the time to let much of the information sink in, while I learned more about the genocide and the reconciliation that has, and still is going on in Rwanda, makes the analysis of the information collected better. This is due to the extreme circumstances that led to the reconciliation process and the language and beliefs of the respondents about what is needed to achieve reconciliation. I will never be able to understand how it is to live through such devastating and cruel conflicts, and I will never understand how to forgive, repair and build a new future after. The time I have had to process all the information has allowed me to move past some of my original reactions, that clearly stems from my own worldview. My worldview is shaped by growing up in a safe, democratic and secular country, with a “western” view on what is right at any given moment. As a researcher, my own background will color the way I conduct my research and how I view my findings. My academic background consist of a BA in religion and cross-cultural communication, before starting the master study of religion, society and global issues. The researcher’s values will always play a part in their work, and it is important to be aware of these. The researcher have to have introspection and to continuously be self-reflective during the research process.⁹⁸My worldview is in large parts consisting of western values; I grew up in Norway and my values are influened by the democracy and legal systems there. I am a Christian, and have been active in church activities the last 15 years. My faith proved both helping and challenging in my research, it gave me a common ground with the people I interviewed that provided a shared value that resulted in gaining a trust from the respondents. It challenges in the way that even with a common faith, culture still affects religious practice and language.

⁹⁸ Bryman (2012) p.39

5.2 Presentation of organizations

Prison Fellowship Rwanda- PFR.

Their mission “is to serve the body of Christ to all those involved in and affected by crime, thus promoting reconciliation, restoration, and reconciliation in the criminal justice system and surrounding communities.”⁹⁹ Though PFR primarily is an organisation that works within prison walls and with criminals, they also work on several different areas of reconciliation. “Prison Fellowship has a vision to see communities and individuals in Rwanda transformed through practical reconciliation efforts such as agriculture projects in prisons, community house building efforts, counselling and evangelization in prisons and communities, or working with vulnerable women and children to provide opportunities for economic mobility and spiritual transformation through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.”¹⁰⁰ They work both in and outside the prison and they work with both victims and perpetrators. The aim is a reconciled nation, not only at a personal or individual level, but also with a focus on the individuals and their communities. Through projects like Reconciliation Village, they encourage communities to learn to live together again. Restorative Justice Training is a workshop between victims, perpetrators and some members of the local community. They gather in small groups and all participants have to tell the others why they are there. They have discussions and classes on topics like the definition of conflict, what caused the genocide and what impact did the genocide have. They talk about what the meaning of true reconciliation is and methods that can be used to achieve this goal. Another topic is the differences in restorative justice and classical justice, PFR try to teach the participants the difference between the two, and why they believe in restorative justice. Their position is “In classical jurisdiction, concerned parties are not involved in the resolution process; decisions are taken by lawyers and often not welcomed by the people involved. This prevents the concerned parties from building a lasting social relationship. In restorative justice however, the concerned parties express their points of view and whilst the mediator does lead the dialogue, he does not take sides. The two people are made to work together, to find their own solution, and to reach an agreement that they are both happy with and therefore creating a

⁹⁹ Prison Fellowship Rwanda <http://www.pfrwanda.org>

¹⁰⁰ Prison Fellowship Rwanda <http://www.pfrwanda.org>

solid, sustainable social relationship.”¹⁰¹ PFR is an organization that under the slogan “Proclaiming the redemptive power and love of Jesus Christ for all people” works for reconciliation in Rwanda.

Great Lakes Ecumenical Forum – GLEF.

GLEF is a Regional Advocacy Platform created to: Raise awareness and lobby for peace, they emphasize sharing information to achieve the goals set. One of the crucial ways of doing this is to encourage dialogue between different individuals and organizations working towards peace and reconciliation. GLEF lobbies to make high-level church leaders and political leaders engage in the issues of security, peace and reconciliation. They also promote interfaith collaboration. Most of their work is done through Conseil Protestant du Rwanda- CPR and their member churches. Their aim is to create a base of trained personnel that can contribute throughout the country through the churches. They have seminars on reconciliation and avoiding conflict progression. The hope is that this work will multiply, by letting it adhere in the communities it then creates an environment where the message of reconciliation will be integrated and can spread to others communities.

National Unity and Reconciliation Commission – NURC

NURC was created in 1999 by the Rwandan government to promote unity and reconciliation among Rwandans in the aftermath of the genocide. Their mandate is enshrined in the Rwandan constitution in article 178, which states that the focus of the NURC is:

- § *Preparing and coordinating the national programs for the promotion of national unity and reconciliation;*
- § *Putting in place and developing ways and means to restore and consolidate unity and reconciliation among Rwandans;*
- § *Educating and mobilizing the population on matters relating to national unity and reconciliation;*
- § *Carrying out research, organizing debates, disseminating ideas and making publications relating to peace, national unity and reconciliation;*

¹⁰¹ Prison Fellowship Rwanda <http://www.pfrwanda.org>

- § *Making proposals on measures that can eradicate divisions among Rwandans and to reinforce national unity and reconciliation;*
- § *Denouncing and fighting against acts, writings and utterances which are intended to promote any kind of discrimination, intolerance or xenophobia;*
- § *Making an annual report and such other reports as may be necessary on the situation of national unity and reconciliation.¹⁰²*

The NURC is composed by 12 members of Council called Commissioners who are responsible for following upon the work being done through or in cooperation with NURC. All the organizations I talked to had contact with NURC in one way or another, and several praised their work. For many of these organizations NURC is the link between them and the government and NURC's work makes them confident that the government is truly engaged in reconciliation of the nation.

5.3 Thematic presentation of findings

After examining my findings, there are some themes that emerges that I will elaborate on and analyze in this thesis. Reconciliation in Rwanda, the process it has been and still is, and the challenges they as a nation, as organizations and as individuals face on the path towards reconciliation and the hard choices being made daily to make this a reality. The reconciliation process that they have chosen, and fought, for in Rwanda differ from others, both in style and in result, so I will look at the reasons for choosing this method. Further, I will look at the role of religion, in Rwanda's case Christianity, and the impact it has had on the reconciliation process. I will address religious actors role in the reconciliation process, and on christian teachings that they use in their work.

What motivates people to get involved and work so hard and so long with reconciliation? My respondents have many different reasons for choosing this, some say it is a calling from God and others say that it is their Christian duty. Many feel the responsibility to help, because they see that the community needs it and because they themselves are a part of a broken society that needs reconciliation. Some see it as making amends for the role the church played in the

¹⁰²NURC <http://www.trial-ch.org> (2015)

genocide. In a couple of cases the respondents are chosen by the community to do this work, and the look at it as an honor and feel very lucky that they get to do this work.

All the respondents are Christians, and they all feel that their personal faith affect their work in different ways. Most of them emphasize that their personal faith has a big impact on the decision to get involved in reconciliation work. It is described as a calling, and that calling is something you have to share with others. One of the respondents told me that Jesus says, “go and be fruitful” and her work in a reconciliation village was her way of following Jesus and his word. Several of them said that their faith makes it easier to do this work, especially when they have difficult days and their work is hard or overwhelming. Another view was that only Jesus can fully transform a person, so in that way her faith meant everything in her work, because working without it meant that the work would never be truly fulfilled. If we look further than personal faith, we should look at how religion influence the work their organizations or churches do on reconciliation. Several mentioned that religious actors provide both for the mind and for the body, since many religious actor have a holistic approach to their work, and try to feed the people both literally and metaphorically. In whole the answers I received shows that the perceptions of religions role in their work is for the most parts the same for all respondents. They say that people’s belief creates a common ground, that makes it easier to find a base to build reconciliation on, that religion teaches people forgiveness and that they should help one another and feed the poor. Religious actors provide a meeting place and forums, which really facilitates reconciliation better than other contributors have been able to do. Religion has a way of bringing people together; and all these factors contribute, to the work that the respondents do, in a positive way.

5.3.1 Christian values and teachings used in reconciliation in Rwanda.

When the respondents expresses that they find religion, and in Rwanda’s case it is mostly Christianity, so important and influential in the reconciliation process, what then are the Christian teachings and values that they use to promote reconciliation?

The thing that they all emphasize is love; Love for one another, loving your brother, loving your neighbor and loving your enemy. These are all commandments from the Bible. From the Old Testament respondents refers to Proverbs 24:17, which tell us not to rejoice when our enemies fall, and not to be glad if our enemies are overthrown. The character of Joseph, in

Exodus 37, almost gets killed by his brothers, and ends up being sold as a slave by his own brothers. When they meet again many years later, instead of hating them; Joseph is good to them, one of my respondents often uses Joseph's history to teach people to be good to those who hurt them.

All the respondents stress that most teachings and values they use in their work towards reconciliation, comes from the new testament in the Bible. The New Testament is filled with wisdom and teachings that encourages reconciliation. The foremost part that is emphasized by all the respondents is the reconciling act that Jesus himself showed on the cross. The simple fact that Jesus would let us kill him to bring reconciliation between us and God is the number one reason, mentioned by all my respondents, why people should embrace and fight for reconciliation. This is why, several of them told me, we have an obligation to forgive and reconcile. One said, "The cross of Jesus Christ is really the meeting point when we seek reconciliation". A passage from Ephesians is also related to the reconciling act on the cross, Eph.2:16 says that by Jesus sacrifice on the cross, Jesus killed enmity. One respondent said, "When you look at Jesus on the cross it is really a good example of reconciliation, of loving your enemies in action". In addition to the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross, there are several other teachings from the new testament that are highlighted. In 2.Chorinthians 5 the Bible speaks of reconciliation between God and man through Jesus Christ, and one respondent told me that he used this Bible passage together with Matthew 5 where Jesus says that before you give an offering you have to be reconciled with your brother. Since we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, he used these two passages together to show that in order to be reconciled with your God, you have to reconcile with your brother and your neighbor. A couple of the respondents referred to Gal.3:28, which reads "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus", where they replace Jew and Gentile with Hutu and Tutsi. Many of them also encourage people to pray for the people who participated in and facilitated the genocide, because Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, that we should pray for our enemies. One of the respondents said that he uses a passage from the Ephesians in his work, which tells us not to let the sun set on our anger. They all tell people that we can always bring our pain and our wounds to the Lord because, as one of them said, God says that all who are weary and burdened shall come to him, and he will give them rest. This may, to many, seem very sugar coated and utopian view, but most of the respondents emphasize that the pain after living through extreme suffering, and the pain that comes with working towards reconciliation are very real. Moreover, He is for them the

God they turn to when it comes to guidance towards reconciliation, is also the God were they can come with their pain, anger and frustrations, and he will comfort them.

All the organizations that the respondents work for or are engaged in have a Christian affiliation. Most of them have a practical approach to the reconciliation, this mean that they work at the grassroots with people in their local community, and few work at a national or political level. Two of my respondents are at a more national level with their work, one as a leader for a big organization that works all over Rwanda, and one is a member of NURC (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission). I asked all of my respondent if they thought reconciliation could be reached without religion, and all but two said no. The two who said yes, thought other ideologies could be used in similar ways as religion but all the others expressed that they did not believe that it would be possible. Some argued that reconciliation could be reached in theory without religion, and to some degree in a society, but that the aspect Christianity brought to the table is the healing of individuals as well as the reconciliation process. For the most part, I experienced my respondents as very open, and they did not evade difficult topics. The only time I experienced this is when it came to the duality of the Roman Catholic Church during the genocide, I found that most of them avoided the question, turned the conversation into some other aspects or emphasized the positive work that have been done through the church on reconciliation after 1994.

5.3.2 Punishment in reconciliation

After the genocide, Rwanda were left with no legal system and a mere ten lawyers in the whole country. The ICTR was established in 1995, and had its mandate to prosecute the most serious crimes committed during the genocide. Still there were enormous amounts of perpetrators, and no system to address it. Therefore, Rwanda chose to build on an ancient traditional court, the Gacaca. All the respondents are positive to the Gacaca courts, most of them know about all the criticism it has received, but like one of them said, “We know that people are criticizing, but they don’t understand.” Most of the criticism received is from outside Rwanda, by people who do not understand Rwandans, and most who have never lived in war or violent conflicts. “Most of them sit in an office in the west and try to dictate what we should do and feel.” In their communities, Gacaca is highly regarded, both by victims and by perpetrators. “When the reconciliation process started here there was a lot of criticism. The first criticism was on the prospect of justice and reconciliation. People wanted us to give

amnesty like they did in South Africa, but they thought that in addition to telling the truth people also needed to be punished, because apartheid was not a genocide, not the killing of 1 mill people in a 100 days. We opted for punishing the criminals. That ended up with close to 100.000 people in jail in 1995, with prisons build for 18.000 so then we were criticized for not having humane conditions in the prisons. Therefore, we responded to that, and created the Gacacca courts. Because the former system of justice, the “western”, could not cope with this situation, the amount of perpetrators was so extensive, so we went for the Gaccaca. But when we finished that, the people came and said that using the Gacacca was compromising justice, and people was not given lawyers, and things should be like it was with the former system.“ Several of the respondents work with perpetrators in prison and on their integration back into society, they all say that if reconciliation is to happen and healing for the community is to be real, it is important that the perpetrators both show remorse, ask for forgiveness and that they pay through the punishment they have received.

In all I saw, experienced and heard during my stay in Rwanda support the views of my respondents. The Gacaca, which combines amnesty, truth telling, apology and punishment, is truly prized and respected in the Rwandan society. Repeatedly I heard reflections about wanting a different reconciliation process than the one in South Africa. Several pointed out that though the TRC in South Africa have received much praise, they wanted a reconciliation that runs deeper in the society than what they feel the South African result does. The critique they put forward is that even though apartheid has been banished, there is still a large degree of segregation in the South African society. In wanting something different, with a result of a deeper reconciliation, they all argue that what the Gacaca courts do will both promote and ensure this. Committing a crime has consequences and a perpetrator has to pay for what he or she has done, but in order for a society to heal and reconcile we also need the truth and forgiveness. This is what the Gacaca does for our society.

5.3.3 Forgiveness in reconciliation

The two words that are used most about reconciliation in Rwanda is healing and forgiveness. I heard people speaking of truth, repenting, restoration, apology and more, but all of them include this in the words forgiveness and healing. They are the words that you hear in every part of society, regardless of urban or rural areas or people with no education or those with PhD's. Having a common language on reconciliation seems to have been a facilitator for

reconciliation and peace building in Rwanda. It is a language build on Rwandan culture, tradition and on Christianity. One focus area in my interviews was based on Cecilia Cleggs four areas of reconciliation, political, societal, personal and interpersonal. It soon became apparent that in Rwanda, societal reconciliation includes both the societal and political parts and that personal reconciliation comprise both the interpersonal and personal aspect. The respondents, all but one, said that both is needed, and that to reach societal reconciliation you have to start with the individual. "Society is made up of individuals, therefore it's better to start with the individual, because then you will reach the society. It will lead to better results." They all agree that you have to start with individual healing, but they all say that in order to achieve reconciliation for the whole society, people will have to forsake some on personal reconciliation. The important thing is that when they as a society see that individuals have to forsake some of their own healing, they as a society have to take extra good care of these individuals, and all of the organizations that was represented take that into the work they do.

The aspect that was most brought up, when it came to what facilitates reconciliation, and that I had not incorporated into my interview guide, was fighting poverty. "People who doesn't have food and shelter can't be asked to forgive before they are helped with their economic situation." Several indicates that the most challenging aspect of their work is poverty. "It is difficult to work with reconciliation when the people you work with have nothing. And often victims lost everything in the genocide, and therefore it is more difficult starting a reconciliation project when they live in poverty." Another one states "Resolve socio economic problems, get rid of poverty. Someone cannot hear the word of reconciliation when they are hungry."

That same aspect comes up when talking about what hinders the reconciliation process, "poverty is a big element that contributes to slowing down the process of reconciliation." To make a good foundation for reconciliation people need to feel secure and they need to want to work towards a common goal. The most obvious reason I identified was the "never again" mentality. This has been used in similar circumstances, in Rwanda it means that they work hard to make sure that this does not happen to new generations. This mentality seem to bring comfort and will to the victims that have to forsake some of their own personal healing for the greater good of the society. Several of my respondents were people who had lost their close family in the genocide and who spoke openly of the hardship they had gone through. They all

agreed that even though they still feel the pain of their losses, for the sake of their children and the new generations they needed to reconcile with their losses and with the perpetrators who had killed their loved ones. This together with their belief that it is the right thing to do within their Christian faith is what gave them strength to heal and forgive. A couple of them also addressed that this part of reconciliation have received a lot of criticism, especially from western critics. For them it feels unfair and insulting, and they raise questions to the validity of a critique with no good alternative or actions, at least not any achievable. Even more so they question the legitimacy of critique from people who have not even been close to experience anything to the trauma and devastation brought on by a genocide. One also refers to people reacting to international media coverage of the reconciliation process, saying that it fuels victims' wounds and hinders their healing, by misleading them.

All of my respondents link forgiveness, reconciliation and healing with their Christian belief. Quite a few of them say that as Christians it is their mandate to forgive, because God has forgiven us. Through all the work I saw being done on reconciliation it all includes some aspects of Christian teachings, this was cooperated by all my respondents. In all talk of reconciliation Christian teachings is a natural part of the language, as it is in almost everything in Rwanda. It permeate everything and it does not matter if you are talking to a pastor, a butcher or a police officer, the language and conversations is characterized by having a very religious tone to it. When talking to my respondents, asking what motivates them to work with reconciliation, only two reasons are presented; because of their Christian belief and a desire to help people who are hurting. All motivation seems to be at the micro level, and all of them uses their motivation and their work to create reconciliation on both micro and macro levels in the society. There is always a holistic philosophy to their work. Even those who have very practical or local focus areas still work with, and advocates for reconciliation and forgiveness on a macro level. A few of them talks about the strength it is for their work and their organizations that the government facilitates reconciliations and that they have organizations like NURC as collaborating partner. It makes them feel like they are all working together as a community.

Chapter 6

Theory

My thesis will look at the relationship between religion and reconciliation, can it be a good match which in turn can give societies, broken by conflict, and war a way forward? I will be using Daniel Philpotts theories and supply with some other aspects on religion from other scholars. This is because few have actually written about both religion and reconciliation in relation to violent conflict or genocide.

6.1 Four dimensions on reconciliation

Dr. Cecilia Clegg is a practical theologian who has a profound interest in reconciliation, especially on helping communities and individuals living together despite differences and after conflict. Her studies have revved around the situation in Northern Ireland. She has developed a theory, or typology¹⁰³, on reconciliation, which focuses on four different societal levels of reconciliation. Clegg says that to achieve reconciliation the first thing that has to be in place is the will to change.¹⁰⁴ Clegg presents a typology of four areas where reconciliation has to happen.

Political reconciliation: How to rebuild a nation, with much emphasis on governance, re-building and judicial challenges. In some ways, this might be superior to the others, because what happens at this level of reconciliation will have an impact on what happens in the other areas of reconciliation. The political is at a macro level, and often deals with peace agreements, ratifying the agreements and facilitating a space for reconciliation.¹⁰⁵ This level also designates memorial sites and memorial days.

Societal reconciliation: how a society in conflict, crisis or otherwise divided, can come together and find a way to work as a society again. The important thing is how to create reconciliation in society, on a level that meets the individuals in the society in question. It

¹⁰³ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p.82

¹⁰⁴ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p.85

¹⁰⁵ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p.82

¹⁰⁶emphasizes people, and living everyday lives, taking action to find ways to live together in a new environment no longer ruled by conflict or violence.¹⁰⁷

Interpersonal reconciliation: This is the level where forgiveness and repentance between people, families and small groups occur. Here it is all about personal feelings and personal experiences, and it includes how to relate to each other after conflict. The relationship between individuals is important.¹⁰⁸

Personal reconciliation: This is the individual level of reconciliation, where people have to reconcile with their own feelings about how the conflict has affected them, and what they need to reconcile in their own minds and their own lives.¹⁰⁹

Philpott advocates that in achieving justice the focus is on the victims. He argues that justice is not focusing on political stability, rights and an abstract balance of right and wrong, but rather focusing on the victims and broken relationships. Still the reconciliation he fronts is that of political reconciliation, “relationships that concerns persons as citizens of states and states as members of the international order.”¹¹⁰

To achieve reconciliation in a society, Clegg claims there are many factors that has to be taken into account and addressed. First, there has to be a will to change, and this will has to be present on several levels, if not all levels, if there is going to be any chance to achieve this goal. Rebuilding a society requires huge efforts on all levels, and it requires cooperation between them. All parts are connected to each other and cannot be separated; they are intertwined in too many ways. The most pressing matter when initiating reconciliation is to find the will to co-exist in the people who need reconciliation. The will to rethink “them and us” and move to a model of “us and us”.¹¹¹ Clegg argues that societal reconciliation is to prefer rather than political reconciliation, because she argues it has a better chance for success and, most of all, for sustainability.

¹⁰⁶ D. Philpott 2012 p.53-54

¹⁰⁷ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p 83

¹⁰⁸ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p 83

¹⁰⁹ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p.83

¹¹⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p.54

¹¹¹ Kim, Kollontai and Hoyland 2008 p.85

6.2 Reconciliation and justice

The traditional western legal system does not do much to improve offenders, often the punishment and the system rather results in offenders getting a “thicker skin” and just end up furthering their criminal ways. The same system largely ignore the victims, their suffering and their stories. The offenders and the community seldom have to acknowledge the victims suffering.¹¹² Justice has to sides, it defines right conduct and how to response to wrong doings.¹¹³

Philpott presents seven views on reconciliation

1. *“Reconciliation sacrifices justice”*. This view sees reconciliation as something that sacrifices equality, rights, persecution of perpetrators, economical justice and fair distribution of wealth It is seen as a tool the wrongdoers in a society can use to escape prosecution and responsibilities.

2. *“Reconciliation is unjustly paternalistic”*. Governments are paternalistic, invasive and thoughtless if asking victims to forgive their perpetrators, crossing a line between public and private sphere that governments should not cross. They often see reconciliation s religious, and therefore not compatible with politics, or they view reconciliation as utopian. Some even claim that reconciliation will stand in the way of a hefty but necessary debate that will make way for a well thought out democracy. “They opt for the negative peace through settlements or the positive peace of liberal democracy.”¹¹⁴

3. *“Reconciliation as a second-best alternative to justice”* If justice¹¹⁵ is not an option or available to pursue for different reasons, then reconciliation is a good alternative. If war or a political system makes it difficult, dangerous or impossible to try to punish perpetrators, then reconciliation can be used to achieve national unity.

4. *“Reconciliation complements justice”* Even though they see justice and reconciliation as two different things, the supporters of this view think it is possible to have both.

Reconciliation can never sacrifice justice, but it can be a process that occur alongside justice as a supplement. Reconciliation methods like truth telling can be combined with traditional judicial trials.¹¹⁶

¹¹² D. Philpott 2012 p.65

¹¹³ D. Philpott 2012 p.53

¹¹⁴ D. Philpott 2012 p. 51

¹¹⁵ Traditional western justice and international l law

¹¹⁶ D. Philpott 2012 p 51-52

5. *“Reconciliation equals the justice of positive peace.”* This view sees reconciliation as identical to justice, “a justice that amounts to positive peace”.¹¹⁷ They see reconciliation as a social harmony and social stability where the expectance of war and conflict is absent and one respect the ways of the other tribes or people groups in society. This is seen in contrast to forgiveness and compassion, which is seen as thoughtless and impartible in the face of individual freedom and accountability as well as on democratic deliberation.¹¹⁸

6. *“Reconciliation encompasses justice”* Justice is one of many parts of reconciliation, and their view focus is on a wide restoring of relationships. Justice is always one of the parts in reconciliation and cannot be sacrificed, but reconciliation is seen as something much broader than just traditional justice. Reconciliation starts with focusing on the victims, and one cannot ask the victims to embrace and forgive before some justice have been achieved.¹¹⁹

7. *“Reconciliation equals justice that entails a comprehensive restoration of relationships”.* This is Philpott’s own view on reconciliation. He argues that reconciliation is justice, that justice is a component in all the parts of reconciliation, and the goal is to restore relationships. When reconciliation is justice, then all steps taken to achieve reconciliation is justice at work.¹²⁰

6.3 Reconciliation practices

Philpott puts forward six practices of reconciliation.

Building socially just institutions, that is, creating laws and institutions that promotes human rights and the rule of law. These laws and institutions, and their purpose, should be build and uphold by the state, with a guarantee to do so to the people.¹²¹ There are sceptics who argue that building socially just institutions is not a practice of reconciliation, because reconciliation “contradicts, complement or is a second-best alternative to human rights and democracy.”¹²² However, Philpott argues that building socially just institutions is a very suitable part of political reconciliation, if the goal of political reconciliation is to restore right relationships. This practice works to rebuild a society that has been wounded by political actions, and is a practice for the state to make amends, and try to rebuild a nation on new premises.¹²³ Building

¹¹⁷ D. Philpott 2012 p.52

¹¹⁸ D. Philpott 2012 p.52

¹¹⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p.52

¹²⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p.53

¹²¹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 174

¹²² D. Philpott 2012 p. 176

¹²³ D. Philpott 2012 p. 176

institutions that promotes democracy and human rights entails building institutions that protect people from war crimes, genocide, rape, torture and crimes against humanity. It also means protecting people from restrictions from expression, religion or assembly, and ensuring the right to vote, elections, legislative institutions, the right to participation and representation in politics and otherwise in society.¹²⁴ For this practice to work as a tool for peace and reconciliation it is important not to rush the process, one cannot just establish an institution and expect it to work, it has to be built under conditions that will allow it to function. Therefore Philpott refers to the political scientist Roland Paris who argues that before building socially just institutions, a nation or state have to build stability. This is to ensure that the institutions actually has the ability to be established in the society, and to act out its purpose. It is also important to look at the issue of the ethics that are in play while building socially just institutions, because it “requires defeating the dictatorial regimes and aggressors states that stand in their way”.¹²⁵

“*Acknowledgment* is the action by which a political official or body of officials, speaking on behalf of the political order, recognizes victims as having suffered a political injustice, as having been wounded by this political injustice, and as being full citizens again. Acknowledgment is amplified when other citizens join in this same recognition.”¹²⁶ The largest institutions to advocate acknowledgement are truth commissions, they vary to some degree from country to country, but they all have a mandate to bring the truth about the past, whether distant or recent, and to acknowledge what has happened. Other forms of acknowledgment include memorials, museums, days of commemoration, public rituals and monuments. Even publishing official documents like those that Germany did when they made old Stasi files available to victim is a form of acknowledgement.¹²⁷ The goal is to ensure that lies that have been told by the officials are exposed, both to find the truth and to prevent the same officials to regain power. Making sure the new regime is built on the truth, “and a basis of integrity; to identify perpetrators and promote their accountability”¹²⁸ this will further “facilitate reparations, trials, the rule of law and the reform of courts and other government institutions”¹²⁹ all this is also a way of honoring the victims.¹³⁰ “

¹²⁴ D. Philpott 2012 p. 176-177

¹²⁵ D. Philpott 2012 p. 180

¹²⁶ D. Philpott 2012 p. 181

¹²⁷ D. Philpott 2012 p. 182

¹²⁸ D. Philpott 2012 p. 182

¹²⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p.182

¹³⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p. 182

Acknowledgement of past in justice not only reduces the lies that circulate in public discourse... it aims to achieve intrinsically valuable primary restorations, redressing wounds that are wider and deeper than is often recognized.¹³¹ Acknowledgment will help restoring relationships wounded by the injustice of the past. The wounds afflicted to a victim must be addresses, and repaired as much as possible. One of the ways political officials and states recognizes the wounds afflicted to its citizens is through truth commissions. A Study, by David Backer, on the TRC in South Africa and on the effect the commission had on victims that participated in the hearings, and on their experience of justice in the process found that over all the victims were generally satisfied, though his findings were broadly negative. He used eight dimensions to discover how just the victims found the work of the TRC; punishment, reparations, systemic change, truth, voice, apology, accountability and acknowledgment. His findings show that on only one dimension most of the participants agreed that the TRC had a just outcome, the dimension of acknowledgement. The dimension of punishment was one that many of the participants lacked in the pursuit of justice.¹³² Philpott argues that the thing he sees making the most difference in the acknowledgement dimensions pursuit of restorations is the “direct and empathetic attention to the individual victim”, what he calls personalism.¹³³ “Restorative justice’s stress on participation also reflects on the virtue of personalism.”¹³⁴

Truth commissions have a various degrees of personalism in their work methods. What the highest way of conducting reparations, in the form of acknowledgment by political officials, is when victims experience empathy in the form of support by public acknowledgement. Offers of long-term support in healing for the victims and encouragement for victims to reintegrate in communities that they feel alienated in. Addressing of wounds through acknowledgement, to achieve transformation, is supported by Christian teachings. Theological traditions that sees Jesus death as an act identification with the forgotten are especially found to believe in the justice of acknowledging. In the Catholic tradition acknowledgement is seen as a dimension of solidarity.¹³⁵ “Pope John Paul II says that...

¹³¹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 183

¹³² D. Philpott 2012 p. 185

¹³³ D. Philpott 2012 p. 185

¹³⁴ D. Philpott 2012 p. 187

¹³⁵ D. Philpott 2012 p. 185-187

Solidarity is specifically Christian... when one's neighbor is seen as the living image of God."¹³⁶

Reparations are economical or material compensation, it can also be actions or services to compensate political injustices afflicted to the victims. "Both governments and individual perpetrators can supply reparations", Philpott chooses to emphasize on the governments.¹³⁷ He uses most of the types that are portrayed in Basic Principles and Guidelines approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2005, they are restitution, compensation, rehabilitation and satisfaction. Reparations can be punishment to perpetrators of political injustices. The goal is to restore the victim to their condition before they became victims, or as close to this as possible.¹³⁸ Philpott calls this "harm to the person of the victim" meaning wounds afflicted "bodily, economic, emotional and psychological"¹³⁹ A government or political officials can offer means of reparations as a public recognition of their suffering, this in turn restores the victims to full citizens again. Through the actions of publicly identifying the suffering of the victims, and the injustices they have experienced officials maintains and enhances human rights, both to the victim and to the whole community.¹⁴⁰

"An *apology* requires the perpetrator to admit that he performed the deed, recognize that it was wrong, display regret for having done it, communicate this regret to the victim, accept responsibility for it, and pledge not to repeat it."¹⁴¹ Apologies does not have a stronghold within the liberal peace, but within religion and in the restorative justice, it has a greater role. In Christianity, confessing to ones sins is crucial in order to receive forgiveness; it is seen as a true, right and beautiful thing to do. In the restorative justice apology is seen as "a crucial step in the holistic restoration of right relationship."¹⁴² Only the perpetrator can apologize on the individual level for the wound afflicted to the victim. On a collective level, states or political officials can apology on behalf of themselves or predecessors to individuals, groups or nations. When wounds are afflicted to people by political officials it creates a fear for and untrust in political systems and governments. For nations, and its citizen, to move forward the apology of heads of nations or political officials can lead victims to regain trust in political

¹³⁶ D. Philpott 2012 p. 187

¹³⁷ D. Philpott 2012 p. 191

¹³⁸ D. Philpott 2012 p. 191-193

¹³⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 194

¹⁴⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p. 196-197

¹⁴¹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 198

¹⁴² D. Philpott 2012 p. 200

systems or governments. These apologies will have to take full responsibility for the harms they have caused, not just an apology that expresses regret that the victims suffered.¹⁴³

Political injustices does not just cause harm to individuals, but often to groups. This is especially clear when looking at genocides. Therefore, the apologies will be addressed to both individual suffering and to the suffering of a group or community. When an apology is offered, it is the victim's prerogative to either sanction or dispute the apology. Philpott uses philosopher Trudy Goviers three ways of distinguishing between what he presents as primary victims, secondary victims and tertiary victims. Primary victims are directly harmed by a crime, secondary victims are friends and family of the victim and tertiary victims are people who are members of the same group, communal, ethnic, religious etc. as the victim. Philpott argues that restorative justice and the religious traditions have a notably strong echo with restoration for primary victims.¹⁴⁴

The liberal peace emphasizes *punishment* more strongly than any other practices of reconciliation. They can be divided into retributivist, who believes that punishment is simply deserved, and consequentialist who believe that punishment have the potential to discourage criminal acts in the future and that it advocate the rule of law, democracy and peace. The critics of trials claims that those who advocate for it are ignorant to the ways trials can sabotage the quest for peace and democracy instead of promoting them. They hold the view that the proponents for trials and punishment are blinded by moral ambitions and their absolute belief that trials will hinder future human rights violations. They argue trials can result in sabotaging reconciliation by creating segmentation. The representatives of the liberal peace claims the opposite. Philpott argues for a third alternative; restorative punishment. Punishment as “a dimension of the justice that is embodied in reconciliation, animated by mercy, and aiming at peace.”¹⁴⁵ Which again echoes in restorative justice and within the religious traditions of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. It differs from retributivist views by not seeing punishment as “abstract balancing of harm and punishment,”¹⁴⁶ but they are equal in seeing punishment as a deserved consequence for the criminal act. In relation to consequentialist views, restorative punishment is not seen as just a means for the effect, though it surely plays a part. “Restorative punishment seeks an actual restoration of human

¹⁴³ D. Philpott 2012 p.205

¹⁴⁴ D. Philpott 2012 p. 204-205

¹⁴⁵ D. Philpott 2012 p. 208

¹⁴⁶ D. Philpott 2012 p. 208

flourishing among victims, communities and perpetrators. ... it aims for both primary restorations – in which punishment directly accomplishes reconciliation- as well as secondary restorations, which correspond to consequences.”¹⁴⁷

There have been established three international criminal tribunals the last three decades; one of those is the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda- ICTR. In addition many countries who have been torn apart by violence and conflict, have established their own trials or courts to deal with the violations that has occurred, either on their own or in collaboration with the UN. Some truth commissions also have a notion of punishment in their work. They may have open hearings where the perpetrators are publicly tried, and then exposed to the public with what they have done. Some places they publish the names and crimes of perpetrators in newspapers and on TV. This brings shame to the perpetrators, and often results in them loosing respect in their communities.¹⁴⁸

At last, there are community justice forums, created by governments to punish perpetrators. They are a hybrid of truth commissions and courts. Truth commissions provide amnesty for testimonies that brings the truth of a crime committed out in the open, courts will conduct trials to establish guilt and sentence perpetrators. In community justice forums, like the gacaca courts in Rwanda, the government took a traditional practice for settling local disputes and build on them to create a forum of reconciliation. The gacaca courts brings together victims, perpetrators, family and community before the elders in the community. In their new model of gacaca as a means for reconciliation, they incorporated international human rights standards and some western jurisprudence. They will not give amnesty for truth telling, but perpetrators who tell the truth will be given immensely reduced sentencing. People who are accused for the most severe crimes, like torture, rape, “notorious” murders and planning the genocide were not tried in Gacaca courts but in traditional courts or the ICTR.¹⁴⁹ The people on trial will have to confess to their crimes, apologies for their actions and often they will have to tell where people were killed and buried, this is for the sake of the victims’ families. Philpott argues that “community forums of this sort carry a special potential for embodying the holistic justice of restorative punishment and the ethic of political reconciliation.”¹⁵⁰ and that

¹⁴⁷ D. Philpott 2012 p. 208

¹⁴⁸ D. Philpott 2012 p. 211

¹⁴⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 212

¹⁵⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p. 212

this is a form of judicial punishment that “has received attention than the others but is, in theory, the most promising for an ethic of political reconciliation.”¹⁵¹

Forgiveness is overcoming a point of view and forgiveness is reconciliation. Forgiveness is a victims’ will to restoration through making the choice to view the perpetrator in a new way. It can be a relinquishment or forgetting, but it does not have to be, and in severe cases such as victims of war, conflict and violence, forgetting is never a part of forgiveness. Moreover, it is not condoning the act, if the act is labeled as condoned then there would not be anything to forgive.¹⁵² What makes forgiveness a facilitator and tool for reconciliation is the possibility that it can create new and better politics and its ability to destroy injustice, it is the victims chance to stand up to injustice and choose to not promote or justify revenge.¹⁵³ It is important that the choice to forgive lie solely with the victim. Thomas Brudholm is a strong critic of forgiveness as a part of reconciliation. He argues that the main problem is people who delivers the incentive to victims that they should forgive. This, in Brudholms opinion, leads down a road where people, commissions or states are in a position to manipulate victims and diminishes their own right to decide how to deal with their suffering and how to feel. He argues that in doing so, the victims are denied the moral validity of anger and resentment.¹⁵⁴ Philpott says that we cannot ignore the critique that Brudholm put forward, and that forgiveness as a tool for reconciliation has to be used and handled right for it to be useful. If forgiveness is encouraged with the focus being on the victim’s choice and the reconciliation for the victims, forgiveness can, and should, be a part of restorative justice and reconciliation. Forgiveness is a constructive act.¹⁵⁵

6.4 How to achieve Reconciliation

Siri Gloppen presents five strategies to achieve reconciliation¹⁵⁶

Justice; making sure that perpetrators receive punishment and are held responsible for their crimes. National and international courts and tribunals.

¹⁵¹ D. Philpott 2012 p. 211

¹⁵² D. Philpott 2012 p. 261-263

¹⁵³ D. Philpott 2012 p. 251-252

¹⁵⁴ D. Philpott 2012 p. 253

¹⁵⁵ D. Philpott 2012 p. 284

¹⁵⁶ Skaar, Gloppen and Suhrke (2005) p. 18

Truth; gathering knowledge about what actually happened, who the perpetrators are, who organized it, what happened to the victims and where victim's bodies were left or buried can be essential knowledge to help victims, those who lost loved ones and entire communities and nations come closer to reconciling. (like truth commissions)

Restitution (restorative justice) and rehabilitation of victims; to get victims to take part in reconciliation, first one has to acknowledge their losses, both on physical, psychological and social levels. Then a change in their situation has to happen, a change for the better. If this is achieved, they are more likely to take part in a reconciliation process.

Reform; looking to the future, rather than the past, and working for building a better state will bring stability and prosperity to the nation. By focusing on building a new nation, instead of looking backwards and lingering on the past, and improving the lives of its people by providing security, education, health care, housing and stabilizing the economy there will be a platform which reconciliation can grow.

“do nothing”; by encouraging public amnesia and providing amnesty for perpetrators “if wounds of the past are left alone, they will heal in time”¹⁵⁷

Philpott argues for the reconciliation of the six wounds of political injustice. These are “the violation of the victims human rights, harms to the victim's person, victims ignorance of the source and circumstances of political injustices, lack of acknowledgment of the suffering of victims, the standing victory of the wrongdoer's political injustice and harm to the person of the wrongdoer”.¹⁵⁸ He also presents six practices to reconciliation; building socially just institutions, acknowledgment, reparations, punishment, apology and forgiveness.¹⁵⁹

6.5 Restorative Justice

Though the Western legal system has a broad support throughout most of the world, and this legal system clearly have strength and validity, there is an increasing understanding that it also has its weaknesses. This is because it becomes more and more clear that victims and the offended often do not feel that the punishment the offender receives is not enough to meet their needs after becoming victims to crimes, often horrendous crimes, The Western legal system does not promote or facilitate peace or healing. In some cases, victims are left with a feeling that the western legal system, with its shortcomings, rather contributes to increased

¹⁵⁷ Skaar, Gloppen and Suhrke (2005) p. 18

¹⁵⁸ D. Philpott 2012 p.32-41

¹⁵⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p.172-174

conflict and societal pain. Restorative justice aims at bridging over this gap, and in most cases, restorative justice works as a supplement to the traditional legal system as for example the Western legal system.¹⁶⁰ Restorative justice will above all create the grounds for healing for all involved. “In the Western legal system one looks at crime as a violation of the law and the state, these violations create guilt, in order to reach justice the state determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment). The central focus here is that the offenders get what they deserve. Within restorative justice one looks at crime as a violation of people and relationships, these violations create obligations. In order to reach justice victims, offenders and community must be involved in putting things right¹⁶¹ “The focus of restorative justice is the victims needs and the offenders responsibility for repairing harm,”¹⁶² making things right again.

Restorative justice is concerned with the needs of victims, community and offender, much more so than on making sure offenders get ‘what they deserve’¹⁶³ It is important to look at the need of the victims, their need for information on what really happened and truth telling, which is important to enable healing for the victim. They need empowerment and restitution. Restitution can be both to make up for actual loss, and as a symbolic gesture. Many victims can experience feelings of- and need for vindication. Restitution can be a good way of meeting these needs and in so doing lead to healing.¹⁶⁴ One of the thing that really makes restorative justice stand out is that they also look at the needs of the community and of the offender. This should not be mistaken for a practice that diminishes or ignore the victim. This method finds it helpful for the victim to address the offender and the community as well, this will, in the supporters of restorative justice’s opinion, more than traditional legal systems give the victims the opportunity to heal and move on. Moreover, it also helps the community to enable healing and in extension change that will accrue to both victims, offenders and the community as a whole.

When addressing the needs of the offender one looks at their need to be held accountable for what they have done. This accountability includes, among other things addressing the harm

¹⁶⁰ H. Zehr 2002 p.5

¹⁶¹ D. Philpott 2012 p.65

¹⁶² H. Zehr 2001 p.21

¹⁶³ H. Zehr 2002 p.18

¹⁶⁴ H. Zehr 2002 p. 14

their actions caused, encouraging empathy and taking responsibility.¹⁶⁵ They are encouraged to experience personal transformation, to heal from the causes that contributed to their offences and to reintegrate into the community.¹⁶⁶

It is not just individuals who are victims of crimes. Sometimes whole communities are impacted by crime, and are therefore, sometimes, secondary victims. Communities are encouraged “to take on their obligations for the welfare of their members, including victims and offenders, and to foster the conditions that promote healthy communities”¹⁶⁷ In Rwanda’s case, we can also look at some communities on the offender side, not just the victim’s side. When it comes to the community taking on the obligations for the welfare of their members, the Rwandan Gacaca courts can be an example of this.

Restorative Justice have three pillars of concept; “harms and needs, obligations and engagement”.¹⁶⁸ The focus on the victims needs and on repairing harm, the responsibility of the offender, understanding the consequences of their actions and making thing right and engagement or participation in the justice process, to make each party able to help suggest how to move forward and find ways to make things right again. Even though restorative justice encourage the traditional judging by someone who is not involved, like a judge or a jury, they also want to emphasize the importance of encounters between victim and offender, if possible and then carefully facilitated and planned, also adding the involvement of the community, if beneficiary and of importance. Restorative justice often look further than traditional western legal law. They look at traditions in some native North American tribes or the Maori tribes in New Zealand, they look to Christian theology and to the sub Saharan ethic of Ubuntu.

6.6 Religion and reconciliation

All convictions and arguments people have are rooted in a variety of theories and doctrines, even when it is put forth by lay people, using a more understandable language than the academics tend to, it is still convictions and understandings that has grown from the same theories. In addition, all theories are debated and critiqued, so how can someone say that theories or principles that are rooted in religion cannot apply in reconciliation? What criterion

¹⁶⁵ H. Zehr 2002 p.17

¹⁶⁶ H. Zehr 2002 p.17

¹⁶⁷ H. Zehr 2002 p.18

¹⁶⁸ H. Zehr 2002 p.22

can rule out religious reasons that does not rule out other moral, legal or scientific reasons?¹⁶⁹ Most communities or countries will have inhabitants that portrait a variety of convictions and principles; politically, morally, philosophically and religiously. Many of these convictions will be common and shared by a majority of the population, and others will not. Nevertheless, what kind of criterion can one put forward, that will not affect and dismiss political or moral convictions, but that will rule out religious convictions? Philpott argues that if “the burden of judgement”, that is the complexity of evidence, the difficulty of weighing relevant and moral considerations and peoples propensity to differ over judgment and interpretation¹⁷⁰, is what we use as the criterion- than most other forms of convictions or principles will fall together with the religious ones. When discussing questions like “should we grant people amnesty?” or “how should we punish perpetrators in the conflict?” citizen will present arguments that has risen from common cultural values, ethical, moral- and scientific theories that all have advocates for-, and critics against them.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ D. Philpott 2012 p.110

¹⁷⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p. 110

¹⁷¹ D. Philpott 2012 p.109-110

Chapter 7

Discussion

7.1 Reconciliation and Christianity

A discussion on reconciliation and religion will inevitably have endless arguments and a sea of opinions on the subject. I have focused on what the respondents I talked to during my research express on the subject, and then discuss these perspectives in light of existing theory on the subject.

In the case of Rwanda the role of Christianity in the reconciliation process is of particular interest. As mentioned earlier there are other religions represented in Rwanda, however, the majority of the population of the country is Christian. The Roman Catholic Church is still the largest denomination in Rwanda, as it was in 1994, though it has fewer members now than in 1994. It is not possible to look at Christianity's role in reconciliation without looking at Christianity's, and especially the Roman Catholic, role in the genocide. The duality of the church both facilitating the genocide and helping and hiding Tutsis have had consequences for the reconciliation process. Representatives of the Clergy invited people into churches under the pretext of safety, only to hand them over to the Interahamwe who killed everyone. Others within the same clergy risked their lives to hide and protect people from the killings. This of course fuels the critic's arguments for why religion should be kept out of the reconciliation process. To me it was intriguing how little support the churches lost despite the atrocities several churches and clergy exhibited. My respondents on the other hand did not blame the church as a whole. When asked about the duality of the church many of them were evasive, they talked about all perpetrators having to take their punishment for what they did. In all it seemed to me like they considered it more as a case of individuals having performed atrocities, disassociated from their role within the church, rather than a Christian institution that in part facilitated the atrocities. It does appear as if public condemnation of the church as an institution based on what happened in some churches, causes a concern that all the work the church has done to promote, facilitate and teach reconciliation will be undermined.. However, this is a topic that the data material did not fully explain. If my respondent's evasiveness on the subject is representative for this topic, and this is not shared opinions with

most victims it can surely be a source of conflict. Especially since it then will conflict with the teachings of reconciliation that has been preached by the church. Brudholm's critique of forgiveness as part of reconciliation also applies here, as his critique on manipulation of victims by delivering the incentive that victims should forgive. Having an authority like the Roman Catholic Church advocating for forgiveness, when the same church has not collectively taken responsibility for their role in the genocide, may give grounds for his arguments. He argues that this stand and these actions deprive victims from the validity of feeling anger and resentment. This being said, many of the memorials in Rwanda are churches where thousands of people were killed, and everyone I met speaks openly and honestly about what happened there and who facilitated it. This can indicate that the respondent's views, though a little vague, are representative of how the mindset of Rwandans are on this topic

A question that sometimes arises; does Christians, or people of other religious conviction, have a larger responsibility in preventing injustice, violence and killings than the part of the population who are not affiliated within an organized religion? Longman clearly criticize the Rwandan churches role in the genocide, and in large parts rightly so, there were churches, church officials and many Christians who facilitated and participated in the genocide. He claims that "something in the nature of Christianity in Rwanda made it unable or unwilling to restrain genocide"¹⁷²

He also goes a long way in stating that the people of Rwanda that confesses to Christianity, are not truly Christians. This will mean that he only deems people to be Christians if their actions are true to how he believes Christians should act according to his understanding of the Bible. Few, if anyone, would disagree that killing people due to ethnic belonging is an act that does not portrait the Christian believes, and is in fact the opposite of what the Bible and Christian teachings say. Does this make Longmans statement about peoples believes true? Because his statement accuses the individual person confessing to Christianity more so that it accuses the churches, and going down that road, can be dangerous and even more it can derail the whole discussion, since it leads to a completely new discussion on who are "true Christians?" What wrongs can or cannot a Christian do in order to still have the right to call themselves Christians? Are peoples faith determined by their actions or non-actions to the degree that they can be unqualified to belong to, or confess to, a faith or religious belief?

¹⁷² Longman (2010) p.10

I can in some cases agree with Longman if his assumption is that in some religious communities they are more prone to gather their followers in endeavors both to do good and bad. Nevertheless, to say that people's belief in a deity makes them predisposed to bad acts and evil more so than non-believers is a misreading of both religion and history in my opinion. I did not hear or observe anything during my research that can underpin Longman's arguments, neither can I find much relevant or valid scholars that agrees with him.

When it comes to critics on religions use in reconciliation, theological differences are often highlighted and used as an argument to portrait religion as more harming to a process, contrary to being a resource. Claims that to put forward a theological interpretation on forgiveness and reconciliation that encourages victims to forgive is an injustice to the victims suffering and their faith. The fact that different denominations have different interpretations and theology on various aspects within their faith creates ground for dissonance, which in turn can lead to religious language on reconciliation that could alienate victims. Thereby inflicting more pain and suffering. It is also common to argue for a secular language, free of religion, to promote reconciliation in public settings. The Rwandan language is permeated with Christian language, both everyday language and the language used in the reconciliation process is built on Rwandan culture, traditions and Christianity. This creates a common language that speaks to everyone and is therefore a resource in the reconciliation work because it contributes to creating common ground.

Most religious communities are used to not agreeing on everything. Theological discussions are common, and they always have to adapt and function within communities where people don't agree on everything. In Rwanda the large majority is Christian, but they are divided by different denominations. These denominations join efforts towards reconciliation, despite there being both small and big differences between them when it comes to theology. My respondents represent a variety of Christian denominations; still they all present some of the same Christian teachings when asked what motivates them and what kind of Christian teachings are used in their work. Every one of my respondents are motivated by their Christian belief and say that it was the main contributor in deciding to go into reconciliation work and it is described as a calling. When it comes to the teachings they put forward as inspirational and guiding in their work, they all emphasize love. Love for one another, love for their neighbors and love for their enemies; this inspires them in moving forward and gives

them purpose in their work. The second element that all my respondents focused on was the reconciling act that Jesus did on the cross, when He died to reconcile us with God. I did not meet anyone who did not hold this as their first and foremost inspiration and motivation in their everyday work, and in their interactions with the people they meet through their work. Not one of them indicated in any way that this was a sensitive area when speaking about reconciliation.

This is very different to the secular language that is most common in the western parts of this world. In Norway, religion is seen as a sensitive area, and when research proposals such as mine is to be approved, it demands for additional authorization.¹⁷³ Here lies the most substantial cultural differences, western academics are the main critics of religions use in reconciliation. In Rwanda, my experiences were the total opposite. The notion that religious language and Christian teachings should be a part of a more personal or private sphere was clearly seen as foreign and to some degree insulting. Since most of my respondents knew that I had a Christian belief, I was confronted several times about the secularity in western culture. We were on total different sides. I am used to religious language and teachings belonging in the private sphere, and that to use this in public debate would, in most cases, be insulting or at best politically incorrect. It is in this area I have gained most by having time from the research was conducted until the finished thesis, because it is difficult to comprehend and absorb the difference between observing a different culture and seeing it in relation to academics and recommendations on international level on reconciliation.

Religious reasoning in public debate or in promoting national reconciliation is not very popular in academic discourse on reconciliation. It is advocated that using religious reason, religious language or in other ways take religious actions or beliefs into the discourse will undermine, even alienate, people who do not share the religious belief that lies behind. I do not see the difference between political parties, on opposite sides of the scale, working together using secular arguments and religious organizations and denominations using religious convictions in their arguments. When you have close to 90% of the population that to some degree confess themselves to an ideology, philosophy or religion that have teachings of reconciliation, that in a real way can be used to build new relationships and reconciliation. I would not argue that it is harmful not to use this common ground, just because it has an

¹⁷³ From the Data Protection Officer

ideological, philosophical or religious language that can not be expressed in a desired secular language. Philpott argues that there are no arguments that can rule out religious reason, that do not also rule out moral, legal or scientific reasons.

Can we turn around the argument that religion should be banned from public discussion, and simply argue that to enter a public discussion you have to be open to other people's opinions and arguments? This is a simple, almost childlike way of seeing things, and not common language in public or academic discourse. Nevertheless, in sum it seems that this is what the critics of religion and religious language in public discussions are afraid of. People arguing on behalf of a deity, and thus not arguing but telling people resulting in people not being open to other views than their own. Critics are right when they raise concern that victims can be persuaded by authority figures to venture into reconciliation activities that they do not feel ready for, or in general do not agree with. All authority figures, whether it is church leaders, politicians, community leaders or others, have a responsibility to not misuse their position or force people in a direction they do not concur with. My argument will be that this applies to all authority figures, not just religious leaders, and that religious, political, philosophical or other convictions and ideologies can all be misused to sway people and even force them into activities they do not want to be part of. I do not see this as a problem with religion having a place in the public sphere, discourse or language. Rather, I see this as a problem with leadership that can, and does, occur in many different forms. This is a problem that should be addressed when it occurs and communities or nations should work with to prevent. However, it does not favor banning religious argument or reasoning from the discourse as a whole in all situations in my opinion.

7.2 Reconciliation and punishment

One of the largest discussions within the topic of reconciliation is on the issue of punishment. Should perpetrators be punished or should they be given amnesty if they tell the truth about the crime they committed? If perpetrators should receive punishment, what should the punishment be and who can hand out judgements to the perpetrators? The opinions and discussions on this are many. In the following chapter I will look at some of the central discussions on this issue in relation to the reconciliation process in Rwanda. After the genocide the amount of criminals who had contributed to the genocide in different ways was

immense, and the total number of lawyers left in Rwanda was ten. In the year that followed, the prisons were crowded, and in 1995 there were close to 100.000 prisoners in prisons made for 18.000. Faced with this impossible task, the new Rwandan government had to find solutions that would address the atrocities committed while still trying to find some feasible way to execute it.

Gacaca

Gacaca is the most characteristic and original part of the reconciliation process in Rwanda. It is also the part that has been most widely criticized. Almost all of this critique has been put forward by foreigners and non-Rwandan NGO's. Both Amnesty International (AI) and Human Rights Watch (HRW) have condemned Gacaca for being unjust. "Amnesty International believes... that Gacaca trials need to confirm to international standards of fairness so that the government's efforts to end impunity, and the trials themselves, are effective."¹⁷⁴ Their claim is that the Gacaca cannot secure fair legal trials. They fear that perpetrators of the genocide will escape punishment and they have accused the Gacaca of not respecting human rights: "Neither justice nor reconciliation can be achieved without strict adherence to international human rights standards in the arrest, detention and trial of suspected genocidaires¹⁷⁵."

Implementing the Human Rights declaration, which has been ratified by Rwanda, is off course a valid issue raised by AI. I do not under any circumstances endorse human right violations that have been breached in the prisons or that have afflicted perpetrators or alleged perpetrators of the genocide. The problem lies in the fact that there is no court in the world that have the resources to try all the people accused in the genocide in a "conventional" trial, and this has, in my opinion, not been fairly identified by AI. It was estimated that it would take more than a century to judge all the prisoners with the capacity of the Rwandan legal system.¹⁷⁶ What is then a valid solution to the problem? This takes me to Philpott's presentation of the seven views of justice in relation to reconciliation.¹⁷⁷ His view embraces steps taken to promote reconciliation, and it cheers for initiatives taken by the population to heal their wounds in order to move closer to being reconciled. When the situation is what it is,

¹⁷⁴ Amnesty International; A question of Justice (2002)

¹⁷⁵ Amnesty International; A question of Justice (2002)

¹⁷⁶ Zorbas (2004) p.36

¹⁷⁷ D. Phipott 2012 p. 49-53

it is difficult to understand the harsh steps taken by AI in their criticism of the Gacaca, because when the ideal way is impossible to implement, it seems unfair to criticize the solution Rwanda chose, by saying that this is not good enough and point to the impossible as the only solution. What can be achieved by publicly announcing that the government and the people of Rwanda are doing everything wrong, when the only way they see as right cannot be done? There are off elements of the Gacaca that can be criticized, it is not a flawless solution, and mistakes have been made. What I find problematic is that they are criticized for not being a traditional and “conventional” legal court, with all that implies, when the reason for establishing the Gacaca courts is due to the possibility of using a traditional legal system being non-existing. AI clearly states that the only way to justice and reconciliation is with “strict adherence to international human rights standards in arrest, detention and trial of suspect genocidaries”¹⁷⁸

When it comes to theories and practices used in situations where communities or nations are in need of reconciliation, this is an unconventional approach.

So what is the right thing to do if it is impossible to provide a trial that adheres to the human rights declaration or the western legal system to all suspects? Personally I believe that using old and familiar traditions adjusted to the circumstances like the Rwandans did with the Gacaca courts is admirable and quite amazing, to find a way that is feasible, has public support, considers both the offended and the offender, and where justice and reconciliation is combined is both innovative and impressive. It seems like I am more in tune with Peter Uvin who says: “Politically, [Gacaca is] a brilliant piece of work. It offers something to all groups – prisoners, survivors – it offers them all hope, and a reason to participate.”¹⁷⁹ What I heard and observed in Rwanda was that even though I did not initially have any questions about Gacaca in my interview guide, all of my respondents mentioned it during the interviews. Not one of them saw the use of Gacaca as unjust. Philpott’s theory underpins this by saying that all actions taken towards reconciliation are justice, because reconciliation is justice.¹⁸⁰

Having such a positive view on the Gacaca does not mean that I believe it is flawless, or that they cannot be critiqued. It could certainly be a good thing if those suspected of participating in the genocide had the possibility of legal representation and a “conventional” trial, but there

¹⁷⁸ Amnesty International (2002) p.4

¹⁷⁹ Clark (2010) p.3

¹⁸⁰ D. Philpott 2012 p.53

are no resources to ever be able to implement that. In a “conventional” legal system the quest for reconciliation is lost, and then has to be sought in other ways. Therefore, it is my opinion that taking steps towards both justice and reconciliation through Gacaca is a very good way to go, when the optimal option is no longer an option. Reconciliation cannot be achieved if everyone involved feel that they got it the way they most wanted throughout the process, reconciliation involves a lot of sacrifices from all parties involved. The Gacaca model would not work within every society. What people perceive as justice differs, and how people look at reconciliation differs. The Gacaca is a good model in Rwanda because it builds on their own traditions and their own understanding of justice. The fact that the suspects do not have legal representation is unfortunate, and that much of the training given to the lay judges was short and at times poor is an element worthy of critique. This critique is valid and should be voiced, my issue is when this critique is used to undermine the whole concept of Gacaca.

What makes the Gacaca model a good model for Rwandans is the unique combination of reconciliation and justice, because in order to move forward as a nation both is required, and it is very difficult achieving one without the other. The other objective here is to look at what people mean using the word justice. Justice can mean more than just legal justice where a perpetrator is punished. “Lederach asks people to broaden their view on peace building to include conflict transformation, restorative justice and sosio-economic justice.”¹⁸¹ Philpott takes this to a new level when he argues that reconciliation in itself is justice, because that entails that international law and punishment does not necessarily have to be a part of reconciliation, even though it can be. In Rwanda there is a common understanding that you cannot ask someone who lives in utter poverty for forgiveness, unless you first help him or her on their way out of this poverty. This is according to Lambourne also the case when it comes to how Rwandans look at the work of ICTR. This shows that reconciliation in itself is more important for most Rwandans, than having international trials that try perpetrators and hand out punishment.

ICTR

For the most severe crimes committed during the genocide, ICTR was created by the UN. The ICTR is an international court where the accused get a lawyer and a trial by international standard. It has everything that critics accuse the Gacaca for missing. Still the ICTR has

¹⁸¹ Lambourne (2004) p.7

received a lot of criticism, mainly on time delays and for an extensive use of money. The ICTR is located in Arusha, Tanzania and does not intertwine much with reconciliation work being done in Rwanda. All my respondents mentioned it, and it is seen as a separate part of the aftermaths of the genocide governed by the UN. They do not have any work that correlates to the ICTR. The most interesting about ICTR in this discussion is how it relates to Gacaca and the critique raised towards both systems, showing that it is very difficult to find a judicial systems that can handle a situation like this, and still be praised for its work.

7.3 Reconciliation and forgiveness

In Rwanda the language used by all the people I met and interviewed uses the word forgiveness very widely, it comprises apology, reparations, healing, acknowledgement and building community, in addition to its own meaning. Thereby it encompassed several aspects of a reconciliation process. When working to reconcile an entire nation after a genocide, reconciliation on many levels is required. Among scholars, there are different views on which level of reconciliation that is the most important. The definition of these levels differs, and they have different theories to represent them, but they all have some of the levels in common, even though they might not use the same words and phrases to describe them. I presented the four levels Clegg introduced; they are also presented by Philpott, just in another way of presenting and wording it. Most scholars see that all levels are important to some degree, but all of them will argue that one level is more important than the rest. For Clegg that is reconciliation on the societal level, which she argues has a better chance for success and sustainability. Philpott argues that reconciliation on the political level triumphs the other levels. The majority of my respondents believe that reconciliation on all levels are required to achieve reconciliation for the nation, and they can agree to the importance of reconciliation on a societal and political level. They do not distinguish between societal and political levels, but see them as the same. However, they argue that to reach reconciliation on the societal and political level, you have to start with reconciliation on the personal and individual level, otherwise it will never succeed. Rather than looking at each level separately, they have a holistic approach, which they agree will bring true reconciliation to their nation. If they are forced to choose one level they will choose the individual, because this will surely affect, and transform, the societal level. If the focus is on the societal level, they argue, it will not affect

the individuals in the same way; therefore the fear is that it will not be a sustainable peace. Their arguments are that a peace that grows from a grass root level is more sustainable than a top-down approach. Even though Philpott argues that the political level trumps the others, he also has his first and foremost focus on the victims and restoring broken relationships the difference in opinions here are likely to be small.

Philpott argues that if the goal of political reconciliation is to restore relationships, building socially just institutions is crucial. I visited a couple of the reconciliation villages that PFR built and interviewed some of the initiative takers in these villages. I also interviewed the leader of the organization, who came back to Rwanda when the genocide ended and immediately started working with reconciliation. PFR is an example of just institutions that has been built up in the mist of chaos and utter despair, and has become a significant actor in Rwanda on its road to reconciliation. Both their work in the prisons and the reconciliation villages that they built and continue to support, will facilitate reconciliation. PFR runs restorative justice training that teaches its participants about restorative justice, and provides a forum for discussion on difficult aspects of reconciliation.

We often talk of truth in reconciliation, and it usually refers to perpetrators telling the truth about what they have done to ensure that the truth about the past and the atrocities committed becomes known. This will give victims some peace and it will be a tool when working to make sure something like this never happens again. In addition to this, truth can have another side. In discussions on reconciliation and restorative justice, people are allowed to talk about the difficult and challenging sides of the process. It is a place for learning and developing, but it is also a place for sharing and processing hardship they face in reconciliation. Respondents emphasized that the pain both victims and perpetrators live with is immense, and that the road towards reconciliation too can be very painful and exhausting. People need forums where the focus is not exclusively on the positive sides of reconciliation. In my opinion having meeting places where you can raise both praise and concerns about what the reality of being in this process entails, is very important. In Rwanda it can be difficult to feel secure when talking about these issues, the fear is that people will misunderstand and, in worst case, think that you are against the reconciliation. Rwanda does not have total freedom of speech. This is a result of the media's role in facilitating the genocide, but it is still a breach of the Human Rights Declaration. The question of political freedom has several sides, political freedom, and freedom of speech, are basic human rights that every country that has ratified the Human

Rights Declaration is committed to implement. The problem in Rwanda's case is that this political freedom was a huge contributor and facilitator in the genocide, so to build a political system that is just, and that people can trust takes time. The critique on political freedom and freedom of speech in Rwanda should always take this into consideration. This does not mean that there should not be any critique, because the goal has to be implementation of human rights, but it means that this cannot be seen as a situation with black and white answers. Moreover, critics of the Rwandan government should consider this, not by withholding criticism, but by thinking about how the criticism is presented. I believe that this approach could be even more effective to reach the goal, freedom of speech, but making politicians defending and arguing this can create delays that might be avoidable if one takes another stand in how to reach the goal.

Feeling secure is important to ensure reconciliation, and having the forums to discuss and talk is one approach to this. Another is to reduce poverty. Everyone I met and talked to in Rwanda said the same thing; *"you cannot ask someone who is hungry to forgive"*. When I asked questions about their biggest challenges in their work several answered poverty, they answered the same on questions about what hinders the reconciliation process. This aspect was very central in Rwanda, but it is not very central in the literature and academic discourse. I will argue that this is a neglected area that results in incomplete depiction on this subject. Violent conflicts often occur in societies where poverty is a vast challenge, and it often furthers the conflict and hinders peace and reconciliation following the conflict. Reparations, security and economic justice are all mentioned, yet poverty surpasses making people feel secure and giving economical compensation. Poverty permeates communities, and presents with a real and difficult challenge in the work toward peace and reconciliation. *"For a person to be open to healing, they first have to have food to eat and have a home, you cannot be transformed when all you think about is how to feed your family."*¹⁸² The organizations I met and talked to in Rwanda all work to reduce poverty, because this is crucial if they want people to find peace and be reconciled.

The Gacaca courts hands out punishments to perpetrators and facilitate forgiveness. Perpetrators have to acknowledge what they have done in order to get reduced sentences. Philpott argues that truth commissions are the most important arena for acknowledgement. As

¹⁸² Quote from one of my respondents

we have seen, both truth commissions and Gacaca courts who in Rwanda encompasses truth commissions, have many critics. They argue that truth commissions do not facilitate peace and reconciliation. Most of the studies on truth commissions have been done on the TRC in South Africa. Backer did his research on the TRC, and his findings were mostly negative, but he also found that on the dimension of acknowledgement most participants believed it had a just outcome. Philpott believes that what makes the most difference in this dimension is the direct and empathetic attention to the individual victim. My respondents see the dimension of acknowledgement as a first step in reconciliation, both for the victim and the perpetrator. For the victim it gives answers and they have a place to start their journey towards healing. For perpetrators, acknowledging the crimes they have committed provides a possibility to move forward and finding peace, knowing that they do so with all their dark secrets out in the open. We see the same when it comes to governments having a forum to acknowledge the past and the crime its people has been victims of. According to Philpott this both reveals truth and it ensures that the officials responsible for the crimes against its people do not regain power. This is echoed by my respondents and their “never again” mentality. All the work people do to promote reconciliation and all the hardship people, who are working to reconcile, go through; it is all to ensure that what happened to them will never happen again. The motivation is, for many, that new generations never have to live through anything like what they have. This may seem honorable, but what I observed is that this motivation, together with their Christian belief, is the drive that makes them work so hard to be reconciled. This is why many forsake some of their own healing, in order for their children and grandchildren’s future to be different.

In the Gacaca trials, the perpetrator have to apologize as well as acknowledge the crimes committed and telling the truth about it. The dimension of apology is not very popular among many scholars, who often claim that perpetrator offering apologies as a part of truth commissions diminishes the suffering and rights of the victim. In western judicial systems, it is common to try to keep a distance between victim and perpetrator, and it is often seen as afflicting the victim with more suffering if he or she has to relate to the perpetrator. In restorative justice this is encouraged, in order for both the victim and perpetrator to find peace. In Rwanda’s case it would be difficult to keep perpetrators and victims separated. Everyone knows both perpetrators and victims of the genocide, often the victims and perpetrators knew each other. However, this is not the reason for encouraging meetings between them; it is encouraged to facilitate healing for both parties. I disagree with the

scholars who do not see this dimension as valid, because I do not see the alternative bringing peace to anyone. I would agree that forcing a victim to face his or her perpetrator on other people's terms or schedules would contradict what they are trying to achieve. However, I do not see that as a factor here.

Several of my respondents work directly with the issue of victims and perpetrators meeting each other, both in Gacaca trial and after, and they all stress how important it is for the victim to be ready for, and open to an apology. They do not arrange these meetings unless a victim is ready. Being ready, does not mean that it is not painful or difficult for the victim, it means that the victim has decided to make the effort to try, because they believe it can help them move forward in their healing process. This corresponds with Philpotts assertion that the apology offered by a perpetrator is the victims to approve or discord.

The power always lies with the victim. Forgiveness is a choice. It is a choice to see the perpetrator in a new way, and a choice to believe that this act will create new possibilities for a better future. For the victims in Rwanda it is about creating a new way forward and a decision to undermine revenge as justice. For Brudholm however, asking people to forgive is to deny victims the right to feel resentment and anger. He argues that asking people to forgive is too easy for authority figures to exploit. Philpott say that Brudholms arguments cannot be ignored, but that the tool of forgiveness, when handled right, is useful in reconciliation. He stresses that for it to be handled right; it means that the choice and the power always lie with the victim. For my respondents it is a common goal for all of them, and for everyone they work with and for the whole nation. All the organizations I talked to work to promote dialog between victims and perpetrators. A couple of them raised the issue that this part of reconciliation has received a lot of critique from the west, as they put it. All of them said that this kind of critique comes from people in the west who have never experienced anything even close to living though a genocide. They see it as some western scholars "*sitting on their high horse*"¹⁸³ judging them. Through dialog and trough counseling they know what challenges the victim's have to faces, and what they find difficult, unfair or when they feel pressured. They work on these issues and they take criticism and change if they cross any boundaries, but the critique raised from the west and the critique raised in Rwanda are different. For me it becomes most clear in the fact that what all my respondents raised as their

¹⁸³ Quote from a respondent

primary challenge on the road to achieve reconciliation; poverty, is barely mentioned in the literature from the western scholars.

Chapter 8

Concluding remarks

The aim of this thesis is to look at reconciliation in Rwanda after the genocide in 1994, with an emphasis on religions role in the reconciliation process. To find the answers I first had to go back and look at Rwanda's history, and especially history relating to the genocide. The literature on the genocide is vast and there are scholars who are experts on the area that provided me with extensive information on the subject. What completed the information on the genocide was my stay in Rwanda, where I found a lot of information in museums and memorial sites in addition to talking to people who had actually lived through the genocide. The crimes committed during the genocide are horrendous and the stories I heard in Rwanda are almost inconceivable. Rwanda had to start over from scratch and rebuilt itself. Chapter 2-4 covers this, and comprise the background chapters in this thesis.

Finding information on the reconciliation process was not so easy, most literature on reconciliation in Africa is on the TRC in South Africa, and since Rwanda opted for a different approach there was not very much information available before I conducted my research. Luck had it that Daniel Philpott published a very relevant book that my professor told me about, and that has been very useful. He is one of few who has done this kind of research on religions role in reconciliation.

My research shows that Rwanda has come a long way on its road towards reconciliation, and for the majority of my respondents they all had long experience in working with reconciliation. From the response I got from my interviews and my observations Rwanda truly has experienced reconciliation and have come impressively far, even though they still have a way to go. The results are impressive, and Rwanda has one of the lowest violent crime rate on the continent.

Though their language on reconciliation is far more informal than the scholastic wordiness of Clegg and Philpott, they complement each other in their arguments and conclusions. The

theory and the practice correlate. Most of the critique that has been raised towards the reconciliation process in Rwanda is on the Gacaca courts, and on the issues of punishment. Some of the critique raised is in many ways valid, it would be ideal to have every person accused of committing crimes in the genocide be represented by their own lawyer in a court with international justice standards. I do not believe anyone has raised arguments against this as an ideal. The problem lies with the reality in this situation; there is no feasible way that could ever be. There is actually no courts in the world that could have executed this, because of the extreme amount of accused perpetrators. When this is the reality, I do not see what a discourse on the subject, with arguments that are not feasible, can bring to the table. It becomes a discourse on a utopian view.

Forgiveness encompasses the basis in reconciliation. Forgiveness is the part of reconciliation when a victim chooses to look at the perpetrator in a new way and makes the choice to change the future. The focus is first bring healing to the victim, and that this healing will help change the whole community. Critics claim that if the expectations to the victim is that he or she should forgive their perpetrator, forgiveness is more harming than healing. It is argued that when authority figures encourages victims to forgive, this undermines victim's feelings of anger and resentment. My findings in Rwanda contradicts these arguments. The victim is always in focus, and their pain and hardship is addressed and acknowledged. The theories presented supports the empirical findings, because it emphasizes that all the power, and the choice, lie with the victim. Restorative justice advocates for healing for both victim and perpetrator, this focus mirrors the views of my respondents. To reconcile Rwanda, both victims and perpetrator have to reconcile. The reconciliation villages I visited in Rwanda is the best model of this, a place where victims and perpetrators live as neighbours.

On the notion of religions role in reconciliation there are also several critics, though most of them have argued on religions role on dimensions that are a part of reconciliation. There are many discourses on the issue of religious language in the public sphere and on religious reason in politics and public discussions. I believe it is important to note, that in some instances and some communities keeping religious language and reasoning to a minimum will benefit reconciliation. However, I argue that this is not universal, and should not be presented as a universal guideline. In Rwanda's case their everyday language is permeated with religious language, therefore it would be contra productive to remove religious language from reconciliation work. Moreover, all my respondents reported that they had never come across

critique on religious language or religious reasoning in their work from Rwandans. This type of critique only a couple of them had heard, from western media. Religion can be misused, and if that occurs it should be addressed and spoken out against. Theories presented in the thesis support religion's role in reconciliation. The conclusion is that religion in itself is not a hinder to reconciliation. My findings show that in Rwanda religion has been a resource for and a facilitator for reconciliation.

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Appendix

Interview guide

What kind of organisation do you work for?

What kind of reconciliation work do your organisation do?

Who are the people/employees working with reconciliation in your organisation?

- What are their background?
- Why are they good in this kind of work?
- What education do they have?

Why did you get involved in reconciliation work?

What role does religion/christianity play in your work?

What part of “christian teachings/values” are used/emphazised in this work?

What are the biggest challanges you face in our work?

- Challanges now and then????

The philosopy of the organisation

The churches role in the genocide

How do you “go about” in order to achieve reconciliation?

Is the aim political, societal, intrpersonal or personal reconciliation?

Does forgiveness without punishment really work, or is it a dreamy harmony that is only skin deep?

What are the most important changes that are needed in order to achieve reconciliation?

What kind of criticism do you recive/face?

How do you approach the victims and the perpetrators you work with reconciling?

How is your organisation integrated in the society/local community?

What role does politics play in the work you do?

Do you/your organisation provide counseling for victims and perpetrators?

When is reconciliation achieved?

What different approaches do you pursue in order to find the right way to accomplish reconciliation?

What elements are helpful and which are harming to the reconciliation process?

What are the biggest challenges you face in the reconciliation process?

What are the biggest challenges your organisation face?

Are perpetrators integrated in society and the local communities?

Do you try to create understanding between the victims and perpetrators, or is understanding one of the things they have to forsake and move on without?

How is the transition from prison to their local communities for the prisoners/perpetrators released?

Do the people working with reconciliation in your organisation receive counseling?

How do you keep your employees motivated in the work they do?